

PROFESSOR

K. SUNDARARAMA AIYAR

HIS LIFE & WORKS

BY

*Dewan Bahadur*

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## FOREWORD.

NO truer appraisal of the outlook and work of men like Professor Sundararama Aiyar can be made than in those penetrating observations of Mr. A. C. Benson that have been extracted by Mr. Ramaswami Sastri and there can be no apter description of his father than that "he was one who had not taken things for granted but had made up his own mind, and what is more, had really had a mind to make up ; who has loved life better than routine and ideas better than success." It is one thing, however, to summarise in a few sentences the career of a man ; it is quite another to indict a well-proportioned life-history, free alike from undiscerning eulogy and from the recently developed habit of cynical analysis designed both to satisfy prurient curiosity and to assure all of us that each one, despite high reputation or accomplishment, is of the earth-eathy. The task of the biographer is all the more complex and onerous if he be closely related to the subject of his sketch. It is hard enough at the best of times to preserve perspectives in speaking or writing of an epoch and *a fortiori* of a person. The work is immensely more difficult when, as in this case, a son seeks to construct for posterity a full-

length picture of his father ; and, indeed, my present task is not less hazardous for the reason that the subject of the biography was my uncle and the writer is his eldest son and one of my esteemed friends as well as a close relation.

There are, however, some persons whose life has been so essentially self-consistent and has signified something so definite that to place on record the story of their lives and their lives' efforts is of itself sufficient to inculcate a lesson and supply its corrective. Amongst such was Professor Sundararama Aiyar. His life was cast in one of the transitional epochs of our history. Western culture and the impact of Victorian Science had broken down many Indian traditions and ideals of life. Modern science was still, in the days of Mr. Sundararama Aiyar's prime, in its dogmatic stage when it aspired not only to investigate everything but to attain certainty in all the things it sought to investigate. It had not yet received the relativity of knowledge and of belief. It had not attained to that reverent sense of incalculable mystery which has been reached by slow degrees. Between the years 1850 and 1900, it may be well asserted of Indian intellectuals that



they were, in the language of Matthew Arnold,

Vague half-believers of casual creeds,

Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,

Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,

Whose weak resolves never have been fulfill'd.

Messrs. Porter and Gopal Rao, the preceptors of Sundararama Aiyar, exercised a dominant influence over their pupils. That influence instilled into them a love of literature and especially of English literature for its own sake and particularly of English poetry as exemplified by Milton, Keats and Shelley among the poets, and Gibbon, Hazlitt and De Quincey and Macaulay among the prose-writers and Herbert Spencer, Mill and Darwin amongst the philosophical thinkers. I may add, in passing, that I include among my cherished possessions a much annotated edition of De Quincey's Essays and another of Shelley's Poems wherein my uncle in his own bold and determined handwriting either questions, admires or annotates passage after passage. With an appreciation of the glories of English literature that generation also acquired a deep belief in the self-sufficiency of a secular attitude towards life's problem and of scientific achievement. This book is the history of a soul brought into such an

environment and 'winning' through from it to certainty and philosophical conviction by strenuous self-education, the passage lying through the region of Eastern philosophy and Hindu beliefs and Sadhana. The interest of the Professor's life lay in his constant and unwearied 'nursing of the unconquerable hope' all along from the days of disbelief to the time of certitude.

Professor Sundararama Aiyar belonged to a middle-class family that inherited age-long and orthodox traditions. As already stated, his career as a student was shaped by Messrs. Porter and Gopal Rao. As in the case of many of their devoted pupils including my father, young Sundararama Aiyar became noted for his command of English but he, like other students of those days, was unacquainted with the Tamil or Sanskrit classics with both of which he became profoundly familiar much later. Mr. Sundararama Aiyar chose the educational line and served in places as far apart as Ernakulam and Bellary, Salem, Tinnevely and Tellicherry. He attempted to enter the Revenue Department which in those days enjoyed high prestige, but as a result of an amusing series of bureaucratic prejudices on the part of Mr. Bliss, the



acting Collector of Madura, he lost his chances. After passing his M. A. examination he was entertained in the Kumbakonam College and served under Mr. Gopal Rao for many years. teaching, as men of that robust period were asked and were able to do, such varied subjects as English, Algebra and History. For two years between 1891 and 1893 Mr. Sundararama Aiyar was chosen to coach Prince Martanda Varma of Travancore for the B. A. Degree examination in History and Economics. It was during his stay in Trivandrum that he came across Swami Vivekananda who exercised a lasting influence on him.

Reverting to the educational line in Kumbakonam, Professor Sundararama Aiyar continued for many more years and exercised a profound influence on successive generations of pupils one of whom was the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri. Even in a generation which prided itself on English scholarship, Sundararama Aiyar was remarkable for wielding a vigorous pen ; and in his numerous contributions to the "Hindu" and other journals then in their infancy, he displayed such skill in controversy and such direct candour of expression that he provoked

opposition in many quarters and admiration in a few. He was however not a man who would suffer fools gladly and when he disagreed with Christian Missionaries, with Dr. Besant or with Mahatma Gandhi as he did on certain occasions, he did not flinch from giving expression to his thoughts without any qualifications or 'buts' or 'ifs'. His private life was marked by some reverses and calamities ; and perhaps the incident of his son's death was a turning point in his life. Influenced largely by Mahamahopadhyaya Swaminatha Aiyar, he turned his attention to the Tamil classics and developed a more and more pervasive other-worldliness. As Mr. Ramaswami Sastri has observed, he would not even allow an easy-chair to be kept in his room, and although he differed violently from Mahatma Gandhi in many particulars, there was a large resemblance between the two personages as a result of the patriotism and the asceticism which were their common characteristics. These developing traits in his character soon displaced the mental habits born of his early devotion to Darwin, Herbert Spencer and to Bain. Under the influence of Mahamahopadhyaya Ganapati Sastri<sup>g</sup>al, he started the study of Sanskrit late in life deliberately adopting rigid habits of discipleship



and studying under a guru the Upanishad Bhashyas and the Brahmasutras and forming a study group which soon attained mastery of our ancient scriptures. He passed the stage of Yogic Sadhanas but latterly concentrated less on yoga practices than upon Vedantic studies and the Gnana Yoga. His inner life was marked by steady progress from stage to stage of philosophic development though his outer life was marked by many disappointments, both official and financial. He declined to ask for an extension of service and although he lost practically all his money through the failure of Arbuthnot and Company, he insisted on retiring and devoted himself to the activities of the Advaita Sabha and to his intellectual activities which were only interrupted for a year when, at a critical juncture, he took up the Principalship of the Tinnevely College. Notwithstanding his scanty resources, he was as generous with his purse as with his advice, and for twenty years before his death his life was one of unabated reading, reflection and writing.

- Right through his life and notwithstanding the changes that he underwent in his religious and philosophical beliefs, he was rigidly orthodox in

daily observances. But it is characteristic of the man that in the catholic tradition of true Hinduism he practised a rare tolerance and demonstrated a spiritual adaptability which many misunderstood but the more discerning appreciated. In the matter of marriage customs and in the shedding of many unreasoning prejudices, he moved with the times and when the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation was issued, whilst everybody thought that he would be an unflinching opponent of the measure, they were surprised to find that he was able to understand its significance and validity. In the course of an interview given to the "Hindu" on that Proclamation he was bold enough to enunciate the following principles :—

"Though I have always lived an orthodox Brahmin's life, I have never been wedded irrevocably to the thought that the ideals on which the present Brahminical life has been based formed a part of the eternal order of the Universe. When human necessities arise and dictate to us prudent and safe steps towards progress to a higher collective or unified life, I have been ready to join in every kind of activity to achieve such a purpose."



He spent the bulk of his slender fortune on his books, especially books on Sanskrit philosophy as well as on modern history and economics. But at the same time he was a close student of contemporary life and he spoke and wrote with his usual vigour on political, social or religious movements that took place around him. Varied and noteworthy as his writings were, it may well be argued that his own life was his greatest contribution to his generation. His strong and yet mellow personality and the stimulus and inspiration that emanated from him in the course of his Socratic discussions vitally influenced the men around him and it may be truly said of him that he was one of the moulders of the thoughts of latter-day India. Equally valuable was his example in the direction of the utmost intellectual honesty and candour, illustrations of which are abundant throughout the volume under discussion, e.g., his views on inter-dining and inter-marriage, on divorce, on Tilak's Gita Rahasya and on the baiting of Aryan culture by scholars like Ponnambalam Pillai. He dealt in his writings with various aspects of Hindu dharma and a most adequate and constructive summary of his work and of the Vedanta doctrines of which he was the exponent, is to be

found in Chapter VI of the biography. Educational, social, political and literary activities were alike within his ken, and to those interested in the evolution of a typical Indian mind, his miscellaneous writings as well as his formal treatises will afford food for contemplation. To him may well be applied this description by a modern poet.

“He, who in face of contradiction’s spite  
Has with his doubt so wrought he can aver  
That he believes, has to his soul a right ;  
And he whom not a world’s odds can deter  
From making trial of belief so won  
Has known his soul.”

It must have been a difficult as well as a delicate task for a son to analyse and to set forth such a career, but the task has been essayed with courage and carried out with such facility and with such a breadth and depth of scholarship and discernment as is given to few. Mr. Ramaswami Sastri has not contented himself with being detached and drily judicial. His beliefs and convictions are as strong as his father’s and he has succeeded in placing before us an impassioned and lovingly detailed story of a significant and typical personality.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In writing this work I know my limitations well enough. I dare assert that in many respects the subject of this biography was one of the mightiest stalwarts of his time and generation but as I happen to be his son it will be easy for any person to say that my personal affection and reverence for my father makes me say so. I was an advocate and a judge during the best years of my life, and hence, whatever my deficiencies may be, I can claim to be able to take a detached view, to pause, to consider both sides, and to evaluate. My aim is not to write a formal biography or a history of the times but to present a full-length portrait of a noble soul—"an external likeness of the inner man"—a psychograph. I have tried to present the subject of this biography in a setting consisting of his great contemporaries and the great forces of a formative period. He reacted to the forces of his age with a plastic power while being rooted in the eternal verities. Quite recently I came across an instance of ~~this~~ trait long after the printing of this biography was completed. He was in favour of an Andhra Province and wrote to the *Hindu* on 28-2-13 :

“Language and culture form the real basis of provincial feeling and the demand for Home Rule..... I do not see why the growth of the provincial sentiment in favour of Home Rule among the Telugu, Malayalam or Canarese people should be regarded as a sign of weakness or stigmatised as the enemy of the new-born sentiment of Indian Nationality.” I have tried to eliminate myself from the picture-gallery but probably the entire portrait is bathed in the colour of my basic mentality. But that is inevitable. The theme is great, because the subject is the Hero as a Teacher, whatever be the limitations of the author. The work is now before the world.

तं संतः श्रोतुमर्हन्ति सदसद्व्यक्तिहेतवः ।

हेमः संलक्ष्यते ह्यग्नौ विशुद्धिः श्यामिकापि वा ॥

“I am deeply grateful to Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer for having contributed a weighty and valuable foreword to this biography in his own inimitable and admirable style and in a manner revelatory of the life and times of my distinguished and noble father. I am equally grateful to Dr. N. Subrahmanya Iyer and Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer and K. S. Venkataramani—who



knew my father intimately and loved him exceedingly, for their excellent appreciative tributes to my father's great and unique qualities of head and heart."

I am grateful to Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar for the lifelong affection which he felt for the hero of this work and for the author of this work, and for the publication of this work as a tribute of love and reverence to my noble father.

Madras }  
13th April 1944. } *K. S. Ramaswami Sastri.*

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## APPRECIATIONS.

### I

It is difficult to write an appreciation of my dear and cherished friend, the late Prof. Sundararama Iyer, It is not because I have nothing to write. It is because I am too full.

To me no friend was dearer, no counsellor more frank. His wide culture, his profound scholarship, his wide learning, his catching eloquence, in fact, his many-sided virtues are too well known to require recounting by one who stood in the relation of a younger brother. As an affectionate father, a dutiful husband, a faithful friend, loyal Hindu and a patriotic Indian, Professor Sundararama Iyer stood unsurpassed. He was a gentleman of strong convictions with an

inimitable capacity for forceful expression. He was uncompromising in his likes and even in his dislikes. But never did he harbour ill-feeling for any person on grounds other than what he considered as opposed to public interest. To all friends and foes he was the pink of courtesy ; and in the language that he used in regard to those whom he cared for, he was extravagant to a degree. Not that he wanted to say more than what he meant. But he meant in abundant fulness whatever he did mean and expressed it in a language distinctly his own. Just as his style was superb, his caligraphy was equally superb. It deserved to be a model for all and was the admiration of all his correspondents including *his European correspondents.*

I knew the Professor first in Trivandrum over fifty years ago. He came to Travancore as the tutor of H. H. Marthanda Varma, the first Graduate Prince. The tradition of university education and culture has been kept up since then in the royal family, and one of the early graduates of the recent University of Travancore is the present Heir Apparent to the Travancore throne.

In his life of Alexander, Plutarch said ; "Often a man's most brilliant actions prove nothing as to his true character, while some trifling incident, some casual remark or jest, will throw more light upon what manner of man he was than the bloodiest battle, the greatest array of armies or the most important siege." And there are many incidents in my friend's life that I might mention as having happened in the course of our long and unclouded friendship. I do



not however propose to do so now for fear of making this note too long.

Professor Sundararama Iyer came under my charge as a patient in the year 1890 for an illness which he said had defied the attempts of all his previous physicians. I was a practising physician at the time. To my good fortune, he got well, and has treated me ever since with great consideration and regard for what was perhaps a mere matter of course.

While in Trivandrum we were joined by another friend, the late Professor Rangachariar, a classmate of mine in the Medical College. He left his medical study early for an appointment in the Madras Educational Service which he adorned with signal success; and having risen to a position, he was invited to become a Professor in the Maharaja's College, Trivandrum. We then formed a veritable trio which people used to refer to partly with approval and partly with a tinge of envy in between. However, both of them were stiff characters and could not be induced to continue in Trivandrum on the terms the then Government found it possible to offer.

And the most memorable incident perhaps related to the late Swami Vivekananda. On the eve of his eventful voyage to America Swami Vivekananda came to Trivandrum in the course of a West Coast tour with a note of introduction to my friend Professor Sundararama Iyer from somebody in Ernakulam. It was not an hour after they met, that my

friend rushed to me with his distinguished guest, who then had nothing like the reputation which he subsequently earned. The talk we then had was on a variety of subjects and is still fresh in my mind. His boundless enthusiasm and his evangelical fervour were written on Vivekananda's face even so early in his life.

As for Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswamy Sastry, his illustrious son at whose kind invitation I am writing these lines, he has been much more than a mere friend. He has always treated me as a veritable elder brother. His noble and devoted mother, I regarded my own, and her trustful affection towards my poor wife to whom she used to confide all her secrets, I shall always remember with grateful appreciation.

Professor Sundararama Iyer was to his son not a mere father. He was a tutor, friend and companion all in one. The proud affection he used to feel for him was something entirely out of the common, and can be understood in its full stature only by those who have known their relationship with some measure of intimacy.

Not having the felicity of the pen especially in matters of description, which the Professor's distinguished son enjoys, I am afraid I may disappoint the readers of this book, if they expect a descriptive note having any proportion to the closeness of my relationship with him. I would not therefore attempt it.

*Dr. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar, M. A.*

*Retd. Senior Dewan Peishkar, Travancore.*



Professor Sundararaman—his was a name to conjure with among the student population of this Presidency during the last part of the 19th and the first part of the 20th centuries. He was an erudite scholar and a great philosopher. He was a very earnest and industrious student. He began his study of Sanskrit late in his life—on the wrong side of fifty—and was so earnest in studying not only the language but also its philosophy of which he became a master so much so that he would discuss several moot points in Sanskrit philosophy with eminent Sanskrit Pandits and come out of the discussion with flying colours. He was a staunch adherent of Hinduism. Whenever there was a case of conversion of any Hindu to any other form of religion, especially to Christianity, in any part of Southern India, the Hindu students of that part immediately approached the Professor who instantly went there and delivered several convincing lectures showing the all-embracing nature of Hinduism and the sectarian narrow-minded intolerance of the other systems. It would be a treat to hear him on such occasions when we will find out that he had made a much more earnest and a much closer study of the Bible than the Christian missionaries themselves. He was a very great admirer of Sri Sankara and his unique Advaita philosophy. As Dr. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar of Trivandrum wrote in the Hindu at the time of the Professor's demise "for robustness of intellect, profundity of scholarship, lucidity of expression and loyalty to ideas, Mr. Sundararama Aiyar stood unsurpassed." He was an ardent and sincere sanataniist who, more than any

single individual, has tried his best during the whole of his life-time to uphold, and vindicate the prestige of the tradition and truths of Vedanta. His was a case of plain living and high thinking. In his private life he was most simple and quite unassuming.

I may thus go on *ad infinitum* describing his many noble qualities of head and heart but I don't do so since this biography written by the worthy son of a worthy father with great tact and skill depicts him in much better language than I would do. So I close this note with a prayer that his son Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri may, by the blessings of Sri Sankara and Sri Maha Tripurasundari, live long and continue the traditions of his noble father in his independence, uprightness, sincerity, truthfulness and last but not least in his earnest study and exposition of the unique nature of Sri Sankara's Advaita philosophy.

*J. K. Balasubrahmanyam.*

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Though I never sat at the feet of Professor K. Sundararaman, he has been the greatest single influence in my life—an inspiring ideal to me as a friend, philosopher and guide in many ways. The difference in age, nay, even in temperament,—we belong to two different generations—gave only a loving tenderness to our relationship. ~~He~~ had the genius to befriend, absorb and enrich the young; the best in him was evoked only in their presence. He showed the teeth of grinning polymics only to his ill-read and ill-condi-



tioned contemporary in age and reserved his lavish heart to the ripening young. I have not seen the like of him in the varied thoroughfares of life. I have trodden these years from Rameswar to Rikhikesh. Mother India produces only once a way such eminent teachers of boys who are also teachers of men. What is the secret of Professor Sundararaman's genius and personality. On which precious herb was he fed and reared? His profound faith in the Hindu way of life is the foundation on which he laid his life-work. He carried to this task a few great qualities which very few modern English-educated intellectuals care to cultivate or possess. He lived his life according to his convictions whether they brought him success or failure. He tried to understand and live up to the true ideals of culture and civilisation into which he was born rather than become easy and well-placed brokers to an alien culture and way of life. He digested his own food, the menu was traditional, sanctified and healthy by a long course of usage; he had independence of judgment and the courage to apply it to all transactions of life, thus evolving a code of values for his guidance. There was transparent sincerity in all that he did and said. What more you want to make for true yoga, to give crystalline perfection and purity even to our sordid lives in Kaliyuga. He believed in ~~Dharma~~ and lived his life accordingly, a *Nishkamya Karma*—selfless, compassionate, active, prompt, thorough, guided solely by a sense of duty, egoless. The flame is pure, fed on such oil, till its last flicker.

Hinduism believes in the increasingly quantitative production of saints or good men. Its entire social structure is based on this guiding purposeful aim of life. Professor Sundararaman felt intuitively this grand idea that inspired the Hindu way of life. Perfect the men who are to man the machines, before you perfect the machines which may enslave the men. This divine voice was heard by Professor Sundararaman and he devoted his long life with *ananda* to its service. May the Tamil land produce more men of his type and work for the continuance of this great ideal and thus perpetuate Sundararaman's name.

*K. S. Vankataramani.*





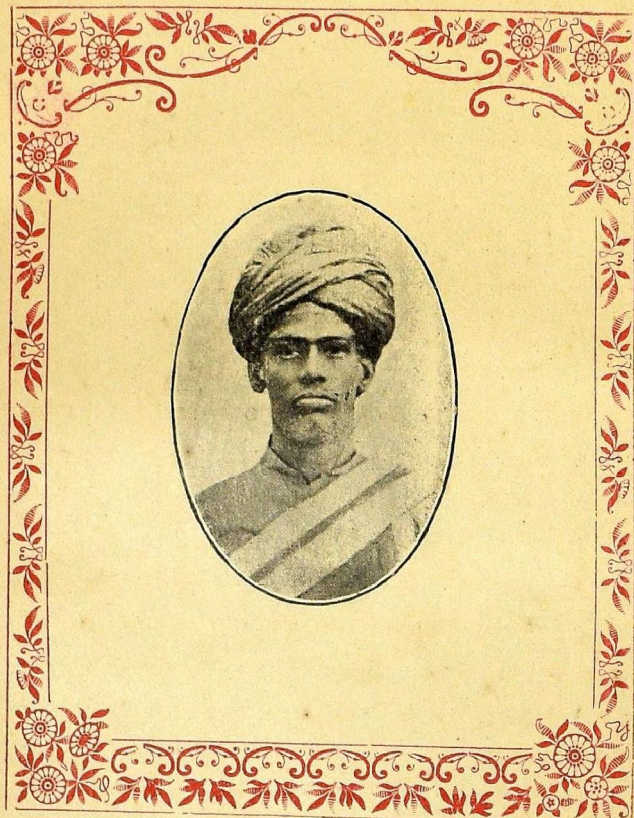
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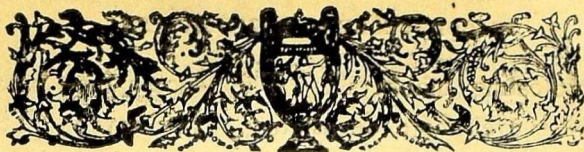
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## CHAPTER I.

### Introductory: Boswelliana.

A spicy essay on *The Eagle-eating Monkey* by A. C. Benson in his charming volume *The Silent Isle* makes a would-be biographer pause in his adventurous endeavour. He speaks about "a very different kind of creature from whom I have suffered much of late, the *Eagle-eating Monkey*, by which I mean the writer of bad books about great people." He says: "I had personally always supposed that I would rather read even a poor book about a real human being than the cleverest of books about imaginary people; at least I thought so till I was obliged to read a large number of memoirs and biographies written by some stupid pains-taking people, and some by clever aggravating people, about a number of celebrated persons." I feel reassured by his remark about the attractiveness of a biography but I feel unnerved at his remarks about

"eagle-eating monkeys." The succeeding paragraph is even more devastating. He says : "The stupid book is tiresome enough, because it ends by making one feel that there is a real human being whom one cannot get at behind all the tedious paragraphs, like some one stirring and coughing behind a screen or even more like the outline of a human figure covered up with a quilt, so that one can just infer which is the head and which the feet, but with the outlines all overlaid with a woolly padded texture of meaningless words. Such biographers as these are hardly eagle-eating monkeys. They are rather monkeys who could eat a live eagle if they could catch one, and will mangle a live one if they can find him. The marvel is that with material at their command, with friends of their victim to interrogate, and some times even with a personal knowledge of him, *they can yet contrive to avoid telling one anything interesting or characteristic.* The only points which seem to strike them are points in which their hero resembled other people, not the points in which he differed from others... There comes out a figure like the statue of a statesmen in a public garden, in bronze frock-coat and trousers, with a roll of paper in his hand,



addressing the world in general, with the rain dripping from his nose and his coat-tails. This is a very bad kind of biography." His view is that this kind of biography is due to an "inconvenient decorum which arises from a deep-seated poverty of imagination, which regards death as converting all alike into a species of angels."

But according to him there is a worse kind of biography and the real eagle-eating monkey is of another type. The former type of biography, is "bad biography because it is false biography, emphasising virtues and omitting faults, and what is almost worse, omitting characteristic traits." But the worse kind of biography is that by the real eagle-eating monkey. It is "ripping up people like pigs, and violating not privacy but decency." Mr. A. C. Benson says ; "Such biographies give one the sense of a man diving in sewers, grubbing in middens, prying into cupboards, peeping round corners." He calls such a biographer as "a dabbler in mind" and as a "ghoul" and his work as a "rag-bag."

There is not much danger of my being the latter type of biographer. But there is a likelihood of my being the former type because of my filial love and

of my firm conviction that the hero was truly heroic and was a stalwart of such pith and worth as cannot be seen in these days of getting-rich-quick and never-minding-the-means. I shall try not to produce a figure which is covered up with a quilt or which sits and crouches behind a screen, I shall try to gather up interesting and characteristic things about the subject of the sketch. I shall do my best to present a live man and not a statue or an angel.

Mr. Benson says : "One cannot tell everything in a biography, unless one is prepared to write on the scale of a volume for each week of the hero's life. The art of the biographer is to select what is salient and typical, not what is abnormal and negligible ; what he should aim at is to suggest, by skilful touches, a living portrait." This will be my aim whatever the measure of accomplishment. In a country and in an era where persons do not keep diaries and the correspondents do not preserve letters, there is no fear of any accumulation of a staggering volume of material—such as confronted Lord Morley when he tackled the biography of Gladstone—especially when the hero, great as he was, was not a statesman whose outer life is a crowded one but was rather a



scholar and a seer and a saint whose inner life is richer than his outer life.

Mr. Benson says that the number of biographies of dull important people is on the increase and cries out : "One sometimes wonders what will be the future of biographies ; how, as libraries get fuller and records increase, it will be possible ever to write the lives of any but men of prime importance." No such baffling problem exists in India where biographies are very scarce and where real biography is as rare as the Dodo and where, further, the conception of a biography is that of a syllabus or a chronicle or a hagiology and nothing more.

Mr. Benson says further : "But I know half a dozen people, of whose words and works probably no record whatever will be made, whose lives, if they could be painted, would be more interesting than any novel, and more inspiring than any sermon; *who have not taken things for granted but have made up their own minds ; and what is more, have really had minds to make up ; who have said, day after day, fine, humorous, tender, illuminating things ; who have loved life better than routine, and ideas better than success ; who have*

really enriched the blood of the world instead of feebly adulterating it ; who have given their companions zest and joy, trenchant memories and eager emotions." Professor Sundararama Iyer was one of such people. But Mr. Benson, after cheering me because of my choice of the hero, makes me cheerless by saying that "the whole process of writing a biography of such a person is "so delicate, so evasive, so informal that it seems impossible to re-capture the charm in heavy words." He heartens me the next moment by saying : "A man who would set himself to write the life of one of these delightful people instead of adding to the interminable stream of tiresome romances which inundate us, might leave a very fine legacy to the world." Immediately afterwards he throws me into the depths of despair by saying : "It would mean an immense amount of trouble, and the cultivation of a Boswellian memory—for such a book would consist largely of recorded conversations,—but what a hopeful and uplifting thing it would be to read and re-read." I am prepared to undertake any immense amount of trouble. But how could I command a Boswellian memory ? Even if I could, what can be done now ? I have not recorded the



conversations of Professor Sundararamier with me or with others, though after my retirement from service in 1933 and after he sustained a fracture of the right leg in 1935, I spent most of my time with him at Kumbakonam. And yet what an opportunity I had and missed ! It is rightly said that we hardly know the value of a thing till we lose it. To me—who was but a humdrum official all my life, my name writ in water and my judgements writ in air—the retrospect of my life is but a long macadamised road. How much better it would have been for me and for the world had I been all my life but a humble Boswell recording the “fine, humorous, tender, and illuminating things” thought and said and done by Professor Sundararama Iyer (or rather Professor Sundararaman as he would like to be addressed) ; though if he were alive he would object to be called a Professor and would insist on being called K. Sundararaman !

Mr. Benson concludes : “The difficulty is that to a perceptive man,—and none but a man of the first perception could do it—*an eagle-eating eagle*, in fact—it would seem a ghoulish and a treacherous business. He would feel like an interviewer and

a spy. It would have to be done in a noble, self-denying sort of secrecy, amassing and recording day by day ; and he would never be able to let his hero suspect what was happening, or the gracious spontaneity would vanish ; for the essence of such a life and such talk as I have described is that they should be wholly frank and unconsidered ; and the thought of the presence of the note-taking spectator would overshadow its radiance at once. There is a task for a patient, unambitious, perceptive man ! He must be a man of infinite leisure, and he must be ready to take a large risk of disappointment ; for he must outlive his subject, and he must be willing to sacrifice all other opportunities of artistic creation. But he might write one of the great books of the world, and win a secure seat upon the Muses' Hill."

In short I have no lack of leisure and I am patient and unambitious enough. But I have not recorded and amassed the necessary materials. I have no chance of getting a seat on the Muses' Hill. I am certainly not an eagle-eating eagle. Nor am I an eagle-eating monkey. I shall try to do what I can to fuse together the scanty materials at my kind and present a living picture of a truly great man.



A biographer should not only present facts but should re-create the personality of the subject of the biography. If the hero were not a hero or if the biographer were a mere chronicler or romancer, the result would be a failure. In such an endeavour, even if the biographer were an artist and the subject of the biography were a hero, there is need for much humility because it has been well said : "All portraits are partial. No man knows the whole truth about himself, much less about another." But whether one is able to write a satisfactory biography or not, the passion to commemorate and describe a great life is inherent in man. Sir Sidney Lee says well in his Sir Leslie Stephen lecture at the University of Cambridge on 13th May 1911: "Biography exists to satisfy a natural instinct in man, the commemorative instinct—the universal desire to keep alive the memories of those who by character and exploits have distinguished themselves from the mass of mankind.....Biography depends for its successful accomplishment on the two elements of fit matter and fit manner, of fit theme and fit treatment." In the present case the theme is of high value. This is not a case which can come under the withering description of Sir Sidney Lee ; "Domestic partiality, social

contiguity, fortuitous clamour of the crowd—such things frequently cause mediocrity to masquerade as magnitude.” But whether this work has accorded a fitting treatment to the theme must be judged by the readers. A biography should not come under the sway of ethical or historical or scientific purposes. As Sir Sidney Lee says: “Biography is autonomous...Biography is a truthful picture of life, of life’s tangled skein, good and ill together. Candour, which shall be innocent of ethical flavour or even ethical intention is a cardinal principle of right biographic method. The biographer is a narrator, not a moralist, and candour is the salt of his narrative.” The aim of biography is “the truthful transmission of personality.”

A biographer has to guard particularly against making the history of his hero a mere history of his times. Sir Sidney Lee says well: “The historian looks at mankind through a field-glass; the biographer puts individual men under a magnifying glass. An intelligent knowledge of the historical environment is indispensable to the biographer, but he should sternly subordinate his scenery to his actors.”

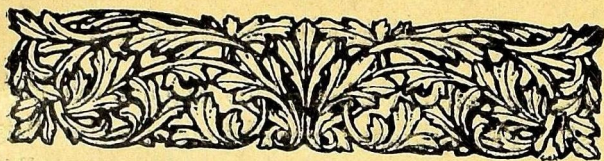
He says further that the two worst faults in



biographic method are being "too long and too idolatrous." The biographer must be prepared for "rigid selection and lavish rejection of available records." "A discriminating brevity is a law of the right biographic method—a brevity graduated by considerations on the one hand of the genuine importance of the theme or career, and on the other, of the genuine value and interest of the available material."

Sir Sidney Lee's catalogue of the qualities needed in a biographer makes me pause and causes a sudden access of diffidence. He says: "Varied qualities are demanded of the successful biographer. He must have the patience to sift dustheaps of written or printed papers. He must have the insight to interpret what he has sifted and the capacity to give form to the essence of his findings. He should treat fit themes with scrupulous accuracy, with perfect frankness, with discriminating sympathy, and with resolute brevity. Not otherwise is one of ordinary clay likely to minister worthily to the commemorative instinct of his fellowmen and to transmit to an after-age a memorable personality." I am made only of ordinary clay but I yearn to pourtray a memorable personality.

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## CHAPTER II.

### **Professor Sundararama Aiyar's Life and Career.**

#### i. BIRTH AND BOYHOOD (1854-1861)

**P**rofessor Sundararamier was born at Palmaner in the North Arcot District of the Madras Presidency, in the year 1854. (4th october 1854). His early home surroundings were always those of an orthodox Hindu family. His grandfather Kachapeswara Sastri was an orthodox and learned Brahman who had a hereditary endowment in the form of a small piece of land in Conjeevaram. He was the first member of the family to enter Government service as a clerk in the Salem Collectorate. He afterwards rose to be a Tashildar in that District. His son Sesha Iyer became a clerk in the Tanjore Raj in one of the Taluks and was as conversant with Mahratti as with Tamil and was deemed to be an expert in Mahratti accounts. He continued to be a clerk and accountant



in the Tanjore Revenue Department after the Tanjore Raj was transferred to the British Rule. Later on he became a Peishkar and then a Revenue Inspector. He held the office of a Revenue Inspector from 1863 to 1873 in the taluqs of Kumbakonam etc. He died in 1873.

Mr. Sesha Iyer and his wife Visalakshi Ammal brought up the child Sundararaman with the greatest fondness. When he was five years of age, his elder brother Chengalroyan who was nine years of age and his elder sister Sita who was seven years old died of cholera. The child Sundararaman also had an attack of cholera. The child was left in front of the Mariamman temple in Tiruveezhimazhalai in Tanjore District and recovered from the dangerous infectious disease. The family lived at Tiruveezhimazhalai from 1858 to 1860.

In 1861 one Cornelius Pillai started an English school in Swamimalai. Mr. Sesha Iyer was the Peishkar there at the time. The boy Sundararaman studied in that school for about a year. The teaching in English in that school was confined to a First Reader. Some arithmetic and the geography of the Tanjore District were also taught. In respect of other

matters the old pial school instruction, in which memorising played a prominent part, was imparted to the students. The boy's investiture with the sacred thread took place in 1862 at Tirupati.

Meantime the office of Peishkar which had been held for a long time by Mr. Sesha Iyer was abolished. Its modern counterpart viz., the post of a Revenue Inspector had not yet been constituted. He was offered a Police Inspector's post but he would not accept it because he was too old and was also too spiritually minded for the job. So he was out of employ for some time and stayed with his family for three months at Polur where his younger brother Krishna Iyer was a Tashildar. Then he was appointed as the Revenue Inspector of Kumbakonam. The job was yet tentative and so he stayed with a cook at Kumbakonam while his family continued to stay at Polur. At the end of 1863 the job was made permanent. His family then joined him early in 1864.

## ii.    **LIFE AS A STUDENT (1864—1874)**

Mr. W. A. Porter was the headmaster of the then Provincial School at Kumbakonam which edu-



icated pupils up to the F. A. Standard (corresponding to the Intermediate Course of today). The B. A. classes were started in 1867. The boy Sundararaman entered as a pupil in the first class (corresponding to the present first form) in January 1864. The Secondary school course up to the Matriculation Examination was then of six year's duration. Mr. T. Gopala Row was then the first Assistant under Mr. Porter. The teachers in class I throughout 1864 were Mr. Royalu Naidu and Mr. Appaya Sastri. Mr. Appaya Sastri was an energetic teacher and a strict disciplinarian but he was disposed to inflict rather severe punishments. He appreciated the boy's quick grasp and retentive memory. Later on in 1884 or 1885 he met Mr. Sundararama Iyer in Mr. Sadhu Seshayya's house and congratulated him on his having become a lecturer in the Kumbakonam College though his teacher (viz., himself) was still a Deputy Inspector of Schools on a salary of about Rs. 100 and his work was confined to secondary education. In the classes II to V the late Mr. S. A. Swaminatha Iyer, who afterwards rose to high eminence as a Vakil at Tanjore and was also for sometime a member of the Madras Legislative Council was the teacher for

all subjects. He was promoted as the teacher from class to class year after year as Mr. Porter had a high opinion about his phenomenal energy and efficiency as a teacher and used to say that he had the energy of higher latitudes. In every subject which was taught by Mr. Swaminatha Iyer he was so energetic and assiduous that he made all his boys fully equipped with knowledge and ready for undergoing a test at a moment's call. Towards the more capable pupils he had a warm affection and admiration which they fully reciprocated. He, however, neglected the teaching of the Tamil language for which no Tamil Pandit was then appointed. The result was that Mr. Sundararama Iyer was not initiated into the Tamil classics early in his life. In the Matriculation class Mr. Sadhu Seshayya was the teacher throughout 1869, except for three months when Mr. V. P. Madhava Row (afterwards Dewan of Travancore and Mysore and Baroda) acted for him when he was on leave. Mr. V. P. Madhava Row had just passed the B. A. Degree Examination as one of the first set of students who were sent up from the Kumbakonam College in February 1869. Mr. Sadhu Seshayya was an eminent teacher of English and was efficient in teaching other subjects



also. Hence nearly all his students used to pass the Matriculation Examination and several of them used to get high places in the first class. Mr. Porter noted the boy Sundararaman's command of English even when the latter was a pupil in the third class when he gave a piece for paraphrase at the annual examination. Mr. Porter mentioned about that fact to Mr. V. P. Madhava Row who was then a student in the college section. Mr. Madhava Row gave the information to the boy's father Mr. Sesha Iyer who was his own father's co-official and companion. Mr. Madhava Row used to mention often about this incident whenever he read with pleasure and profit Mr. Sundararama Iyer's literary contributions later on.

The boy Sundararaman passed the Matriculation Examination in the first class. His marriage took place in 1869. As usual in the case of all Hindu marriages, it did not interfere with his studies and did not involve any domestic responsibilities. He joined the F. A. class in January 1870. In that year the course of studies for the F. A. Examination was increased to two years. The teachers were Mr. Porter, Mr. T. Gopala Rao, Mr. Sadhu

Seshayya, and Mr. Sundara Row. Mr. P. Rengathatha Mudaliar acted for three months as a senior Professor in the college and taught some of the English subjects.

The chief influences in forming and furnishing the boy's mind were Mr. Porter and Mr. Gopala Row. The latter's admiration for the style of Macaulay and his impressive effort towards producing in the minds of his pupils a real appreciation of the same formed the chief feature of the entire F. A. course. This effort was strengthened and reached almost its climax during the time when Mr. Gopala Rao was the Principal of the College from April 1872 to the end of 1874. The boy Sundararaman passed the F. A. Examination in the first class in December 1871 and joined the B. A. class in 1872. During the first three months Mr. Porter was the Principal and taught Shakespear's King John and Milton's L'Allegro. He taught Optics also. Mr. Porter's teaching of King John left an abiding impression and the notes of which were taken during his lessons were of the greatest help in passing the B. A. Degree Examination. Mr. Gopala Rao came from Bellary and took charge of the Principalship



in April 1872 from Mr. Porter. He would never revise a subject taught by Mr. Porter. While re-reading King John it was found that Mr. Porter had given notes on the difficult points only and had never dwelt upon what the pupil could find for himself. No printed text-book was then available and Mr. Porter supplied by dictation one from his own knowledge of the subject. The main influences on the boy's life were Mr. Porter and Mr. Gopala Rao who were responsible for his intellectual and ethical development. He passed the B. A. Degree Examination in February 1874. He was enabled to do so as his father got an extension of service for two years to enable his son to complete his studies.

### iii. ENTRANCE INTO LIFE (1874 to 1881)

After Mr. Sundararama Iyer's graduation, his sister's husband (the late Rao Bahadur R. Subramanya Iyer who died in 1896 while he was the District Registrar of Chingleput and when he was about to retire from service) asked him to stay with him for some time. Mr. Gopala Rao gave him a certificate before he left Kumbakonam to stay with his brother-in-law who was then the Sub-registrar of

Madura. In it he stated : "He is a young man of respectable talents and praiseworthy industry, and possesses excellent attainments especially as an English scholar". Mr. R. Subrahmania Iyer sent a copy of this opinion to his friend Mr. H. Subbaroya Iyer who was a Deputy Collector in British Cochin and asked him if he could secure an employment for Mr. Sundararama Iyer. As the result of Mr. Subbaroyar's efforts Mr. Seely who was the Principal of the Maharajah's High School at Ernakulam appointed Mr. Sundararama Iyer as a teacher in the High School on Rs. 60. When I went to Ernakulam in 1910 I went to the High School (at that time a College) to see the place where my father (Mr. Sundararama Iyer) used to sit and teach his students. I met some of those students also. The late Dewan Bahadur T. R. Ramachandra Iyer, who was later on a Judge in the Cochin State and later yet one of the leaders of the Madras Bar, was one of his students. While Mr. Sundararama Iyer was staying in Madura he paid a visit to Mr. F. A. Nicholson I. C. S. (later Sir Frederick Nicholson) who had been a Sub-Collector at Kumbakonam and got for Mr. Sundararama Iyer's father an extension of service for two years. Mr. Sundararama Iyer



when he was a student took his father to Mr. Nicholson and asked for his patronage by such extension of service because without it his further studies would have become impossible. Mr. Nicholson was immensely pleased to hear that his patronage had borne fruit and that his protege had taken his degree.

Mr. Sundararama Iyer was a teacher at Ernakulam in 1874 and 1875. In the second half of the year 1875 Mr. Porter gave him an introductory note to Mr. E. C. Caldwell who was then an Inspector of Schools. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was thereupon appointed as the senior assistant master in the then Government Zillah (High) School at Salem. The Headmaster was Mr. John Small. Mr. Sundararama Iyer's predecessor was one B. Krishnayya who was a man of striking talents and personality and who left the teaching profession to join the Bar. Mr. Small was afraid of Mr. Krishnayya and was glad when a much younger man who was not yet inured to life's trials took his place. He set Mr. Sundararama Iyer to do private tutorial work for his son who was then studying in the Matriculation class after failing in the mathematical subjects. The boy

fortunately got through under Mr. Sundararama Iyer's tuition. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was a teacher at the Salem Zillah School for about a year. The late Rao Bahadur T. Subramanya Iyer who was a leader of the Salem Bar and was later on an eminent advocate at Madras was one of his students there. Mr. Sundararama Iyer's nuptials took place in 1876.

Meantime a strange unsettlement took place in Mr. Sundararama Iyer's life. Mr. S. Ramasubba Iyer who was his old friend while they were students at Kumbakonam mentioned about him to his father Ramaswami Iyer who was the Collector's Sheristadar at Madura. He was then a Vakil at Madura. His uncle S. Subrahmania Iyer (afterwards Sir S. Subrahmanya Iyer the famous Judge of the High Court at Madras) was then a leading Vakil at Madura. He had become Mr. Sundararama Iyer's friend during the latter's stay at Madura in 1874. Mr. H. W. Bliss was then the acting Collector at Madura. He had contracted a personal grudge against the then Rani of Sivaganga—the well-known Kattama Nachiar who figured in many Privy Council cases. During the Easter in 1876 he asked his Sheristadar to have a warrant ready for his signature



in respect of her non-payment of the Peishkush due to the Government. The previous Collectors used to grant her ample time for its payment but Mr. Bliss refused to do likewise. Before he returned from Madras after the Easter holidays, the Peishkush was ready for payment through Mr. Robert Fisher, Bar-at-law, who was the legal advisor of Rani Kattama Nachiar, as Mr. Fisher was informed by Mr. Subrahmanya Iyer about the intention of Mr. Bliss. Mr. Bliss was very angry with his Sheristadar but the latter threw the blame on his two confidential clerks. Mr. Bliss dismissed one of them and gave to Mr. Sundararama Iyer, on the Sheristadar's recommendation, that post which carried a salary of Rs. 60 P. M. But the clerks convinced the Collector that they were not to blame for the leakage of the information about the intended issue of the warrant against the Rani. Thereupon Mr. Bliss cancelled the appointment of Mr. K. Sundararama Iyer and restored the dismissed clerks and compelled the Sheristadar to take furlough for a year. Meanwhile Mr. Sundararama Iyer who had been asked to apply for permission to apply for a post in some other Department of Government Service had already done so. General Macdonald who was then the Director of

Public Instruction became vexed by such a request which was made within seven or eight months after the applicant entered the public service in the Educational Department. He gave him three month's notice to quit the Department. The date for quitting the Department arrived in October 1876. He thereupon went once more to Madura and stayed in the of house his sister's husband Mr. R. Subrahmanya Iyer. He then went to Madras, saw the Director of Public Instruction and persuaded him to re-employ him in the Educational Department.

Meantime his eldest-born male child died soon after child-birth. Mr. Sundararama Iyer got a job in 1877 as the second master in the Wardlaw London Mission School at Bellary. The Headmaster there was an old college friend, Mr. V. Kuppuswami Iyer M. A. The latter became afterwards a District Munsiff and died after about fifteen years of service. From Bellary Mr. Sundararama Iyer went to Kumbakonam as the second master of the Town High School. In 1877 the Director of Public Instruction offered him the second master's post in the Government Bremen Zilla School at Tellicherry. Mr. Sundararama Iyer took up the job on 7th



April 1877 and continued there till 1st August 1887. Meantime in August 1878 his son K. S. Ramaswami Sastri (the author of this sketch) was born at Kumbakonam and was taken by his mother to Tellicherry. Mr. J. M. Hensman was the Acting Headmaster of the Tellicherry Zilla School during the absence of Mr. Thomas who was the permanent incumbent. During the twelve months when Mr. Hensman stayed at Tellicherry his relations with Mr. Sundararama Iyer were most friendly and cordial. Their joint work proved very successful as judged by the results of the University Matriculation Examination. Mr. Thomas returned early in 1878 and continued for a year and then left the Educational Department and became a pleader in Tinnevely. When he left Tellicherry Mr. Hensman returned there as acting Headmaster. The interval between January 1878 and January 1881 was spent by Mr. Sundararama Iyer in studying for the M. A. Degree Examination (Branch V), the subject being History and Economics and Philosophy which later on became separate branches of study for the M. A. Degree. He took the Degree in March 1881. Thereupon the Director of Public Instruction, who had agreed to take him

into a College on his passing the M. A. Degree Examination, transferred him as a lecturer to the Kumbakonam College on 4th August 1881.

Mr. Buick, the Sub-Collector of Tellicherry, used to conduct the Government Special Test Examinations in the Zilla school building in August. During the examination in 1878 he brought three issues of the London Mail and gave one of them to Mr. Sundararama Iyer who also had to take part in the superintendence at Mr. Buick's request. That issue contained Mr. Gladstone's six column speech in the House of Commons on the Afghan War which had been launched by Mr. Disraeli's ministry. The reading of it was a turning point in Mr. Sundararama Iyer's career and roused in him a keen interest in politics and political controversies and an equally keen interest in Journalism—an interest which never lessened or ceased but grew from more to more as the years went on. With the help of the local Tashildar and some Brahmin and Nair Vakils Mr. Sundararama Iyer started a Reading Room in the village of Tiruvengadu which is a suburb two miles from Tellicherry town. The *London Mail*, the *Saturday Review*, the *Madras Mail*, the



*Bombay Gazette*, and the *Statesman* of Calcutta were subscribed for. Thus for the first time an interest in public affairs and public movements was created there mainly through Mr. Sundararama Iyer's effort and despite much opposition from the educated men who were unwilling to pay subscriptions, the Reading Room flourished well and was also utilised for the reading of papers on literary and other topics, followed by discussion, once a month.

iv. 1881 to 1890.

Mr. Sundararama Iyer arrived at Kumbakonam from Tellicherry on the 4th August 1881 and began his work in the Government College there as a lecturer. Mr. T. Gopala Row was then the Principal. The other lecturers were, in the order of seniority, Mr. Sadhu Seshayya, Mr. C. Sundara Rao, and Mr. R. V. Srinivasa Iyer. All of them were senior to Mr. Sundararama Iyer. Mr. R. Chakravarti Iyengar was his junior. Mr. B. Hanumanta Row and Mr. Sundararama Iyer had studied together in the Kumbakonam College during their entire College course (1870—1873) with Mr. Porter and then Mr. Gopala Row as the

Principal. A few months before Mr. Sundararama Iyer took charge at Kumbakonam, the High School Department of the College had been abolished. Pending Mr. Sundararama Iyer's arrival from Telli-cherry and that of Mr. N. Vythinatha Iyer from Calicut, two of the High School teachers, both graduates, who had temporarily been detained for doing work in the College classes had failed to satisfy the expectations of the students and had been shut out of the class room. So Mr. Hanumanta Row warned Mr. Sundararama Iyer to go into his classes after the fullest possible preparation. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was entrusted also with some of the English language work in the two F. A. classes. Mr. Hanumanta Row warned him further that, if he had any doubts about the exact interpretation of any passage, he should never seek the Principal's aid, even though he had been their old English teacher, because Mr. Gopala Row (the Principal) would immediately begin to think that such an action was a proof of unfitness for college work.

The first lesson which Mr. Sundararama Iyer had to teach was geometrical progression for the Junior F. A. class. When the book-work explaining



geometrical progression had been finished, a student, Mr. A. Sundaram, (Rao Bahadur A. Sundara Sastri) who later on became the leader of the Tinnevelly Bar and was the President of the Tinnevelly Hindu College Committee during the one year (1909) when Mr. Sundararama Iyer was the Principal of that College after his retirement from Government service, rose and said that he had an algebraical series to sum up and asked Mr. Sundararama Iyer to work it out on the blackboard. Mr. Sundararama Iyer's competency as a lecturer in the College evidently depended upon his success in this task. The series in question looked as if it did not form an arithmetical or geometrical or harmonic series. The result was a momentary state of confusion and dread in Mr. Sundararama Iyer's mind. Luck, however, came to his aid. Following a momentary suggestion, he found that the terms of the series were reducible as follows :  $a-b, b-c, c-d$  etc.,  $y-z$ . Thus when summed up and the positive and the negative letters cancelled each other, only the first and the last terms were left to represent the sum. When this was shown to the class, the entire body of students, 114 in number, indulged in a mild cheering. Thenceforward, his reputation among the

college students became assured. Besides a portion of the English and Mathematical work of the two F. A. classes, he had also to do the history work of the entire College.

In November or December 1881 the Town High School Committee coopted Mr. Sundararama Iyer as a member of the Committee. This was due to the good opinion which he had earned in the College.

In December 1881 Mr. Porter, who was to retire from his appointment first as Tutor and later on as the Private Secretary of His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore, was invited by Mr. Gopala Row, the Principal, to revisit the scene of his old labours and receive an address. Mr. Porter came and had a magnificent reception, the like of which was witnessed at Kumbakonam only when Swami Vivekananda visited it in 1897.

Mr. H. B. Grigg became the Director of Public Instruction in 1880 on the retirement of General MacDonald. In March 1881 he visited the College and came to the conclusion that Mr. Gopala Rao must be removed from the Principalship. He



could not complain either about the methods of instruction in the College or the results as judged by the result of the University examinations. He sent up a complaint to the Government that the College compound was a wilderness, that the College tank and its surroundings were kept in the worst possible condition, that the scientific apparatus was kept in very bad order and so on, and recommended that Mr. Gopala Rao's place should be taken by a young and vigorous European selected from the alumni of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Accordingly Mr. G. H. Stuart who was a Smith Prizeman and was a man of reputation in the mathematical circles in England was appointed as the Principal of the Kumbakonam College in August 1882. Mr. Gopala Row and his staff and students parted from one another with the greatest reluctance and sorrow. Mr. Sundararama Iyer felt the parting with Mr. Gopala Row most keenly, because Mr. Gopala Row had much affection for him and was thoroughly satisfied with the manner in which he discharged his duties in the College. Further, during the crisis which occurred in connection with the charge of inefficiency which was brought against the Headmaster of the Town

High School, Mr. Krishna Row, by the then secretary Mr. R. V. Srinivasa Iyer, Mr. Sundararama Iyer, supported by Messrs N. Vythinatha Iyer and Mr. C. Sundara Row, two other College Lecturers who were also members of the Town High School Committee, placed the Headmaster's case so fully and accurately before Mr. Gopala Row and others who were on the Committee that the majority of the Committee threw out the charges and the impression left on Mr. Gopala Row's mind by what Mr. Sundararama Iyer had done made him Mr. Gopala Row's confirmed favourite and made him contract the most sincere regard and affection for him. Mr. Gopala Row's influence on Mr. Sundararama Iyer's habits of thought and life had been profound, and the intimate and kindly relations of esteem and loving regard due to the course adopted by Mr. Sundararama Iyer in dealing with the Town High School episode brought Mr. Gopala Rao very near to his heart. All through his life Mr. Gopala Rao was an object of enthusiastic reverence and his influence on Mr. Sundararama Iyer's aims and ideals of life never lessened but increased with the passage of time.



Mr. Stuart's Principalship extended from August 1882 to November or December 1885. When leaving the College he recorded his opinions regarding the junior members of the College staff in their respective service books. This was not known to any of them for two years or more. Mr. Stuart wrote about Mr. Sundararama Iyer as follows: "K. Sundararama Iyer has done good work in the College and possesses exceptional qualifications as a Lecturer in History." Mr. Stuart's favourable opinion was a surprise to Mr. Sundararama Iyer. Soon after Mr. Stuart's arrival Mr. Sundararama Iyer had attempted to see him at his house on certain mornings. Owing to Mr. Stuart's being a late riser, Mr. Sundararama Iyer was not able to meet him as proposed by him. Mr. Sundararama Iyer did not know then about his peculiar habits and thought him to be unkind and perverse in his disposition.

During Mr. Stuart's Principalship some incidents worth mentioning took place. Late in 1883, the fifth lectureship in the College carrying a pay of Rs. 150 p. m. became vacant. But it was not given to Mr. Sundararama Iyer who thought that

it was due to his having complained openly in the lecturers' room about the Principal's discourtesy in refusing or failing to receive his visit during the morning calls mentioned above. The real reason was that, during the Town High School crisis referred to already he had supported the Headmaster against the College party which was adverse to him. The result was that the vacancy on Rs. 150 went to a person outside the College. Mr. Stuart did not object to such importation from outside, and Mr. Sundararama Iyer thought that this was due to the misguiding influence of some of the senior members of the College Staff. Further, early in 1884, a Science Chair was opened in the College, and a class was formed for studying Science as an optional subject for the B. A. Degree Examination. A Parsi graduate from Bombay was brought out and held the office throughout the year. He failed to give satisfaction and was sent back. Early in 1885 A. W. Ward (a brother of the famous psychologist and philosopher James Ward) was appointed to fill the vacancy. But before he arrived a temporary appointment was made by the transfer of a junior officer from the Government Normal School (as the Teacher's College was then called) at Saidapet.



Mr. Sundararama Iyer made a complaint to Mr. Stuart and received the reply : "No one has a claim for promotion in the Government Service." In reply to him the obvious explanation was given by Mr. Sundararama Iyer that a claim founded upon long and approved service certainly constituted a legitimate claim for promotion and must be considered by the higher authorities. When Mr. Sundararama Iyer had left the Principal's room, a senior College Professor Mr. Ramadasa Iyer, who had also gone thither to protest against the proposed Saidapet importation, was told by the Principal that he had himself already objected to the importation and that neither of the professors who had gone to him to press their claims need be anxious about the matter and that the supercession feared by them would not take place. He specially asked Mr. Ramadasa Iyer to convey that intimation to Mr. Sundararama Iyer and to ask him not to tender his resignation hastily. Mr. Stuart did not mean this seriously but was only referring to what Mr. Sundararama Iyer had said, with more or less seriousness, in the lecturers' common room when complaining about his failure to receive me during the morning calls mentioned above.

The proposed transfer from the Madras Normal School to the new Science post in the College was cancelled owing to the objections raised by Mr. Stuart, and Mr. M. Rangacharya, M. A., was appointed to that place on Dr. Miller's recommendation. Mr. Rangacharya joined the appointment in June or July 1884. He made his mark at once as an able and impressive and inspiring teacher in his subject. He had his lodgings in the Mettu Street at Kumbakonam during the six months when he remained there. He was of a somewhat retiring disposition and his innate social qualities and the varied resources and attainments of his intellect and his zeal for spiritual aims and ideals were not then revealed to his friends and colleagues. Mr. Sundararama Iyer also was living in the western part of the town at two furlongs' distance from his lodgings. Some mutual friends, who had become familiar with Mr. Rangacharya and had some hints of these higher qualities of his nature, conveyed some intimations of them to Mr. Sundararama Iyer. So he paid a visit to him, with the result that he felt attracted and made more visits to him. The impression received was very high indeed but the acquaintance thus formed did not then ripen into anything like the



friendship or the admiration which in later years was to prove so prominent and loveable a feature in the lives of both of them.

When Mr. Ward arrived from England, it was learnt that he had been appointed permanently not to his new place as Science Lecturer but as Senior or First Lecturer in the College. Sadhu Seshayya who had long been acting as the first lecturer was transferred from Kumbakonam. In the meantime, as early as 1883, Mr. N. Vythinatha Iyer had been transferred to Rajahmundry as Lecturer in Philosophy, and his place at Kumbakonam was taken by the transfer from Rajahmundry of Mr. Sattyanathan, a young Native Christian, who had been educated at Cambridge and had been directly appointed as Lecturer in Philosophy at Rajahmundry. Early in 1886, Mr. Hensman, who had been Headmaster at Tellicherry when Mr. Sundararama Iyer was there, was transferred to Kumbakonam as one of the lecturers in the place of Mr. Hanumanta Row who had been transferred about two years previously to the Government Normal School at Saidapet.

Mr. Ward, the new Science Lecturer, was a

very nice man, moving freely and frankly with all. Early in his career he got into a muddle by attacking Venkatasubba Row's Science Primers as unscientific in a lecture delivered by him at Kumbakonam. In that lecture he attacked also some educational officers who had given certificates of approval to those primers. One of the officers attacked was Mr. C. M. Barrow who was once in the Government Educational Service and was later on Headmaster of the Kerala Vidya Sala (which was subsequently taken over by the Zamorin of Calicut and known as the Zamorin's High School and then developed into a first Grade College). Mr. Barrow was a man of influence and complained to the Director of Public Instruction against Mr. Ward. The matter was adjusted after some sort of apology was offered. Mr. Ward was a man of outspoken sincerity and courage.

#### v. (1891—1893.)

In 1891 there happened an important event which broke the even tenor of Mr. Sundararama Iyer's life as a teacher in British India. He had settled down to a life of learned endeavour in the Government Colleges to fit the generations for the inevitable



new life in modern India. Besides his son (*i.e.*, myself) who was born in 1878 he had another son (born in 1881) named Seshadri and a daughter named Savitri (born in 1886). In 1890, however, the Travancore Government tried to get a teacher of eminence to coach up His Highness the then Second Prince of Travancore, Prince Martanda Varma, for the B. A. Degree Examination in Branch V (History and Economics). The choice eventually fell on Mr. Sundararama Iyer. He had not yet reached the lowest rung of the ladder of the Madras Educational Service (200-20-700) but was somewhere near it. He was offered a pay of Rs. 300 p. m. at Travancore. His sister Subbalaxmi who had become a widow early in her life and who was a member of his family throughout her life and who had a will of her own and dominated the home life was dead against his going to Travancore. His mother who was under her daughter's influence, put up a mild protest against going to a strange country. She was of a sweet and pliable disposition. Mr. Sundararama Iyer's wife was then a comparatively young woman and her one great desire in life was to serve and please her husband and do her household duties with scrupulous care and attention. She was neutral

in the matter of the acceptance of the Travancore appointments. But in this matter, as in others, "there is a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will" and the family moved to Travancore, as Mr. Sundararama Iyer accepted the appointment. When he was as yet in a state of indecision about the acceptance of the post, two factors turned the scale. One was the personal charm of Janakivallabha Iyer who had been sent from Travancore to induce Mr. Sundararama Iyer to go to Travancore. The other was that Travancore—the Parasurama Kshetra—had always glittered before Mr. Sundararama Iyer's mental vision as a land of beauty and piety, a land won by the prowess of Parasurama who combined filial obedience and filial affection and who was gentle as a lamb and yet mighty as a lion and who when his world's work was done made way for the world's next great divine guide Sri Rama and took to a life of penance, ready, at the same time, to train disciples in the twin arts of soldiership and statesmanship and to intervene to redress the balance of life whenever injustice and unrighteousness threatened to bear down and destroy justice and righteousness. He had already spent the young and impressionable years of his life at Ernakulam and Tellicherry and



seen the fascinating beauty of hills and dales and incessant rains and perennial streams. Travancore at the southern end of India and Kashmir at the northern end are the two beauty spots of India and the two centres of romance and charm unrivalled in the world except perhaps in Switzerland and Northern Italy which are said to be of surpassing loveliness though with a different charm.

At Tinnevelly Mr. Sundararama Iyer and the other members of his family stayed with his sister's husband Mr. R. Subrahmanya Iyer who was then the District Registrar of Tinnevelly and whose son is Rao Bahadur R. Kuppuramaswami Sastri who was later on the Private Secretary of Sri P. Rajagopalachariar and Dewan Bahadur T. Raghaviah C. I. E. when they were Dewans of Travancore. From Tinnevelly Mr. Sundararama Iyer went in bandies to Trivandrum by easy stages. There was in those times a regular bandy service to Trivandrum. The first halt was made at Nanguneri. The big lake at Nanguneri was an unforgettable sight. The Thovazhai pass through which came tempestuous gusts of wind, the Travancore villages with houses nestling amongst cocoanut palms and areca trees and

jack trees, the tumultuous and fitful showers of rain, rivers full of perennial waters, the women graceful and fair and clad in white, the domed temples so small and so clean and so lovely, and other noteworthy features amidst a setting of nature's lovely alternations of hills and dales could never be forgotten. Eventually Trivandrum was reached in January 1891 and the gold-crested temple of Sri Padmanabha by the side of the lotus tank (Padma Teertham) gladdened eyes and hearts.

At Trivandrum Mr. Sundararama Iyer lived for a while in the suburb Srikanteswaram and then within the Fort. He threw himself heart and soul into his work and made Prince Martanda Varma a specialist in History and Economics. Mr. Kerala Varma (called Kuttan Thambiran) studied along with the Royal Prince. He was the father of Her Highness Setu Lakshmi Bayi, the Senior Maharani of Travancore who was the Maharani Regent of Travancore after the demise of His Highness Moolam Tirunal and during the minority of His Highness the present Maharajah of Travancore. Mr. Sundararama Iyer had regular tuition hours (11 A. M. to 4 P. M. with an interval for lunch) at the palace of



Prince Martanda Varma. He was a prominent member of the Union Club, Trivandrum. Mr. M. Rangacharya happened to be appointed as Professor of Science at the Maharajah's College, Trivandrum, and thus the old friends came together again. Mr. N. Subrahmanya Iyer M. A. at one time Palace Physician and later on Dewan Peishkar, became an intimate friend of both of them. They were often referred to as the inseparable trio. Many public lectures were delivered by them. Mr. K. G. Seshā Iyer (afterwards Justice K. G. Seshā Iyer of the Travancore High Court) once delivered a very interesting lecture on Wordsworth. I had the good fortune to attend it. Mr. Sundararama Iyer presided on the occasion. Though he had not made an intensive study of English poetry, yet he made an illuminating speech on the occasion, both because he read up the best critical literature on Wordsworth and also because of a spiritual kinship with the great English poet. Mr. M. Rangachariar delivered a highly applauded and noteworthy lecture on "*The Function of Religion in Social Evolution.*" On one occasion after Mr. G. Subrahmanya Iyer, who was a great politician and journalist and social reformer and who had as editor of the *Hindu*

brought that great national newspaper to a very high level of excellence, had left Trivandrum whither he had come for a stay and where he delivered some lectures, Mr. Sundararama Iyer delivered a great lecture on *The Hindu Ideal and Practice of Duty*, defending the orthodox view point of the Hindus.

Under Mr. Sundararama Iyer's tuition the Prince Martanda Varma got a good grip over History and Economics and sat for the B. A. Degree Examination in Madras in December 1891 and came out successful in the Examination. He was keen about studying for the M. A. Degree Examination and so the Travancore Durbar got a further loan of the services of Mr. Sundararama Iyer from the Madras Government. Mr. Sundararama Iyer continued at Trivandrum during 1892 and 1893 also and taught the M. A. text books in History and Economics to the Prince. The Prince benefitted much by such tuition but did not appear for the M. A. Degree Examination.

Meantime I (who am the eldest son of Mr. Sundararama Iyer) passed the Middle School Examination in the first class in 1890 and the Matriculation Examination in the first class in 1892 at



Trivandrum and studied for one year in the Maharajah's College, Trivandrum, in the Junior Intermediate Class. Another female child, named Kamala, was born to Mr. Sundararama Iyer at Trivandrum about April 1890.

One of the most important events in Mr. Sundararama Iyer's life was the coming of Swami Vivekananda to Trivandrum early in 1893. Swami Vivekananda went into the Himalayas after the passing away of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in 1886. Then he travelled on foot all over Northern and Western India and went to Mysore and Cochin and eventually reached Trivandrum. I remember vividly his stepping into our house one morning. He had a long orange robe and a turban of the same colour loosely tied on his head. His face was beaming and his carriage was regal. My brother and I ran up and told our father (Mr. Sundararama Iyer) and told him that a Rajah had come. Mr. Sundararama Iyer came down and eyed the Swami and found him to be a great personality. The Swami stayed for more than a week in our house. He met Mr. Rangacharya, Mr. Subrahmanya Iyer, Mr. S. Shan-

karasubba Iyer (the then Dewan of Travancore) and others. He had also an audience with the Maharajah. He impressed every one with his marvellous learning and his dynamic spirituality and his burning patriotism. His later life belongs to history. Mr. Sundararama Iyer became a confirmed admirer of Swami Vivekananda from that day,

vi. 1894 to 1896.

In 1894 Mr. Sundararama Iyer reverted to the British Educational Service and became once more a lecturer in History and Economics at the Kumbakonam College. His beloved mother died at a ripe old age at Kumbakonam in May or June 1894. I passed the Intermediate Examination in the first class in December 1894. In 1895 Mr. Sundararama Iyer was transferred to the Rajahmundry College and remained there during 1895 and 1896. He left his family at Kumbakonam and went with a cook to Rajahmundry. During the summer recess in 1896 he celebrated the marriage of his daughter Savitri with Rajagopalan who was a relation of his wife. In June 1896 Mr. Sundararama Iyer's last child—Raghavan—was born at Kumbakonam. To-



wards the end of 1896 he took leave for four months and was on his way to Kumbakonam as he wanted to coach up his younger son Seshadri personally for the Matriculation Examination. But a most tragic event happened which was a crushing blow to him. In December 1896 Seshadri had a sudden attack of cholera at Kumbakonam and succumbed to that fell disease in two days despite the best medical aid. Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to say that on the day of death he was at Guntakal *en route* to Kumbakonam and that on that night the light suddenly went out when he was at his meals in a hotel. With dim forebodings of some misfortune he entered his house at Kumbakonam. He found his elder son (myself) in tears. The latter was not able to break the dreadful news. When Mr. Sundararama Iyer eventually learnt it, he was prostrate with grief for many days. He loved Seshadri very fondly and the boy bore a very loveable character. But "there is no armour against fate." Later on he presented three to four hundred volumes to the Gopala Row Library Kumbakonam, each book having glued to it a printed paper stating that it was given in memory of his bright and short-lived son. His elder son (myself)

passed all the branches of the B. A. Degree Examination in December 1896 in the First Class.

vii. 1897 to 1907

Early in 1897 Mr. Sundararama Iyer, finding that his leave merely made the sorrow of separation from his beloved son more poignant than before, cancelled the remaining portion of his leave and rejoined his duty at the Kumbakonam College. In January 1897 Swami Vivekananda returned to Madras from his epoch-making tour in America after attending the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 and covering himself and India with glory. Mr. Sundararama Iyer had the great happiness of being with him for a week at Kernan Castle called also Ice House on the Marina. In May 1897 he got his elder son (myself) married to Srimati Sundaramma daughter of Mr. A. Sami Iyer who was then a leader of the bar at Vellore in the North Arcot District. His elder son (myself) was then studying in the Law College and eventually got enrolled as a High Court Vakil in 1902 and set up practice at Madras. This was one of Mr. Sundararama Iyer's keen desires because he felt that he



should have joined the Bar himself but had not the means to study for the legal profession. His father had died and he had to enter life and earn his living and support his family. His wife's brother, the eminent Advocate and Judge Mr. C. R. Pattabhirama Iyer, was his junior by one year and had joined the Bar after a brilliant academic career and had carved out a great place for himself in the profession at Tanjore and later on at Madras. Mr. Sundararama Iyer, who was a fine scholar in English and a person endowed with a remarkable power of speech and a rare ability in argument, felt that he also could climb to the dizzy and dazzling heights of success in the learned profession of the law which could unlock any door leading to the highest offices in the State. Mr. Pattabhirama Iyer's only son, C. P. Ramaswami (now Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer), who is the eminent son of an eminent father and who has after a career of phenomenal success at the Bar risen to the highest offices in the State and is now the famous Dewan of Travancore and who has been as great in letters as in law, was my junior only by one year and had a most brilliant academic career and was marked out for the legal profession. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was

anxious that I should make my way in the profession. But then as now the ways to the narrow platform of eminence at the top of the profession were crowded by talented and keen-minded young men, though it must be said that the jostling crowd is now very much more than before and hence the available elbow-room is much less. There is an old English joke that if a man is to succeed as a solicitor, he must be a solicitor's son or son-in-law. That joke is as near the truth in India as in England. I was struggling on as best as I could without such volunteered help as came to others. I was able to establish and maintain my footing without being a burden on my father's slender finances. His sister kept home for me, and my only children—a son named Subrahmanyan and a daughter named Visalakshi—were born in 1904 and 1906 respectively. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was watching my career and my progress with affection and with pride.

The years sped on at Kumbakonam, and batch after batch of students sat at Mr. Sundararama Iyer's feet and got not merely the benefit of his ripe knowledge of his special subjects but also inspiring descriptions of Indian culture and religion. He was



a strict disciplinarian but yet his love for his students was so great that he could step down to their level and mix with them as an elder brother without in any way lessening the respect without which there could be no beneficial receptivity. I was myself his student in the Senior F. A. Class. He taught us one of our English text-books (Butcher's Demosthenes). I know with what care he used to prepare his lessons at home. Mr. M. Rangacharya taught us Browning's *Saul and Clive*. Strangest of all, the then Principal Mr. E. W. Middlemast taught us Lamb's *Essays of Elia*. On the whole the present-day method of specialists handling each subject is the best method, though in the case of specially able and versatile teachers like Mr. Sundararama Iyer and Mr. M. Rangacharya the handling of subjects other than their own special subjects did not lead to any loss of efficiency but gave the students an added flavour by a combination of diverse forms of excellence. But that was because they took such enormous pains over what they taught. Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to tell me and other students often Mr. T. Gopala Row's quoting to him and others Carlyle's famous definition of genius as "an infinite capacity for taking pains". He used also to quote a remark

of Mr. T. Gopala Row which made a deep impression on his own mind. It was about the truth that the real difference between man and man was a difference in effort and industry.

Amongst the thousands of students who passed through his hands must be mentioned a few special names. I mention them not because they alone were tied to him by strong ties of regard and affection but because I know well and intimately the fact of such sincere and respectful love. The Rt. Hon'ble Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was one of his eminent students for whom he had much affection which never wavered despite differences in political and social views. Among the older set of students there was a deep and fond attachment between Mr. Sundararama Iyer and Rao Sahib R. Swaminatha Iyer (Retired Headmaster, Town High School, Kumbakonam), Mr. K. Narayanaswami Iyer, Retired Tashildar, Kumbakonam, the late Mr. K. S. Narayanaswami Iyer (Headmaster, Town High School, Kumbakonam), Rao Bahadur C. V. Vijayaraghavachariar (Retired Postmaster), Mr. C. V. Rajagopalachariar (Advocate, Mylapore, Madras) Mr. G. V. Venkatarama Iyer (Advocate, Kumbakonam)



and the late Mr. R. Krishnaswami Sastri (Sub-Registrar). I know that there was a thorough unity of heart and mutual respect and affection specially as between Mr. Sundararama Iyer and Mr. R. Krishnaswami Sastri. The latter was one of the most learned men of his generation both in Sanskrit religious and classical literature and in western philosophy and ethics, though his extreme modesty and simplicity stood in the way of his achieving fame and publicity in this self-worshipping and self-advertising age. The above characteristics were prominent traits in Mr. Sundararama Iyer's character also, and it was this consanguinity of temperament in addition to the thoroughly lovable and self-less character of Mr. Krishnaswami Sastri that drew him ever nearer and nearer to Mr. Sundararama Iyer's heart. Mr. Sastri sought to be posted as near Kumbakonam as possible in his official career so as to be able to pay his heart's homage often to his *guru*.

It was during this decade (1897-1907) that Mr. Sundararama Iyer purchased his Kumbakonam house (24, Sakaji Naik Street) which became a kind of shrine to his students and admirers during the long period of his retirement (1907 to 1938). He

owed his purchase of the house to his life-long friend Mahamahopadhyaya V. Swaminatha Iyer, who died recently in April 1942 and whose Tamil scholarship has won international recognition and who has rescued from oblivion the ancient Tamil classics which but for his assiduous collection and scholarly editing would have gone into the limbo of nothingness and which have established for the Tamil language an unchallenged and unchallengeable position as a language of great beauty and plastic power and a tongue in which masterpieces of literature came into existence thousands of years ago—a province of achievement in which Sanskrit and much later Greek and Latin have a record of signal greatness which is one of the splendours of human history. Mr. Swaminatha Iyer lived in the next house and bid for the neighbouring western house at a court sale for Mr. Sundararama Iyer and secured it for him. Mr. Sundararama Iyer had the highest affection and regard for Mr. Swaminatha Iyer—a feeling which was fully reciprocated by the latter. Each of them used to refer to the other always in the honorific plural Iyyaraval. Mr. Sundararama Iyer voluntarily gave monies on several occasions to Mr. Swaminatha Iyer when the latter was collecting Tamil manus-



cripts and editing the Tamil classics. Mr. Swaminatha Iyer's autobiography which is now coming out in the pages of the premier Tamil Weekly *Ananda Vikatan*—which is a *tour de force* in political and pictorial and humorous and literary journalism in Tamil and shows the wonderful inherent vitality and plasticity of the Tamil language—speaks for itself and need not be further referred to here. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was lucky in the friendship of a *purohit* of Kalanjeri village—Subramanya Iyer—who was the nephew of an old friend of the family Mr. Ohai Krishna Iyer fondly called by the members of Mr. Sundararama Iyer's family as Kittachi Thatha. Subramanya Iyer had a considerable talent as house designer and architect and engineer. He had the front portion of Mr. Sundararama Iyer's house demolished and totally rebuilt from the basement. Mr. Sundararama Iyer gladly bore the expenditure. The new house had a big *Koodam* downstairs and a big hall and an adjoining room upstairs. The innumerable students and disciples and friends and admirers of Mr. Sundararama Iyer will easily and fondly call up the vision of the third southern window in the hall where Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to have his small table littered with books

and pamphlets and manuscripts and all sorts of odds and ends. He used to sit in a stiff-backed wooden chair next to the table and would be always found there reading or writing or talking to friends. He would not allow an easy chair to be kept in the hall because he would not allow himself to be enslaved by indolence and refused any such concession to his friends as well. Nay, he was of an ascetic disposition, being in that respect like Mahatma Gandhi who is the incarnation of the soul of India and regards physical life as the vestibule and the corridor of the life spiritual and to whom the earthly career is but a scene of probation for spiritual perfection. No doubt Mr. Sundararama Iyer did not agree with all the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He even violently differed from some of Gandhiji's social and political views. But there could be no mistaking the fusion of patriotism and asceticism and mysticism to the point of incandescence in both of them. Mr. Sundararama Iyer would not lie down on a mattress or a soft bed but always rested on a bare bench. He made this such a matter of habit that he could get perfect and restful sleep only in that way. Again and again he would quote with passionate feeling and boundless admiration bordering on



adoration, Sri Sankaracharya's world-famous poem *Bhaja Govindam* wherein the great spiritual hero speaks of the earth as his bed and mere skin as his garment (*Sayya bhootalam ajinam vasah*) and expresses his preference for a dole of food into his open palm and the protection of trees as his chosen shelter from wind and sun and rain (*Karatala-bhikshas Tarutalavasah*).

This mention of Sri Sankara naturally leads to two unique and remarkable episodes in Mr. Sundarama Iyer's career—episodes about which he was supremely happy and thoroughly grateful to Providence. In the earlier portion of his career he was a worshipper at the shrine of Herbert Spencer. All through life he had a well-reasoned and well-founded admiration for Spencer as the greatest of the modern scientific philosophers. He used to ask me often to read Spencer's *First Principles* and would reel off the striking definitions with which that great book abounds. He studied the entire *Synthetic Philosophy* of Herbert Spencer in his great books as they appeared from time to time. He had nothing but veneration for the encyclopaedic mind and endless industry of Spencer who had planned his

Synthetic Philosophy as a young man and finished it as an old man. He used to tell us how Dr. Duncan—for some time Principal of the Presidency College at Madras and afterwards the Director of Public Instruction in the Province of Madras—was so great an admirer of Spencer and Bain as to name his sons after them as Herbert Spencer Duncan (Principal of the Kumbakonam College later on) and Alexander Bain Duncan. During his youth Mr. Sundararama Iyer was dominated by the scientific and sceptical attitude which was prevalent then all over India. It was a much-needed and welcome change from the uncritical superstition and legend-worship of the preceding era, when the old spirit of bold enquiry—not merely logomachic as in the west but an attitude of relentless cross-examination of current views coupled with passionate and laborious inner quest and search—which was such a noteworthy feature of the interrogations and negations and affirmations of the Upanishads and the Darsanas—began to bend the knee before inner autocracies of all sorts and to grovel in the dust.

But Mr. Sundararama Iyer soon outgrew the thin imported scientific scepticism so fashionable for



a while in India. His study of history gave him a hold on the basic facts of human life—so sordid yet so spiritual, so petty yet so pure, so miserable yet so magnificent. Further, his heredity and his early upbringing and his innate conservatism of temperament led him to examine critically the rational foundations of the so-called rationalism. Last but not least he came across a great Sanskrit scholar who was as great an adept in ratiocination as in sound religious scholarship—Mahamahopadhyaya Ganapati Sastrī of Painganad. The latter was one of the greatest disciples of the supreme Advaitic Teacher Mahamahopadhyaya Raju Sastrigal of Mannargudi who was a master of four Sastras and lived a life of exemplary piety and was venerated by all in Southern India. Pandit Ganapati Sastrī was yet unknown to fame. A meeting of the Pandit and the Professor showed to each how indispensable the other was in his life. Mr. Sundararama Iyer had not known by that time one letter of the Devanagari script and had not read even a primer of Sanskrit. But his talks with the Pandit had made him admire the subtlety and the speculative boldness of the doctrines of Sri Sankara. Mr. Sundararama Iyer felt that he was in sight of the thought that he had long been

waiting for and its expounder that he had been equally waiting for. It was for the sake of mastering Sri Sankara's works that he sought, albeit late in life, to master the intricacies of the Nagari alphabet which had puzzled and repelled such powerful minds as that of Mr. C. R. Pattabhirama Iyer and others. Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to state this fact again and again. It was indeed a rare performance for a person who was on the wrong side of fifty and whose mental fare had been entirely different and who could easily have trod the primrose path of writing books on his own life-study *viz.*, history, as so many of his compeers did and have reaped an abundant harvest of fame as an author in the fields of history and economics. The latter endeavour was dear to his heart and his equipment for it was unique. But he felt an urge in a different direction. I have seen him often requesting younger men like Professor Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar and Professor V. Rangacharya to plan and write a great and accurate History of India giving an inside view of things with a resolve to be an authentic voice and refusing to be an echo of western writers on Indian History. He felt that he had given his best years to studying and teaching



history and could no longer summon to his aid a grim determination to master the ever-expanding sources of Indian history. He felt also that he must concentrate all his energies on mastering Sanskrit and Sankara so that he might slake the quenchless thirst of his soul.

This lifting of the veil will let us see the inner moods and motives of the man in his consecration in his old age to a seemingly well-nigh impossible task. But where there is a will there is a way, and Mr. Sundararama Iyer had an iron will and an inflexible purposiveness in all that he thought and said and wrote and did. The group that met during many years from 1901 every morning at 8 A. M. after bath to study Sri Sankara's world-famous *bhashyas* on the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita was remarkable in many ways. Many of the members of the group became famous in later life. One of them was Mr. K. S. Lakshminarasa Iyer who was then the District Munsiff of Valangiman at Kumbakonam and afterwards retired as a District Judge. Kadalangudi Natesa Sastrigal, whose *Shashtyabdapoorti* (completion of sixty years) was celebrated so fittingly and enthusiastically

on 1st October 1940 at Madras, was then a young member of the study group and was practically a member of Mr. Sundararama Iyer's family. He later on became a great expounder of the *Vedanta* and published famous Tamil translations of Sri Sankara's *Bhashya* on the Brahma Sutras and the Srimad Bhagavata and is also an astrologer of great and acknowledged eminence. Whenever I went from Madras to Kumbakonam to see my father I used to take part in the activities of the study group and wonder at the self-denial and self-discipline which were the mainspring of that remarkable effort. I had a passable knowledge of Sanskrit but it was always a puzzle to me how Mr. Sundararama Iyer who took to his Sanskrit study so late in his life was able to find a short-cut to the mastery of the philosophic *technique* which blossomed in Sankara's works and gave a doctrine the like of which has been seen nowhere else in the world and which more than any other achievement of India has brought it the glad and willing and eager homage of genuine and unprejudiced thinkers all over the world.

I must mention also the other unique and remarkable episode in this period of Mr. Sundara-



rama Iyer's life. He had the good fortune to come across a great adept in yoga called Hindupur Swami. I have seen the latter only very occasionally. He was a tall stately figure of a man with a long robe and a beaming face. Mr. Sundararama Iyer received instruction in yogic methods and practices from him and began to indulge in concentrated meditation. I have seen him shut himself for hours in the room adjoining the main hall in the first floor of his house. As usual with him he did not surrender without a struggle to the yogi. There was a fundamental strain of rationalism in his nature and he was not of the usual orthodox breed prone to swallow legends in wide-mouthed wonder and fall at the feet of all sorts of claimants of introspective inner vision. When at last he was convinced, his was not the surrender of a man with a superiority complex who must resort to face-saving stunts and stratagems. The surrender was as true and deep as the struggle. Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to report progress in his yogic discipline to his master who was surprised at such phenomenal and quick progress on the part of Mr. Sundararama Iyer. Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to tell his intimate friends with a charming and disarming candour about his travails and his ex-

periences. I also happened to be a recipient of some of these confidences. He used to say how he used to hear the Dasa Nadas (ten varieties of sound heard in the chamber of the heart or *Chidakasa*) and see visions of divine forms. He said once to me how he experienced his own soul untrammelled by physical sheaths, and how he visualised its lying down when he lay down and its sitting when he sat and its walking when he walked. He used to say that these experiences should not be broadcasted because they would be discounted and disbelieved but that he could not resist the impulse to share his joys with his well-wishers. After some years he did not persist in continuing his yogic practices. He used to say that his intellectual passion for studying Indian philosophy—especially that of Sankara—was having the better of him and lured him away from the joys of introspection. It was a matter of regret to him and he used to say that his *Guru* also used to tell him that he had given him the fruit of divine knowledge and that he need not study philosophy and thus merely get the skin of the fruit with great ado and superfluous labour. But whatever be the merits of these two divergent views, *Vichara*, (Vedantic study) slowly increased at the expense



of yogic Sadhana, despite Mr. Sundararama Iyer's oft-repeated regret. We are all in the hands of Providence and we do not know the why and wherefore of such things. I may note one special trait of Yogic *Sadhana* as communicated by the Swami. He made it available to women also, though in the case of married women he insisted on their husbands teaching it to them. The gate of *yoga* to union with the divine is open to all. My noble mother is one of the Swami's Yogic disciples. Yogic Sadhan is India's unique possession and privilege and she will have the reverence of the world so long as she keeps her hold on it in trust for all.

Thus sped on the years bringing more and more knowledge and inner satisfaction to Mr. Sundararama Iyer. His outward life however had its ups and downs. He had lost a few places in his grade during his absence in Travancore, because Mr. Seshadriachariar who was the manager of the office of the Director of Public Instruction, had enunciated a new principle in promotion. The details of that step need not be gone into here but Mr. Sundararama Iyer's protests were of no avail. He, however,

rose up from rung to rung of the Madras Educational service and was drawing a pay of Rs. 400 in 1906. He was quite contented and was grateful to Providence as his lot in life was easy and pleasant on the whole.

In 1905 he acted as Professor of History in the Presidency College at Madras when Mr. Allen went on leave. At that time professorship in the Presidency College was unavailable to Indians, and his appointment was due to his great reputation as a teacher of history. Now, however, almost all the professorships there are held by Indians ! When he was at Madras he stayed with me. Once he paid a visit to Mr. J. B. Bilderbeck who was then acting Director of Public Instruction. The latter asked him if he paid any money to me for his boarding. He replied: "We have not yet reached that western level of civilisation." Mr. Bilderbeck, who was a nice man and a good friend of Mr. Sundararama Iyer, understood and enjoyed the joke.

But in September 1906 there fell on him a bolt from the blue. He had deposited practically all his life's savings—about twenty thousand rupees—in Messrs Arbuthnot & Co. It is a matter of history



that that famous firm closed down in September 1906 and that that step ruined thousands of families all over South India. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was then only fiftytwo years of age but he was keen on retiring from service as he had completed thirty years of service under Government and was eligible for pension. At that time Government was freely giving extension of service up to the sixtieth year though now there is a reversal of that policy and no extensions are generally granted after the fiftyfifth year. His friends sought to persuade him to continue in service so that he might repair to some extent the tremendous breach effected in his worldly fortune by the failure of Arbuthnot and Co. But he was adamant and resolved to retire so that he might devote himself ardently and with undivided attention to his studies. This resolve led also to a turning point in my career because rather than woo fickle fortune at the Bar, though I was not doing ill at all in the profession, I resolved to apply for the post of a District Munsiff. I became a District Munsiff in 1907. Mr. Sundararama Iyer retired from service in 1907 with a glad and easy mind.

## viii. 1907 to 1909

During 1908 Mr. Sundararama Iyer carried on his studies in an intensive manner. He had all through his life shown a passion for doing honorary work and rendering social service. He was the secretary of the Porter Hall for many years at Kumbakonam and was an enthusiastic member of the Club located there. He was most assiduous in collecting funds for a memorial to Mr. T. Gopala Rao and it was his self less and strenuous endeavour that brought into existence that great and unique institution at Kumbakonam—the Gopala Rao Library. He continued to be a member of the Town High School Committee and was well-known and respected for his high-minded and courageous and unselfish attitude at its meetings. He took up in addition a task which was dear to his heart and into which he threw himself heart and soul. There was already in existence at Kumbakonam an Advaita Sabha which held its annual sessions at Kumbakonam. But it had no permanent fund and its then activities had no similarity to its mighty achievement to-day. Mr. Sundararama Iyer went from place to place and collected funds to place it on a stable financial basis.



No distance daunted him and no frowns and sneers deterred him in the pursuit of his self-chosen and self-less task. His infectious enthusiasm carried Pandit Ganapati Sastri also with him though the latter preferred teaching disciples to collecting funds. But these peregrinations discovered the Pandit's rare oratorical and expository powers to himself and to the world at large. I have heard many of his religious lectures. They were marvellous specimens of close argumentation and clinching quotation and telling illustration and devastating sallies of humour. Mr. Sundararama Iyer gave nearly two thousand rupees out of his own depleted store of money to the Advaita Sabha. His great reputation and his obvious sincerity and selflessness had a telling effect. The result was that he collected nearly eight thousand rupees for the permanent fund of the Advaita Sabha and has left the Sabha in a position of unshakeable financial security. He was its secretary for many years and conducted many annual sessions with considerable and commendable tact and zeal. A grateful generation must do much for his memory for that one work alone if for nothing else. But what and where is gratitude?

In 1909 there occurred a unique incident in his career. In Tinnevely there was trouble in 1908 owing to agitation and rioting in consequence of the way in which the Swadesi Steam Navigation Company was debilitated and strangled by competition. The nascent spirit of nationalism took strange forms before Mahatma Gandhi's star rose on the political horizon. Mr. V. O. Chidambaram Pillai was the hero of the hour then. There was a riot in Tinnevely. It was alleged that one of the teachers of the Hindu College, Tinnevely, took part in the riot and that some students also took part therein. The further fortunes of that rioting case have little or no bearing on this memoir. Later yet in 1910 Mr. Ashe, who was acting as Collector of Tinnevely, was shot and murdered in the railway train at Maniyachi by one Vanchi Iyer who immediately rushed into the latrine in the station platform and blew out his brains. Then followed the trial of the conspiracy case against Nilakanta Brahmachary and others to the effect that they plotted the overthrow of the British Government by violence and sealed their compact in blood-red ink. Thus Tinnevely was in an agitated state and the Hindu College was under a cloud, Mr. A. Sundara Sastri (formerly



A. Sundaram who was a student of the Kumbakonam College (as already referred to) who was the Public Prosecutor of Tinnevely and the President of the Managing Committee of the College wanted to fill the then vacant office of the Principal by appointing a strong and able and celebrated person who would establish discipline on a proper basis in the College and restore and enhance the prestige of the College. He went to Kumbakonam and requested Mr. Sundararama Iyer to take up the job. Mr. Sundararama Iyer was unwilling to forego his hard-won retirement and rest which he had toiled for and which he had resolved to utilise for the improvement of his mind and the happiness of his soul, foregoing even the certainty of repairing his shattered fortunes. But the call of distress always evoked a sympathetic response in his heart. He found that a great institution which had been built up by the love and sacrifice of many persons and which was one of the nurseries of Indian culture was in a difficult position. He agreed to serve the institution for a year and set it on its feet again. That was how he went to Tinnevely to guide the destinies of the Hindu College in 1909.

The year was one of strenuous work and tactful guidance. The College won back its proud position and great prestige. The staff regarded him with affectionate reverence and the students looked up to him with mingled love and awe. He used to prepare his lessons with unremitting care and assiduous attention as ever before. During that year I was transferred as District Munsiff from Srivilliputtur to Tinnevely and took charge of my new post in August 1909. Thus there was the great pleasure of family reunion. He and I lived together in the same house in Viraraghavapuram which is a suburb of Tinnevely close to the Tinnevely Junction (then called Tinnevely Bridge) railway station. We spent the week-ends at Courtallam and had an altogether jolly time of it. Mr. S. Narayanaswami Iyer, who was a prominent advocate at Tinnevely, was our neighbour and had known Mr. Sundararama Iyer well already. He had the highest regard for Mr. Sundararama Iyer and they used to go out together on long morning walks. The year soon drew to a close and Mr. Sundararama Iyer began to long once more for rest and study and meditation in his house on the charmed banks of the sacred Kaveri. Mr. Sundara Sastri as well as Mr. N. A. V. Soma-



sundaram Pillai who were the President and the Secretary of the College Committee and who were wise and beloved leaders at Tinnevely besought him to continue for some years more as the Principal of the College. They even pointed out that my transfer to Tinnevely must plead with him along with them. They knew that it was the keenest desire of my heart that he and I should be together. But Mr. Sundararama Iyer was a man of iron will and there was no turning him away from the resolve of his mind and the quest of his heart. On 11th December 1909 the staff and the students of the College bade him farewell in an address which expressed in moving language their feelings towards him and in his reply to the address he made a pronouncement which was the last testament of his official life and at the same time the first proclamation of his non-official life. The following extract from the address by the staff speaks for itself and shows how it was inspired by a feeling different from that which is responsible for the hum-drum style and conventional phraseology of most addresses and tributes of respect in the world. It says : "In all your relations with us you have guided us by your example, subdued us by your courtesy, won our

hearts by your goodwill, and extorted our admiration by that spirit of philosophic contentment which lies behind your early retirement from public service. You have in short, been to us all a guide, model and friend. Your faith in the power of love and benevolence is like a religion and finds illustration in the numerous scholarships, prizes and donations of the year. We are struck by and appreciate very much the vastness of the range and depth of your culture and sympathy."

ix. 1910 to 1917.

William Paley says in his well-known work "Natural Theology": "But it is not for youth alone that the great Parent of creation hath provided... To novelty, to acuteness of sensation, to hope, to ardour of pursuit, succeeds, what is in no inconsiderable degree an equivalent for them all—'perception of ease.' Herein is the exact difference between the young and the old. The young are not happy but when enjoying pleasure; the old are happy when free from pain... The vigour of youth was to be stimulated to action by impatience of rest, whilst to the imbecility of age, quietness and repose become positive gratifications. In one important respect the



advantage is with the old. A state of ease is, generally speaking, more attainable than a state of pleasure. A constitution, therefore, which can enjoy ease, is preferable to that which can taste only pleasure. This same perception of ease oftentimes renders old age a condition of great comfort, especially when riding at its anchor after a busy or tempestuous life. It is well described by Rousseau to be the interval of repose and enjoyment between the hurry and the end of life...I am far, even as an observer of human life, from thinking that youth is its happiest season, much less the only happy one." Paley then proceeds to quote the following excellent passage from Dr. Percival in "Father's Instructions": "To the intelligent and virtuous, old age presents a scene of tranquil enjoyments, of obedient appetite, of well regulated affections, of maturity in knowledge, and of calm preparation for immortality. In this serene and dignified state, placed as it were on the confines of two worlds, the mind of a good man reviews what is past with the complacency of an approving conscience, and looks forward, with humble confidence in the mercy of God, and with devout aspirations, towards His eternal and ever-increasing favour."

These two long passages seem to me to describe most appropriately Mr. Sundararama Iyer's old age and his attitude to that period of life which only few reach in our land of early maturity and early senility and early death. He spent day after day in reading and writing but he had always a cheerful smile and a ready welcome for guests and friends. Any tale of suffering and woe, any cry of need, any demand for help was always heard by him with sympathy, and his thin purse was always at the disposal of others. As soon as the month's pension came (about Rs. 150) he used to give seventy rupees to his wife with a strict order to get on somehow with that amount for the domestic expenses during the month and never go to him with any request for more. He had commuted one-fourth of his pension soon after retirement. He used to say often that he regretted that step as it crippled his available monthly resources and that he took that step acting on the advice of his friend Mr. Srinivasa Iyer, a retired Deputy Collector. The latter who also commuted his pension died one year after such commutation but Mr. Sundararama Iyer lived for thirty years after such commutation. He had an old servant Marudai by name who was employed at the



College but happened to be discharged from there and was a man with a large family and thoroughly helpless and unable to earn his livelihood otherwise. Mr. Sundararama Iyer sympathised with him exceedingly and kept him as a domestic servant on a monthly pay of Rs. Fifteen—a pay unusual in any other household for a domestic servant and really beyond the slender means of a person in Mr. Sundararama Iyer's position and also higher than was warranted by the work done and to be done *i.e.*, sweeping the upstairs hall and buying vegetables *etc.*, in the market and taking letters to the post and washing clothes. Mr. Sundararama Iyer kept the man for over thirty years and treated him with great kindness almost as if he were a member of the family. He used to make these two disbursements on the second day of each month as soon as he got his pension. Whatever money was left in the purse—he kept it in an old-fashioned cloth purse which was tied up with a string—was never counted, and he never in his life kept any account book. Any appeal or help met with a ready response. Sometimes it was mere beggary. Sometimes the appeal was for aid to celebrate a marriage. At other times it was for digging a tank or building a temple or for Veda-

parayanam or for a religious Sabha or for a Hari-katha or for a bhajana. Or it was for a political purpose or for Harijan uplift. Or it was for helping students to pay their school-fees or for celebrating a prize distribution. Or it was made by struggling authors for help in bringing out their books. It is not possible to count or describe such purposes. In addition to all this, he had a passion for buying and reading new books. Whenever he went to Madras he used to go to such booksellers as used to stock and sell the latest books and to buy as many books as he could buy and to order for others. He subscribed for English Journals and kept himself abreast of modern ideas irrespective of the expense involved. Any one who knew him intimately day after day can bear testimony to these and other features of his rare character and temperament.

Such was his life and such were his interests and labours day after day. Once in 1911 I got a wire from friend Mr. K. S. Narayanaswami Iyer (his favourite student and my life-long friend) saying that Mr. Sundararama Iyer was very ill of high fever and unconscious. I ran up immediately to Kumbakonam and found him thin and weak but



free from fever. He was propped up with pillows but insisted on lying down on the bare bench which was literally strewn with books and journals and daily papers. He had filarial trouble in his left leg for a long time and used to get frequent attacks of filarial fever which used to cause semi-unconsciousness for a day or two. When I ran into the house I found him immersed in his studies as usual, though weak owing to fever and lack of nourishment.

In 1915 he had his son Raghavan married to Saraswathi, a daughter of Mr. R. A. Krishnaswami Iyer (then a District Munsiff and later on a Sub-judge and a District judge). He and Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer both belonged to the North Vadama sub-sect of the Smartha sect of the Brahmins. But the unfortunate Brahmin Society is now cut up into groups and sub-groups and sub-sub-groups and so on. Mr. Sundararama Iyer belonged to North Arcot sub-group of North (Outtara or Vadadesa) Vadamas whereas Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer belonged to the Tanjore sub-group of the same group. His elder sister Subbalakshmi (whom he used to call Suppu) raised a very strong objection to the alliance on the above ground especially as his forefathers

never entered into matrimonial alliances outside the circle of relations. His wife left the matter entirely to his discretion as she was an ideal Hindu wife who merges her existence in her husband's life and career and finds the fulfilment of her life in obedient love and loving obedience. My vote was given in favour of the marriage. Mr. Sundararama Iyer hesitated because he did not want to displease his elder sister to whose opinion he used to defer all his life and who was a woman with a resolute will and an irresistible downrightness of expression. On the other hand he felt that there was no rational basis for the innumerable sub sects and sub-castes which had crept into the Brahmin community and that they were due merely to linguistic barriers and difficulties of transport and to the fatal facility with which the mediæval Brahmins split over minor differences of doctrine or custom and that the time had come to unify the Brahmin society by inter-dining and intermarriage and to restore the Gita ideal of *chatur-varnya* (four-caste basis) which was founded on the concept of interdependent co-ordinated non-competitive but energetic and effective and efficient and enthusiastic unified social life. In fact he went so far as to suggest to a well-beloved



Vaishnava student and friend who was an advocate at Kumbakonam (the late Mr. T. Krishnaswami Iyengar) to give his daughter in marriage to his son. But Mr. Krishnaswami Iyengar, while approving of the reform, shrank from offending the susceptibilities of his super-orthodox friends and relations. Mr. Sundararama Iyer eventually agreed to the alliance proposed by Mr. R. A. Krishnaswami Iyer and the wedding took place in June 1915. My son Mani's *Upanayanam* also took place a month later in our house at Kumbakonam.

In 1917 Mr. Sundararama Iyer's elder sister Subbalaxmi sickened and died of an apoplectic stroke in the family house. She lingered for over seven months and was attended to with loving care by Mr. Sundararama Iyer's wife—such care as evoked the loving admiration and affection of the patient despite her usual domineering and intractable temper. She died in June 1918. In 1917 Mr. Sundararama Iyer's youngest son Raghavan passed the B. A. Degree Examination. Mr. Sundararama Iyer thereupon resolved to move to Madras after leaving his Kumbakonam house in charge of his son-in-law Rajagopala Iyer. He did not want his son to live apart

separately and without the loving care of his parents at Madras when studying for law. My daughter Visalakshi's marriage took place in the family house at Kumbakonam on 18th June 1918 (3rd Ani). In July 1918 Mr. Sundararama Iyer's daughter Kamala's daughter Saraswati was married at Villupuram. He and his wife and Raghavan and his wife left Kumbakonam after his sister's death which happened 3 or 4 days after my daughter's marriage in June 1918. He went to Madras and lived there in a house in the Sanskrit College Street, Mylapore. Raghavan entered the Law College and proceeded with his studies there.

x. 1918 to 1922.

Mr. Sundararama Iyer's life at Madras during two years was externally uneventful but it was one of intense literary activity and spiritual discipline. He was editing the *Hindu Message* which had been started in 1917 by Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer who has, as the Proprietor of the Sri Vani Vilas Press and the publisher of the collected edition of Sri Sankara's works and other priceless gems of Sanskrit Literature, done yeoman's service to the cause of



Hindu culture and who was sincerely attached to Mr. Sundararama Iyer. The entire credit of starting that excellent weekly must, however, go to Mr. N. K. Ramaswami Iyer. He had a very forceful and dynamic personality. He was practising as a lawyer at Chittoor and was at first an ardent theosophist. But in course of time he moved away from his theosophical affinities and became a zealous supporter of orthodox Brahminical culture. He was then practising at Tanjore but he never took kindly to the law, and the law also never took kindly to him. He was a live wire, and his bullet head and lively and even pugnacious looks made him a noticeable figure in any gathering. He very early spotted my father as a person who by reason of his remarkable combination of traditional and modern knowledge would be a reliable guide of Hindu society in its new environment and amidst the confusions of attacks by rival world-religions and internal materialism and scepticism. He had an eye on me as well as a possible lieutenant and follower of Mr. Sundararama Iyer in such a new role. He asked the latter to take up the editorship of the *Hindu Message* which was intended to study "the Indian and world-problems from the Hindu standpoint."

I wrote the first editorial and promised to be a frequent unwearied contributor to it. Mr. Sundararama Iyer told Mr. N. K. Ramaswami Iyer that his age was in his way. Mr. Ramaswami Iyer said: "Why should you not spend yourself in a good cause? What does it matter if you die if India lives and Hinduism is triumphant?" That admonition clinched the matter and Mr. Sundararama Iyer threw himself into the task of editorship heart and soul. For nearly five years he wrote a large portion of the contents of the weekly issues. Even when after the first year Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer's name appeared as the sole editor, Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to write most of the editorials and other matters as well. Before then the names of both of them appeared as editors.

During Mr. Sundararama Iyer's stay in the Sanskrit College street, Mr. T. S. Ramachandra Iyer, Inspector of Registration Offices, lived a few doors off and became an intimate friend. Mr. Ramachandara Iyer was a man of remarkable worldly wisdom and bubbling humour and a most pleasant companion and honourable man. He and Mr. Sundararama Iyer used to spend many hours to-



gether in the evenings. It so happened also that Mr. Sundararama Iyer's old and intimate Trivandrum friend Mr. N. Subramanya Iyer lived for many months then at Mylapore, and they used to meet every morning and go out on long walks together. The Pandits who were employed in the Sanskrit College and who were living in the same street—Pandit Venkatasubba Sastri, Pandit Krishna Sastri, Pandit T. V. Ramachandra Dikshitar and others—formed excellent and stimulating company. On one occasion Mr. J. S. Mackenzie, the famous English writer on philosophy and ethics, who had come to Madras paid a visit to Mr. Sundararama Iyer whose philosophic writings had been read by him and for whom he had a genuine regard. There was a frank and free and full exchange of ideas between them on that occasion. The days thus sped on amidst hard work and genial company.

But in 1921 a great sorrow became his lot in life. His son Raghavan who had passed his F. L. Examination and was a student of the B. L. Class had an attack of pleurisy which later on developed into tuberculosis. Dr. S. Rangachari treated him but the young man grew worse. He advised Mr.

Sundararama Iyer to take the boy to a place with a dry climate like Bellary. I was then Sub-judge at Bellary. Mr. Sundararama Iyer stayed with me at Bellary along with his wife and Raghavan and his wife from 4th August 1921 to January 1922. The best treatment was given to him. His father-in-law Mr. R. A. Krishnaswami Iyer (then District Judge) and his wife also stayed at Bellary with me for some months. An eminent doctor used to come now and then from Madras with instructions from Dr. Rangachari and to report progress to him. The best local doctors including the local D. M. O. (Mr. Varughis) and Dr. Narasimhulu were also in attendance. But the young man died of tuberculosis on 27th January 1922. Mr. Sundararama Iyer had planned to keep his younger son with him at Kumbakonam as an advocate after the latter's enrolment. The young man had a most loveable nature and was the pet child of his parents and the pet of the entire family as well. His death was a great and shattering blow to Mr. Sundararama Iyer. Though Mr. Sundararaman called his philosophy to his aid and realised the evanescence of all human aims and hopes and resigned himself to the will of God, yet the wound continued fresh and to smart all through



the remainder of his life. Earlier—i.e., about September or October 1921—he himself was operated on for an abscess in his left leg. He developed also acute hernia. Thus 1921 and 1922 were years of great physical and mental trouble for him. In May 1922 he underwent an operation for hydrocele and hernia at the house of his nephew Rao Bahadur R. Kuppuramaswami Sastri in Big Street Triplicane. Dr. Rangachari performed the operation. It was successful and Mr. Sundararama Iyer rallied quickly and was quite his old self again. The family moved to Kumbakonam and he had his granddaughter Kuppu's (Savitri's daughter's) marriage celebrated in the family house on 18th June 1922.

#### xi. 1922 to 1938

From June 1922 to his death in May 1938 Mr. Sundararama Iyer lived permanently in his own house on the banks of the Kaveri at Kumbakonam. He never moved out of it except to stay for a few months every year with me in the course of my service as a judicial officer in many Districts in the Presidency. From September to December 1922 he and my mother stayed with me at Chittoor. My

sister Kamala and her husband P. Sitarama Iyer and their children also were at Chittoor then. Mr. P. Sitarama Iyer was then the Deputy Inspector of Schools at Chittoor. Thus the loving company of his children and grandchildren gave Mr. Sundarama Iyer some consolation in his terrible bereavement. His second daughter's daughter Saraswati was a gifted child and he was fondly attached to her. She grew up in his own house at Kumbakonam and has got a high intelligence and extraordinary musical gifts and "her voice was ever soft gentle and low,—an excellent thing in woman". Her mother Kamala also has got remarkable musical gifts and a charming voice. Saraswati got good musical training at Kumbakonam and perfected it later on. My daughter Visalakshi also can play on the violin well. The company of these children and his own spiritual discipline and his work for the *Hindu Message* slowly assuaged his sorrow and a new calm and softness and tenderness beamed from his face and fell in kind accents from his lips.

As stated above, during the latter part of 1922, he stayed for some months with me at Chittoor when I was a Subordinate Judge there. His



daughter Kamala was then at Chittoor, her husband P. Sitarama Iyer having been appointed as a teacher in the Government Training School there. Mr. Sundararama Iyer and my mother spent some months with all of us at Chittoor and then left for Kumbakonam at the close of 1922. He stayed with me later on at Negapatam when I was a Sub-judge there and later yet at Tanjore and at Trichinopoly when I was a Sub-judge in those places. Later yet he spent some months with me at Cuddappah and later yet at Madura when I was a District Judge in those towns. Wherever he was staying—whether at Kumbakonam or with me—he was always at work except during the time spent on meditation. He was reading or writing, and his studies were of a very varied character but his special delight was in studying books on European History or western and Indian philosophy. He had a keen interest in Indian political developments and spoke out his mind freely and fully on them in the columns of the Press and especially in the *Hindu*.

In June 1925 an operation on one of his eyes for cataract became inevitable. Dr. E. V. Srinivasan performed the operation successfully and his eyes

got back its normal vision. Some years later the other eye was affected but he did not desire to get it operated upon and left it as it was, as the other eye was quite serviceable.

His second daughter Kamala's second daughter Lalita was married in July 1925. Two bereavements came to him in 1927 and in 1929. On 23rd December 1927 his elder daughter Savitri's husband Rajagopala Iyer died of diabetes after a lingering illness. In January 1931 his second daughter Kamala's first daughter's Saraswati's husband died at Madras. This bereavement was a very great shock to him. Among the pleasant domestic occurrences may be mentioned the investiture with the sacred thread in the case of his daughter Savitri's son and his daughter Kamala's son and the marriage of his daughter Savitri's daughter Mangalam.

He generally preserved good health and used to take long walks and have an early morning bath in the Kaveri river. But for ten years before his death his walks were shorter and he gave up bathing in cold water because of his liability to fever owing to the lymphatic trouble in his left leg. But he continued to maintain his health and vitality unimpaired.



It was in 1935 that he had the first serious setback in his long and healthy and active life. One night he got up from his sleep on a bench and while yet half asleep he walked on the bench thinking that it was the ground and fell off the edge of the bench and fractured his right thigh. I went to him on receipt of a wire. An x-ray photograph showed that the fracture was an impacted fracture. The leg was placed between sand-bags and he was quite unable to use it. This was a period of great suffering for him, and the inevitable enforced inactivity made the ailment even more galling. All sorts of treatment were tried including that of an Indian bonesetter from Puttur. Fortunately Mr. Sundararama Iyer recovered the use of his leg, as the two portions of the broken thigh-bone joined together. There was a slight shortening of the bone and hence he had a slight limp in the right leg thenceforth.

In 1936 and 1937 he maintained a fair standard of health but his health began to show signs of decline especially as he could no longer have his vigorous morning walks followed by a cool bath in the Kaveri river though it ran within ten feet from

his house. In March 1938 he came over to Madras at my request. It seems, in the light of subsequent events, as if he came to see his relatives there for the last time and give darsan to them. I escorted him and my mother to Kumbakonam. Soon after I returned to Madras I got a wire that he had a stroke. I ran up to Kumbakonam and found that he got an attack of apoplexy. After some days the clot that was formed in the brain and caused the stroke was absorbed and he recovered the use of his limbs. But his memory was impaired. In May 1938 he had a second paralytic stroke and soon afterwards became unconscious. In spite of the best medical treatment, he grew rapidly worse. He had occasional clearness of memory. His children were about him and my mother rendered devoted service to him. His friends were most helpful and sympathetic. He passed away peacefully on 5th May 1938.

*The Hindu* wrote at once a very appreciative sketch of his life and work in which it said: "Professor Sundararaman commanded universal reverence and esteem. His personality, though unassuming, was none the less impressive. His writings were marked by a breadth of outlook and a virility that



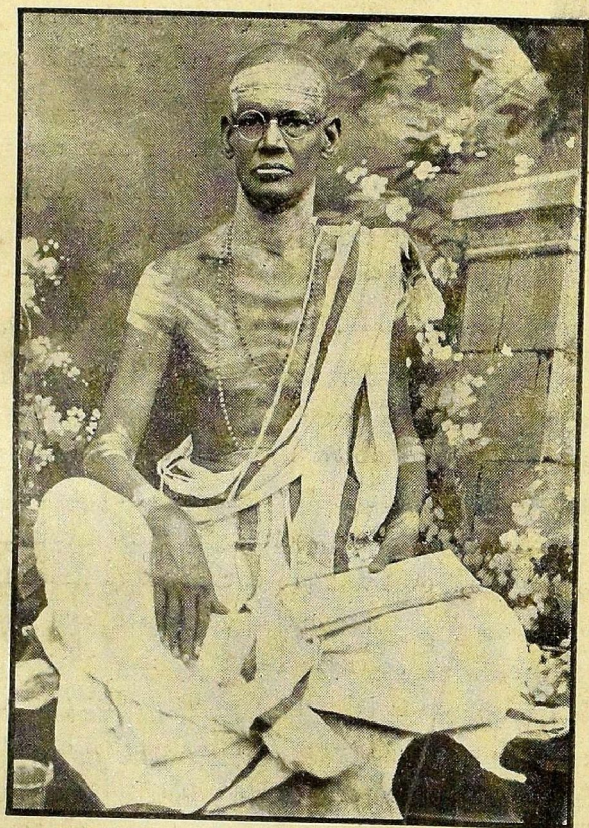
won appreciation. A lover of the old and a close student of history, he had a profound faith in the Hindu Shastras. His heart went out to the low and the suffering and there was no worthy cause which he did not actively sympathise in and generously donate for. His literary productions were scholarly, realistic and analytical. His powerful pen he utilised to repel the many wilful attacks on ancient Hindu religion which the traducers of Hinduism often indulged in. Philosophy he mastered and taught. Sanskrit he learned late and used his learning to illuminate and modernise the neglected Hindu philosophic doctrines. Books were his constant companions and causes his spouse."

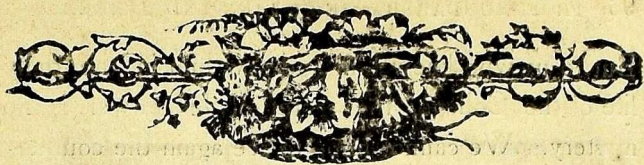
The Hindu Matabhimana Sangham passed a resolution of condolence on 17-9-38. The All India Young Men's Association passed a similar resolution on 14-6-1938. The Elementary School Teacher's Association, Kumbakonam, passed a similar resolution on 18-6-1938. Similar resolutions were passed by the Young Men's Cultured Association, Kumbakonam, the Sankara Ramanuja Siddhanta Paripalana Nidhi, Ltd., Kumbakonam, the Advaita Sabha, Kumbakonam, the Gopala Rao

Library Study Circle, Kumbakonam, the Sanskrit Academy, Madras, the Sanatana Dharma Maha Sabha, Attangudi, City Youth's Association, Madras, the Town High School Association, Kumbakonam, the Hindu Religious Association, Dindigul, the Kumbakonam Club, the members of the staff of the Town High School, Kumbakonam, the Kumbakonam College Old Boy's Association, etc. The Municipal Council of Trichinopoly passed the following resolution on 10th May 1938. "This Council deeply mourns the passing away of Professor K. Sundararama Iyer of Kumbakonam, whose services to the cause of education, religion and culture were distinguished and extended over a period of half a century." On 26-5-1938 the Municipal Council of Kumbakonam passed the following resolution. "This Council records its deep sense of sorrow at the demise of Professor K. Sundararama Iyer, who had been a long time professor of the local Government College."









### CHAPTER III,

#### Sundarama Aiyar—The Man and the Teacher.

**W**HEN I was reading some time ago what Lord Oxford said about Benjamin Jowett (Master of Balliol, I came across a passage which seemed to me to hit off most appositely the main traits of Mr. Sundarama Iyer's personality. I set down that passage here as it is : "It is difficult, as Lord Salisbury has said, perhaps it is impossible, to define, or even to explain, the subtle power of his personality. He had none of the vulgar marks of a successful leader either of thought or of action. He founded no school; nor was he the author or the apostle of any system, constructive or even critical. In a sense it is true he left behind him no disciples; and to those who think that no man can stamp his impress upon his generation unless he is either a dogmatist or a partisan, his career will be a constant puzzle.



But to us who knew him and saw him in the daily life of the College, the secret of his power is no mystery. We cannot hope to see again the counterpart of *that refined and fastidious mind, in whose presence intellectual lethargy was stirred into life and intellectual pretentiousness sank into abashed silence.* Still less can we hope to see a character such as his : *the union of worldly sagacity with the most transparent simplicity of nature ; an intelligence keen and unsleeping, but entirely detached and absorbed in the fortunes of a great institution and its members. Upon his personality no call could be too heavy: with his delicate kindness he was ever ready to give the best hours of either the day or the night to help and to advise the humblest of those who appealed to him for aid.*" The words Italicised above applied as much to Professor Sundararama Iyer as to Mr. Jowett, whose precious words of advice the former used often to tell me and others as the best rule of life : "Never tell ; never fear ; never fret ; never fail ; never disappoint ; never spare ; never quarrel."

Professor Sundararama Iyer had a nature which was both stern and soft at the same time.

He would never suffer fools or knaves gladly but when he was sure about the sincerity of motives he would overlook all deficiencies of judgment and faults of temper. He would never tolerate lies, including white lies, and would always insist on truth-speaking irrespective of consequences. On some occasions he welcomed such odium and unpopularity as came to him owing to his speaking out the bare truth.

Thus simplicity and love of truth were his most outstanding traits. None could mistake his meaning and he never liked to hide it to the slightest extent. His handwriting was just like himself—bold and clear and straight and unmistakeable. His style was like his handwriting and his mind. The sayings that the style is the man and that a man's handwriting reveals his character were perfectly true in his case. Col. G. A. Jacob wrote to him in 1912 about his "admirable handwriting" and "his fine command of English." In another letter to him he asked: "Where did you get your excellent knowledge of English and your admirable handwriting?" Another peculiar and loveable trait of the man was his love of books. His life exemplified Southey's description of the *Scholar*.



"My days among the dead are past,  
Around me I behold,

Wherever these solitary eyes are cast  
The mighty minds of old.

My never-failing friends are they  
With whom I converse night and day."

He spent the bulk of his fortune on books—and especially on books on Sanskrit philosophy and on the latest works on modern history and philosophy and modern scientific and religious thought. He presented away the bulk of his library to the Copala Rao Library and the Sadhu Seshayya Oriental Library at Kumbakonam and the Sundararaman library at Madura. Many friends used to borrow his books and forget to return them but he never bothered about the re-arrival of the books at his library.

But this love of books did not mean a lack of love of contemporary life and especially of contemporary politics. He took a lively interest in the Indian National Congress. In the *Hindu* dated 27th December 1935 which was devoted to the celebration of the Jubilee of the Congress he wrote: "He (Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao) got up a

special meeting of his friends in his house and determined with their approbation to find ways and means of bringing together Indian politicians to inaugurate a political movement for the regeneration and reform of the methods of government of this country calculated to promote a future Indian advance towards Swaraj." Professor Sundararama Iyer was one of those who attended the first session of that supreme national political organisation in India. He watched the growth of the Congress with anxious love and a keen and critical eye and never failed to express disapproval of methods or measures or ideals when he felt it necessary to do so in the interests of the country. When the Non-Brahmin movement began in the second decade of this century Professor Sundararama Iyer analysed its causes and effects with care and precision in the *Hindu Annual* and indicated what ought to be done to overcome communalism by nationalism.

In his private life he was the most charming and unassuming of men. Within the household he would lay aside all his weight of age and learning and play like a child. It is said that Mr. Gladstone used to romp with his children. Professor Sundara



rama Iyer also used to play with the little children in the family. On one occasion I remember how on the Deepavali day he was teaching my younger brother and myself to fire crackers. This was about 1890. One of the crackers did not explode. He brought it back and broke it into two and applied a lighted matchstick to it to show that it was a really live cracker. It backfired and burnt his fingers and he could not go to the College for some days! He would play cards with younger persons and feel at ease in their company and put them entirely at ease. In the Kumbakonam Club, of which he was the first Secretary, he used to feel equal to all others and let all others feel equal to him.

He used to play a fairly good game of tennis but never attained a high rank as a tennis player. He was genuinely glad and proud when I attained tournament rank as a tennis player. He had a peculiar style of service, cutting and chopping his balls without lifting his bat above his shoulder. He used also to play a fairly good game of billiards and was very fond of the game, though in his later life he entirely dropt that charming aristocratic game. But he always took long walks two hours before

sunrise and used to quote often Dr. Dollinger who said that he owed his long life and good health to his having never been in bed after 5 A. M., and to his having been taking long walks immediately after waking from sleep.

I may particularly mention here one very charming and unusual trait of Professor Sundararama Iyer. As he was getting older and older, his zest in contemporary life and the ever-changing problems of the day was as keen as ever. Nay, he found great pleasure in the company of young men and even sought it and tried to understand their points of view and help them to solve their problems and their puzzles. He was much attached to his old student Mr. S. K. Visweswara Sastri, my classmate and sincere friend, who is now living in retirement in Kumbakonam. He was attached very fondly to his students—the late Mr. R. Krishnaswami Sastri, Sub-registrar, and Mr. G. V. Venkatarama Iyer, Advocate, Kumbakonam and Rao Bahadur C. V. Vijayaragavachariar, Retired Presidency Postmaster and Mr. C. V. Rajagopalachariar, Advocate, Madras. He had a deep and sincere affection for Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar. He was



sincerely attached also to Mr. N. Sundara Iyer, Sanitary Inspector, Kumbakonam, and Mr. A. R. Sankaranarayana Iyer, son of the late well-known Akkarai Rama Iyer of Kumbakonam and Mr. L. S. Viswanathan of Trivandrum. He was also fondly attached to a young man named S. Vasudevan of Kumbakonam. This did not mean that there was any lessening of his affection for his friends among his contemporaries. He had a very deep and sincere affection for Dr. N. Subrahmania Iyer, the late Professor M. Rangachariar, Mahamahopadhyaya V. Swaminatha Iyer, Mahamahopadhyaya M. V. Ramanujachariar, V. Rangaswami Iyengar of Kodavasal, Rao Sahib R. Swaminathier, Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer, the late Mr. S. Sivasambier, (Retired Sub-registrar), Mr. S. Ramakrishna Iyer (Professor of English, Hindu College, Tinnevely) and many others. Quite recently Mr. T. Sundarachariar, the famous Sanskrit scholar and aesthetician, told me how Professor Sundararama Iyer was very kind to him and asked him to dive deep into Sanskrit literature instead of dissipating his energy in many fields of work.

Mr. Sundararama Iyer used often to mention

with gusto and with a quiet humour at his own expense which was characteristic of the man, some strange incidents which happened to him during his life. Once when Mr. Hensman and he were together in a railway carriage, each of them claimed that he had the more dour and forbidding face. They had a bet over it. A stranger entered the carriage and all sat glum for a long time. Eventually the stranger who was by nature communicative looked at them both and greeted Mr. Hensman and entered into conversation with him. After he left Mr. Sundarama Iyer broke into a laugh and claimed that he had won the bet. On another occasion when he was at a cardplaying party at the residence of his friend Mr. A. C. Narayanaswami Iyer, a Vakil at Kumbakonam, a Brahman gentleman who was a stranger came in. He was well-dressed and was fair and tall and had a prepossessing appearance. All those who were there got up and greeted him and entreated him to sit down. He complied with their wish and entered with zest into the play. At the end he produced a donation list *in re* his daughter's marriage and solicited aid from them. On one occasion in the teacher's common room in the College, Mr. Satyanathan who was somewhat



of a devout Christian, raised a laugh by parodying Pope's well-known lines and saying :

"Gita and its treasures lay hid in night

God said "Let Sundararaman be "and all was  
light"

He was a charming and attractive conversationalist. Nay, he liked to talk and he liked to listen, too, though he preferred to talk than to listen. It was a real pleasure to hear him talk. He would grip a subject and his vast store of knowledge and experience would play round it now in a spirit of lambent humour, now in a spirit of irony, now in a spirit of imparting new and overflowing information, and now in a spirit of demolition of the opinions of contemporary faddists. He would cover a wide ground in a short time and would never let his listener go till the latter was convinced and accepted the propounded point of view. The rub would arise when the listener was a propagandist of the opposite temperament. I remember how once K. Vyasa Row and he sat down to discuss social reform and found no end in wandering mazes lost and each tried for hours vainly to convert the other to his view !

The same equipment of ready knowledge and ready argument was carried by him also into other fields such as public lectures. Once at Trichinopoly and another time at Kumbakonam he showed by clear citations and irrefutable arguments the untenability of certain views advanced by some Christian missionaries. They held their ground for a little while but when he cited chapter and verse and relentlessly pricked the bubble of their arguments, there was no help for it but to accept defeat and beat a hasty retreat.

He took a prominent part in advocating Hinduism and combating Christianity when there was an epidemic of conversions at Trichinopoly about forty years ago. He delivered various lectures there and stemmed the rising tide of conversion. I remember quite clearly how he and Mr. G. Ganapati Sastrigal (then Puisne Judge at Pudukotah) had a discussion at his house at Kumbakonam almost continuously during two or three days about the respective merits and tenets of Hinduism and Christianity.

His devotion to Sri Krishna and Sri Sankaracharya had no bounds. They were always in his



daily thoughts and not a day would pass without his referring to them and their teachings. His loving and prayerful passion for Sri Krishna was touching in the extreme. He always used to invoke Sri Krishna's blessings on those whose happiness and welfare he desired and prayed for. Equally intense was his devotion to Devi. Every day he would repeat in the night Sri Lalita Sahasranamah. One verse in Sri Mooka Panchasati appealed to him very much and he used to repeat it many times a day.

चिन्तितफलपरिपोषण चिन्ताप्रणिरिव काञ्चिनिलया मे ।

चिरतरसुचरितसुलभा चित्तं शिशिरयतु चित्तसुखाधारा ॥

During many years he performed *aupasana* day after day besides bathing at 4 A. M. in the Kaveri and repeating the Gayatri a thousand times.

During the last few years of his life, he had considerable optimism about the future of Hindu religion though at the same time he was pessimistic about the future of the Hindu community as it did not fully realise how it could preserve the essentials of thought and practice (*achara*) while unifying itself to meet the onslaughts of world-religions and western civilisations and powerful democratic forces. I have

already referred to his guru Sri Krishnananda Swami-gal and the Yogic Sadhana received by him from that great soul. During the last few years of his life Professor Sundararama Iyer was anxious to spread and broadcast that knowledge and especially popularise the practice of Ajapa-gayatri, because he felt that such a step would lead to the intensification and amplification of practical Hindu religion on a wide scale. At Cuddapah, while he was staying with me when I was District and Sessions Judge there in 1931 and 1932, he imparted that knowledge not only to me but to many others as well. He imparted it to many persons at Kumbakonam from 1933 to 1936.

He was a frequent contributor to the press—and especially to the *Hindu* on social and economic and political and historical topics as well as on cultural and philosophical and religious matters. When the *Hindu* was yet young, he wrote many leading articles also. Mr. M. Vijayaraghavachariar, who was the manager of the *Hindu*, once wrote to him which he long preserved with pride and affection. In it Mr. Vijayaraghavachariar said: "Though nominally an outsider, you have built up the glory



and reputation of the *Hindu*". Mr. S. Kasturiranga Iyengar, who later on became the proprietor and editor of the *Hindu*, had much regard and affection for Professor Sundararama Iyer. He and his son Mr. K. Srinivasan who along with his brother Mr. K. Gopalan are the present proprietors of the *Hindu* and who is the Managing Editor of that great national newspaper were sending the *Hindu* free to him for nearly thirty years in recognition of his services to the *Hindu*. He used to tell me that he wanted to make a selection of his articles and publish them under the title *Heart-throbs of a Journalist* but eventually shrank from the drudgery of such a task. His literary connection with the *Hindu* (which was started as a weekly in 1882 by Mr. G. Subramaniya Iyer) was from 1882 to 1935. In 1935 when he was in his sick-bed he dictated to the *Hindu* correspondent at Kumbakonam Mr. N. R. Ramanujam an article for the Congress Jubilee number of the *Hindu*.

As a teacher, he occupied a unique place in the educational world in South India. Mr. T. Hodges, Principal, Kumbakonam College, wrote in his report on 27th March 1908: "By the retire,

ment of M. R. Ry. Sundararama Iyer, Government has lost an able and faithful servant, and the College, one of its best counsellors and friends. Officers under whom M. R. Ry. Sundararama Iyer worked during his long service are unanimous in his praise; and to their testimony I need only add that personally I have found him an able lecturer, a conscientious tutor, and a most scrupulous, trustworthy and honourable officer". In his review of the report, the Director of Public Instruction stated: "The Director desires to place on record his high appreciation of the good work done by him during his long connection with the department by M. R. Ry. K. Sundararama Iyer who retired from the service in the second term of last year".

I was myself his student in the Intermediate classes in the Kumbakonam College. Earlier yet he used to coach me in mathematics when I was in the lower classes of the Native High School, Kumbakonam. He was always a very impressive teacher—precise in ideas and precise in expression. He used to build up his exposition with a clear vision of the beginning and the middle and the end. In his classes he used to devote the earlier portion of his period



to a moral and religious exhortation and his lecture would be a clarion call in the direction of the love of our country and our culture and our civilisation. These ideals used to sink deep into the minds of the students and influenced them deeply and powerfully throughout their life. Rao Sahib K. Yegganna Pantulu, Advocate, Narsapur wrote to him on 21-7-36 : "The hints that you used to throw about the Advaitic Philosophy now and then during the course of lectures in the College (at Rajahmundry) have taken deep root in me." His exposition of his special subject did not suffer in the least on this account because he used to study all the best and most recent books on the subject and come fully prepared with clear and brief and illuminating notes which threw light on the subject and at the same time enabled the students to answer all the possible questions on the subject by the most learned and subtle-minded examiners.

I shall record here the impressions formed about him by some of his prominent students and contemporaries, thus rescuing from the rushing waters of oblivion beautiful tributes to his great traits. The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri

wired to me on learning about my father's death : "His noble life was devoted to noble causes, learning, philosophy and piety. His heart throbbed with large generous enthusiasm." He was then the Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University. On 17th May, 1938 he said at a public condolence meeting in Chidambaram: "He belonged to a class of people now somewhat rare. He gave all his life to the work of education, and, therefore, learning was his chief occupation. He spent his life in acquiring learning and imparting it. He never ceased all his days to be either a learner or a teacher. The full round of a Brahmin's duty he performed from day to day. His main characteristic from the intellectual point of view was his alertness." In his recent reminiscences in Tamil now being contributed to the Swadesamitran Weekly, he has referred again to his impressions of his old teacher Professor Sundararama Iyer.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer Dewan of Travancore, said in a statement to the *Hindu* : "By the death of Professor Sundararama Iyer, South India has lost an erudite-scholar and a profound thinker and one who, by his life and career, furnished a



living example of the spirit of the true Vedantin. During a long and brilliant career as an educationist in Kumbakonam and in Travancore, as a lecturer in Philosophy and History and English, he moulded the thought and outlook of many generations of students for over a quarter of a century including one of the Princes of Travancore known as the graduate Prince...His main contribution, however, lay in the Socratic method of discussion and stimulation of thought."

In a joint appeal for funds for a memorial to Professor Sundararama Iyer the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar referred to him as "one who was for many years a teacher of the highest repute and to the end of his life a student of exemplary eagerness and assiduity."

Dr. N. Subramania Aiyer, retired Senior Dewan Peishcar, Trivandrum, who was deeply attached to Professor Sundararama Iyer, wrote in *the Hindu*. "For robustness of intellect, profundity of scholarship, lucidity of expression, and loyalty to ideas Mr. Sundararama Iyer stood unsurpassed. In Dewan Bahadur Ramaswami Sastriar he has left

a son who, in respect of filial devotion, and anxiety to live up to his father's reputation, stands unique. It is impossible for me to say more in the present temper of my mind."

Mr. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, Lecturer in Indian History, University of Madras, referred to a prominent trait of the Professor when he said in an article to the *Hindu*: "He was proud of being born a Hindu...At the same time he was a nationalist and thought in terms of India." He said further: "He used to remark in his own unique way that the Dravidian race is as much a myth as the Aryan race. He was against the theory of an Aryan invasion of India. He always held that the Aryans were autochthonous and that India was the cradle of ancient civilisations."

Dr. R. Nagaraja Sarma wrote in the *Hindu* about him as "a Sanatanist, who more than any single individual, had endeavoured for over half a century his utmost to uphold and vindicate the prestige of the traditions and truths of the Vedānta." He said further: "Professor Sundararaman was a nationalist to the core...Latterly his heart bled when he had to witness the gradual decay of the forces of ortho-



doxy and allegiance to Vedic Dharma, and the incorrigible optimist that he was, he was hoping for a renaissance of Vedic Dharma."

Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar wrote to me on 10th May 1938: "He was universally esteemed for his high character and ideals of life, scholarship and culture."

Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri wrote to me on 10th May 1938: "Deep learning, a very large body of students to whom he imparted it, highly useful public activity, name and fame—all that illustrious men of his type care for were his...Our generation will remember him. He will ever live in the work he has done for us in South India."

Mr. J. M. Hensman wrote to me from Ceylon: "Your noble father was not only my oldest friend. He was also my dearest friend...a great man—great intellectually and morally...A genuine man he was all his life."

Sir T. Vijayaraghavacharya wrote to me that he (my father) "was always enshrined in my heart as one of the men who were the salt of public life in South India."

Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar wrote to me from Rangoon on 17th May 1938. "With his intellectual attainments, lovable disposition and fine robust character, it was easy for him to win and retain the affection and esteem of his students and those who came in contact with him in public life... South India is the poorer for his loss."

His equally distinguished son, Sir. M. A. Muthiah Chettiar, Kumara Rajah of Chettinad, wrote to me on 14th May 1938: "Plain living and high thinking have been his watchwords."

Dewan Bahadur K. Sundaram Chettiar wrote to me on 7th May 1938: "A great scholar, savant, philosopher, teacher and sanataniist, he has left his footprints on the sands of time. Such great men are few and far between."

Mr. Justice K. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar wrote to me on 7th May 1938: "I remember with pleasure and gratitude those days in the Kumbakonam College when sitting at the feet of your father I learnt not merely his class lessons but what exactly is the purpose of life here and hereafter, what are the traditions and ideals we have inherited, and what



should be the ideals we are to pursue in life...An indomitable soul never known to have made compromises with his conscience or his principles has left this world. But he will continue for ever to inspire and to guide."

Mr. S. Satyamurti wrote to me on 7th May 1938: "He was a genuine scholar, an ardent patriot and above all a trully generous man."

Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar wrote to me on 7th May 1938: "He was a Brahmarishi, and was always ready to go but the world is the poorer for the departure of the last of our spiritual and moral giants."

Dewan Bahadur V. Bhashyam Ayyangar wrote to me on 7th May 1938: "I used to wonder at his childlike simplicity and refined manners... Although he is no more, the footprints left by him on the sands of time will continue to exist and shine for a long time."

Dewan Bahadur V. S. Subramania Iyer, Retired Dewan of Travancore, wrote on 12th May 1938: "It is a great loss to the country. To the Hindu community the loss is irreparable. With

deep and reverential love for the Sanatana religion and its scriptures, he was yet not impervious to the Time-Spirit. Such a leader was invaluable to the community to the days of acute clash between the old and the new."

Dewan Bahadur V. K. Ramanujachariar wrote to me on 7th May 1938: "He was a great scholar; he was a true son of India, and used his great influence to oppose all the tendencies against the interest of India and of the real Hindu religion."

Mr. P. Seshadri wrote to me in a letter dated 11th May 1938: "I have a great regard for his personality and character." In his tribute published in the *Hindu* he said: "The death of Professor Sundararaman has deprived South India of a profound scholar, a pillar of Hindu civilisation and a personality of great sweetness and charm."

Rao Bahadur Mr. T. S. Tirumurti wrote to me: "He was the first in obstructing the flood of atheism and agnosticism, which was trying to submerge educated India some years ago. He was an embodiment of Hindu culture and spirit."

Mr. R. Radhakrishna Iyer, Vakil, Tanjore,



wrote to me: "He made the history of South Indian education for over a quarter of a century. When South Indian History comes to be written his name will certainly find a prominent mention as the Guru that was responsible for the intellectual and moral equipment of many a graduate that fought Freedom's battle."

Mr. B. Annaswami Iyer, Vakil, Nellore, who was one of Professor Sundararama Iyer's students, wrote to me on 14-5-38: "But the certainty that sitting at the feet of the Lord your father's soul will spread its radiance in the world which has been left dark and put life into Sanatanists must console one who had the great honour and fortune of having been born to him."

Sir V. T. Krishnamachariar, Dewan of Baroda, wrote to me on 12-5-38. "Your father lived and died like the true Vedantin that he was and has left an example to all of what a perfect life can be... We shall not be able to discover the secret of that peace and deep and abiding faith which men like him had."

Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu wrote to me on

13th May 1938 : "He has lived a glorious life and has died a noble death."

Mr. K. G. Sesha Iyer, Retired High Court Judge, Trivandrum, wrote to me on 13th May 1938 : "He was almost an institution by himself and it will be difficult indeed to think of one similar to him in learning and culture. He was a great inspiration to all who came in contact with him." He wrote to me a kind letter of condolence also.

Mr. S. Dandapani Iyer wrote to me on 14th May 1938 : "His self-questioning bore their fruit in self-realisation. He was, for these modern days, a Maharishi, living on the banks of the sacred Cauvery, in what was more or less a Parnasala, influencing his associates, not so much by direct teaching, as by the example of a great life, disciplined, simple, and dedicated to the service of others. I had been in his presence on a few occasions and I was always struck by the simple grandeur of his facial expression and the dignity and chastity which pervaded the atmosphere. His deep learning and high culture were nothing before his highly earnest and religious life which distinguished him from the rest of his fellows."



Mr. T. M. Krishnaswami Iyer wrote to me on 14-5-1938: "It will not be possible to see a man so simple in the habits of life and so illumined in his thoughts. The deep piety of his life and the great love which he gave to every one of his numerous friends regardless of their position are standing ideals for future generations...His work for Hinduism has been monumental and his devotion was unique."

Mr. K. Ramachandra Iyer, Advocate, Madras, wrote to me on 8th May 1938. "He was the embodiment of intellectual and moral power in our distracted land, and was a pillar of orthodoxy cemented with high liberalism in thought and was a moral guide to his contemporaries."

Mr. K. S. Javarama Iyer wrote to me on 14th May 1938: "Apart from his academic distinctions, he was a man of broad culture and was not satisfied until he had unearthed the inner meaning of every thing that tended to make life glorious...He has blazed a trail which we can follow without flinching."

Mr. Ganti Lakshmana wrote to me on 13th May 1938: "He has been a staunch and stalwart Hindu and a pillar of orthodoxy in its unflinching

advocacy of Dharma. He passed away full of years and full of wisdom. His memory will be a cherished inheritance and the example of his simple and austere life a beacon light."

Mr. A. V. Gopalachariar wrote on 10th May 1938 from Trichinopoly referring to my father "as a great soul whom I always revere as a Rishi and who was a loving and spiritual father to many persons of whom I had the privilege of being one."

Mr. L. S. P. Raghavan wrote to me on 13th May 1938: "A man of fearless independence, sturdy character and above all a fountain of learning, the late Mr. Sundararama Iyer was an institution. To all of us of the younger generation, he was indeed an apostle of Sanatana Dharma, and an example of how the best of the east and the west could be welded in one."

Rao Sahib G. P. Venkatarama Sastri, Retired Deputy Collector, wrote to me on 13th May 1938: "He has shown what Hindu orthodoxy is, and I suppose I am not mistaken in saying that he has shown how it should move with the times. The heritage that he has left to the community is



very rich and will be treasured by us all. He has lived a very useful and noble life and his example will be a beacon to the youths of this land."

Mr. S. R. U. Savoor wrote to me on 11th May 1938: "His was a great soul which aspired to the loftiest ideal and I know that he was a practical Yogin."

Mr. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer wrote to me on 8th May 1938: "The finest product of Hindu Culture, he was an ornament to the Brahmin community of South India. His services to his countrymen have been equally great.....Orthodox by temperament, at the same time he had a constructive view of things and his conception of reviving the four castes and his disregard for the many superstitions that have grown upon the pure faith of the days of Sankara, all indicated to me a modern progressive mind."

In his tribute published in the *Hindu* on 9th May 1938 he wrote: "He was one of the finest products of English education of the last century... He was a scholar of great erudition both in philosophy and history. Far from rusting after retirement,

he mastered fresh branches of knowledge and developed an intimate acquaintance with Hindu philosophy and religious literature. Possessing a masterful and acute intellect, Mr. Sundararama Iyer developed as the result of his deep study and thinking, clear-cut views and convictions on all social and religious and historical problems. He commanded a lucid and vigorous style of writing...He was not merely a scholar but a man of action...In fact he was a centre of light and healthy influence on Hindu society."

Mr. R. Krishnaswami Iyer wrote to me from Tinnevely on 17th May 1938: "The cause of Vedanta has now lost a stalwart champion and I cannot think of anybody who can fill up the gap now made."

Mr. K. S. Ramabhadra Iyer wrote to me on 7th May 1938 referring to him as "a luminous personality who was all love and sweetness to those who came in contact with him."

Mr. F. G. Natesa Iyer wrote to me on 7th May 1938 that he regarded him "as a man among men, a truly great Acharya."



Mr. R. Rangaswami Ayyangar, now Chief Judge, Pudukotah, wrote to me on 7th May 1938: "His scholarship, his love of learning, his earnestness, his enthusiasm which did not abate with advancing age for the cause of Sanatana Dharma and his intense desire that the world should progress on healthy lines entitle him to the gratitude of the country for ever."

Mr. N. Sambasiva Iyer wrote to me from Negapatam on 7th May 1938: "He is sure to come back in a younger and more useful body for the furtherance of the cause so dear to his heart."

Dr. P. R. Raghuraman wrote to me from Conjeevaram on 9th May 1938: "A Sanatanist to the core, a lover of Hinduism, he was anxious that every one should try his best to put an end to the proselitisation of the Hindus by the Christians."

Mr. K. Rangaswami Aiyangar, Headmaster, The Hindu Theological High School, wrote to me on 15th May 1938: "In his death, South India loses one of her heroic sons. His wide and deep scholarship, especially in the field of our hoary religion and philosophy, his unrivalled powers of

debate and his passion for discussion and controversy, are matters of common knowledge. For more than half a century he used his remarkable talents and gifts in the propagation or defence of the Vedic religion. It was a hero's work. A Volcanic sincerity was the keynote of his character. He was, if I may say so, an intellectual and moral Titan."

Mr. S. Hari Rao, Retired Sub-Registrar, wrote to me on 9th May 1938 describing him as a kind and zealous Guru who strove to shape, tone and enlighten our young minds, a sturdy patriot, an erudite and earnest scholar and seeker after truth."

Mr. M. K. Ramanatha Sarma wrote on 18th May 1938 from Conjeevaram : "He represented in himself the best culture of the East and the West."

Nott Devaraja Rao wrote to me on 10th May 1938 from Conjeevaram : "He was an ornament to our society. He was the acknowledged leader of the Hindus in South India. He was a stout defender of the Brahminical culture."

S. Vasudevan (Vasu) to whom Professor Sundararama Iyer was sincerely and tenderly attached wrote on 25-9-1938 :



“He was really a prince among conversationalists. He was accessible to high and low, poor and rich, and had absolutely nothing of the snobbery or stand-offishness which are usually associated with prodigious intellects like his. He was a Nestor in wisdom, worldly experience, and scholarship and was bounteous in his gifts of advice, admonition and instruction to those who gathered round at his feet.

None who approached him ever returned without being inspired towards righteous aspiration, and conduct. Even his casual remarks on homely topics were pregnant with deep spiritual significance. ...His was a life of dedication towards the moral and intellectual elevation of his fellow-countrymen and it was due to his ceaseless and untiring and indefatigable efforts that Hinduism has been saved from being washed away by the flood of western materialism. ...His chats were always lively and lucid, interesting, impressive and instructive and were listened to with rapt attention by his friends and disciples who had been coming to him every day...Even in his advanced years, his intellect was extraordinarily keen and virile and his heart ever flowed with the milk of human kindness. In a word, he shed sweet-

ness and lustre and light wherever he lived, and he was a haven of rest to those who yearned for moral evolution, mental edification, and spiritual peace, engendering new creative powers and faculties and delightful feelings of health and happiness, which can be at all times compared to nectar and honey mixed together—delicious and delectable. *Requiescat in pace.*"

The following reminiscences written on 10-12-38 by Mr. T. Padmanabhachariar, who was one of his beloved students, are full of tenderness and insight.

### REMINISCENCES.

"I began to take an intelligent interest in Prof. Sundararama Iyer's public lectures from the beginning of the 20th century along with a few other classmates of mine from the High School classes. Our respect and admiration for him increased as we entered the College. We were full of interest in all the problems of the day and we were deeply impressed with the depth and range of the Professor's knowledge. The impressiveness of his teaching, the earnestness of his call, his critical analysis



and close observation of current events struck us as something wonderful. The limitations of a class-lesson appeared to us a handicap as the Professor was at his best in his general lectures after the year's lessons were over. His term-end lectures were therefore of great importance, aiming as they did, at creating a historical, critical and liberal outlook, illumined with scintillation of personal anecdotes and experiences.

There were only two of our Professors in the Kumbakonam College of whom we stood in great awe.—Mr. Hensman and Prof. Sundararama Iyer. They, however, allowed us plenty of freedom, when our personal opinions were called for in connection with interpretation of passages or discussion of topics. Our freedom ended then and there. It was therefore a very agreeable surprise to all of us, when we noticed in the two professors, at the time of their retirement, a kindly and tender touch hidden beneath all their apparent sternness and firmness.

On one occasion, Prof. Sundararama Iyer took seriously ill during his class lectures. High fever brought forth only strings of verses from the Upanishads with which the Professor expounded the

spirit of the Vedanta before he allowed himself to be taken home by his pupils. "Do you think I am afraid of Death?—pooh!—not at all!" he observed at the time. His conversion from atheistic tendencies was due to the study of Sanskrit which, unfortunately, was not in those old days prescribed as a course of study in Schools and Colleges. He admitted that Theosophy opened his eyes to the treasures of his own religion by creating in him a thirst for the study of Vedanta philosophy. Once, Col. Olcott who was hemmed in with inconvenient questions while he was addressing an intelligent and educated audience consisting of men of the type of the Professor and Prof. N. Vythinatha Iyer, remarked with much embarrassment and great disappointment that if they, Hindus, would decline to seek and find out the truths found in their own philosophical works, it showed nothing short of 'stupendous false conceit' (Olcott's words quoted by the Professor). From Dr. Sathianathan, the Professor said, he learnt another lesson—sincerity and earnestness in religion—his own faith. "No one can shake my faith—I have seen!" he would say. It was this faith that gave him indomitable courage



and strength and led him on to a ripe old age with little decay of vigour.

He had his own share of disappointments and miseries as well as bereavements but he got over them all—the Yogi he was all through. Sometimes he 'felt like a scalded cat fearing cold water' but his tenderness for the feelings of his noble son would prevent him from expressing his feelings freely. 'You have been my student, you were my colleague and you are now my friend—I am sure you would not tell him my feelings expressed in a moment of weakness' he would say.

Closer contact with the Professor after College life enabled the students to appreciate and understand more fully his greatness. The Professor left a deep impression upon all who came in contact with him by force of his character sincerity and straightforwardness, scholarship and critical acumen and above all by the great love for humanity which lay concealed far beneath all that outward sturdiness and rusticity.

He was an ardent politician and a true nationalist bred up from the beginnings of Indian nationalism.

His view was that every Indian is *ipso facto* a Congressman and has no existence outside the pale of the Indian National Congress. He once held the view that the best thing for the English people to do was to divide India into autonomous states ruled over by constitutional Maha Rajas or Nawabs, in conformity with cultural and racial affinity, proximity, precedent, language, custom and Dharma and to reserve for themselves only the defences of the country. (I am not aware of any change in this view of his, recently).

He was devoted to the welfare of Hindu Society and by its unification into only four classes and no more on the basis of mutual help and co-operation of work and duty. He was extremely sorry for the present lowering of the Brahman ideal of life, but he hoped that, one day, that ideal would be restored to its proper sphere of work for the development of Hindu Society and Dharma.

His connection with several centres of learning in South India, including British Malabar, Cochin and Travancore has resulted in a large following of old students, friends and admirers. The older generation still remember the swing and the ring of



the spirited public speeches of the Professor, delivered during the course of his stay at Trivandrum for well nigh three years and a half. Travancore, in his opinion, is a fortunate country where the ruler is very constitutional selfless and devoted to the cause of the country and her people, with a fine tradition of able Maha Rajas and Dewans behind. He lived to see the establishment of a separate University for Travancore which was one of his greatest desires.

He had a warm corner in his heart for Travancore—for Kerala as whole—and his recollections were mostly pleasant.

T. Padmanabhachari,  
10—10—38.

I have been giving above post-obituary references. It is a relief to me to go back to some earlier appreciations. When I wrote to some friends of his for their impressions about him, Rao Bahadur T. Subramanya Iyer of Salem wrote to me on 1st April 1925 : As a pupil of the highest class of the school (the Government Zilla School at Salem), who had to sit for the Matriculation Examination of December 1925, I came under his tuition for the remaining months of the year. My connection with

him was thus very brief but yet it has remained ever since among the happiest memories of my youth, As probably the youngest senior assistant, if not also the youngest teacher that the Zilla school had yet known, Mr. Sundararaman attracted great attention in Salem while the simplicity of his manners, his innate love of work and ardent desire to make himself useful to others not only won for him the love and esteem of his pupils but made him the cynosure of all eyes in Salem.....Of the achievements of Sundararaman in later life I am hardly competent to speak. I will only say that the versatility of his intellect, unceasing industry and sterling character made him a master in fresh fields of knowledge and won for him in due course a place in the front ranks of the educationists of the Presidency...A teacher he has verily been to this day in the highest sense to all who came under the influence of his writings or inspiring personality, very much to the advantage of his country and his people. I venture to believe that most thoughtful men will agree to find in him the ideal of a true Brahmin who has developed on the correct lines by his contact with the culture of the West."



Mr. S. Narayanaswami Iyer, a leader of the Bar at Tinnevely, wrote to me his impressions thus on 21st February 1925 : "We used to meet in our morning walks, which were almost regular and long. He would discourse to me of high and sacred topics, and however imperfectly, I would strive to imbibe them...Of him I know he is of robust intellect, of steadfast devotion, of vast culture, unweary of study. He loves to call himself Sundararaman. He is a child of emotion, but never did I know that his feeling led him away from love. He is orthodox and is moulded of the ancient, full of pious and sacred reverence."

On 14th November 1925 Mr. K. S. Venkataramani's appreciation appeared in *the Hindu*. It is in his admirable and charming and most characteristic style. He said therein : "Teachers of boys are rarely teachers of men. But I have known two exceptions to this rule—Prof. K. Sundararaman and the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. The two are perhaps poles apart in many things. But an intense and critical interest in life, in all its varied and changing aspects and an ever-fresh heart for the young, make them teachers of men. They

have risen superior to the deadening influences of the class-room—the constant familiarity which kills the soul, of sympathy and insight. On the other hand, like the true teacher, they have learnt from the young and the ever-changing class-room and have now become in a great measure the prophets of the people...Professor Sundararaman is a warm friend of merit and never delays his word of praise waiting to see if it has recognition first elsewhere. He has faith and courage in his own judgment... Wherever he worked he worked with energy and conviction and won the love and respect of all his enemies first...He is a philosopher by birth and a historian by vocation...He is the soul of honour and kindliness. In an age of vanishing values of life all around, one understands from him its true worth and rare possibilities...Friendship is an entrancing passion, like love, with him.

But with Professor Sundararaman it is all one real plain living and high thinking. His daily life is simple and pure. With a friend or two he loves a long walk in the morning and in the evening. Nature is scanned; men are discussed. Vedic life and simplicity are praised and contrasted. Life in



all its aspects, economic, political, and spiritual is surveyed, reviewed and assessed at its proper worth. The conversation is animated. He is vivid and dramatic, emotional and generous, bitter and powerful, self-forgetful and supreme. In conversation he is as invigorating as a sea-bath—only rarely it is a calm sea. You may not agree with his views, convictions or conclusions. But you cannot but admire his courage and fighting power, his close logic and the fine flow of language, his truthfulness and devotion. He bears the marks of a great man.

Professor Sundararaman would be a great asset in any deliberative assembly. His knowledge of history, his splendid energy and combative power, his formidable dialectical skill and mastery of form and procedure are useful qualities in any assembly. But probably it is a gain to pure thinking to be relieved of the stress and attraction of political work.

He is an unsurpassed letter-writer—intimate, frank, full and free. He writes a noble hand as large and bold as his very soul.

Prof. Sundararaman once seen is always remembered like some lofty and irregular crag in a

chain of hills far away in the horizon. If inaccessible in one sense, it is yet the source of many a stream at which travellers slake their thirst. If you can't explore its valleys and defiles, you can always taste the qualities of its soil. For, Prof. Sundararaman like the true aquarion pours the water from the mountain top. He hides nothing. He seeks to hide nothing. He is a very rare soul but has a very complex mind—a singularly dual personality. He is broad as well as narrow. He is kind as well as unkind. He is a thinker and a man of action, a historian and a philosopher, an admirer and a critic, a dialectician and a master of substance. He is docile as well as combative. He is, in short, universal as the sea, calm or stormy not in his making but depending upon the wind that blows."

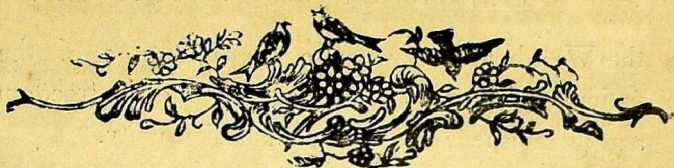
I cannot conclude this chapter better than by quoting the words of Professor Sundararama Iyer's life-long friend Mr. N. Subrahmanya Iyer, Retired Senior Dewan Paishkar of Travancore, when he unveiled in 1936 the portrait of Professor Sundararama Iyer in the spacious hall built by Mr. S. K. Visweswara Sastri between the Gopal Rao Library Hall and the Sadhu Seshayya Oriental Library



Hall in Kumbakonam. He said in the course of his speech:

“Professor Sundararama Iyer, besides being an institution of South India is an institution of the Kumbakonam town...Although Professor Sundararama Iyer is one of the many who have won laurels in that field (western culture), the great glory of his life has been that, on the top of it, he developed a taste for, and acquired an erudition in ancient Indian culture...Professor Sundararama Iyer took to the study of Indian classics while in the fulness of energy and with the sole view and resolve to contribute his share to the maintenance of his country's glory, and for the spread of her great message. And the fact that he has lived to achieve this ambition in a substantial measure is a matter on which he had abundant cause to be congratulated...Whatever he wrote, he wrote without malice, though there was no compromise...If the hero of to-day's function is not one such *punya*kr̥it (the doer of virtuous deeds), who is?”





## CHAPTER IV,

### Professor Sundararama Aiyar and Contemporary Life and Thought.

**I**N the case of such a forceful personality as that of Professor Sundararama Iyer, we can well expect both receptivity and response to the multitudinous forces surging in the life of modern India. India's central position in Asia, which was the first home of the world's culture and the earliest home of the world's spiritual culture whence have gone forth the vivifying streams of world-philosophies and world-religions, has exposed her as much to the cultural blasts blowing in all directions as the invading hordes which poured through the north-western passes. During the lifetime of Professor Sundararama Iyer there were not only the conflicts of races and religions and of castes and communities and the clashes of the civilisations and cultures of the East and



the West but there was also the up surge of the national spirit and the passion for India's freedom and its indispensable basis *viz.*, Indian unity.

One of the controversies in which Professor Sundararama Iyer was engaged was that relating to the question whether there can be no liberation for any soul until all souls win freedom. Sir S. Radhakrishnan has stressed the *Sarva-Mukti* ideal in recent times but it is not a new thing by any means. The above-said controversy arose in 1908 over a similar statement which was made by Mrs. Besant in a lecture by her at Adyar and which was controverted in the columns of the *Hindu* by Professor Sundararama Iyer. In 1909 he entered into a controversy over the opinion expressed by Mrs. Besant in a lecture at Mayavaram on 26th January 1909 that there is caste distinction in souls. Professor Sundararama Iyer made it clear in a letter to the *Hindu* which was published on 8-2-09 that "there can be no difference of caste in the Sukshma Sarira" and that "the difference of caste—or *Jati*, as we call it—is due to *Janma* or birth, and the birth of a caste-child must be preceded by a caste marriage." Later in 1909 he had a controversy with Krishna

Dasa (Sir T. Sadasiva Iyer). In it he emphasised that Theosophy differed from Hinduism in some respects *viz.*, "its denial of retrogression in Karma, its denial of single supreme eternally perfect Lord in the universe, its assertion of the reincarnation of Muktas, its belief of caste distinctions for re-incarnating souls." He had earlier controversies with Dewan Bahadur R. Raghoonatha Row, as against whom he defended various Hindu customs and institutions.

Professor Sundararama Iyer while thus upholding the ancient ideals and traditions and *acharas*, had the courage to speak against what he considered to be later additions and perversions. In a letter to the *Hindu* he said : "Our Sankara Vijayas, our Bhakta Vilasas, our temple legends, our Sthalapuranas, our river mahatmyas etc., form a class of literature of which we, as a community, ought to feel ashamed. I heard that already legends were gathering round Sri Ramakrishna, the modern Saint of Bengal."

When the staff and the students of the Hindu College, Tinnevely, presented farewell addresses to him on 11th December 1909, he made a touching



speech which went home to the hearts of his hearers. In the farewell address by the Hindu College staff on 11th December 1909 his colleagues stated : "In all your relations with us, you have guided us by your example, subdued us by your courtesy, won our hearts by your goodwill, and extorted our admiration by that spirit of philosophic contentment which lies behind your early retirement from public service..... We are struck by and appreciate very much the vastness of the range and depth of your culture and sympathy." In his reply, after explaining why he felt proud to be called a Hindu and saying that India was the *Punya Bhoomi* of the Aryas, he stressed that the Hindu ideal was noble and spiritual and must be carefully preserved. He said: "Gentlemen, there have been two great intellects and ideals known to history—the ideal discovered by the Hellenic intellect which insists on the development of our conscious personality in the secular and social life of humanity on earth, and the spiritual ideal discovered by the intellect of *Aryavarta* which insists on the development of true self-realisation by the incarnation of the soul amidst favourable geographical, social, and spiritual surroundings. *Hellas* is dead, and its civilizations and ideals only live today

in the social and political life of the mushroom nations of Europe and America—nations which are only enlarged photographs of the ancient Greek and Hellenic communities known to history. Aryavarta is not dead. It lives, and will never die.....Be strong and true like men ; hold aloft the standard of purity and piety ; press forward towards the light and glory which is the same within you and without you. May the blessing of the sages be with you, now and for ever. Farewell."

Professor Sundararama Iyer felt deeply that the Indian Universities had accorded a step-motherly treatment to the Sanskrit language and literature : In a letter to the *Hindu* on 31-1-11 he said : "Allow me to make an appeal, through your columns, regarding the future of Sanskrit studies in our schools and colleges. Under the new University Regulations, Sanskrit has been made one of the optional subjects of the University course. The result has been that everywhere students have ceased to study Sanskrit, and they take up either Science or History. If in Europe and America the study of Sanskrit can be encouraged in an increasing measure, and if Germany, in special, can feel the need of



employing as many as 18 Sanskrit professors in her universities, it is certainly unfortunate that steps should have been taken which have practically led to the abolition of all Sanskrit studies in the midst of a society and people who are still to a large extent in living contact with the sources of their civilisation as found recorded or expounded in Sanskrit literature." He urged that though modern studies might be more helpful to those who enter the public service or the modern learned professions, "those who have the responsibility of organising and developing a great system of education ought certainly to take a wider and more liberal view of their responsibilities in regard to the future of Indian culture and civilisation."

Professor Sundararama Iyer held decided views about Pramanas and never forgave any tinkering or tampering with them. He said that a Guru can teach only through manifested sounds (Vaikhari), though the subtler aspects of sound (para, pasyanti, and madhyama), can be realised in Yogic Vision by the Sadhaka (striver). In a letter to the Hindu on 11-4-1910 he said : To those who like Vamadeva are born with spiritual intuition no Sabda is wanted.

as a medium for acquiring knowledge; and even they must have in previous births acquired knowledge from their teachers by Vaikhari sounds and undergone the training needed for gaining Atma samvit. When the Atma samvit comes in, the world including all Pramanas cease to exist, and so it is only proper to hold that Pramanas are sources for Atma Samvit and not *vice-versa*."

Professor Sundararama Iyer never felt any sympathy with the purely rationalistic social reform movement in India, though he stood for social reform on Shastraic lines. He felt that the movement was inspired by western ideals and was not racy of the soil. In a letter which he wrote to Mr. T. Ramaswami Iyer, Vakil and Member, Social Conference Committee, Tiruvarur, on 19-12-1910, he wrote in reply to a letter requesting him to take part in the Conference: "I have never attended Social Conferences, and never felt any sympathy for the Social Reform movement. For, I believe it to be inspired mainly by the ideals preached in modern India by the Christian missionary for his own purposes. Its aim is to destroy what remains of the unity and power of the now shattered and debilitat-



ed Hindu civilisation, and to completely secularise the Brahmins by taking every step calculated to destroy even the minimum of the religion of Hindu ritual and worship now surviving the hostile movements directed against it in the past. As for our *Jnana Marga*, which depends essentially on the acquisition of *chittasuddhi* resulting from the practice of that religion of ritual and worship, it is now almost dead; and the chances of producing *yogis* and *gnanis* like Sadasiva Brahmam and Pattanattu Pillai are almost nil. The production of the phenomena of mesmerism, magnetism, clairvoyance etc., have also come to be regarded as the aim of higher spiritual life." After describing thus the lamentable condition of our social and spiritual life, he showed the way out. He said: "At the same time I feel convinced that several true social reforms are urgently required for the Brahmans and our Hindu brethren of other castes. These reforms, however, must be based on *Sruti* and *Smriti*. I firmly believe that social reform on *Shastric* lines will be most efficacious for restoring gradually the power and unity now lost to us."

Professor Sundararama Iyer was never tired

of pointing out that there is no vital and inseparable connection between nationalism on the one hand and inter dining and inter marriage on the other. He showed how the latter factors have not unified Europe or prevented Indian consolidation. In a letter to the Hindu on *Mr. Basu's Bill and Indian Politics*, he said on 11-8-11 : "In ancient India,— we refer to the historical, not the heroic period, of our history—the caste system prevailed with a good deal of its original strength. Still the Hindus long maintained their power and unity against foreign invaders. Many great empires flourished, and even to-day some of their achievements remain to attest their glory. In comparatively modern times also, caste did not stand in the way of the foundation or the flourishing of the Great Empires of Vijayanagar and Maharashtra." In two articles contributed to the Hindu on 19-8-1911 and 26-8-1911 on *Blood, Caste and Place in India*, he emphasised the need for racial purity and integrity of blood and pleaded for progress along the lines of least resistance.

On questions of marriage also, Professor Sundararama Iyer held decided views. He was against marriage for women before eight or after twelve



and held that the system of early and compulsory marriage in India was a wise system and led to love and happiness. He was however, against too early consummation of marriage as it led to physical degeneracy. He was against divorce and widow-marriage. In an article contributed to *the Hindu* on 8-5-1912 he said: "Ugly women do not get neglected like unsaleable goods in a competitive market. All women secure one chance of marriage. The existence of widows is a perpetual reminder to married women that life ought to be viewed in the light of a sacrifice for high ideals such as chastity, service, love, etc. Love is a slow, but sure, growth, —even in those cases where wives are ugly, ill-tempered and so on. For, when married people begin to know that they are bound by an indissoluble tie, they settle down contentedly to the business of life.

So far as his view about Harijan Temple-entry was concerned, I must point that it was but the final expression of what he had been feeling for a long time. Even in his work *Dharma and Life* which was published in 1924 and was a collection of his earlier articles in the *Hindu Message*, he said: „There is not the slightest reason for assuming that

the South Indian Panchamas are Chandalas or even belong to any section of the Anuloma or Pratiloma branches of the community. What impurity is still ascribed to them is evidently of pre-Aryan origin, and can and ought now easily to be removed. Manus distinctly says that there is no fifth caste, i.e., Panchamas."

I now come to his opinion about the temple-entry by Harijans in Travancore. He was highly praised by some and violently denounced by others for his view which he expressed boldly in the *Hindu* in regard to the Temple-entry proclamation by His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore in November 1936. The interview which he gave to the *Hindu* correspondent at Kumbakonam on 19th January 1937 and which was published in the *Hindu* on 20th January 1937 runs as follows: "Professor Sundararaman stated that he did not believe that mere birth as such could be a source of pollution to any human being. As the Hindu Shastras asserted the existence of only four castes and denied the existence of a fifth, he did not believe that Hinduism swore by any faith in the existence of the so-called polluted classes as a part of th



permanent ordering of the Hindu social system." He said : "Though I have always lived an orthodox Brahmin's life, I have never been wedded irrevocably to the idea that the ideals on which the present Brahminical life has been based formed a part of the eternal order of the universe." When as human necessities arise and dictate to us prudent and safe steps towards progress to a higher collective or unified life free from superstition or meaningless custom, I have always been ready to join in every kind of activity to achieve such a purpose. This explains my general attitude towards all proposals for the uplift of all sections of the Hindu community." As for the Travancore proclamation, he said : "When it is fully carried out, it will be found to be most beneficial to the Hindus and will certainly place them and their religion on a higher scale of civilisation. Any religion worth the name cannot and ought not to stand in the way of evolution and progress of human welfare and culture. The Agama Sastras, however useful for the maintenance of social order, can never act in such a way as to prevent our adjustments in accordance with the precepts and injunctions of the Vedas, direct and implied. As the Agamas can never have authority

over-riding the Vedas, we can always retain or reject or modify any current practices which accord with the Agamas but not with the Vedas. The Vedas are unalterable and inviolable but not so the Agamas. This is the view of Sankara and his followers as formulated in Chapter II Part II of the Brahma Sutras. Further, it is absurd to hold that all the so-called depressed classes in India today should be labelled as "Chandalas" and hence excluded from the benefit of a higher social and religious life or association with those who now enjoy a higher social status."

"If Hindus fall away from their religion and become converts to other religions at the present rate," the Professor stated, "we may be sure that the extinction of Hinduism will be completed within the next three or four generations. It behoves all Hindu leaders therefore to bestir themselves and take every step needed to satisfy the depressed classes that their elevation and association with the higher classes is at hand and it will not be delayed till it is too late. Those who have status and influence in Hindu society must avail themselves of every opportunity to set an example and thus pave the



way for those who are in favour of rapid reform. Though there should not be forcible interference calculated to blot out racial or communal inclinations in respect of modes of life or kinds of food or methods of culture now prevalent among the various Hindu communities, every opportunity should be offered for the adoption of methods which will enable the various sections of Hindus to promote harmony and social change tending to greater goodwill, peace and unity among all sorts and conditions of men, whether among Hindus or other religionists. Further, all sections of the Hindus must learn to recognise the fundamental rights which birth confers upon all men irrespective of caste, creed, or race. For instance, any Hindu must be ready to take or offer coffee or tea or even food prepared by Brahmans in the company of even Christians or Muhammadans. Mere drishti dosha or pollution through sight while eating or drinking must be regarded as a piece of etiquette in the observance of which all should feel ashamed. But one thing must be stressed and that is that the elevation of the depressed classes must be achieved without involving the sudden dislocation or depression of the higher classes of Hindu society."

Asked whether he was in favour of legislation for temple-entry in British India, he said : "I am for beginning with an enabling legislation in favour of temple-entry for Harijans. What I mean is that if any body of trustees resolve to throw open the temple or temples under their management to the depressed classes now excluded therefrom, they must have entire discretion to do so, and the laws of the land must be so amended as not to fetter their discretion. Even in British India today, individual cases of temple-entry by representatives of all sections of the depressed classes are daily taking place within the knowledge of orthodox Hindus and still nobody has ever taken any steps actively to prevent such instances of violation of orthodox rights. Why then should we not boldly come forward to extend such rights of temple-worship now denied to the Harijans who still remain within the pale of Hinduism ? "

Professor Sundararama Iyer and myself found that our opinions in regard to the Temple-Entry proclamation in Travancore appeared in the *Hindu* on the same date (21-11-1936). Our support of it on the basis of the depressed classes being only



Hindus who pursued unclean occupations and led unclean lives and not being under any innate taint led to the disapproval of our action by some Brahmins. But Professor Sundararama Iyer found no reason to go back upon his considered and deliberate view on the matter.





## CHAPTER V.

### Professor Sundararama Aiyar's Epistles.

**I** shall give below some of the characteristic letters of Professor Sundararama Iyer. He used to refer often with admiration to one of Mr. Gladstone's unique traits—a prompt reply in his own hand to letters received by him. This admirable trait was a characteristic quality of Professor Sundararama Iyer also. In his letters, which were written in his bold and clear and beautiful handwriting and which were couched in his forceful and stately style, he ranged over many subjects with freedom and without pedantry, so that his letters not only make delightful reading but also give us an insight into his personality and amplify our knowledge and purify and uplift and strengthen our heart, and form by themselves a liberal education.

Professor K. Sundararama Iyer had written



thousands of letters to his friends. His age was an age of letter-writing *par excellence*. Nowadays the seductions of the typewriter and the habit of dictating letters to secretaries and typists or stenotypists have killed the epistolary art. We have reached, as it were, the Kaliyuga (Iron Age) of the epistolary art. Men are in a hurry, though the time saved with the aid of speed-friends in every direction is lost in do-nothingism of one kind of silliness or another during the hard-won leisure hours. Professionalism also has cast its baneful shadow over life, and the love of pelf and power has driven out the old-world love of Man and God. But somehow Indians have not kept up the habit of preserving letters or writing diaries, and so my appeal for sending my father's letters met with but a poor and disheartening response. Nay, my father himself usually destroyed the letters received by him and preserved only half a dozen of such letters in his bureau.

He carried on a frequent and interesting correspondence with Mr. P. Venkateswara Iyer of Madura, (a retired Tashildar who died some years ago). The following are extracts from his letters to Mr. P. Venkatesvara Iyer.

Kumbakonam

13—6—1910

"I do not need to remind you how the life and achievements of the Great Lokaguru are recognised in the West as among the noblest in human annals and that "the most sublime philosophy and the most satisfying religion of Advaita"—to use Professor Max Muller's words—are as much in accordance with the latest developments of modern science as they are also the greatest of man's spiritual consolations and "the strongest support of pure morality on earth." The duty of preserving our rich inheritance of Vedic thought and culture is imperative on all, especially at a time when Pandit learning has reached almost the last state of decline."

Kumbakonam

13—6—1910

"A crisis is impending compared to which the Buddhistic heresy and rebellion of the past will seem but a pin-prick. Isvara can always find agents for doing his own work. Meanwhile to us whose life and work have soon to terminate, the prospect cannot but appear dark.".....



Kumbakonam

24—10—10

“Many of our educated men are curiously enough utterly ignorant of the truths of our religion. They are also credulous, gullible and indolent. They are indifferent also about truth, morality and the future world. Things are much worse than a generation back and it is difficult to say where we are tending.....”

“It seems to me that the time has come for forming an Association which will take all our three or four religious schools under its wings and bring about a union among men by doing all in its power to advance the interests of each and every one of them. Of course they cannot get rid of their peculiarities, and their value lies in these peculiarities which are suited to the people born with different *vasanas*. But we may promote mutual esteem and harmony by bringing into existence an organisation which will sincerely endeavour to help each and all of them. I am trying to enlist sympathy for such a proposal and have spoken to some young men. It is the young men whom we must secure for all good and noble work. There are many of them who are

good and true but who are strangers to the truths and secrets of our religion.

Of course it is easy to bring oneself to the belief that Isvara will do what he deems best for us. But our Shāstras teach "Sapekshatvat" and they also teach the theory of Karma-vasanas as guiding all of us in our life here. Hence also the need for combining Daivikam and Purushakara."

Kumbakonam

1—2—11

"I have begun reading Appayya Dikshitar's Sivatatva Vivekam. Our great men are really wonderful people. It is a great pity that I have had to take to Vedanta late."

Kumbakonam

6—5—12

"His (Pandit Ganapati Sastrī's) marvellous mind has been a great blessing to all who had been brought into contact with him and to me it has been the greatest inspiration of my life. Without him I should never have known the Great Acharya whose words and thoughts have been and will be the greatest consolation in this life and beyond it. Sankara



—the infinite wisdom itself personified—fills my mind and heart with all that makes for peace and freedom and can alone solve the mystery of life for men. To you who have all your life tasted and drunk of the sweets of his perfect wisdom, I need not say more to explain what I feel at the loss of him to whose powerful exposition I owe the inspiration I have received from the great Loka-guru.

(The reference is to the death of Pandit Ganapati Sastri.)

Kumbakonam

6-6-14

“The new age and the neglect of Dharma which it entails on us all is the cause of the premature decay of vitality. Such of us as keep up Shastraic habits and ideals in some measure at least do fare better than others. But most or all of us have neglected Vedabhyasa. Manu says that those who abandon this Vedabhyasa must suffer premature loss of vital power. We Brahmins of this age are experiencing the bitter truth of Manu's dictum. Still I pray devoutly to Iswara to spare you for many, many years to come.”

Kumbakonam, 9—2—1915

“.....I think that these later writers have, it seems, done more harm than good by their ingenious explanations and by their speculative controversies. The mind of man can only be filled and consoled by the writings of our unmatched Acharya. If realisation is to be reached, we want also some Guru like Sri Krishnananda Swami of Hindupur. Without Mantra, Mudra and Lakshya, and without the Acharya's help in clearing doubts and difficulties, the writings of these later controversialists are, it seems to me, practically useless and in the end bore the mind.”

Kumbakonam, 17—8—15

“An intimate friend of mine who was formerly my student in his entire college course, Mr. R. Krishnaswami Sastrigal B.A., a gentleman every inch of him, a Sanskrit scholar, and one highly connected in this District—has been posted as Sub-registrar to Madura town...It was at my request that he entered the Registration Department. As he is a very well-to-do gentleman, I told him that in this Department he could find time to acquire knowledge of all kinds and he could render himself useful to the public and



especially to himself and at the same time avoid the funkism and slavery so common everywhere now-a-days. He is all that I expected him to turn out and more. I feel sure you will find him most valuable and desirable in every way. He is a gem in every way."

Kumbakonam, 19—6—16

".....People say that we are living in a progressive age. I cannot understand what progress may be—when I find that men all around can only worship a big bag of money or flesh but cannot appreciate the man's inner worth and his ideals in life. In these days, all are adepts in the art of concealment and only care for show and subterfuge, especially when they reveal themselves in the form of fluent speech and smooth manners. How "westernised" many are ! "

Kumbakonam, 15—11—17

(This letter relates to the *Hindu Message*...  
...which was conducted, as already stated, under  
the editorship of Professor Sundararama Iyer)

.....

"I want to know your opinion as to what you think of the paper...I want to be cautious and careful and try to conciliate men rather than get into

warm debates. I want also that all questions must be discussed, as they arise, from a temperate and conservative standpoint.

We who belong to the Dharmic community have waited too long without an organ to press our views. Already it is too late. Now at least, if we bestir ourselves, we can save something at least, and hope slowly to bring back the rising generation. We must not be content with this weekly—and it is doubtful whether even this will succeed. We have proposed to start a Syndicate for supporting and conducting the weekly now started, and to develop it gradually, until it becomes a Daily paper."

The following are extracts from Professor Sundararama Iyer's letters to Mr. R. Krishnaswami Sastri, Sub-registrar, to whom I have referred above. He had a paternal affection for the latter who reciprocated it with a filial affection. He wrote to the latter always as "my dearest Krishnaswami."

.....

Kumbakonam, 2—7—10

"Wherever you are, I know that you will be a radiating source of piety, learning, honesty and high aims in life. May Sri Krishna make you his



chosen instrument for the spread of truthful and noble living is my sincere prayer.'

Kumbakonam, 17—1--11

"I hope you keep up your Historical studies. Some change is wanted. We enjoy the Vedanta all the better when we have had the exciting dip into the drama of the conflict of human emotions which absorbs so much attention and interest in Europe. Science or history is always necessary as a variant. Otherwise the honey of Vedanta is apt to pall,"

Kumbakonam, 6—2—11

"...I am glad you are keeping up both Sanskrit and historical studies. Both have a great fascination for me, as they have for you. All is sane about them."

"What a mighty controversialist the Dikshitar (Appayya Dikshitar) is ! Truly he is one of the marvels of our holy land. How are the mighty fallen!"

Kumbakonam, 30—4—1911

"...In this country post-puberty marriages will simply introduce Pandemonium, I fear, in Hindu society for various reasons."

Kumbakonam, 3—9--1911

"I hope you will systematically follow the Brahminical Ahnika. Let me give you a fact. Far 2 months past, I have bathed at 4-20 A.M., and daily go through the 1000 gayatris before 6-30 or 6-45. You must live this life also. You will live long and live to be great and useful."

Kumbakonam, 19—9—12


"...I am single-handed trying to carry on the attack against our enemy in the newspapers. All attempt to throw mud are being repelled with added vigour every time. So long as I remain I will go on thus."

Kumbakonam, 27—9—12

"...Karma,—the sum of the Karmas of men in societies, quite as much as the Karma of each individual so far as it cannot suit itself harmoniously to the collective Karma—must settle the course of social destiny. But we are the servants of the Lord and must obey his behests as we understand them in our Sruti and Smriti. Let us work on in the hope that after all the truth of the Lord will surely win."

Kumbakonam, 6—9—15

"...Your knowledge and your sweet temper






mark you out from almost all, and between us the most happy of all personal relations has always subsisted"

"...Next Saturday I have to do my lecture work at Madras. I hate this lecturing business. I have not the gift of the gab."

"I have received from a strange quarter a prospectus of the new movement or institution started at Ahmedabad by Mr. M. K. Gandhi of South African fame. But of this in my next letter..... Meantime, I may tell you that it is nothing but his passive resistance. The prospectus makes it clear that the source of his inspiration is the "*Yama*" of the Yogis (Patanjala). Nothing of the remaining 7 *Angas* of the Yoga is to be found in the Prospectus."

Kumbakonam, 30—11—15

"...The more we *practise* their methods, the more will experience confirm our records—so far as they have not been tampered with in later times. This last clause ought not to be understood to mean that in my view, none of our sacred and literary records are reliable. I firmly believe that they are on the whole well-preserved but we certainly have to separate what is valuable and authentic from the



little that is not, which has got mixed with the ancient lore of the Rishis.

...I fear that Germany will be blotted out from the roll of the great communities of the West.


I trust you have read my short contribution in *The Hindu* (of yesterday's date) on "Rakshasas, Vanaras, Dravidians." I am sure the so-called South Indian antiquaries—of the stamp of Ponnambalam Pillai—will soon come out with their replies and reproofs. Of course I shall not be found wanting. But I hope you, too, will help from your ample store of learning in scattering the band of paupers (intellectual) who have now for some years been howling against Sri Rama and Valmiki Maharshi."

Kumbakonam, 25—1--16

"...There is no limit to the demands on one's energies—exhausted already by nearly thirtyfive years of hard work other than what I lived by. I think one can only avoid work by turning away from the world bent on Naishkarmya. When shall I do this, now, or when, if it is to be later?"

Kumbakonam, 27—3—16

"...I do not think and have never thought much of the world and its gifts."





Kumbakonam, 13—5—16

"What a pest modern life ! Why man should lose himself in this mad life of unthinking activity is hard to see !"

Kumbakonam, 13—9—16

"...I have read almost the whole of the Gita Rahasya. I do not think after all that Mr. Tilak's book is such a terrible thing. The poor man—scholar as he is—cannot fully enter into the spirit of the Gita. Of course it is primarily a Karma Shastra for it is intended for Arjuna. But is it the goal of man below to be constantly at work ? Can he become a *Jivanmukta* here or not ? This is the question. Again, is not the Gita also a complete discussion of the problems of life so as to satisfy men of all stages of development ? This question is not evidently answered by Mr. Tilak. No one can answer it who is not a *Jnani* and *anubhavi* and knows not what is a *Jivanmukta*, at least by imagining what an extension of what the *samadhinishta* will be like from the experience, even limited though it be, gained by one's self."

Kumbakonam, 16—11—16


"...A purely indigenous movement ought to be



begun, and it ought to consider both our goal and our immediate wants. In my view, we want *first* protection for our industries, and efforts to provide for our industrial and manufacturing wants. We want also more of rural and municipal self-government and when we are fully trained in these spheres of work we can have Home Rule."

Bellary, 28—1—1922

"With the deepest possible regret, I have to inform you that my dear and saintly son Raghavan died yesterday evening...For the moment I feel crushed and inconsolable and full of despair. But I must call up all the resources of my mind in this hour of darkness and trial. There are yet, I hope, some palliatives in the world. Among them I reckon your unfailingly constant and loving friendship. A sinful person like me ought to make Mahaprasathanam. But, the love you and my dear son, Ramaswami bear for me,—and there are some others who are kind and good—is against my taking to such a course. My unfailing devotion to Sri Krishna is also yet alive and against the same. So, I must remain tied where I am,—though it seems that the sources of consolation are all dried up and I feel as if overwhelmed : I can say no more."





Kumbakonam, 8—6—22

"...The only comfort left is my faith—enduring and endearing—in Sri Krishna and his Vedantic doctrine and teaching. There is also my love for chy. Ramaswami and your excellent self. I pray to Sri Krishna daily and hourly on behalf of both of you and I shall do so till I pass. Let me have the consolation of seeing both of you by my side when I pass, and that is all I want from the Lord and no more."

Kumbakonam, 30—6—23

"...No people have preached truth more, and practised it less, than we, since the passing of the Vedic era, and other influences overwhelmed us in ruin."

Kumbakonam, 16—8—25

"My friend, N. Subramania Iyer, calls me, as he has often done, a pessimist. For the one existence is Ananda-Svarupa, and the world as the Taittiriya Upanishad teaches us, is sprung out of Ananda. But, consistently with this, one can hold that one has no faith—or rather lost faith—in the over-educated and mis-educated generation of denational-



ised and Westernised Indians. My pessimism so-called, means only this, and no more !”

Tanjore, 9—11—25


“...I am glad to hear that Asvaghosha mentions Maya Vada. If you find K. G. Natesa Sastri's suggestion accurate, it confirms my contention in my Bangalore lecture that Sankara's attack on Buddha and his teachings, must have preceded and even led to the modification of them by Asvaghosha so as to develop the Mahayana system.”

Kumbakonam, 9—8—26

“...Though my stay with Ramaswami is invariably loaded with the incessant and continuous tokens after tokens of his tender affection and loving regards,—it is always difficult for me, even temporarily to tear myself away from these surroundings and scenes and ties of life-long association here and about.”

Kumbakonam, 23—2—26

“...I have always felt that it is only after middle age that the ripeness needed is gained and I see that whatever work you turn out is and will be authoritative and unassailable, and recognised as such immediately.”





Kumbakonam, 1—11—29

"...In a few years more, our Dharma will, I fear, become a memory, unless the Brahmins resolve to live for it. To secure this end, it is the women who must first be trained for it. You will of course understand what I mean. "*Pura Kalpe tu nareenam maunji-bandhanam ishyate etc.*" This means that they must become tapasvinis and the males tapasvis. The Bhagavata teaches that Iswara creates, sustains and dissolves the Universe by Tapas. The Ramayana begins "Tapas swadhyaya niratam." What are the implications of these? My very limited personal experiences have also only confirmed me in the perfect possibility and practicability of re-gaining all by Tapas. But we have been bred in a wretched atmosphere of sensuality and Adharma! The fall has not come suddenly but developed in hundreds of years. Shall we ever strive to regain our lost inheritance?"

Kumbakonam, 27—7--30

"...I expect to send my review of "Srikanta's Sivadvaita" in a day or two. I have changed my views—i.e., my lines of criticism and comment. I think the great Dikshita's views are the only lines on which we can rely. I think Srikanta left South

Indian Saiva Siddhanta for a Saiva system which can combine with Advaita and thus make out a system which has room for all. *In religion this last feature is most important. If logical needs are also met, then philosophy or metaphysics becomes allied or married to religion. Only Saṅkara has produced the marvellous combination of both and there will come an advanced age when his name alone will shine in the world of thought and practice. Mere religion and mere thought are sure to fail in the end."*

Kumbakonam, 28-8-1930

"...The Govt. is determined to crush Gandhi's movement of rebellion, and the present "peace-move" so called, is fast proving devoid of promise. The existence of many anti-congress parties and the promotion of a loyalist "campaign" or movement are facts to be noted. If the civil disobedience gets fizzled out, the last state will be worse than the first. Matters will never again be left to drift, and we can have nodoubt of the ultimate outcome. The best thing to do now is to utilise the "peace" negotiation, so-called, to abandon the rebellious spirit, and gain all we can at the R. T. Conference. If Gandhi and the Nehrus and Patels are bold enough to do what



they can to bring about a reconciliation with the Government, the Labour Party and its chiefs will go a great way to redeem their abundant pledges of help towards the gaining of Dominion Status to the extent we deserve. Here is the real difficulty. How can we get Dominion Status and yet rely on Great Britain's or the Empire's help against barbarian hordes from the West or the East, which is a new danger owing to the rise of the Chinese movement of nationality."

The following are extracts from Professor Sundararamier's letters to Mr. G. V. Venkatarama Iyer who is an advocate at Kumbakonam and a man of frank and good nature and high principles and for whom Mr. Sundararama Iyer had a deep and abiding affection and who had for him a measureless and tender solicitude and veneration.

Chittoor, 29—10—22

"...Loving kindness such as you have always shown to me is rare in my experience of life...I intend to be there (*i.e.*, at Kumbakonam) in January or so. That is a long way off indeed. But I want to remain here till then, and cannot tear myself from my only son's sweet and loving society easily earlier."

Negapatam, 15—11—23

"...I feel here at times a little lonely but my son's love and devotion hover above and around me even as yours did there, though occasions for their manifestation did not recur daily in your case owing to your professional engagements and our separate residences."

Chittoor, 10—11—22

"Between promise and performance there is almost always a vast gap, at least in this country and time of ours. That is why our British rulers often denounce our "oriental mendacity." It is no answer to them to say that our scriptures do all inculcate truth as the most imperative of all virtues and duties. The truth, however, is that our masters lie for great gains, and we for small and even petty aims and gains."

...A Sanskrit and Tamil Academy comprising every one willing to help in any wise is a desideratum and will prove a great and useful institution.


...Unless an active propaganda is kept up, both the "educated" and the mass mind is apt to fall into vacuity and vacillation. The Brahmin of to-day is fallen beyond redemption, as proved by the fact that



even our non-Brahmin friends have, by their own "movement" and rise to "power" failed to stir us to effort for reform and restoration."

Kumbakonam, 19-4-28

"I read 50 pages this morning of that rascally and lying performance—I will not and cannot call it, a book, of Mayo's which you brought to me last night. Most or all of the devilries she mentions were unknown to South India at least before the alien system of education now in vogue was introduced here. Therefore, only westerners are responsible for any such degrading practices as Mayo mentions—even where they happen to exist within recent or present years. Within a few decades much corruption with a few families and at least a little in many and various quarters may have crept in—and even to my knowledge, in some at least. But, even now, we in South India, are not fallen to such an extent as to be scandalised before this world in the manner stated even within a portion of this dishonest—or at least misguided woman's performance. I feel certain that it has been deliberately arranged for by the unprincipled enemies of the Congress and of the founders and teachers of the Hindu race and religion at large.



The following extracts from his letters to Mr. T. Padmanabhachariar are intimate and revealing.

Kumbakonam, 3-1-'16

"...Trivandrum is ever in my thoughts. ... I made some excellent friends soon, in spite of having to do very hard work at the Prince's palace. His good mother the Rani was very kind to me ; and H. H. The Maharaja too was very gracious and let me pay my respects to him frequently. I can never forget his gracious condescension and captivating address whenever he was pleased to receive me. He is, I am sure, thus to all. Still I confess to have always returned from his august presence charmed and delighted. I saw him after an interval of 16 years at Tinnevely when he passed by on his way to Madras during the time I was Principal there in 1909.

It is our educated men—usually so servile, selfish, cheeky and untruthful—that ought to blame. The present system of training is utterly worthless and debasing and so cannot but bear this deadly fruit.....

I wish they will found a separate University after a new pattern there."



Kumbakonam, 9-10-'17

"... Hindu society is condemned for we are now a subject people. Everywhere people wish for an out and out democratic society. We are now nearing a crisis, like what has taken place in Russia or China. In India, the difference is that Brahmins will be attacked everywhere.....

I would advice you to stick on to Travancore. You are sure to rise, though slowly, and all one wants here is competence, security and serenity. In these days of soaring ambitions of all kinds, I fear you will regard my advice as tame and as tainted by old-fashioned and destructive conservatism.....

Why should any one in Travancore want 'boons'? H. H. The Maharaja is himself the greatest of boons. May he live for another 60 years is the only boon I want. In Travancore as elsewhere the anarchist is abroad and H. H. is the gracious keeper of all, the gaurdian of the weak and the angel of beneficence.

Kumbakonam, 16-4-'28

"Herewith I send for your perusal a letter received by me to-day from Mr. M. K. Acharya M.L.A. (Delhi). Kindly note the place in which he

warns us against the imminent danger arising from the certainty of the passing of Sarada's Bill,—if we do not carry on an intensive and extensive agitation, within the few months still remaining before it comes up for final consideration ..... We must hold a series of meetings—at least two per month—and not only in this town but also elsewhere in this District.”

The following are extracts from some of his numerous letters to Vasu (S. Vasudevan)—his young protege for whom he had a boundless affection during the last 10 years of his life.

Kumbakonam,

“...As long as I live I can assure you that my affection and attraction for you will never have any diminution but will grow only more and more. One thing I can say truly—my joy knows no limits when you are with me, and I feel unhappy every moment I am separated as I am now”.

Kumbakonam, 11-11-33

“... I have found a small poem to be got up and meditated upon *daily* by you. The sonnet concerns ‘Beauty’. We call it *Jyotis*, *Soundaryam*, *Jnanam*, *Prema*, *Madhuryam*, *Brahman*, *Ananda* etc., according to the context and occasion with



which we are concerned. Though the name and the significance thereof may be (or seem) different, the thing (or substance) in view is one and the same looked at from various aspects or points of view. The poet's aim is to point out the necessity for courage, perseverance, and heroic disregard for perils and obstacles and 'wounds' too. In his own words 'Beauty is for the few who walk through fire to win her—none but these'.

Kumbakonam 16-8-35.

"...In matters of worldly prosperity we must ever use patience. For, we cannot 'command' the future course of events. It is always best to compare ourselves with persons who have been less fortunate."

I may wind up this chapter by quoting a few extracts from some letters written to Prof. Sundarama Iyer by his old and venerable friend Mr. J. M. Hensman who retired as the Principal of the Kumbakonam College and settled down at Chundikuli, Jaffna.

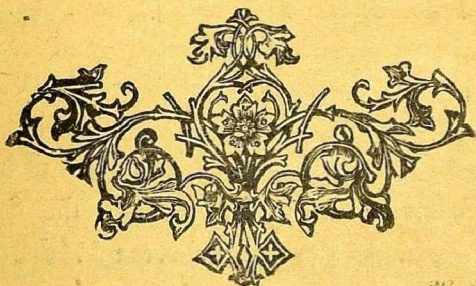
Chundikuli, Jaffna 21-7-35

"...I know that you are and have always been a thoroughly upright man and the most un-

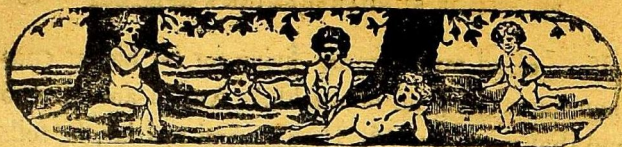
selfish of all my friends, living for far higher ends than mere piling up of wealth. And I am glad to find that your son, Mr. Ramaswami sastriar, is following in your footsteps."

Chundikuli, Jaffna, 12-7-36.

"...The only fault in you was your temper and the consequent intemperate language you used towards me during an argument. But I never took it to heart. I soon forgot it—that was perhaps my temperament—or was it my religion? I can't say. I had always and have a sneaking love for you."







## CHAPTER VI.

### Four Great Works.

I shall now deal with four Volumes containing Prof. Sundararamier's ripest thought and maturest wisdom about things of eternal value to man. Of them the first work consisting of two volumes deals with Hindu Dharma in relation to the problems of the modern life. The other works deal with Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga. The last mentioned work was collected by me from out of the articles contributed by him to the *Vedantakesari* in 1926—28 and was published by me in 1941 and has been excellently brought out by Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer through the Sri Vani Vilas Press under the title *Aspects of Advaita*.

#### I. A. DHARMA AND LIFE—Vol. I.

Bertrand Russell, in his great work *Principles of social reconstruction* distinguishes human impulses as possessive and creative, and says that the State and

War and Property are embodiments of possessive impulses whereas Education, Marriage and Religion embody, however imperfectly, the creative impulses. Prof. Sundararamier says about the fundamental idea of his work 'the *main* aim of the present work is to show that all these six institutions can be—and are—made to subserve creative purposes under the transformation they undergo when men are guided by rules and principles of Dharma. Part I deals with the State, War and Property. Part II deals similarly with Education, Marriage and Religion.

Chapters I—VI of the first volume submits the origin, and aims and methods of modern European civilization to a searching examination. Chapter I begins thus:—"Europe has always trifled with the problem of the struggle of life, and so her thinkers have failed to put before the masses of their people any satisfactory view of the true aim and import of life or the means by which to reach its final goal." Utilitarianism has been exalted to the highest place in human conduct. The cult of progress is in the ascendant. The western man is prone 'to magnify the exploits and achievements of science and machinery'. 'We have everywhere the triumph of Humanism, Pragmatism and Acti-



vism'. 'The prevailing standpoint everywhere is that of *Value*. The ideas of *obligation* and *virtue* have ceased to influence human life or thought'. The West has been ruined by 'the struggle for universal domination and imperial ascendancy'.

The Hindu is not a pessimist. We know and affirm the evanescence of life but 'we do not despise the world, but regard it as the field in which our sense of righteousness and human fellowship is to have the amplest opportunities for exercise'.

But in the West the worship of the State has become supreme. Morality has no place in international life. Human society is not a mere organism, as such a concept would imply that the individual severed from the society, can have no life or purpose or value. It is a *corporation* rather than an organism and has 'for its final aim and goal the promoting of every individual's inward and eternal bliss or perfection'. 'In fact India has been concerned hitherto chiefly in the effort to produce a higher ideal than the highest conceivable ideal of humanity and its perfections.'

Prof. Sundararamier urges that the function of the Brahmin in the Hindu social polity is the

preaching, and practice and preservation of Dharma. Each *Varna* out of the four *Varnas* has a great heritage and a great duty and a great function in relation to the Hindu community as a whole. Prof. Sundararamier says at pages 54 & 55—‘the very fact of the distribution of the functions and of their maintenance by the ruler as his own special Dharma or function among the *non-competing* Hindu communities led to the achievement of a consolidation or unity among the Hindu social groups and divisions and of the promotion of collective and individual welfare in the Hindu Society and State.’ The four-fold division of society was not due to any Brahmin cunning as now urged by some of the new leaders but existed from ‘at least Indo-Persian times’ as stated by the French Scholar De La Saussaye. We find it even in the *Rig Veda* and also in the ancient Persian society. But such a non-competitive co-ordinated interdependant community life was in no way a negation of democracy. Prof. Sundararamier says:—‘Ancient India had *the essence of a truly democratic government* though they may not have had in full measure, all the details of the elective system by which a modern representative and democratic system of government



claims—in mere external form—to rest on the basis of public opinion and popular approval.’

According to Hindu political thought, *Rakshana* (conservation) is more vital than *Vardhana* (expansion). The seven limbs of the State (*Saptanga*) viz., the king, the ministers, the treasury, the executive, allies, cities and villages. Taxation was mild and the taxes were to be used for the protection and benefit of the people. Professor Sundararama Aiyar says—‘Thus, the Indian State had no need to maintain a costly central executive and revenue service department for the collection of revenue...So long as our own village and suburban or urban self-governments are not reconstituted and their old functions of police and judicial protection along with other functions relating to agricultural, communal, sanitary and educational matters are not restored, India’s finances and taxation must remain in their present deplorable and degrading condition...India has no self-government now. ‘No conferring of self-government is, indeed, needed ! Hands off ! What is wanted is the practical abolition of the central administrative departments constituted within the last 50 or 60 years at least in South India, and the restoration or revival of the system of rural and

suburban self-determination prevailing in the 'eternal' and still surviving villages of India, with all the functions once appertaining to them, so that they may go on fulfilling the needs of our people and enabling them to recover their ancient position, strength and glory among the civilised races of mankind.

He utters another vital home-truth when he says—"There is a general idea or impression abroad that a popular scheme of education and examination and the spread of cheap newspapers among the masses are the means by which public opinion is, and can be, created among the people in such a manner as to react upon the measures of the government. Nothing can be a greater mistake...It is the party chiefs who determine the nature of public policy and the measures which are to be set in motion in pursuance of such policy. When once these measures are settled, the creation of a public opinion favourable or adverse to them is a foregone conclusion... All are borne along by the stream of current party shibboleths and the necessity of preserving the party supremacy unimpaired in the determination of State-policy and State measures." In India "the Council of Ministers" was composed of the most esteemed



and representative men of *all varnas*. He says—"In our view, *the substance of popular freedom* was secured under the ancient Indian system through the promotion by the State itself of voluntary popular assemblies and even voluntary organisations for the promotion of various interests of business, religion etc., on which the people of India then set a value. State policy and State interests did not differ thereby, but were to secure for themselves the strength and glory derived by its endeavours to promote public beneficence and from its incessant attempt to base itself on the support of the will of the people. What a startling contrast to the Modern Imperialism, its aims and methods !

In the next Chapter, Professor Sundararama Iyer points out that "political *power* alone can belong to the people—*not political authority*." He says further—"Numbers—the mere consulting of majorities and counting votes to gain a majority—can never enable us to attain the highest standards of State policy. Numbers can only bring *strength*—no justice or humanity or any real excellence of any kind—to a State in pursuing its aims or even in setting its standards of public policy". In ancient India the rule of the people was carried on not by

their elected representatives but by ministers *chosen* by the monarch as representing enlightened public opinion among all sections of the community. Professor Sundararama Iyer says that the consultative assembly had 47 members (4 Brahmins, 18 Kshatriyas, 21 Vaisyas, 3 Sudras and one Suta) as described in the Mahabharata and that the Ministerial Cabinet was to have 4 Brahmins and 3 Sudras and one Suta.

Further, he points out that the Modern State is based on the equality of all whereas the Indian State realised the inequality of men and gave the right of rule to the wisest and the best. He points out also that "the authorities engaged in administering these villages and groups of villages were responsible to their several assemblies." The ultimate aim was the preservation of Dharma. He says—a Government is the highest and most difficult of all arts; and so only the most capable and high-minded men—those citizens alone in whom the *Sattvic* element in human nature predominates over the *Rajasic* or the *Tamasic* or both—must be chosen as members of the assemblies of all kinds in the State. This is equally true of the Council of Ministers and the officials who constitute the executive". There



is nothing sacrosanct in the Party system. "What we want to say is that in the ancient Indian Polity, the principles and conditions under which the popular representatives were chosen, prevented all the evils of partisanship, while securing a just government for all in consonance with the Dharma. There was no iron bureaucratic rule then as now. The Indian king had real power but was not an autocrat. In western democracies, the Prime Minister is all in all and the king is nowhere, or we have only a President and no king at all. In India, the king let them (the people) engage freely in all sorts of creative, economic, ethical, artistic, educational experiments or constructions." Professor Sundararama Iyer wanted such devolution of power to popular agencies in an ever-increasing measure. He says: "So long as the activities of the people, associated or individual, are constructive and serviceable in the promotion of social or spiritual advancement of any kind, the State will be well-advised in regard to all advances thereby made in the same light in which it would regard progress gained through its voluntary acceptance of devolution as a means of encompassing the aims of the State itself. Non-cooperation so called has a constructive phase which, when it results in

measures calculated to promote public welfare through educational efforts and experiments or acceptable forms of combination among individuals so as even to dispense with some of the machinery of the State now existing is not necessarily an evil and ought not to be regarded as even remotely smacking of sedition and disaffection. The springing into existence of public bodies intent on the promotion of communal or patriotic aims without bringing the State itself into conflict with such bodies will always be regarded with dislike by all bureaucracies and autocracies but it promotes national strength and prosperity”

Professor Sundararama Iyer emphasises another great truth when he says:—“The village autonomy was a real blessing to the people of India. India did not lack towns or suburban areas with their own self-governing institutions. But they did not develop in such a manner as to depopulate or dis-integrate Indian villages. .... Even her urban and suburban culture partook largely of the distinctive features of the simplicity of a rural economy. Hence the rural population was never attracted towards the ancient towns but found both employment and comfort where they were.”



Further India had no 'hatreds of race and colour now indulged by the so-called white races of the Continent. Imperialism is rampant in the West. Europe's so-called civilising mission has only spelt the extermination of the so-called backward races.

About the doctrine of Ahimsa, Professor Sundararama Iyer says:—"Neither Sri Rama nor Sri Krishna was unaware of the *Ideal* principle of Ahimsa,—the ideal to be practised by the highest and most perfect man,—the man who has attained, in due course of development, to the summit of human excellence in renunciation,—the man to whom the ordinary life of man in society and the State offers no attractions, and who seeks the realisation of the Atman or has attained to it... Barring all these exceptions the resort to the arbitrament of force as a necessary precept of Dharma fit and even necessary for observance is inculcated both by the Ramayana and Mahabharata. .... The 'modern' theory of non-violence and the Hindu "ideal of Ahimsa" are, as the poles, apart ..... Our own matchless Mahatma Gandhi has propounded for us his gospel of *Satyagraha*. But men are not all alike."

In India war (*Danda*) was resorted to only when *Sama* (negotiation), *dana* (gift) and *bheda* (disunion in the union's camp) failed. A man who is killed in a righteous war attains *Virasvarga* (the heaven of heroes). In India there was no militarism or universal conscription. Wars were carried on in a righteous way (*Dharma Yuddha*). There was a prohibition of the slaying of the unarmed, of women, of the old and of those who were vanquished in battle. In regard to the modern age, Professor Sundararama Iyer says that "diplomacy was, in a word, synonymous with dissimulation and war with brutality." The sentiment of patriotism has degenerated in the west into *Jingoism*. The new deadly weapons of war have made wars terribly destructive. Professor Sundararama Iyer gives us the only solution possible in the present state of the world. "If the League of Nations develops into the one military state in the world by the abolition of all national armies or navies or the reduction on such a scale as to amount to a practical abolition of them, the opportunities of war will become reduced to a satisfactory extent, and this state of things is as much as can be reasonably expected of an imperfect world like this.....Our Dharma has recognised the essen-



lial weakness of human nature, and, even from the dawn of history, insisted on the need and necessity of a *Sarvabhauma Raja*, a single universal Empire and World-State."

Professor Sundararama Iyer is of opinion that on the whole the Labour Party in England is the best friend of India. He says: "There is far more honesty, far more love of freedom for its own sake and of true manliness in the British Labour Party than in the traditional groups or factions known as Liberals and Conservatives brought together by the love of power and aggressive strife. The Labour Party loves freedom truly and has shown its fidelity to the cause of freedom by supporting Home Rule for Ireland in the past, and now for India in its recent election manifesto. *People who truly love freedom need not be taught, or forced, to confer freedom. No people who truly love freedom can endure the agony of seeing others kept in slavery and subjection.....* A true civilisation is that which promotes human freedom, freedom for the individual and group; all civilisations are false that impose obstacles to the human enjoyment of freedom in the fullest measure."

Professor Sundararamier says that India alone knew how to harmonize individual and collective ownership. The village community had the collective ownership of the village lands and used to arrange for the periodical re-distribution of its lands among the families in the village. In the west, Bolshevism carries out collective ownership ruthlessly by State coercion. In India the collective ownership was decentralised and left in the hands of the village community. Karl Marx is not right when he says that "private property is theft". Private property is rooted in human nature. The social and economic evils of the west should be traced not to private property but to capitalism and over-production and mal-distribution. A co-ordinated social life based on *svadharma* and control of greed is the Indian ideal. India had a system of guilds supervised by the State. That was a better method than the modern socialism or syndicalism or bolshevism or anarchism. Professor Sundararamier says :—"Thus private property in one form or another remains and is reconcilable with the new and improved social and industrial order, now in process of contemplation or evolution". The future belongs to a federal organisation of the various guilds of industry, the



State supervising them without rigidly controlling them and harmonising conflicts among them. "It is also necessary that the State authorities, central and local, should guard the individual and the family and the instincts or impulses naturally implanted in man which make for the maintenance of human personality and the ties of love or brotherhood which family or communal union tends to breed among men". Professor Sundararamier says further "Further, it is the occupational groups and subcastes or communities that led to the formation and growth of the ancient democracy with its village, village assemblies, caste and subcaste, panchayats, the suburban or urban guilds and councils and communal federations and assemblies of groups of villages and so on. Side by side with this communal organisation and interlaced with them, there is also a territorial organisation emanating from the central authority of the Indian State and associated with the work of assemblies whose members are chosen to represent the interests of the populations inhabiting territorial areas." All these groupings were within the pale of the four *Varnas*. "*Varnas*" does not mean castes or races but the major groups. He says finally "our discussion so far has shown that

the abolition of private ownership of land and capital is more or less of a dream, that the State must and will exist in one form or another.

## I—B. DHARMA AND LIFE—VOL. II.

Just as in Volume I Professor Sundararamier deals with the State and War and Property which, according to Mr. Bertrand Russell, are embodiments of possessive impulses, so in Volume II, he deals with Education and Marriage and Religion which are the embodiments of creative impulses. He says:—"Education corresponds to *Brahmacharya* in that scheme and Marriage to the *Garhasthya* and Religion may be said to include both the *Vanaprastha* and *Sannyasa* Stages."

Professor Sundararamier says further:—We must first guard against the idea that the knowledge and training which the student receives in the *Brahmacharya* stage is only intended for Brahmins and that even Brahmins studied only the Vedas. The studies and disciplines appertaining to this stage of life extended to all branches of science, industry, art, and culture known and practised in Ancient India by the respective *Varnas* (castes) to which they were assigned. The Brahmins themselves



studied not only the Vedas but Vedangas and Upavedas—for, without the latter the former cannot be fully understood."

In the West, education has a political motive and is to fit men for the political life. In India the aim was to fit men for "the good life". In ancient India, on the other hand," says Professor Sundararamier, 'the aim of education is the gaining of immortality (*amritatva*).' He says further 'the Indian system and conception of student's life—or *Brahmacharya*—is a course of study and discipline intended to form the type of character which will inevitably lead up to the practice of the ideal of renunciation'.

Professor Sundararamier then proceeds to describe elaborately the gurukula type and scheme of education and says :—"if India is again to produce Rishis, she must rebuild her system of *Brahmacharya*. (Page 27)'.

In regard to education and the Indian Craft-guilds, Professor Sundararama Iyer has brought out a fundamental truth which we are likely to forget or ignore. In the west the aim in industry and art is profit. There is also the ideal of art for its own sake—for the attainment of the highest conception

and ideal of beauty. But "almost all Indian articles are produced with a direct religious purpose, or at least can be traced to some influence of a religious character acting on the mind of some one connected with their production, consumption, or utilisation". Further "all Indian articles are hand-made—not machine-made. The Indian workman is thus able to attend to the minutest details in regard to material, form and colour which are insisted on in our sacred authorities." "India's guilds of artisans and artists form part of the highly valued constitution both of the ancient agricultural community in the villages and of the manufacturing and commercial communities in the great cities." "The son received his training from his father, and obeys like the father all the regulations of the guild in regard to the quantity, quality and duration of his work. Each guild has a fund from which it defrays its common expenditure for charities and other undertakings for carrying out the guild's common aims and common well-being of all kinds. In the towns, too, craftsmen's guilds are formed out of those members of the village sub-castes who emigrated to the towns in search of employment. Usually a trade or industry is confined to the members of a



sub-caste and membership in a rural or urban guild was confined to them. But sometimes men of other castes and sub-castes are taken as apprentices and pursue an occupation different from their hereditary one, and also admitted into the new guilds on paying the prescribed fees and following all the customary regulations..... The master was not always and necessarily the father, but one of the members of the guild; but the training given to the apprentice was the same and carried on under the same rigid conditions of discipline and life. In the latter case, as in the former, the apprentice lived with his master in his home, and did him faithful and willing service of various kinds ..... As regards the syllabus, where the learning and practice of the craft required a detailed knowledge of the rules and principles contained in ancient works (such as Silpa Sastra etc.,) specially in Sanskrit, the apprentice had to study with the Pandits..... They (the workmen) had to express in their skilled works of art and in the products of their unskilled labour the synthesis of religion, art and science which is characteristic of all conceptions of the Hindus."

Even in the west we hear today the slogans "Back to the Land", "Revive the handicrafts" etc., so as "to bring once again into life those direct, simple, human, and out of door things of which mechanical industry has deprived our working population" (C. R. Ashbee). Mr. Ashbee says further: "The spiritual awakening in England demands such a condition as in India our commercialisation is destroying."

Professor Sundararama Iyer gives us a clear picture of what Indian education should be if it is to fulfil India's present and future needs. We must attach the greatest importance to such a scheme and see that it is realised soon. "While primary education is made free everywhere, steps should be taken, by the offer of scholarships and prospects of lucrative employment, to make it general, if not also compulsory wherever possible. Every effort must be made to keep the system of primary education cheap and to prevent its becoming a burden on the country's finance through the introduction of western departmentalism and all its costly regulations and requirements. *As regards our secondary education, the present pernicious system must be at once abolished, as it has no art or part in quali-*



lying our young men for bread-winning. In the ancient Indian system, as already described, every young man became apprenticed to a master-craftsman and received both training and knowledge enabling him to become a skilled professional in his own turn and also receive and train his own apprentices. Our present secondary education should similarly provide for the practical training of apprentices and for their attendance at lectures at a school where they have taught to them all the elementary principles of science applicable to their own special art or industry and also all that science has to take about the proper use and appropriate nature and function of their tools and of the various kinds of goods which they are expected to turn out when they begin to earn their livelihood or work with a view to the gaining of profit. Simultaneously, the students of secondary schools should be made to learn drawing, music and sanitation. The entire aim in secondary education should be to set up the Indian young man as a journeyman—worker or as a master in some industry, art or trade, and to enable him to apply his knowledge to the achievement of practical aims. Our existing schools have failed in this respect and therefore stand self-con-

demned. Laboratories, workshops, and lecture-rooms must meet the eye on all sides when a visitor enters a secondary school. Of course, the same will be—and ought to be—the case in the case of Universities and University training—except when they are specially founded with a view to advance the development of a purely literary or æsthetic culture. But the training in secondary schools must be chiefly intended to turn out workmen, while colleges affiliated to a University must aim chiefly at producing experts, leaders and entrepreneurs in all the various branches of practical work and business organisation. The aim in secondary schools should be to impart skill to the learner or apprentice either by imitation, or by the unfolding of such latent capacity as he may have for originality and invention in his work. The teacher can only give guidance and no cramming should exist. Every apprentice and learner should be enabled to grow in knowledge and develop his latent capacity as a workman so as to be able to go out into the world with the self-consciousness and assurance that he will be a useful and serviceable member of the Society and State in which his lot is cast."

. . .



Professor Sundararama Iyer says further :  
“Simultaneously with the technical training which an apprentice receives during his course of secondary education, a certain amount of general knowledge must be imparted so as to give him the elements of culture and taste and thereby enable him to appreciate and enlarge the scope and influence of whatever makes for the happiness of the individual or the group, or even the brotherhood of mankind as a whole.” The education should also be national *i.e.*, in accordance with the national heredity and history and traditions. The body must be trained by *Hathayoga* and the will by *Raja Yoga*.

Professor Sundararamier stresses another vital truth as well. He says:—“There is a corporate system of education in India as well as an individual system. The former has for its aim the preservation of the racial culture, even when the old political or State system has vanished and even when the old social system tends to decay or disappear.” Our temples and Mutts and our rituals and our Puranic and Harikatha expositions and our Bhajanas and our traditional charity and courtesy and hospitality are the factors of such a corporate system of education.”

In ancient India the State allowed the Dhar-  
mic and vocational system of education to take its  
course. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "What  
the ancient State did in India was to give ample  
support to the teachers of all kinds who existed  
within its limits, while at the same time it never  
interfered with their freedom to carry on their  
pursuits according to the prevailing standards".  
Professor Sundararamaiyer is of opinion that "the  
elementary schools should concern themselves with  
purely secular education and admit the pupils of all  
denominations for instruction in such subjects,—  
while dividing according to several denominations,  
for religious and moral subjects under arrangements  
made by those denominations with the permission  
and under the guidance of the State". He says  
further:—"As for religion, which must necessarily be  
taught at this stage, so that the foundations of Vedic  
truth and of its promise of eternal bliss may  
command the life-long acceptance and adhesion of  
every one born as a Hindu,—only a few funda-  
mentals should be taught such as the existence and  
attributes of God, the fact and purpose of creation  
and the existence of God therein, the doctrines of  
Karma and reincarnation, the need and practice of



the love of God (and man), the essentials of daily and occasional duties and rituals which have to be practised as a discharge of the debts we owe to the Devas, Pitris and Rishis, the intimacy of the relation between the religion of the individual and the community and the means by which that intimate connection is to be maintained etc. Hinduism can only be truly known in all its fulness and glory when its saving benefits become matters of daily realisation. Its higher stages and reaches of spiritual practice can only come to us as a matter of evolution through the teachings of a *Sadguru* and our faithful devotion to him, and by the thorough carrying out of his precepts in every detail."

In regard to the education of Indian women, Professor Sundararama Iyer expresses very strong and decisive views. He says that in the West, women compete with men in all occupations. Both get high wages and are engaged in over-production which leads to dumping which in its turn results in the economic exploitation and ruination of less developed lands. The tendency in the west is now-a-days for women to try to avoid the trials of a married life and especially those of maternity and

the trouble of rearing children and hence to detest home life. This is chiefly due to the western system and ideals of female education and female labour." He says further "it is thus necessary that the home life of Indian women should be preserved, and that no changes should be encouraged simply because they have been adopted in the west." He says that women's education should be given in the Vernaculars and Sanskrit and should include religion. He says further :—"In the *third* place, our women must be trained in all the kinds of knowledge needed to enable them not only to pass a portion of their time in useful domestic occupation and industry but also to keep the homes healthy and comely and train children and rear them properly, and so they must be taught the elements of sanitary science and sexual physiology, cookery, sewing and knitting, needle-work and embroidery, and lastly drawing and painting."

In regard to the institution of marriage, Professor Sundararamaiyer puts up a strong plea for the ancient Hindu ideals as against the modern ideals of "egotistic happiness". Today "the sexual relationship is regarded as a purely natural or biological one, and therefore, no legal or religious, or even a moral or



social sanction can claim to govern the circumstances of its origin, incidence and course." But "the Veda regards this relationship between the sexes as a part of its conception of Dharma" and we must "recognise that the need for proper suggestion, education and control is all the greater in regard to the sexual impulse." "The Veda has certainly its eye upon the formation of the human organism and its social and economic building up but its ultimate aims are far higher than the composition and welfare of human society, and are related to the *life beyond* and the *life eternal*, to the attainment of the spiritual realisation of the One Self which is supreme and all-pervading in nature and man." In the Hindu eyes, marriage is a *Samskara* (Sacrament). Sir Gooroo Das Banerji says: "Parental love, to secure the future happiness of the daughter, gives her to a fit bridegroom, and conjugal love accepts her. There is nothing sordid or sensual in this notion of marriage." The modern ideal is a vision of physical union. But women are prone today to shrink from maternity and there is a tendency to postpone, or even abstain from, marriage. There is abroad a passion for freedom and pleasure and there is also a dislike of duty and responsibility. The Hindu

conception is that love evokes the real divine blissful nature of the soul and that it can do only if it is Dharmic love. Marriage creates an indissoluble tie and its aims are "the preservation of Vedic Dharma" and "the preservation of the race in its purity". The wife is the *Dharmapatni*. Love is the flower, whereas Dharma is the root and the children are the fruit. Economic and physiological considerations should not be the basis of marriage. The aims should be *Lokasangraha* (the welfare of the world) and *Dharma praja* (righteousness and progeny). Chastity is of the essence of the marital life. Modesty is equally prized in India. It contributes to the ethical life and enhances the mystery and charm of the eternal feminine.

Professor Sundararamaiyer holds that the rule about marriage within the caste is a wise eugenic rule and should not be violated with impunity. He warns us also against the western tendency towards "breeding from the bottom and dying at the top." In the west there is a fall in the marriage-rate in proportion to the population; the higher classes marry very late or do not marry at all; they are also prone to use birth-control appliances and further,



"increased nutrition and habits of luxurious living generally result in reducing the child-bearing fecundity." We have to guard against the invasion of India by such dysgenic tendencies. The West has now to go to the extent of taxing bachelordom and subsidising marriage ! The wisest course is to base marriage not on mere sexual impulse but on Dharma. If marriage is but a necessary stage in the evolution of the soul towards its divine goal, then it has a different meaning and value than we regard it as a mere satisfaction of a physical urge. A life based on duties is more noble than one based on rights.

The final portion of the book deals with religion. Hindu religion is considered in its amplitude in the other works of Professor Sundararamaiyer which I shall describe and discuss below. I shall therefore make only a cursory reference here. He says that it is "wrong to suppose that the Creator has left us absolutely unaided and without guidance to solve for ourselves the great problem of what constitutes the true plan and methods of redemption". Nor is it right to say that a harmonised universe is itself the divine state. Such a conception confines

religion to the merely *external* aspects. We must not get lost in pragmatic values or in phenomenal values.

Professor Sundararama Iyer says about the interrelations of *Varna* (caste) and spirituality: "The existence of Varnas created according to guna does not mean that these Varnas are water-tight compartments of our social edifice ; but they only indicate tendencies preponderating in the various Varnas. Though in each Varna there is such a dominant trend and direction discernible in men's characters, preferences and deeds, there must be (or are) individuals—whose numbers may vary at different times—possessing other tendencies and preferences... The Vedic religion does not hold that any particular religious doctrine (or even observance) is to be revealed to a particular class or group only and not to others." He says further that the shat karmas fixed for Brahmins from the *Vritti* (or economic point of view) "have not much value from a spiritual point of view." "On the other hand the Dharma which have alone a spiritual value (and bring no professional or economic uses or gains) are dwelt upon in the Gita (XVIII 41-44) with much em-



phasis and force especially in the case of the Brahmins." The most spiritual Dharmas—Jnana, Yoga, and especially *bhakti*—are made common to all" (Gita, XVIII, 46) et seq. The doctrine of the *gunas* shows to us that we must rise from the life of instinct to the life of the mind, and from the life of the mind to the life of the spirit.

About the Brahmins, Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "In India the Brahmins were especially entrusted with the duty of" (protecting Dharma or religion. Their chief functions or methods of work in this respect were *three*—to study and teach the Vedas; to perform sacrifices or officiate at their performance; to learn and teach the various sciences (*shastras*) which are subsidiary and helpful to the gaining of a prosperous national life." They never formed a church or profession. "Whatever status they gained was entirely due to their learning, character, and their unflinching and courageous devotion to all high aims and ideals in life... The Brahmins, too, were allowed to take up various secular callings in times or occasions of trouble arising from insufficient resources. This was also a further reason why they never became a professional class." Further many among the

Other classes performed such functions as teaching etc. to the members of their groups. The Brahmin's duty is a Dharmic function and not a mercenary profession. In the west the clerical profession is becoming unattractive in the modern sceptical age. But in India the concept of Dharma has prevented such a catastrophe.

The book ends thus. It has got an Epilogue wherein Professor Sundararama Iyer analyses modern Indology and its theories. He says: "We Indians have always accepted the dictum that the entire Indian peninsula (with some adjacent countries North, West, East) has ever been inhabited by an ancient people known as Bharatas by race and Aryans by religion, Aryan and Dasyu are names applied to persons belonging to different and opposing faiths, even as Christian and heathen, Mussalman and Kaffir etc. Racially the Dasyus were not different in origin from the Aryans! The view of Indologists that the Aryan race emigrated into India is but an unproved theory.

In the Epilogue he says also that Brahmoism, and Arya Samaj as well as the mediaeval religious movements should not be regarded as Protestant



Hinduism but as so many defensive outworks thrown round the ever-living holy fabric of Vedic Dharma." Dharma is eternal, and the Karma and Bhakti and Jnana aspects of Hinduism have a perennial value. "We have lost the practical aspect of it (Vedanta) and only retain its dry and dreary polemics." Let us revive our Karmakanda, and make alive our Pranayama and Yoga and Mantra Sastras and let us realise the practical aspects of Vedanta, and then will come back the days of Hindu glory once again.

In the Appendix to the book, Professor Sundararama Iyer presents briefly the basal ideas of Hindu Sociology. Man is soul who is ensheathed in a body. The division of *Varnas* is a natural division and is found in all creation. "Here alone we have fully appreciated and guarded the function of heredity in transmitting mental tendencies and physical endowments. "Hindu society is organised on the basis of Co-operation—on the basis of 'unity without uniformity'—among its different occupational sections or groups (*Varnas*). The Hindu society is not a mere organism. An organism is liable to the inevitable law of birth and growth and decay and death. The Hindu society is built on the solid

rock of Dharma and shows an undying vitality and is destined to endure for ever.

## II. THE VEDANTA: ITS ETHICAL ASPECT.

In this book we have six introductory chapters *viz.*, The Vedanta as the source of Spiritual truth; Vedanta the universal religion; The practical aspect of the Vedanta; The place of the Guru in the Vedanta religion, the qualified disciple in the Vedanta, and Vairagya and Progress. In the next Chapter I discuss Chapters I, IV, V & VI, as they were separate articles by him and were separately published by him as small brochures. In Chapter II he says:—"Hinduism alone neither desires nor attempts conversion, while all its rivals here are openly and avowedly propagandistic and proselytising." Professor Sundararama Aiyar claims that truly universal religion is not "that which seeks only to conquer the whole World." He says "Thus the Vedanta religion alone—with its distinctive doctrines of Karma and Re-incarnation and with its equally distinctive doctrine of an omniscient and omnipenetrative, at the same time personal, ruling God (Iswara) that can provide for and reward according to their deserts, all living souls (Jivas) each bearing



with it the burden of a past immeasurable in its length and infinitely diverse in its tendencies, gifts and acquisitions—can be regarded as a universal religion in the proper and acceptable sense of the phrase." In Chapter III, he points out how the Veda consists of three parts "Karma or ritual *upasana* in its twofold division of divine meditation (*dhyana*) and the love of God (*bhakti*), and *Jnana* or the perceptual realisation of the one Self." The goal is *anubhava* or realisation. Karma leads to *chittasuddhi* (purity of mind) which leads to *bhakti* which, in its turn, leads to *Jnana* which leads to *Anubhava* (realisation) by means of concentration on spiritual sounds (*nadanusandhana*) or radiances (*antarjyotirdarsana*).

Part II of the book deals with the ethical aspect of the Vedanta i.e., Karma Yoga. According to Hindu thought, Dharma or Karma is eternal and has been revealed by God to Man. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "Hence, the superconscious state known to Indian *yogis* and *jnanis* as *Samprajnata Samadhi* can alone be the foundation of a code of ethics having the famous teleological aim and motive known to our sages and *shastras* as

*mukti* and avoiding the material evils and dangers of a purely mechanical system of sensational or rationalistic morality". He says further : "*Karma* or *Dharma* is the name we apply to the entire body of the laws of conduct which form the ritual and morality of the Vedic religion..... We are concerned with *Karma* as an ethical precept having a teleological aim". It is learnt from the Veda (*Karma brahmodbhavan viddhi*—Gita III, 15). See also Gita XVI, 24 (*Shastram pramanam te*) i.e., your authority is Scripture.

*Karma* is classified as *nitya* i.e., daily and obligatory, *naimittika* i.e., occasional and obligatory and *Kamyā* i.e., prescribed for particular desired results, and *prayaschitta* i.e., expiatory. *Nishiddha* *Karmas* are actions that must be avoided. *Nitya* and *Naimittika* *Karmas* must be done, as it is a sin to give them up. "Those who desire release from the bonds of *samsara* (*mumukshus*) must avoid *Kamyā* and *Nishiddha* *Karmas*." *Nitya* *Karmas* may be done with *Kama* or desire, and *Kamyā* *Karmas* may be done in a spirit of *Nishkāma* as a love-offering to *Iswara* (God). "What brings a *Karma* into the category of *Nitya* and *Kamyā* lies in the mind of the doer and not in the *Karma* itself—just as colour



attaches not to the object but to the unabsorbed ray of light which is conveyed to us from the object."

Karmas are due to *Vasanas* i.e., "the antenatal and organised tendencies of each jiva." But "they can be counteracted or modified by cultivating tendencies having a reverse direction (*Pratipakṣa-bhavanas*). The Lord has created the universe and has allotted its direction to the Devas, though He alone is the creator and preserver and destroyer of the universe. Karmas are done for the satisfaction of the cosmic divinities and for enabling the wheel of life (*Lokachakra*) to move on. If they are done in a spirit of dispassion and surrender of the fruits to God, they cease to be instruments of bondage. Nishkama karma has an alchemic touch. The ideal of service was not unknown in India but the higher ideal is Nishkama karma for *Loka Sangraha*. Ethical life helps us in the direction of Soul-liberation. Control Desire by Dharma. Peace will then be easily attained. Thus Purushakara (human effort) and Daiva (Divine aid) are both needed. The former is the soil and the latter the seed. It is hence erroneous to equate Hinduism with quietism or fatalism. God helps the soul by giving the scripture for guidance and the

world for working out the *karmas* and distributing rewards and punishment for *karmas*. Professor Sundararama Iyer says in a telling way. "We thus see that Iswara is only the helper of the *jiva* in building his (*jiva*'s) own fortune and that he is no slave-driver or tyrant who delights in relentlessly subjecting all to his arbitrary purposes and mandates. The Vedanta happily combines the inevitable results of tendencies stored by past Karma with the counteraction of them effected by personal efforts of the human will, and thus harmonises the traditional opposition between the doctrines of free-will and fate."

The *Gita* affirms that the performance of *Swadharma* alone will bring to us *chitta suddhi* (purity of mind), which is the sine qua non of *Yoga* and *bhakti* and *jnana*. "*Swadharma* is thus the commencement of the spiritual life of resignation which is to lead the *jiva* to the final goal of deliverance from the bondage of *samsara*." The *vrittis* (means of livelihood) of the castes may change but the *dharma*s should not change.

Professor Sundararama Iyer says about the ancient Indian social and state organisation: "That



organisation was intended to help forward the highest form of social purity, of international or inter-racial harmony and of the highest level of ethical and spiritual excellence for the individual". He says further: "The constitution of the Hindu society, its chosen home on earth, and its Karma are based on the doctrine of Karma." He says further: "The doctrine of karma is inseparably and fruitfully associated with the principle of the 'solidarity of man' and even of the solidarity of the entire universe of living souls (Jivas) as the social aim of the Hindu race."

Professor Sundararamier says further: "The Vedantin steps in fearlessly with his doctrines of vairagya and humility before a world maddened by egotism and allured to its ruin by the fascinations of the flesh." He says also: "Karma is the instrument for securing the manifestation of the divine blessing throughout the phenomenal world for maintaining the normal or healthy condition of the elements and forces of nature, and thereby enabling all living personalities and entities to ensure their progressive advance towards the realisation of their destined perfection. The blessed Bhagavan is the universal helper, both as the revealer of the Vēda

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and its law of Dharma and the custodian and distributor of the world's rewards. He performs this last function by maintaining the order of the universe—manifesting whatever is healthy, beautiful and true in it so as to reward the faithful, and withdrawing his grace and bounty from it so that the deformities and horrors which nature can assume may impress his creatures and thereby have their influence in leading them into the path of righteousness which is marked out for them by the divine mercy and which is to lead them on to health and joy." *Thus karma has not only an individual result but also social and environmental results.* Professor Sundararamier says: "Karma has to take the form ordained by God in order that it might have the *indirect* effect of helping forward the world's well-being. Its *direct* effect is, as we have pointed out in a previous chapter, to help forward the evolution of the individual soul towards the purification of the mind from all egoism and self-aggrandisement so as ultimately to achieve freedom from the bondage of *samsara* and the supreme blessing of self-realisation. *But no living soul can attain this final goal of existence unless favoured by the conditions of the environment. Karma, as shown*



above is also the means to the gaining of these favouring external conditions. These favouring conditions are of various kinds—physical, political, economic etc.” These are bold, brave, and wise words which we must ponder over again and again.

Professor Sundararamier then proceeds to examine a current view that the Gita teaching is an “advocacy of the strenuous life of secular activity.” But the Gita is a Sastra and is not merely meant to teach us what we can find elsewhere in books on ethics. It seeks to transmute Karma into *Jnana* so that we may achieve liberation. Mere Karma alone can never bring about that result, Karma yoga will bring about *chitta suddhi* which will lead to *Jnana*.

The *vasanas* engendered by karma produce some constraint but they can be overcome. “Hence the mind is not only subject to the law of necessity, but also capable of freedom in determining its own forward and progressive march to the goal.”

It is also noteworthy, that Indian thought alone has harmonised heredity and *karmic* endowment. Professor Sundararamaiyer says: “Heredity, parental or ancestral, is but a part of the ele-

ments which cooperate in determining the character and constitution of the body."

Professor Sundararamaiyer then proceeds to discuss some outstanding problems of Karma. He says: "Several karmas—all such karmas as are consistent with each other so as to unite and give their fruit in one and the same birth will ripen so as to bring on their experiences of pleasure and pain in one and the same birth."

In the appendix on "Gita—How to understand it," he shows how the Gita is not a mere gospel of work. He says: "The Gita not only teaches the principle of Nishkama Karma or Svadharma without desire of fruit, but also the methods of Yogic meditation needed for the higher man who seeks to realise the Atman in practice and thereby to free himself from the bonds of *Samsara*."

### III. THE VEDANTA : ITS DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PERSONALITY.

This work shows a remarkable gift of independent and original and vigorous thought. It is an attempt to harmonise the doctrines of the God of religion and the Absolute of philosophy. We must



not confuse Brahman the Absolute with Herbert Spencer's Absolute which is but an analogue of the Samkhyan concept of Prakriti or Pradhana. Nor is it right to equate Advaita with Pantheism which equates the Absolute with the universe and is unable to account for the immaterial intelligent *selves*. Theism describes God as the creator of a pluralistic universe. The Visishtadvaitins (qualified Non-dualists) have a higher concept of *chit* and *achit* as the body of God, the universal soul. But their theory has many defects. It reduces the divine reality to the level of that of *Chit* and *Achit*. Further it postulates God as being in a state of eternal relation to *chit* and *achit* and hence God "ceases to be absolute, and even becomes an *object* of the worshipper's experiences" Further, even in *Sayujya* (final liberation) there is said to be separateness of God and soul but it is said to be like the river emptied into the ocean. Is not this a loss of the individual personality? Further, even this state is to be *ni* Vaikuntha to which the soul goes in a journey. If this is the case what becomes of the concept that "the relation of the Supreme Spirit to the individual spirits and the material world constitutes an orga-

nism in which the former is the Dehi (soul) and the latter is Deha (body) ?

In India Religion and Philosophy are perfectly harmonised and reconciled and unified. The worshipper of the personal God (Isvara) goes into Paradise and can from there realise the Absolute. Professor Sundararama Iyer says : "In the Vedic religion, we have *both* the immanence and the transcendence of the personal God...In fact, the manifestation as the universe of the primordial and unmanifested 'root of matter' (Moolaprakriti) is undertaken by God, in accordance with the Karma of all creatures, with the purely gracious object that they should truly realise him and thereby gain the bliss of emancipation from Samsaric bondage." Professor Sundararama Iyer says about God : "He is mere Absolute Existence, but associated with form and limitation, i.e., he has of his own grace, taken it on himself, to desire and effectuate the impulse to transformation in primeval matter." He says also : "The Vedanta not only reconciles the ideas of immanence and personality while avoiding those of pantheism and anthropomorphism, but also reconciles the ideas of immanence and transcendence."



Thus God is a Person. He has will and purpose in relation to the universe. "When, at Isvara's will, the Prakriti (unmanifested matter, which is the primordial centre and source of potential energy becomes kinetic, the world starts into being and begins its career of change and evolution." It is the destiny and privilege of the Jivatman to know the Truth and attain liberation. "The Vedanta recognises Shastraic activities of all kinds as the means to the jiva's spiritual advancement and to the final realisation of the One Self which sustains and pervades the universe."

The remaining Chapters in the book deal with and discuss various philosophic problems relating to the nature and attributes and qualities of Isvara (God). He is the friend of all beings (*Suhridam sarvabhootanam*). He makes the universe and gives us our bodies so that we may be enabled to work out our Karma and realise His beauty and His bliss. He reveals scripture which reveals Him. About Incarnation, Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "The blessed Bhagawan's incarnations (Avataras) are, however, only exceptional instances of the help he renders to his universal family out of his unique love for them."

Is Isvara finite or infinite?—is a question formulated and answered by Professor Sundararama Iyer. He says: "It is this relation of controller to the controlled world of matter that gives him his character as supreme Personal God and all the auspicious attributes above mentioned. It is this personality of his that makes him a finite being. Dr. Bradlay well says: "A person, I should add, to me must be finite, or cease to be personal. God is a person and therefore finite." Yet he can be and is both immanent and transcendent. "Even the *yoga siddhis* give to those who develop them the possession of *seemingly* contradictory powers at the same time—the power of simultaneously remaining both within and without a place and in distant places also. Isvara can, therefore, certainly be at the same time both the extra-cosmic controller, maker and sustainer of matter in its potential and kinetic forms, and also the all-pervading, 'omnipenetrative', indwelling, inspiring, loving witness and helper of all."

But God is not a mere "society of selves". There is a difference between the *samashti* (collective) and *vyashti* (individual) personalities of Isvara and jiva. "In the Vedanta, the collective personality of God in all the stages is not inconsistent with his



retaining his own separate or individual personality as distinguished from the jivas. For the Veda speaks of him as *Ēko devah sarvabhuteshu goodhah* (the one God who is hidden in the hearts of all living objects). "It is this fact or attribute of the all-pervasive power that renders God omnipotent, omniscient, and the centre from which universal love, grace and mercy emanates, and spreads over all like a protecting *aegis* or shadow, and distinguishes him from all other living and intelligent personalities, having only limited capabilities and spheres of activity"

In regard to Isvara and the problem of evil, Professor Sundararama Iyer says : "There is no higher being than God, and the very idea of responsibility for evil detracts from his super-eminent attributes of justice, mercy, authority and wisdom. Evil exists for man owing to his ignorance, self-will and perverse self-indulgence... Evil, sorrow, repentance, recovery from sin, faith, devotion, self-realisation and redemption from Samsaric wandering—these form the successive stages of spiritual progress towards perfection of soul for all who follow the path stretched out by the sages of Aryavarta for attaining the goal of life."

In regard to Isvara and human freedom, he says that God's omniscience leading to his foreknowledge of the future in no way negates human effort which "is only regarded as removing the impediments to the manifestation of the predetermined evolution of the universe in accordance with Karma which is present to God's omniscience." He says further: "It (the jiva) is a self-determined focus and centre of personality, having energies and capacities fit to enable it to achieve its own perfection, and in its essential nature free from all chains of circumstances, past and present. Its liberation from the bondage of matter and its perfect self-realisation can be achieved when it obeys the commands of its divine source and author"

In regard to the problem "Isvara—Has He Anger?", he says: "Even though God may seem from our point of view, to have anger or other emotions and to engage in activities with the form of a human being, He is not at all in truth associated with such a form or with emotions and activities corresponding to it.....Isvara has no form except what He has to assume, no attributes except what are implied and required for the purposes of the



universe and its working adjustments in accordance with the Law of Karma."

So far as the need of a mediator is concerned, Professor Sundararama Iyer says that Hinduism does not accept the doctrine that God has sorrow because of the sins of Man or that God takes on Himself the burden of man's sin in order to secure the latter's redemption. The Vaishnava doctrine of the Guru's intercession is not one that says that his intercession is for all mankind but one that says that it is for a particular soul that seeks salvation. The Advaitin accepts the indispensability of an Acharya but only in the sense of the teacher being the channel of scriptural teaching and of divine grace.

The Appendix to the book contains an article on *The Vedanta on Free-will and Necessity* which I am discussing in the next chapter and an article on *The Doctrine of Eternal Hell in 'India'*. In the latter, Professor Sundararama Iyer points out "that Vedantins declare that neither Heaven nor Hell can partake of the character of real, eternal, and absolute existence."

#### IV. BRAHMAN AND MAYA

Quite recently Mr. T. K. Balasubrahmanya

Iyer brought out a Volume entitled *Aspects of Advaita*, of which the first part contains Professor Sundararama Iyer's essays on Brahman and Maya which were contributed to the *Vedanta Kesari* under the caption *Experience as the one self* and my six essays on *Advaita and Modern Thought*. The former contains his ripest thought on the Advaita philosophy.

He shows at the outset how Sankara claims that his teaching is in accordance with Veda and with tradition (Sampradaya). The Advaitin takes his stand on the Mahavakyas. Jijnasa in the first Sutra in the Brahma Sutras means Vichara (enquiry). Jnana (realisation) is due to Sravana (hearing), manana (ratiocination), and nididhyasana (introspective meditation). But before starting on such enquiry, the enquirer should have the *sadhana chatustaya*. The Vedantic method of six *tatparya lingas* (*viz.*) *upakrama* or introductory statement, *upasamhara* or concluding statement, *Abhyasa* or repetition, *Upapatti* offering of proof or analogy, *Apurvata* freshness of view and *Phala* or value is then expounded by Professor Sundararama Iyer in great detail. He then distinguishes between *tatastha lakshana* and *svarupa lakshana* i. e. occasional and indicative

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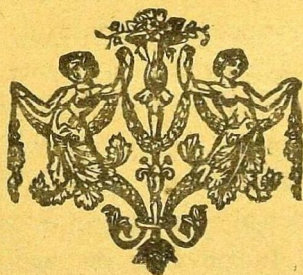
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attributive and eternal and inalienable nature. That God is Creator is *tatastha lakshana*. That he is Bliss (Satchidanandam or Satyam jnanam anantam) is *svarupa lakshana*.

The remainder of the book deals with the intricate concept of Maya. Maya is neither *sat* nor *asat*. It has two *saktis viz.*, *avarana sakti* which obscures the Atman and *vikshepa sakti* which projects the universe. The Advaita says that there are kinds of being viz., *Paramarthika* or Absolute, *Vyavaharika* or Relative and *Paribhashika* or Illusory. Maya belongs to the second category, and "hence also all the *material* phenomena forming the universe. It is *bhavarupa* (positive in its nature) and not *abhava* or *sunya* (non-entitled). It is thus wrong to condemn an Advaiti as a crypto-buddhist (*prachchanna bauddha*). Maya or Ajnana or Avidya is *anadi* (beginningless). Its *Vishaya* (object) and *Asraya* (abode) is the Atman. All Becoming implies fundamental Being. The *adhyasa* (super-position) of Avidya and Atman is prevalent everywhere but has to be terminated. When the smoke-screen goes away, the eternally existing, but obscured, sunshine irradiates all. Professor Sundarama Iyer says: "In the Vedanta, on the other

hand, the conception of Brahman is taught to us as the only one entity or reality which is in itself ever unchanging and unrelated to any other existence of any kind similar or dissimilar—and yet through its (falsely postulated) identifications with Prakriti (maya), we get involved in the conception of a divine personality creating and preserving what is perceived (or known) by us in the world of phenomena. The latter *i.e.*, the objects of the phenomenal world have thus only a derived and relative value. The Brahman or Self alone has an independent, intrinsic and true value as the one noumenal (or absolute) reality.







## CHAPTER VII.

### Professor Sundararama Iyer's Miscellaneous Writings

I have already remarked how his innumerable contributions to the Press—especially to *the Hindu*—though they powerfully influenced public opinion are now untraceable. He had kept cuttings of many of his articles and reprints of his tracts and pamphlets. During the penultimate decade of his life he thought that the free distribution of tracts on Hindu culture and on the world-problems, with special emphasis on the problems of India from the Hindu standpoint would help the cause of Hindu culture and Indian Progress and world-welfare. He wrote some tracts and asked me to write others and published them at his cost under the auspices of what he designated *The Indian Tract Society*

and distributed them *gratis*. Once I sat up with him for a month continuously and arranged all the occasional and fugitive writings into seven main groups *viz.*, Educational, literary, social, political, philosophic and religious with a view to their publication in a collected form. But one day during my absence, in a fit of self-abasement and self-abnegation, he destroyed all of them and literally scattered them to the winds. When I met him next, he told me what he did, and I was almost in tears. He soothed me and said: "My name is writ in water." He quoted the Biblical saying "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" and said that the proposed publication was but a piece of vanity and self-worship. I was rather sore and vexed and said: "I wanted to publish them for my joy and for the benefit of the world. You have denied us that privilege and that benefit." To please me he said: "I shall collect them once more". But he never did so. I have therefore to go on the basis of his published books and such copies of his occasional writings as I happend to get and keep. I lost many of them in the course of my frequent official transfers from place to place. I have myself been a prolific author and article writer and pamphleteer. But my

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incessant wanderings stood in the way of preserving and arranging what I have written. He was practically at Kumbakonam all his life. I took enormous trouble in arranging his writings for publication and counted my time and energy spent on such a labour of love as spent well. But the gust of a casual mood of his blew away my house of cards into the ocean of oblivion to my infinite but vain regret.

Even the available writings of Professor Sundararama Iyer cover a very wide field and show how his was a capacious and critical and constructive mind. He was rooted in the eternal truths of Indian culture and yet his mind was open to every wind that blew, though he could not be blown off his feet by any storm or tempest. He brought to his late study of the Hindu scriptures a very finely tempered and trained mind which was thoroughly conversant with western science and philosophy and religion and which had made the study of history and economics and politics and sociology his life-work and not merely the work which furnished him with the means of his livelihood. Thus his latest writings show a unique and peerless blend of qualities which made him a great leader of Indian life and thought and a germinal power in the future life of India.

## I. EDUCATIONAL.

Professor Sundararama Iyer held decided views on modern Indian education which, despite the laudations bestowed upon it, is not modern or Indian or education. He used to say that it has denationalised us without even giving us a better grip on modern science or stimulating our inventiveness. Nor has it stimulated an all-India nationalism in an abundant measure. He says in an article on *The Bane of Parochialism in India* which he contributed to the Old College (Trivandrum College) Magazine in March 1930 : "It is our duty to ask ourselves why, in spite of the endeavours of our rulers since the middle of the last century to spread education in all its grades in our colleges and schools, we have not yet been able to imbibe and cultivate a true spirit of all-India citizenship." The remedy is national education. He says : "Who is to blame ? Where is the dark spot in the present position with regard to our educational system ? Our answer is :—It is our teachers themselves who are to blame." He urged the need for a "new aim in education viz., the building up of the new type of free citizens who, while being shining examples of the purely Indian ideals of *Viveka* and *Vairagya*



and of the cultural outlook based upon them as the one thing needed for the humanity of the future, will be ever ready to overthrow the dangerous modernist dogmas of racial domination, racial aggression, and racial prestige which, since the Continent of Europe accepted the political teachings of Machiavelli have poisoned the very fountains of the world's culture and restricted the range of human sympathies by their influence on the educational systems prevailing in the West." He wants the teachers to band themselves voluntarily into an educational corps to spread "the light of national culture and national civilisation."

He was yearning all his life to start a Gurukula. He urged his noble friend, the late Hon'ble Mr. K. V. Rangaswami Iyengar of Srirangam, to launch such a scheme in his village of Nagai near Mannargudi in the Tanjore District. In it he wanted to combine Vedic and scientific study along with a handicraft. He thus anticipated the Wardha scheme of education and even bettered it. But somehow or other the scheme did not materialise owing to his numerous pre-occupations and those of his noble friend.

## II. LITERARY.

Professor Sundararama Iyer used to regret often that he could not devote much time to the study of pure literature—English or Indian. But he took a keen delight in dipping into English or Sanskrit or Tamil poetry now and then during the intervals of leisure among his incessant study and writing of historical and political and religious literature. I shall refer briefly here to the few writings of his which have a purely biographical or literary taste.

His contributions to the Kumbakonam College Literary Society Journal on W. A. Porter and T. Gopala Row, great educationists of India who were long and intimately connected with the Kumbakonam College, are very interesting. His reminiscences of Mr. Porter were published in the Kumbakonam College Literary Magazine in August 1924, and November 1924 and February 1925. Mr. Porter became the Head Master of the Provincial School, Kumbakonam, about the close of the year 1863. The Presidency College was formed in 1867, having been raised then to the status of a College from that of a School. Mr. Porter became its Principal. Mr. Gopala Rao was the first Principal of the Kumbakonam College till Mr. Porter resumed



charge of that post on his return from Madras. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "It was, however, the truly solid work done by Porter himself, the influence of his magnetic personality, his varied gifts, and his scientific attainments and ripe scholarship which created a new atmosphere in the College and a new environment both in the town of Kumbakonam and throughout the District of Tanjore, and in a few years brought to the former the reputation, still often spoken of as a state of things existing in some storied and remote past, of being the Cambridge of Southern India." It was Mr. Porter who first introduced cricket in the Kumbakonam College. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "He was a cricket enthusiast, and was most regular in his attendance. Porter was noted as a fast and graceful bowler, never as a batsman. As a bowler he was not only fast, but always a fair dealer, for he never threw or shot his balls at the batsmen. His figure and manner while bowling attracted my youthful enthusiasm." Evidently the bodyline bowling technique was not invented then. Professor Sundararama Iyer refers again to Mr. Porter's fine and faultless and fair bowling. "He craved the privilege of being taken as a back-stop and was overjoyed when he

secured that coveted privilege from Mr. Porter. He says: "Porter's love of outdoor exercise was unbounded. He not only delighted in cricket but regularly took to horse-riding in the mornings, and walked long distances in the evenings on almost all college holidays." About Mr. Porter's love for the College boys, he says: "As Porter regarded all the little boys in his College with a warmth of affection absolutely unknown before or since, he delighted in seeing them joyous and in filling their hearts with pride by bestowing little attentions on them...Porter's reception was so cordial and his manifestations of kindness and courtesy so striking, that the memories of them which fill the soul even at this distance of time cannot easily be betrayed. How his face beamed with joy as he conversed with his boy-visitors and patted them gently on their backs and faces or gently twisted their ears and watched their childish shrieks and boyish prattle with even more than a parent's tenderness and interest. This was in the mornings when he returned tired after his ride and stopped for a moment outside his bungalow to feed with his own hand his equally tired dumb companion and bearer with fresh grass specially gathered and kept ready for him by the servants."



He refers thus to certain other admirable and amiable qualities of Mr. Porter : "Porter was always accessible to his college students, especially to the lads who liked to play cricket, or join him in his walks. We had his permission to take and read any book from his almyrahs. His amiability, good-will and good humour knew no bounds,...Porter used to defray the fees of several poor boys month after month, and he gave besides, one or two scholarships of 7 or even 10 Rupees to poor young people who were attracted to Kumbakonam by the opportunities of educational advancement which it offered under Porter's Principalship. In paying the fees he promised, Porter almost always used to step (or steal) unnoticed behind the boys he patronised while they were attending to the work going on in their classes and to leave the fees on the benches behind them and it always happend that, by the time their attention was drawn to it, he had hastened away and could not be got at to receive their thanks. Porter could never bear the sight of any one of his young clientele expressing, or even exhibiting a sign of, his obligation, and in fact it may be truly said that his left hand never knew what his right hand gave away. Porter's heart unfailingly melted at every

call made to him which deserved its innate characteristic of quick and generous response, and few could know to what limits his generosity and the sacrifices he made extended. In one case, a Vaidika Brahmin residing at Mysore who gained his livelihood by officiating at *Sraddhas*, received a monthly stipend of Rs 10 from Porter, and passed his B A. Examination after a 'six years' course only in this College i.e., Only six years after he commenced his study of the English alphabet. I am referring to the late V. Rama Sastri (of Valadi gramam on the banks of the Cauvery, Trichy Dt.) who was 24 when he began his English study and who rose to be a District Munsiff of the 1st grade in this Presidency" On one occasion when Porter acted as the Principal of the Presidency College, Madras, Mr. Justice Holloway, presiding at the annual distribution of prizes, spoke of him "as the only man in the assembly who was not aware that he was a man of encyclopaedic attainments in Science and vast learning in Philosophy and Literature." As a result of Porter's intercession, Gopala Rao and Ranganatha Mudaliar became the first University examiners in English and Mathematics. Porter delivered the annual convocation address of the



University in March 1873. Therein he made a spirited defence of educated Indians against the charge which then used to be frequently brought against them by high Civilian officials that they did not care for Knowledge for its own sake." The following passage in Professor Sundararama Iyer's essay is interesting as a study in psychology: "We Tamilians, have to encounter a similiar prejudice when we have to reside in the Telugu or Canarese country in consequence of official transfers, due to unavoidable departmental requirements. We, Tamilians, however, are never known to regard as interlopers any one coming to us from any other part of the Presidency, and I think we have in us some of the true sportsman's quality which is prominent wherever the spirit of adventure resides, and is so attractive wherever it is found."

In an earliar issue of the Kumbakonam College Magazine (November 1916) Professor Sundararama Iyer published an appreciation of Rai Bahadur T. Gopala Rao (1833—1886). He says: "His was a magnetic and forceful personality which impressed itself on every scene and on every individual it touched.....Thoroughness and the taking of infinite pains were his marked characteristics as a

teacher". These were noteworthy traits of Professor Sundararama Iyer also. He says: "But Gopala Rao and Porter, too, had literally to earn their bed with the sweat of their brow." Mr. Gopal Rao worked the whole day and the summer vacation extended only to one month. The College teachers of today have, comparatively speaking, a bed of roses, with a few hours' work a week and a summer recess of three months' duration. Professor Sundararama Iyers says: "For myself I can truly say that I have owed almost everything that has been of value to me in this world almost entirely to his influence and inspiration:" He says also: "Never have I known a stricter martinet than Mr. Gopala Rao." He says about Mr. Gopala Rao's views on Music: "He frequently spoke of Moro Pandit of Tanjore as the finest musician he had heard, and also said that the late Maha Vaidyanatha Aiyar was the only one who had approached him in the highest qualities of the musician. "He had a horror of what was known as scientific music, and avoided its votaries as poison. For him the best music was that which filled the soul with its melody." He says further about Mr. Gopala Rao: "He never was marked for playing the role of a public speaker,

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and certainly he could not have gained distinction if he had attempted it." He says also: "Like several highly educated men belonging to the first generation of modern Hindus, he was indifferent to the regular observance of the ritualistic part of religion." He, however, refers to him as "the impersonation of duty for duty's sake, the incarnate spirit of self-denial, the soul of honour, the diadem of purity" and says: "He was a man who possessed, in a larger measure than other Indians known to me, some of the best qualities of the best type of the educated Indians of today."

In his descriptions of his personal knowledge of Swami Vivekananda (contributed to the *Brahma-vadin* in March-April 1914 under the caption 'Swami Vivekananda at Trivandrum' and to the *Vedanta Kesari* under the captions 'Vivekananda our supreme Teacher' and 'My second Navaratri with the Swamiji') he gives us very intimate and revealing glimpses of a unique and masterful personality. He met Swami Vivekananda for the first time in December 1892 at Trivandrum. The Swami stayed in our house then for nine days. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "The Swami's presence, his voice, the glitter of his eye, and th

flow of his words and ideas were inspiring. "He says: "how he (the Swami) was all eyes and noted closely all that was passing around him and could use them effectively, how he combined with his rare gentleness and sweetness of temper, the presence of mind and the power of retort which could quickly silence an opponent." Professor Sundarama Iyer had a great love and admiring affection for both the Swamiji and Professor Rangacharya, and he groups them together thus: "The Swami entered freely into conversation with all,—but in Professor Rangacharya the Swami found the man most near to himself in all that he valued most in life,—an almost encyclopaedic learning, a rare command of eloquent expression, the power to call up readily all his vast intellectual resources to point a moral or prick the bubble of a plausible argument, an emotional temperament which unerringly pointed to the love of whatever is good and noble in man and beautiful in nature and art." He says further: "Occasionally he burst out into spirited denunciation of the observance of mere *desacharam* (local usage)". He says again: "The Swami spoke to me of the institution of caste, and held that the Brahmin would continue to live a

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long as he found unselfish work to do and freely gave of his knowlege and all to the rest of the population." In the actual words of the Swami which are still ringing in my ears the Brahmin had done great things for India, he is doing greater things for India in the future'. I am unable to refrain from quoting Professor Sundararama Iyer's reference to me and my boundless admiration for Swami Vivekananda : "My sons were frequently in his company and one of them still swears by him and has the most vivid and endearing recollections of his visit and of his striking personality."

In the article on *Vivekananda* our Supreme teacher which was his contribution to the first issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*, to which I also had the honour to contribute an article, he says : "The crown of Indian spirituality consists in the practical observance in daily life of *sraddha*, *bhakti*, *dhyana*, and *Yoga*," Social service and philanthropy constitute in Vivekananda's happy phrase, mere 'social scavengering' and are brought into existence, as they are in the new Indian life of today, by the action of purely secular motives and national aspirations".

In his article in the *Vedanta Kesari* on *My Second Navaratri* with the Swamiji, he narrates, his experiences at the Kernan Castle, Madras, in February 1897. He says : "He sang one of Jayadeva's songs in a most entrancing voice and in the appropriate *raga* (tune) which was one we had never before heard in this part of the country." He speaks thus of the wide popular homage to the Swamiji : "I had never witnessed this kind of collective worship and homage giving conspicuous vent to the popular emotions of love and reverence, and revealing to the world where the heart of the nation and of its religions still lay—namely, the renunciation of the world's pompous vanities and its unsubstantial fleeting attachments as the sole means to the attainment of the lotus feet of the Supreme and the resulting liberation from the miseries of the Samsaric wanderings in the material universe." Professor Sundararama Iyer says in his article : "The truth is that the Brahmins have been throughout the ages the upholders of true democracy. The same is true also of all other *Varnas* and sections of Hindu society. As the Swami explained to us, our Vedic social ideal is renunciation and love." He says further : "He was also an inno-



vator and reformer, but from below upwards,—beginning from the masses below and reaching upwards to the higher castes and richer classes of communities.....The Swami's plan of campaign was to be a process of spiritual upheaval and purification among the masses of the people of India...Secular knowledge and its growth must come after or side by side with the spiritual." He says further that the Swami's view was that the caste system would remain but all privileges would go. "No privileges for any one. Equal chances for all." He says also that the Swami stood for the removal of untouchability, and the restoration and redistribution of the caste system so as to recover its ancient basis. Professor Sundararama Iyer lets us have a glimpse of the Swamiji's remarkable conception of a universal religion. "The Swamiji explained to us his plans for a vast religious reformation and revival in India which would serve to bring Hindus, Christians, Mahomadans, Buddhists, and all under a common flag of brotherly union and serve as a star of hope and harmony, and a ceaseless incentive to the striving by men of all creeds and colours after a common goal of national aspiration. He wants a new sort and style of temple with a hall in front

containing the statues of the sages and prophets of all the great religions, and behind it an inner precinct containing a pillar with the letter (or letters) *Om* inscribed on it and underneath the open sky." In his lecture on *The Sages of India* the Swamiji taught that Hinduism alone, among the world's religions, is not built round the person and life of a prophet or founder and that it alone "is built on the basis of truths, of principles and of doctrines." Professor Sundararama Iyer says that the Swamiji taught that "the Hindu may even worship any one of the Incarnations of God in creeds or countries other than those which are his own and yet he cannot be doomed to perdition" and that "it (Hinduism) has thus the true mark of a universal religion, and is in fact the harmony and unification of all particular creeds and founded religions." He says that the Swamiji told him that "Spiritual work never tires in India." He refers to the Swamiji's reply to a Pandit : "Tell the Pandit that, so long as I have this body I am a Dvaiti but not afterwards. This incarnation of mine is to put an end to these useless and mischievous squabbles and puzzles which only serve to distract the mind and make men weary of life and even turn them into sceptics and athiests."

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He refers thus to the Swamiji's great idea about Indian nationality. "Religion is the keynote of Indian life, and Indian nationality can be built on that basis."

Professor Sundararama Iyer's Introduction to Krishna Karnamritam (published by Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam) gives us as clear an insight into the essentials of art as into the essentials of religion. He says : "Thus Sri Krishna, both in his outer human form and inner divine essence, reached a combination of sublimity and beauty so absolutely unique that the impression of it has never since faded from India." He says further in regard to æsthetic experience : "Truly æsthetic beauty in any act or object within our experience is based on a careful constructive effort of the imagination in which the conclusion is reached after considering and rejecting, at every stage of the process, various imagined alternatives." Sri Krishna's beauty is not an ordinary natural or æsthetic charm but is a supernatural supernal supreme loveliness which kindled the purest sweetness of love (Madhurya Rasa) in the hearts of all by the sweetness of his form and by the sweetness of his flute and by the sweetness of his gospel. Professor Sundararama Iyer interprets thus the flute-

call of Sri Krishna : "When, with their help (*i.e.*, of Yogis), we experience the delights of listening to the *Pranavadhvani* (the sound of Omkara) which becomes manifested in the cerebro-spinal system in the human body, the mind gets finally dissolved into the *Venu Nada*—the sweet and ringing and coursing melody of flute-like sound,—hitherto lying silent, unknown, uncared-for in the interior depths of our being and personality."

### III. SOCIAL

In a letter sent by him to the Editor of the *Ardra*, Jaffna, Ceylon, from Kumbakonam on 12—6--33 he wrote "I have no doubt that the people of India, both North and South, belong to the same ethnic group—the Dravidian—and that though there once was a cultural difference between the northern and southern sections of the Indian people, that difference disappeared in later times when the religion of the Rishis and Devas had become spread all over the land and all of us became Aryans by religion. The word Aryan designates not an *ethnic* group, but only a creed—the one based on the four Vedas, the six Vedangas, the *Itihasas* and so on. This fact can be proved



from both the literatures in Sanskrit and Tamil. It was long ignorantly and unscrupulously held and taught by certain interested persons that the Aryans entered India from some remote place in the north-west. It can be proved by the Sanskrit literature that these Aryans by religion only emigrated westwards out of India and became Yavanas and Mlecchas. I have proved this before... An old pupil of mine (Prof. V. Rangacharya) who has projected a work on what he calls "Pre-Mussalman India" in nine volumes and has published his first volume says that my argument is 'plausible' but that my views on Aryan expansion westward are only supported by Indian literature, but are not in accordance with "the evidences of ethnology, anthropology and philology". All these are even now pseudo-sciences and I think Sanskrit literature is a more reliable guide than they seem to me. This gentleman admits, however, my contention based on literature that 'the Aryans and Dravidians were the same ethnically as they were branches of the same Indo-Mediterranean race'. If the ethnical kinship of the Aryan and the Dravidian is universally admitted that is an important thing for all of us, Hindus. During the last 20 or 30 years, much mischief has

been done by spreading the out-worn view of the early Orientalists that the Aryans were foreigners who originally emigrated into India, and made a political and spiritual conquest of its autochthones, the Dravidians. The mischief done has not spent itself, and sometimes is most unscrupulously active today among some of our leaders and groups of agitators who care only for the interests and impulses of the moment and do not care to enquire into truth or for the permanent unity and solidarity of our Hindu people and their progress in power and greatness for all time'.

In an article contributed to the *Wisdom of the East* (as well as in certain articles contributed to the *Hindu*), Professor Sundararamaiyar controverted and disproved the theory equating Dasyus and Dravidians. He pointed out therein that Dasyus are described in the Vedas as descended from Rishi Viswamitra and that "Dasyu" means such persons as are beyond the pale of the four castes and not the Dravidians. Viswamitra was originally a Kshatriya and was a Vedic Rishi. Professor Sundararamaiyar says: "All are agreed that there were no wars leading to the establishment of the Aryan religion in South India. Mr. Caldwell has



held that 'the introduction within the pale of Hinduism appears to have originated not in the conquest but in [the peaceable process of colonisation and progressive civilisation'. If so, there can be no room for an Aryan war of conquest leading to the subjugation of the Dravidians in the South India. Much less can it be held to be proved that there was a war leading to the subjugation of the Dravidians in the North. For we have already shown that the Dasyus of the North with whom the Aryas fought their battles were racially akin to themselves, though differing in the forms of worship or the languages they spoke. And now who were these Dravidians of the South. .... According to that tradition (Manu, Chapter X verses 43 and 44)) the Dravidians were Kshatryas once, and only sank to the conditions of the Sudras owing to certain peculiar conditions of the past history. They have therefore as a people never been beyond the pale of Aryan religion and social system; and so they cannot have been, at any time, among the Dasyus.' He instanced also the fact that the Tolkappiam mentions Arjuna's daughter with the daughter of a Pandyan King.

In an article contributed in January 1915 to the opening issue of *The Literary Journal* which was begun by Mr. K. S. Venkataramani, Professor Sundararama Iyer contributed an article on *The Eugenic Idea* and Hindu Society. He points out in it how "for centuries the peoples of Europe have set more store by the improvement of the environment than by the improvement of the organism as the means to the achievement of social progress and efficiency" and how "at last, however, a crisis has arrived—or threatens to arrive—in the evolution of Western societies when thinking minds are compelled to admit that it is much more radically necessary to improve the condition of the race through parentage than through change of environment." Natural selection can adjust us to our environment but cannot ensure our advance in beauty and virtue and spirituality. He pointed out that the Hindu caste system in its basic and ancient form had a eugenic ideology inspiring it. "We shall find that it is a classification based on the two important ideas of heredity and selection. These are exactly the ideas which underlie the eugenic efforts to reform the Western Society... At the same time our forefathers largely anticipated the modern eugenicist in estimating the action of the



principles of selection and heredity on the character and destiny of the human organism at a higher value than the interaction of man on the environment and *vice versa* as the source of man's power and progress... Since the introduction of this prohibition (of inter-caste marriages), however, men of all castes have been free to change their secular professions and employments without change of caste, and this has been due entirely to the eugenic consideration that mixture of blood should be prevented so as not to allow merely economic conditions, more or less temporary, to interfere with race-purity and race-heredity. The object of marriage among Hindus is not to satisfy the sexual instinct, but to produce the best offspring; and the selection of the bride is left to the father from an obviously eugenic motive. Love is proverbially blind, as also—we would add—frequently the love of money. Where men are left free to follow the promptings of these motives, we can unhesitatingly assert that eugenic principles will be largely ignored."

In an article in *The Wednesday Review* (19-3-1913) on *The Father and the Home*, Professor Sundararama Iyer put in a powerful plea for the preservation and perpetuation of the basic

Hindu concept and ideal of family life. The Taittiriya Upanishad enjoins on the son the duty of regarding his parents as divinities (*Matrudevo bhava, Pitru devo bhava*). Professor Sundararama Iyer writes : "The Hindu home has ever been a temple of piety and sanctified virtue, of purity and devotion, of order and peace. Is it today the same as formerly ?" The household ritual and worship are now largely in abeyance. Even *Sandhya* and *tarpanam* are disappearing. "These are now in many cases abandoned as meaningless and fruitless, and this is a source of much spiritual and moral degradation in the Hindu home". In this connection we wish to point out that, even from the purely secular point of view, the early morning baths and breathing exercises which precede the repetition and meditation of the Gayatri have a great and undoubted value as aids to bodily purity, to sustained and strenuous mental exertion, and to longevity..... *Brahma Varchas* in many cases, seems to have declined among educated Brahmins in these days and will altogether disappear in a generation or two unless these ancient and well-worn steps and aids to spiritual development are maintained." Such discipline will stop the early mortality which is now so



rampant among our educated men. Professor Sundararama Iyer says further : "Moreover, the home is the best of all places for religious education, and if the Hindu *pater familias* does his duty and converts the home into a temple of religion and training-ground for piety and purity, the victory for religious education in schools, now so frequently raised and as often ignored, will surely and speedily cease. It may be here pointed out that, as in athletics so in religion, training alone and not the cramming of information contained in books can be counted as truly valuable for the formation of habits and the attainment of genuine worth. Religion has been valued in India not only as a training for the formation of character, but as the only means for attaining the supreme purpose of life—the growth of the soul and the attainment of the God-like perfection which lies in the realisation of the unity and the freedom of the Atman. The piety and the purity prevailing in the atmosphere of the home is the best school for the converting of our youth into pure men and true devotees of the Supreme." It is also necessary to keep up our national dress and speech. We must not look on these as non-essentials. "The transition from non-essentials to essentials becomes

easy enough to those to whom change for its own sake brings no unpleasant consequences and even becomes pleasant and indispensable as giving a zest to life by relieving some of its monotony." Professor Sundararama Iyer warns Hindu society against the dangers of sending young Hindu boys to the west for education. He referred to Sir William Markby's view that in adopting such a course "the risk was too great and the prospect of advantage too small." He says : "The educated Indian's mind is apt to be completely upset by getting drunk with the alcohol of democratic equality and freedom." He says further : "Harmony or unity amid diversity has always been the ideal of the Indian sages ; and it is well calculated to promote peace and happiness, and to remove discord and disturbance, in the home and society."

In his Introduction to Mr. Sundararaja Sarma's *Bharyadharmam* (Duties of wives), Professor Sundararama Iyer made clear his views on marriage and family life. He used to quote often two opinions of western wise men—Sir George Birdwood and Sir Thomas Munro. The former said : "Perfect daughters, wives and mothers, after the severely disciplined self-sacrificing Hindu idea,



remaining modestly at home as the proper sphere of their duties, unknown beyond their families, and seeking in the happiness of their children their greatest pleasure, and in the reverence of their husbands the amaranthine crown of a woman's truest glory." The latter said: "It would be no slight praise to the woman of any nation, even to the ladies of England, to have it said that the correctness of their conduct was not inferior to that of the Brahmana women and the Hindu women of the higher castes". He said further: "I do not exactly know what is meant by civilising the people of India. In the theory and practice of good government they may be deficient; but if a good system of agriculture, if unrivalled manufactures, if a capacity to produce what convenience or luxury demands, if the establishment of schools for reading or writing, if the general practice of kindness or hospitality, and above all a scrupulous respect and delicacy towards the female, are among the points that denote a civilised people; then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe, and if civilisation is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country (*i.e.*, England) will gain by the import cargo".

Professor Sundararama Iyer says in his Introduction: 'Sita the eternal, the adorable, the tender, the lovely, the pure Sita has been the source and inspiration of all the Hindus that have been in the past, in their humble, as in their heroic, moods..... She (the Hindu wife) is by no means to be reckoned, or to behave, as her husband's slave, but as his sweet and tender companion and help-mate with privileges and rights of her own..... Dependence upon, faithful love for, and self-denying service and devotion to the husband are thus enjoined as the primary Dharma of the Hindu wife, and the position in the home which is thus secured to her is one not of subjection or enslavement, but of abundant consideration, privilege, and self-respect..... The ideal of duty in India for woman, as for me, is summed up in one word, and that is self-denial. "Professor Sundararama Iyer urges that there is no real seclusion of women in India and that the observance of such seclusion among the upper classes in North India should not be solely attributed to the Muslims because the Antahpura was a Kshatriya institution. He says also that the extreme social freedom of women in the west has not been regarded even there as an unqualified blessing. He says: "The Aryan



civilisation of India has been built upon this granite foundation, upon this wonderful ideal of constancy in woman to one husband and to one only—unfailing and irrevocable constancy in death as in life.”

#### IV. HISTORICAL

Professor Sundararamier often said that he would like to write a History of India. But that dream never materialised. Further, it was only that the archaeological and epigraphic sources were being studied and classified. Even today the writing of an authentic and documented history of India remains a dream. Perhaps today the ambitious writers of Indian History are appalled by the vast and stupendous and undigested materials accumulated in a hundred direction after having been dug up by all sorts of spades.

It is, however, worth while to ponder over Professor Sundararamier's articles in *Current Thought* (a monthly journal conducted by S. Ganesan) in 1925 and 26 reviewing critically the *Cambridge History of India*. He showed the untenability of the view in that History giving “as facts well established the worn-out fancies and the ingenious fictions regarding the existence, migrations and insti-

tutions of an original Indo-European or Indo-Germanic race which had its uncertain original home in Europe, or elsewhere on earth, whether in the temperate zone or in some other quarter." "The word *Aryan* has no racial significance whatever, but was and is applied to all such Bharatas (or people of India) as follow the vedic religion, as distinguished from those Bharatas who did not follow that religion and were therefore called *Dasyus*". It is to be remembered that no Sanskrit work contains any allusion to the foreign origin of the Hindus. The *Sabda kalpadruma* fourth kanda page 24, gives quotations from *Matsyapurana* and *Vishnupurana* which show that the *Yavanas* (i.e., the Persians) are descended from *Turvasa*, son of *Yayati* whereas the *Mlechchas* (the Greeks) are descended from *Anu*, another son of *Yayati*. The *Mlechchas* are stated in the *Vishnu Purana* to have been described so, as they had given up all the *Dharmas*. Thus the Indian kings ruled once up to and inclusive of Greece. In the German excavations at *Boghaz Keui* the ancient *Pteria*, inscriptions containing the names of *Indra* and *Varuna* and *Nasatyas* were found. In the letters from *Tel el-Amarna*, references to the people of *Mitrani* and to other princes *Tusratta* and



Suttarma and also Shuriyas (Surya) and Marytas (Maruts) and Zima (Hima) (Aryan names) were found. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "The similarity of these names can prove nothing in favour of the western origin of the Hindus or Bharatas of India. It might equally be used to prove the Indian origin of the so-called Aryans of the west. "Mr. Hall, the author of "The Ancient History of the near East" says that "the Sumerians came into western Asia from India". Further Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "The Brahmins who originally belonged to this region (Aryavarta) have promulgated their Dharma among the Bharatas of all varnas and classes all over the Indian continent. Hence the people of the entire peninsula, and even of the countries beyond where they taught their Dharma have come to be regarded as Aryans. Those lands, too, where they did their work of promulgation became part and parcel of Aryavarta which thus came to have, an extended geographical significance."

Professor Sundararama Iyer has stoutly and convincingly refuted also the views of Sten Konow and Professor Macdonnell and other Orientalists about the gods of the Aryan Pantheon. These

urge that the Aryans began to care far less for Varuna who was called an Asura and was a moral God and a God of fixed principles (Dhritavrata) and a *samrat* (supreme ruler) than for Indra "who stood for physical strength and vigour, for boldness and irresistible force" and who was a *svarat* (a self-dependant and autocratic ruler). But Varuna also is called *svarat* (Rig. VI, 28, 1). The epithet *Asura* is applied in the Rig Veda to the Adityas also. Further, the parallelism of Ahura Mazda and Asura Varuna will not show that the Aryans came into India from the west and is consistent with the view that the Aryans went westwards from their Indian home in colonising lands. Many hymns in the Rig-Veda invoke all the gods—Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman and Savitri. The word 'Aryas' refers to those who perform sacrifices (Aryaya Dasushe, R. V. IV. 26, 27). Sayana explains Dasas as *Karmahinah Satravah* (enemies devoid of religious rites). Roth says that the Dasyus are contrasted in the Rig-Veda with pious orthodox men (arya) and it is but seldom, if at all, that the explanation of Dasyu as referring to non-Aryans, Barbarians, is advisable. "Professor Sundararama Iyer concludes : "But mostly the fights between Aryas and Dasyus,



both Indians, not foreigners, were due to religion". In fact R. V. X, 49, 2 says: "Arrest, O, Indra, the bolt of the destroyer who seeks to slay us; avert far from us the stroke of *Dasa* or *Arya*." In R. V. 7-83, Indra and Varuna are invoked to slay both *Dasa* and *Arya* enemies. In R. V. VI, 60 "Indra with Agni is besought to slay all enemies—*Aryas* as well as *Dasas*." Professor Sundararama Iyer concludes: "The truth is that all these theories are more or less founded on airy nothing. One or more gods are invoked—severally or jointly—for help; and the attributes of one god are also found ascribed to others, not only Indra, but even other gods, are invoked against *Vritra*; if from passages declaring Varuna to be subject to Indra, we infer that the worship of Indra was gaining ground over that of Varuna, we should also have to hold from other texts that the worship of Savitri, *Vrishni* or Agni was beginning to supersede that of all the other deities who are there subordinated to them, not excepting Indra..... These 'Orientalists' fall into errors, puerilities, self-contradictions and mutual contradictions because in interpreting the *Rig-Veda* and other ancient works belonging to antiquity, they ignore the *Aitihasikas* (the recorders of

the traditions of the Hindus. They *chiefly* or almost wholly rely on the *Nairuktikas*—the Indian etymologists—for their interpretations..... Sometimes they reject even the aid of etymology, and substitute for it mere conjectures and assumptions based on archaeological 'discoveries' so-called and even the 'rules' of philology—all of which are still in their infant and even embryonic condition,—to establish racial and cultural affinities between Indians and western Asiatics or Europeans. These new methods of interpretation may be used to confirm, but not to abandon, those of Sayana and his co-adjutors based not only on tradition, but on the still existing cultural and religious and social institutions which maintained themselves and survived in the land owing to the value set on the ancient authoritative sources of revelation.

Professor Sundararama Iyer has given us various proofs to support his theory that the word 'Aryan' implies religion and not race and that the religion called Aryan began to establish itself in the time of the Rigveda and gradually spread all over the land. The Indian people were known as Bharatas and their country India was known as Bharatavarsha.



“The rest of the population were either autochthones or Pre-Dravidians conquered and either driven into the hilly tracts or settled on the land as feudal serfs”. He agreed with the views of the Cambridge History that “it must be assumed that the speakers of the Dravidian languages are aboriginal tribes” and that “the aboriginies have in the course of long ages, lost their ancient languages and adopted those of their conquerors”. The writer in the Cambridge History says that “the speakers of the Dravidian languages predominated in Northern and Southern India” but feels puzzled as to how “to account for the existence of Brahmin, the large island of Dravidian speech in the mountainous regions of distant Baluchistan which lie near the western frontiers of India.” Professor Sundararama Iyer suggests that long ago—four or five thousand years ago—the Brahmins may have immigrated there from India. It is also likely that such of their racial kin who still sparsely inhabit the mountains of Baluchistan must be a branch of the Indian emigrants who stayed behind there, while those who advanced westwards found their way to Sumeria”. Max Muller says that “the Zoroastrians were a colony from Northern India”.

Professor Sundararama Iyer relates also V. Kanagasabhai Pillai's view that the Tamils are Mongolians who emigrated into India from Nepal and Tibet and Assam and adopted the language of the aboriginal Nagas and the Dravidians and "in course of time they modified and refined it into the language known as Tamil". Mr. Kanakasabha does not say how he came to distinguish the Dravidians from the Tamilians. 'Tamil' became changed gradually into Damila, Dramila, Dramida, and Dravida in the mouths of those who adopted the Aryan religion and the Sanskrit languages. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "we must, therefore, dismiss as fanciful his view that the Tamils are a people of Mongolian origin,—and more especially so because anthropologists have all agreed in holding that, while the Tamilians and other Dravidians belong to the dolico-cephalic type of man, the Mongolians are of the brachy-cephalic type."

Nor is there any proof that the Tamils came from Australia or Africa through the now submerged Lemurian continent, though some Tamil works say that a large extent of Tamil land (Tamizhagam), 700 kavathams (*i.e.*, 7000) miles in length, was submerged and that it lay between Mount Kumari

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and the river Pahruli, Equally unproved is the theory that the Tamils are identical with the Kolarians.

Sanskrit has been regarded as the language of the Devas *i.e.*, the men who lived in the Polar and in the circum--Polar regions. The Indo-Aryans did not come from outside India and the original speakers of the Dravidian languages were not invaders. The Aryans and the Dravidians were racially one.

## V. POLITICAL

The Professor collected his political writings and published them in a volume called *Four Political Essays*. That volume was published in 1903 and the entire proceeds of the sale of the book were made over to the Madras Swami Vivekananda Memorial Fund. The first essay in it is on *citizenship*. He defines citizenship thus: "Citizenship may be explained as the status of the individual freeman in the social organism, and this status consists not only of duties and responsibilities but also of rights and privileges". Duties were stressed before but rights are stressed now.

The great law of social evolution is "that all

the leading races of humanity, the Aryans, Semites and also the most richly endowed branches of the Mongolian race passed from the horde to the tribe nomadic, from the tribe nomadic to the tribe agricultural or the village community, from the village community to the city, and thence to the large oligarchical or monarchical states". Professor Sundararama Iyer describes elaborately the village communities in the East and in the West and the city-states. Aristotle says that the city-state (polis) "contains in itself the perfection of independence." In Athens "the entire body of citizens came to be constituted into the State and all enjoyed equal political rights, liberties and prerogatives". Rome was a city-state but deteriorated and passed under imperial sway.

Ancient Greece and Rome not only gave the world examples of single city-states, but also examples of federations of city-states". In both these were both popular assemblies and senates.

In the mediaeval ages the Christian religion and feudalism dominated the public life in Europe. There was no political freedom in the rural tracts. But in towns the traders became rich and laid the



foundations of civic freedom which evolved into national freedom.

In the modern native states we have immense populations and hence the principle of representative government had to be introduced and perfected all over Europe. Professor Sundararamaiyar says: "The Athenian Ecclesia exercised the functions both of a modern Parliament and a modern Council of ministers, and hence the Athenians attained to a higher level of political ability than even the ordinary Parliamentary representatives of the free populations of modern national states." But, he says, the City States suffered more from factions and wars than the modern national States, because, owing to their small area, even petty differences aroused bitter passions.

Thus in modern times "the State is looked upon as distinct from Society and as external to the individual citizen" whereas in the city-state the state was identical with society. According to Aristotle the State exists not for securing "life" but for securing "the Good life". The Greeks had higher political knowledge and political honesty than the moderns. In Rome, in the later centuries, corruption became

rampant. In modern States electoral corruption is widespread.

Professor Sundararama Iyer then compares the single State and the federal State. He then compares British Indian citizenship with the citizenship in earlier eras when village communities flourished and the ruler merely collected the taxes and fought his foes. The Government of British India is far superior to that of a Roman province. Professor Sundararama Iyer quotes with approval the opinion of Sir T. Muthuswami Iyer that India must work up towards a British Colonial Constitution but is in doubt if it could be attained. How far we have marched since then ! Colonies have become Dominions. Ireland has become a Free State. India demands immediate Independence or at least immediate Dominion Status of the Westminster variety. Dominion Status has been promised to her by the British Parliament and is inevitable.

In the second essay Professor Sundararama Iyer deals with "The National Movement in Modern Europe." He says : "As kinship is the basis of ancient, and religious faith the basis of mediaeval, Society, so the basic principle of modern civilisation



is its insistence on the rights and interests of men in society." The secularism of the Renaissance and the Rationalism of Voltaire and the Egalitarianism of Rousseau have resulted in the emergence of militant Nationalism all over Europe. The Rights of Man have eclipsed the Duties of Man. The ruling principles are the principle of the Sovereignty of the people and the principle of Personal Liberty. The feudal tyrannies and the guild tyrannies and the employer's tyrannies of the Mediaeval Age were swept away. "For the existence of a State, the most indispensable thing is that this common interest should centre round certain common laws and a common government." If the natural ties of common race and language and religion and territory and historical association exist along with the artificial ties of the common bonds of law and government, we find the emergence of a strong National State. The history of modern Europe shows that the national states arose under the creative stress of foreign aggression.

History shows us further that "economic and material prosperity must precede the achievement of political advancement." Equally important is the culture of the national language. Professor Sundara-

rama Iyer says thus, a great truth in vital words that have a singularly appropriate meaning and message in India today : "Passing on to another phase of the movement, we find that everywhere its development has been helped by the renovation of the martial spirit of the people and the effective introduction of military reforms. An unwarlike people has nowhere been a great power for good or evil among human societies." It may indeed be held that courage in war has never been a monopoly among men. All communities of men have shown aptitude for war, and after all, it is no great merit, when we remember that superior militancy is an indication of an inferior social evolution. Still we must not forget the lesson taught by history that no modern community has ever been able to attain to, or maintain, its status as a nation unless it has kept up its military spirit and organisation in a state of thorough efficiency. A heroic struggle of arms has almost invariably preceded the birth of a nation, and no victory can be achieved without the acquisition of military strength by means of effective military organization."

Professor Sundararama Iyer says further :  
"Another lesson taught by the history of the national



movement in Europe is that foreign help has in every case been found necessary in more or less extent for its successful prosecution." He says further: "A community has to be made to advance harmoniously along several different lines of activity, intellectual, economic, military etc., and not only concerted action is indispensable, but leaders are wanted who can accomplish all such work so as to secure to their community a place of honour and importance among the powers of the world." Such leaders must have culture and character. Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "What is culture? Various definitions have been given, but it will be well, instead of indulging in vague generalities, to seek out the visible marks by which we can distinguish the man of real culture from him who has none, or is merely a simulacrum. To be able to understand one's epoch, to believe in progress, and to be always ready manfully to bear one's part in active life—that is real culture. And then as to character; it may be summed up as consisting in independence of all sinister influences and in honest, unwavering enthusiasm for all that makes for progress in freedom and peace. It is only given to men of culture and character to help in removing the fetters of their

race, and then they shine forth as the stars of humanity for all time."

In the third essay—*Politics and the Vedanta*, —Professor Sundararama Iyer seeks to interpret and harmonise the political vision and the spiritual vision of Man. The State is both means and end—because it subserves the perfection of the human personality and also because for its preservation the individual is and must be ready to sacrifice himself. The highest goal is "the development and perfection of the national life consistently *with the ultimate destiny of humanity*." In ringing and memorable words which show his grasp of the problems of to-day as well as his vision of the eternal verities, he says: "If the ultimate destiny of the human race, then, is to be achieved in the sense of mutual help, harmony, peace, and goodwill among the world's communities so as to achieve for man eternal freedom, bliss, and the 'peace which passeth all understanding', human political society must be built on the adamant basis of principles which India, through the voice of her ancient seers, was the first to proclaim to the races of humanity... When the destiny of humanity is spoken of, the only proper reference



is to this final goal of deliverance from Samsara into the life of perfect renunciation, freedom, peace and bliss already mentioned. The State, in all its stages of evolution, is or ought to be, a means for helping the individual in this life to attain to the utmost level of purity, self-culture and self-conquest which it is possible for him to attain, and the State is also an end-in-itself in so far as the *universal* form of it which will then be brought into actual existence on earth will be not only consistent with the perfection of each nation's collective life, but will be a veritable advance copy of the Kingdom of Heaven."

It is the glory of the Vedanta that it has always consistently upheld the torch of the supra-national ideal. Professor Sundararama Iyer urges that "the resort to the arbitrament of force ought to be an exception to the operation of the law and duty of self-sacrifice." He says at the same time : "Nor is this law of force applicable only to international relations. Even in the internal affairs of each State, if the peaceful, innocent and duty-loving citizen—and a Vedantin of Vedantins to boot—is to be enabled to pass through life and to fulfil his function in society and the universal order, there has to exist an ultimate

centre of force to put down by the strong arm of power however tempered it may be, by mercy, the ebullitions of unthinking brutality and fanaticism in the tamasic commentary." I wonder how it has turned out the riots of today all over India and the failure of *ahimsa* to put them down are a clear commentary on this early text. But Professor Sundararama Iyer clearly and correctly exalts *ahimsa* and love as the real nature and essence of soul-life when he proceeds to say: "But it is revolting in the extreme to make this an all-sufficient ground for ignoring the rational and supra-rational foundation of morality as indicated above and to insist that the law of battle is as sacred and imperative in its demands on humanity as the law of love and self-conquest." He concludes in pregnant words: "If...there is so much of law and order and peace in society, it is due to the existence and activity of the political machinery, in whatever form, among the world's communities and to the physical force with which it is charged. But because this is true, we must not forget what is even more true than this, *viz.*, that the eternal moral law lays down that this physical force must be restrained so as to be reserved only for such extreme crisis as are above men.



tioned; and even then man in his relations with his fellow-man must allow his spirit to be sustained by the life-giving milk of love and mercy”.

Professor Sundararama Iyer shows clearly how in India the *ahimsa* ideal has been valued very highly. He says: “In India at least the honour paid to the order of the Sanyasins, as the highest of the four Asramas, and to the Brahmins as the highest of the Castes or Varnas points to the tendencies of social advance in the appreciation of moral worth, culture and self-denial”. He says further: “We, too, may be permitted to hope that in the future evolution of European society, the infinite worth of individual ethical excellence, of such qualities as humanity, truthfulness etc., will find an increasing sphere of active application and that such qualities as patriotism, loyalty etc., which tend to promote racial strife and animosities, will more and more decline. At the same time we firmly believe that, if this is to be accomplished, men in Europe, and especially the leaders of thought must lend their ears and hearts to the inspiring words and truths of the Vedanta.” Alas ! the present age of Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin in

Europe shows that "racial strife and animosities" have increased rather than declined !

Professor Sundararama Iyer urges that if force governs the external relations of a State, such a mental habit will contaminate the internal relations as well. He says with bitter pathos and pathetic bitterness: "The tremendously swollen armaments of Europe, the enormous acquisition of wealth and power by which alone these efficient and powerful fleets and armies and the unhealthy spirit of rivalry and jealousy among the nations is maintained, the 'general ferment' in society which is the result of this ceaseless pursuit of wealth and power, and the source of 'the aimless war of every man against his neighbour' in European communities, their atheism, nihilism and anarchism and their heartless manner of dealing with weaker races so as to harass and ultimately to exterminate them are the direct result and natural outcome of the prevailing tendency to bolster up the sentiment of nationality and suppress the sentiment of humanity in men".

What then is the attitude of the Vedantin to the State ? Professor Sundararama Iyer says with courage of conviction and clarity of vision : "With



the Vedantin, on the other hand, the State has to work in subordination to the eternal laws of love and duty for their own sakes so as to enable the individual to live the life of the spirit and thereby to realise the unity and solidarity of the entire human race and even of the universe of being (Lokasangraha, as the Bhagavad Gita calls it) so as to approach step by step the lotus feet of Isvara, the lord of Law and Love, the Satchidananda of the Siddhapurusha, the perfected sage. The State then, is not a necessary evil to be put up with by the ideal man, but a necessary good demanded by the imperfection of human nature and a capital instrument in the hands of the higher man for realising the perfection of human nature on earth".

Professor Sundararama Iyer clearly affirms that the Vedanta is not in love with any particular type of State. He says: "Has the Vedantin to recommend any particular form of the State as the perfection of the political life possible for men to attain in this world? The answer must be in the negative. Progress towards spiritual peace and perfection being the law and end of the universal organism, the form of the State must be adjusted

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to the several stages of the progress in knowledge, purity and power achieved by the several sections of our race. Centralisation and decentralisation, popular liberty in the shape of an extended franchise and popular restraint by superior administrative direction and control, all must be mingled in the due proportions needed for enabling the individual to fulfil the obligations of citizenship so as to attain the highest perfection of human nature...To the Vedantin...it must appear natural and desirable that the eligible and capable citizen alone—the man in whom alone the *sattvic* element of human nature preponderates—must rule on earth”.

Professor Sundararama Iyer says about the west today. “This Western and Christian civilisation sets more store by the *rajasic* ideal of active competition among nations than by the *Sattvic* and Vedantic doctrine of the solidarity of the human race”. He asks: “Can they (the nations) avoid being drawn together into some kind of co-ordinated state forming a real federation of the world and ruled and guided by the wisdom of a real parliament of man?” Alas ! humanity is as far as ever from that goal despite Tennyson and H. G. Wells.



and Professor Sundararama Iyer. Even that simulacrum of world-federation—the League of Nations—is practically dead.

What then is to be done? Professor Sundararama Iyer says: “Everything in the nature of an artificial union of peoples or of a forcible introduction of exotic civilisation and institutions must be avoided, for that will lead only to dislocation and destruction and not to the continuous development of the organisation of our race by political co-ordination”. He says further: “Men of different religious faiths must remain content with influencing each other for good and this result is best achieved when all nations live in peace and harmony with each other so that every one may develop along its own line of advance so as to enter finally into the most suitable form of political, social and religious relationship with the rest of the world in the universal empire of the future”. He says finally. “When such a co-ordinated universal state has come into existence in the world and when, owing to the disappearance of war, the present militant organisation of every one of the existing states of the world has ceased to exist,... not only will all the traces of militancy now existing

in the internal social and economic organisations of each society disappear, but the utmost amount of freedom will be permitted to the individual so as to confine, within the most absolutely indispensable limits, the extent of the present state of control over the citizen's person and property".

In the last essay which is on *The National Movement in India*, Professor Sundararama Iyer applies the lessons of history to India. "Patriotism and Militarism and Imperialism—these are the holy Trinity of the civilised world...Civilisation, under these conditions, has come to be regarded as identical with colonial and commercial expansion and political predominance over millions of dependent races and communities." Professor Sundararama Iyer thinks that Bombay under the leadership of Mr. Ranade has taken the lead in organising the western ideals and that Bengal under the leadership of Svami Vivekananda has taken the lead in organising the eastern spiritual ideals, whereas "we in Madras have yet produced no man endowed with the gift of leadership." He asks: "Shall we adopt a revolutionary ideal, or shall we fulfil the past and further develop the national aim and ideal which has so



long fascinated men's mind's in India? He reviews the history of India since Buddhism and says: "And thus our brief review of the past history of India has taught us the great lesson that neither the process of internal schism nor the advent of revolutionary influences from abroad, can restore India to her rightful place in the history of the progress of humanity."

Professor Sundararama Iyer says of the National Congress of that time (1903) that it was hardly national and had no revolutionary aim by way of the overthrow of foreign supremacy. He says further that "Lord Lansdowne, when Viceroy of India, acknowledged in handsome terms that it was a perfectly loyal and constitutional movement." The Congress of to-day is national out and out and has proclaimed Independence as the goal of India. About the Congress politics and politicians of those times, Professor Sundararama Iyer says: "They must remember that speeches and resolutions do not form social forces. It is the power of faith that can touch human hearts, and faith comes only to those who undergo great sacrifices and sufferings in what they conceive to be a great aim of human life and endeavour. The Congress politicians and speakers

have assuredly made no such great sacrifices or undergone such sufferings as to touch human hearts in India with the power of faith or to communicate that magic power to human hearts elsewhere." It is just this metamorphosis by that supreme saint and wizard Mahatma Gandhi. Professor Sundararama Iyer thinks that India should earn her freedom by making a gift of her spirituality to the West.

There is an appendix to the Volume. It is called *The Boer and the Hindu*. Professor Sundararama Iyer urges that the British conquered the Boers whereas, in the words of Sir John Seeley "India can hardly be said to have been conquered by foreigners, she has rather conquered herself." Professor Sundararama Iyer says that India had risen above nationality. "India cannot and will not become a nation, and the rival or enemy of any other community of men." In later life he stood up for a sturdy Indian nationalism and applauded the nationalistic spirit which had captured the Congress, and had, through the Congress, captured India. He made this clear beyond doubt in his article to *the Hindu* on the occasion of the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Congress in December 1935.



## VI. PHILOSOPHIC AND RELIGIOUS. (MISCELLANEOUS)

I shall refer here briefly to Professor Sundarama Iyer's miscellaneous writings on philosophic and religious matters. Their name is legion and I can give here only a cursory reference to them.

He delivered two lectures at Bangalore on Sri Sankara and Sri Ramanuja. His writings show here, there and everywhere his deep and abiding and limitless admiration for Sri Sankara. In an article on *Sri Sankaracharya and Vedantic tradition* he urges that the Advaitin takes his stand on the Vedas while the others take in the Agamas etc., and says that the Saguna Brahman is realisable by *dhyana* while the Nirguna Brahman is realisable by *Jnana*. Sri Sankara also, no less than Sri Ramanuja, follows an ancient tradition and seeks to show that *Prasthanas Trayas* (Veda and Brahma-Sutras and Gita) propounds the same truths. In the article on *Sri Sankara's Vedantic doctrine*, he says: "Sri Sankaracharya's Advaita doctrine is both a philosophy of existence and a practical religious system. In both aspects, it rests primarily on the authority of the Veda. But, as the Veda itself permits the

use of reasoning, the Acharya freely avails himself of this source of proof and of human experience, too, in establishing his system. So the Advaita doctrine, while ultimately based on the Veda, appeals to all thinking men as a synthesis of revelation and ratiocination." In his article on *The Vedanta on Freewill and Necessity* he discusses a very debated and debateable philosophic problem. If man's will is not free, what is the use of moral and religious commands to do or not to do? The jiva (or embodied soul) has *Kartritva* or freedom of the will. It has got *Samskaras* or *Vasanas* which are only tendencies and can "be counteracted or modified by cultivating tendencies in a reverse direction" i.e., *pratipakṣabhāvanas*. In dream life the jiva's *kartritva* is free and full. God is the causer of deeds (*karaitritvam*) and gives the fruits of deeds. In his article on *The Real and the unreal* in the monthly called *Hindu Mind* (now defunct), he points out how Sankara is a realist inasmuch as he postulates the reality of the existence of the universe independently of the mind, though both mind and matter are stultified and are swallowed up in unity when the Brahmic realisation is attained. Sankara, like modern Science, denies the substantiality of



matter. Before creation it is *avidya* or *avyakta*. Matter is real (*Bhavarupa*) and not fictitious. When the superimposition of *Maya* is removed, the self-luminousness of Brahman shines forth. In his article on *Maya and its stultification* (*Current Thought*, January 1925) he elaborates the same idea. In his articles on *The Misconceptions regarding the Vedanta* (published in the *Wednesday Review*, Trichinopoly, 1906) he disproves the prevalent wrong notions about the Vedanta such as that it militates against activism etc. *Nishkama Karma Yoga* is only activity on a higher plane of life. Even the *bhakta* and the *jnani* must perform *Nishkama Karma* for the sake of *Lokasangraha*. In his article in the *Vedanta Kesari* on *Vedanta the source of spiritual truth*, he shows that Hinduism is not a religion depending on any founder and that Veda is eternal sound revealing eternal Truth. In his article in the *Vedanta Kesari* on *the Place of the Guru in the Vedanta Religion*, he shows that the doctrine of *adhikara* is the bed-rock of Hinduism and that the Guru is the transmitter of the teaching and the grace which were transmitted to himself in unbroken succession from God the Primeval Teacher. In his article in the *Vedanta Kesari* on *The Qualified*

*Disciple in the Vedanta* he elaborates the idea of *adhikara* and the need for *chitta suddhi* (purity of mind and heart) and *Sadhana chatushtaya* (the fourfold qualification) described in Sri Sankara's *bhashya* (commentary) on the Vedanta Sutras.

I shall refer here to a few miscellaneous religious articles by Professor Sundararama Iyer. In his article in the *Vedanta Kesari* on *Gita*—how to understand it, he shows how the *Gita* is not devoted to quietism alone or to actions alone, that it is the Gospel for all *adhikaris*, and that it is classed as a *Jnana Sastra* and a *Mukti Sastra* along with the *Upanishads*. In his article on *Vairagya and Progress* in the *Vedanta Kesari*, he showed how *Yoga* and *Kshema* meant progress and order, and how order is more important than progress (*Vardhanat rakshanam sreyah*), and how *nivritti* (renunciation) is higher ideal than *Pravritti* (activity). In his article on *God and Jesus in the light of the Vedanta*, he shows how Jesus not only referred to God as Father but said also : "I and my Father are one."

In his foreword to the *Tiruneelakudi Sthalapurana*, he clarified the Hindu doctrine about the



*rationale* of temple worship. A temple is "a place of great sanctity and a mighty spiritual centre and possession of our people." He says: The Hindus who resort to temples *never* worship the idols therein. The word *Vigraha* means 'symbol, image, form'. The Hindu knows well that the Supreme Being is without form. He knows that a consecrated image is placed before him in the temple only in order to create and diffuse an atmosphere suitable and helpful for the worship of and meditation on, the Supreme Being as Siva, Vishnu etc., by those who are incapable of the practice of mental concentration. The image in the temple is a spiritual dynamo, originally charged with spiritual power according to the rules prescribed in our *Shāstras* (*Agamas*) and kept daily re-charged for the benefit of those Hindus who resort to temples for help in pure meditation, in prayer, or even for seeking various worldly aims through the praise and worship of God in the sanctified atmosphere created round the *Vigraha* in what is regarded as the holiest part of the temple. Thus we see that no one of high spiritual endowments is compelled to resort to temples at all. Our temples are intended to create a spiritual environment for the soul-growth only of such as need

or seek them to accomplish their *ultimate* realisation of the Holy of Holies, the Supreme Being, the Concrete Reality, the One only without a second, the Permanent Ego, the innermost bliss of the Self, the Sat-chid-ananda of the Veda and Vedanta."

In his great address on *Sri Ramakrishna and Modern India* at the Sri Ramakrishna Anniversary at the Ramakrishna Mutt, Mylapore, Madras, on 25th February 1912, under the chairmanship of his admired and beloved friend Rao Bahadur Professor M. Rangachariar, he defines our duties as the heirs and guardians of the spirit: "Here we have *first* to preserve our acquisitions from the Rishis; and *secondly* to give the rest of the world their due share of them." He stated Swami Vivekananda's teaching to be: "We must revive the old laws of the Rishis" and "India's gift to the world is the light spiritual" and "the infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality." We must achieve the unity of India but it must and will be a unity in diversity.

I shall quote here a few extracts from his letters bearing on religious ideals. In a letter to Mr. G. V. Venkatarama Iyer on 12-8-28 he discussed



sacrifices (yajnas). He says in it : "Kulluka Bhatta says in so many distinct words that all the yajnas referred to—whether they involve Himsa or not—are 'not nitya.' Besides in p. 136, Manu distinctly teaches that those who follow jnana marga need not perform even the daily *pancha yajnas etc.*, as they have reached the higher stage in which they sacrifice their indriyas and pranas in the Atman by their mental processes (of jnana and dhyana and bhakti etc)...I now can easily understand why these yajnas, which involve the killing of animals have slowly declined especially after the advent of our great Acharya and the spread of higher ethical and spiritual ideals."

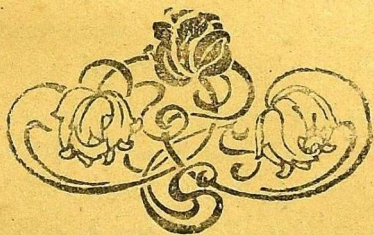
He had an epistolary controversy of course in a spirit of goodwill and love with his beloved pupil Mr. R. Krishnaswami Sastri about Nirguna Bhakti Yoga. In a letter to the latter on 6-9-1928 he wrote : "Just a line to say that Bhagavata, Skandha III Chapter 29, Slokas 1314 and 15 give, the Lakshana of Nirguna Bhakti Yoga. In a letter to him on 10-9-1928, he says : Sridhara explains Madbhava as Brahmatvam not as *bhagavadakarachittavrittii* (as Madhusudana says). Sridhara also says that

the "Brahmatva" comes as Anushangikaphala—not as the direct result of it—in accordance with the Bhagavata statement that the nirguna-bhakti yoga goes beyond all the well-known forms of mukti viz., Salokya, sarupya, sayujya, sarshti etc. *Secondly* as "Aksharopasti" is an *Upasana*, there must be a mental element *indispensably* associated with it and that is what made me suggest that it may be identified with the Bhagavata Nirguna Bhakti. So long as there is such an ever present mental element, how can it be identified with what is known as *Jivanmukti* or what is *gunatita* etc., both of which, as you point out, are identified by Sri Vidyaranya. I wish you will offer further explanation on this point. *Thirdly* the explanations offered by Sri Sankara regarding the word *Upasana* and his use of the word *Viseshanah* in reference to *Akshara*, seem to me to make it clear that he thinks there is a mental element in this *upasana* as in all other forms of *upasana*—and that therefore Sridhara's idea that *Brahmabhava* can come to *upasana* only as an *Anushangika phala* may be applied to this *Aksharopasti* of the Gita—and so it is worth considering whether this may not help us to identify it with the Nirguna-bhakti yoga of the Bhagavata.



Fourthly you say that Ahamgrahopastī is only one form of the Nirgunopasana (of Gita). Is not the former's *phala* only brahmaloaka while that of the latter is *brahmabhava* itself? If this is correct, these two upasanas cannot be the same. Fifthly, the great Dikshita seems to distinguish clearly between the Nirguna Upasana as an upasana in which there is *yoga* in the *marga*—as distinguished from the *Samkhya* where *sravana* etc., are resorted to. In the latter, *sakshatkara* comes in immediately (*Jhātī*); in the former case, *Sakshatkara* is delayed (*Vilambena siddhyati*). It seems to me that this explanation is exactly like Sridhara's already referred to? So long as you allow a mental element in nirgunopastī—and Appaya Dikshitendra seems to allow it,—you must allow that there is *ākara* in the upasana, and as the *phala* is nirguna *sakshatkara* it is called *nirgunopastī*. Why this superior (or even supreme) *phala* comes in here as a fact, must be explained, and I think the Bhagavata offers an explanation, which we may well take into consideration." In a letter to Mr. R. Krishnaswami Sastri on 19-2-1933, he says: "Please see Krishnacharya's edition of Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter XII sloka 17 where the expression *Kshetrajñah sarva-*

*bhootanam* is applied by Arjuna to Bhagawan..... It is now clear that the word *kshetrajna* has been applied to Sakshi or Paramatma also and not only to the jiva in the Mahabharata. Kindly refer to Gita XIII slokas 27 and 28, and also sloka 19 which mentions only Kshetram, jnana, and jneya, and says that the bhakta who knows these reaches Madbhava. Sankara interprets *jnana* to mean *Samyakdarsanam* and *Madbhava* to mean *paramatma bhava*. In Chapter XIII Purusha is the word applied to the *bhakta* (see slokas 21 and 22. Compare with sloka 23 where the word Paramatma occurs).







## CHAPTER VIII.

### Conclusion.

I have thus reached the end of this work. During the last three years, ever since my father left us, it has been with me late and soon. It made me feel as if he was always by my side. Now that it is over, I feel the pang of parting once again, and a sense of desolation overwhelms me. We come we know not whence and we go we know not whither. And yet we trust that we are in the keeping of an almighty Power which means well by us and whose sleepless and paternal eye watches us with loving care. My father loved me truly and easelessly. His praise was to me the greatest reward and his blame the greatest punishment. His last words were addressed to me and he said in a faltering voice "you have been a good son." I would live many lives to hear those kind and loving and

gracious words. Though he has gone and even the intimacy of his nearness due to my preoccupation with this biography comes to an end as all earthly things must in this vale of tears,—I feel somehow that he is in me, about me, and above me. I cannot better express my feelings than by quoting the following sublime lines from Tennyson's *In Memoriam* :

“Thy voice is on the rolling air  
I hear thee where the waters run,  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;  
But though I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee same diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before ;  
My love is vaster passion now  
Tho' mixed with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
I have thee still and I rejoice ;  
I prosper, circled by thy voice ;  
I shall not lose thee though I die.”



"Behold, I dream a dream of good  
And mingle all the world with thee."

I cannot bid farewell better than by publishing here an unpublished writing of his on *The Search After Light*—a search which was his lifelong endeavour.

### THE SEARCH AFTER LIGHT.

Goethe died asking for "more light", Has more and truer light,—rational or spiritual—been vouchsafed to the west which is pre-eminently powerful in the world today and has taken upon itself the proud and gigantic task of guiding and developing India's destiny in the future? The answer would seem to be,—Not yet. For the interests of western states, national and imperial, are found to remain as the primary aim and exclusive occupation of their statesmen, presidents, and monarchs; What is this but to proclaim that the late President Wilson's magnificent dream in the laying of the foundation of the League of Nations *viz.*, to make the world safe for democracy—has proved a gigantic failure. The ideal he aimed at was that narrow national interests and pre-occupations were to give place in the future to the comprehensive pursuit of the interests of humanity at large. The policy of militant pacificism which the democracies and dictators now ruling Europe pursue to-day is a clear proof of the fact that President Wilson's hopes and

efforts have proved but the baseless fabric of a vision. If a society which can contribute unerringly its resources of energy, wisdom, and humanity in its endeavours to preserve the peace and welfare of men is to maintain itself free from the fear of revolution or dissolution, it can only be through the concerted action of leaders to whom is vouchsafed the light of Heaven manifesting itself in all its passionless perfection of joyous hope and disinterested sympathy so as to discover how to build up the successive steps and stages of the evolving fabric of practical social and political life with courage, prudence and hopefulness.

We have always with us men who hold that the human reason working itself but in the forms of scientific discovery and mechanical invention is quite enough for the building up of our future fabric of civilisation. Let us turn our attention for a while and consider how man's faculty of reason manifests itself at the present epoch through the genius of scientists. The West can certainly boast that its science has conquered matter in all its three regions of earth, water, and air. Scientists are also emphatically proclaiming the nature and significance of the attitude of mind by the possession or cultivation of which all their triumphs, over matter (or Nature) have been accorded to them as a laurelled coronet or crown revealing itself in all its inherent glory and splendour. Scientists have now come forward boldly to proclaim that, while hitherto the conflict between religion and science has been regarded as irreconcilable by the mind of the populace at large and even by most of their enlightened leaders, they



are themselves in a position to avow or even assert in bold and clamant tones, that it is to their attitude of "*Faith*" that they owe the mechanical inventions which have shed a lustre on their names for all future time. This statement might shock the minds and consciences of the clericals in Europe. But the scientists are not at all thereby disconcerted. For they speak not from mere hypothetical assumptions as their basis,—but from "*Faith*"; and they understand "*Faith*" to mean the attitude of earnestness and devotion which has given them the inspiration for their discriminative wisdom in the collection and preparation of their marvellous materials, for their deliberate carefulness in the making up of their synthetic comparisons and calculations, and for the intrepid ingenuity with which they deduce their conclusions. Hence there is not the slightest trace of that unlovely egotism which from first to last animates the minds and emotions of the clericals who preach the popular creeds, and makes them assume the airs of supermen who hold within the palms of their hands the privilege of conferring the eternal and supernal bliss which soars above all the lowly states and stages of life in this purely material world. This rare excellence and virtue may itself be regarded as justifying the claim put forward on behalf of our notable men of science in various quarters that they have either reached or beheld the summit of divine beauty or perfection in their own individual experience, or at least found within the region of their common concern the thoughts and sentiments which help to promote their appreciation comprehension of each

other's attainments and triumphs and thereby to form them into a separate, though unique congregation or brotherhood of soaring intellectual lights honoured and adored in common among all the civilised nation and communities of the world.

There is doubtless a large amount of truth in the modern man's idea or jeer that the traditional religion which the theological mind has promoted among the masses of every civilised people, on the earth, has made them querulously seek their own separate and special liberation from the bondage of sin, sensualism, and sorrow which has brought with it the limitations of life in the phenomenal world. Prof. Einstein has recently said:—"An individual who should survive his physical death is beyond my comprehension, nor do I wish it otherwise; such notions are for the fears, or absurd egoism of feeble souls." The philosopher, Bergson, too, who has approached the topic in the true scientific spirit, has said:—"In truth, if we are sure, absolutely sure, of survival, we could not think of anything else." To the former our answer is exactly that which the divine lord, Sri Krishna, gave to Arjuna in the "Divine Lay" (II Slokas 12 and 13).—"Never was there a time when I, you, and these kings were not. Neither shall there be a time when all of us shall cease to be. As the individual has in this same body the states of childhood, youth, and old age, even so he gets another embodiment. The wise man has no illusions in this matter." Like Einstein to-day, Arjuna laboured under the materialistic illusion that no individual can survive when his body dies. So Sri Krishna had to resort to



rationalistic arguments in order to remove his doubts. If the thinking mind of the individual today could exist only in association with a body, we can have no awareness of our personal identity when the body which we have in childhood and youth has passed and that of our manhood has taken its place ; also, later on this second body (of our manhood) has also to pass away and give place to the decrepit body of old age. If the scientist argues against this doctrine that, as youth, manhood, and old age are only states of the body and that to the body alone attaches the awareness of its identity we must, in reply, point out in this connection the significance of the state of sleep which, according to the scientist's view, can only be one of the states of the body. Hence, in that state, too,—*i.e.*, while it lasts—there must attach to the body the same awareness of its identity that we have been speaking of ; and so we are landed in a serious quandary contradicting a universal experience of humanity at large, and so contradicting also Bergson's view that, "if we are absolutely sure of survival we could not think of anything else." What does this "*we*" of Bergson here mean, of whose "survival after death" he speaks ? Does he mean *both* the individual and his body, or only the former ? As death means the leaving behind of the body to be burnt or buried, the "pleasures" to which he refers cannot get attached to it after that final catastrophe. Hence, the "survival" he mentions can only belong to the individual in the future, whatever its form and whatever may occur to him in the body which is dispensed to him therein. Life in this new body must necessarily have its own allotted share of

“pleasures.”—pleasures as “intense” and as necessary as those which are allotted to him in the present one, pleasures which equally owe their own value and “intensity” to the “attention centred upon them” by himself.

The stray observations above put forth are not at all to be understood as having for their purport the unjustifiable vilipending of science or the equally undue extolling of the aims or accomplishments, ethical and spiritual, of India’s marvellous soul in its constitution and essence of the Absolute Bliss of Love which, irrespective of time, place, and circumstance is identical with the innermost experience of the Self in man which is behind all his wanderings across and amid the beating billows of the seemingly shoreless ocean of the Samsaric limitations which bind him to the status and stages of life allotted to him during his confinement in the world of phenomenal being.

