

# Comparative = Study of = = Sacred Books.

= BY =

Mr. JOHAN VAN MANEN.



The  
Srinivasa Mandiram  
and Charities,  
Bangalore, 1912.

Price : Annas 8.]

Charles R. Henderson Library

# AN APPEAL.

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Contributions in kind and coin, however small they may be, are most gratefully received and acknowledged.

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(a) gifts of old or new clothing for distribution among the orphans of the Mandiram Orphanage and other needy persons :

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*Assistant Manager and Librarian,*

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India ... .. 8 „
5. Comparative Study of Sacred Books ... 8 „

(Printed :—In October 1912.)

ON THE VALUE OF THE

# **Comparative Study of Sacred Books.**

**AN ADDRESS**

DELIVERED BY

**Mr. JOHAN VAN MANEN  
OF MADRAS,**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
TWENTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

SRINIVASA MANDIRAM AND CHARITIES

AND

**THE BIRTHDAY-FESTIVITIES OF  
SRI RĀMĀNUJĀCHĀRYA.**

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**23rd APRIL, 1912.**

**BANGALORE.**

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PRINTED BY HIGGINSBOTHAM & CO., SOUTH PARADE,  
BANGALORE.

Price As. 8.]

## **The Sreenivasa Mandiram**

**CELEBRATIONS HELD ON 23rd APRIL, 1912.**

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On the 23rd April 1912, the Sreenivasa Mandiram Anniversary and Sri Ramanuja's Day were celebrated in Janopakari Doddanna's Hall, which had been tastefully decorated by the City Municipal Council for the occasion. Mr. F. J. Richards, M.A., I.C.S., the Collector and District Magistrate of the Civil and Military Station, Bangalore, presided at the celebrations. There were present among others the following gentlemen:— Messrs. J. S. Chakravarthy, B. J. Kumarasami Naik, Changaiah Chetty, S. Krishnaswamy Aiengar, M. B. Varadaraja Aiengar, Karpur Sreenivasa Rao, C. B. Seshagiri Rao, K. Ramachandra Rao, S. Narayana Rao, K. H. Ramaiya, B. Subbanna, Hariyannayya, B. Oosman Khan, Hanumanthappa, and many others. The proceedings began with an invocation in Sanskrit by the Orphans of the Mandiram. This was followed by a song sung on the *Vina* by a member of the Mandiram Ladies' Association. Then the Chairman began his opening speech and ably conducted the proceedings to their termination.

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## CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY SPEECH.

The Chairman then introduced the Lecturer as follows:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is my privilege to introduce to you the lecturer of this evening, Mr. Johan Van Manen, Assistant Director of the Adyar Library, Madras. I shall not waste your time by a lengthy introduction, as I think that his name and his reputation in connection with the Adyar Library is itself sufficient recommendation.

Before I proceed further, I have been asked to read the following letter from His Highness the Yuvaraja to Mr A. Gopala Charlu.

D. O. No. 186.

CHAMUNDI VIHAR,

MYSORE,

*16th November 1911.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge, with thanks, receipt of the Mandiram Report for 1910—11, together with a copy of Prof. Sundararamier's lecture, forwarded with your letter of the 6th Instant, and to inform you that His Highness the Yuvaraja was very pleased to note the good work the Srinivasa Mandiram has turned out during the year.

In accordance with the promise already made by His Highness and communicated to you in my D.O. letter No. 399-Dated 7-4-11, I am to inform you that His Highness will be glad to contribute a sum of Rs. 5,000/-towards the

construction of the Orphanage \* As the Government have also promised an equal sum, His Highness hopes to see the construction of the Orphanage started early and the long-felt want realized.

\* \* \* \* \*

I shall be glad to know for the information of His Highness, if the sites intended for the Orphanage have all been acquired and how many orphans the proposed building is intended to accommodate.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yours sincerely,

(Sd). M. A. SINGARA CHAR.

I have also received a letter from Col. Sir Hugh Daly, asking me to express his thanks for the invitation, and informing me that owing to his absence from Bangalore, he is unable to attend and that he wishes every success to the Sreenivasa Mandiram.

I shall now call upon Mr. A. Gopala Charlu to read the report of the past year (1910-11).

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\* We have since received this contribution of Rs. 5,000; and with the help of this amount as well as with the Government grant of Rs. 5,000; the Foundation-Stone of the Orphanage will be laid very soon.

At the conclusion of the reading of this report, Mr. Johan Van Manen delivered his address as follows :—

ON THE VALUE OF THE

## **Comparative Study of Sacred Books.**

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I have accepted the invitation to speak to this gathering on a subject which, I think, must be of interest to any Hindu—with pleasure, not only because of that subject, which was chosen in consultation with your venerable Secretary (Mr. A. Gopala Charlu), but because it is and ought to be always singularly satisfactory for a representative of one race to bring a message of good-will and sympathy to the members of another. Though I myself am not an Englishman, and though, in speaking to you, I use a tongue which is foreign to me, yet I belong to the same Western white race, and as such I, too, in a humble way, can bear a message of good-will from the West to the people of the East. That is why I readily accepted the task put before me. Secondly, I have noticed that this is a meeting called together not only to celebrate the Anniversary of the Srinivasa Mandiram, but also to celebrate the birthday of that great Saint and Sage of Southern India, Sri Ramānujāchārya. And certainly, there is no better way of showing sympathy with another race than by joining it in recognising and worshipping its great men and its spiritual teachers. It is, moreover, not the monopoly of any one religion—be it Christianity, Hinduism or Muhammanadanism—neither is it solely a manifestation of Eastern or Western activity, to feed the

poor, to shelter the orphan, to provide the intellectual means of development for the many, as is done in this Mandiram. Therefore, anyone, to whatever nation or race he may belong, may rightly be called upon to join and help the celebration of the Anniversary and the review of the activities of such an Institution during a past year. These then, are the reasons why I have accepted the invitation to speak to you to night, and we may now pass on to the subject proper, on which I am to address you, which is "The Value of the Comparative Study of Sacred Books to Hindus".

In order to lead up to my arguments on the subject, we have to begin by casting a bird's-eye-view over the conditions and the historical changes of the modern world around us.

In order to understand how conditions have altogether altered in this world, how the world of now is not the world of a century ago, nay, of 25 years ago, we have to rapidly survey the ever changing aspects of our present humanity, culture and civilization. We shall find, when studying these, that progress has been made by civilization in one clear and definite direction—in the direction of a unification of the world.

You know how, only a few centuries ago, before Columbus discovered America, that one of the five now known great parts of the world, fully populated with representatives of many nations and many races, was altogether cut off from and unknown to, and therefore non-existent for, the civilization of what we now call the West and the East. The gigantic continents of America, both North and South, were altogether unknown, their civilizations a sealed book, their languages unheard of,



In short, to the Western man of a few centuries ago, as to the Indian, America did not exist; and, as if by magic touch, Columbus, by his intrepidity, zeal and perseverance, discovered this fourth Continent, adding one more to the three already known. Then, during the seventeenth century, a host of discoverers and travellers unveiled Australasia as a fifth Continent to general knowledge, step by step. This was only a few centuries ago, and since then progress has been making rapid strides in all directions. Nevertheless, though, more or less, the world was mapped out, yet it was often simply the outlines of the Continents which were known, whilst the interior conditions remained for the most part mystery and myth. It may be safely said that before the year 1800 it was Europe, and Europe alone, which was intimately known to the West; just the upper rim of Africa, just isolated tracts of Asia, a little bit of America and Australia, and, as an exception, somewhat more about the Mediterranean world and the nearer East, but what scanty news reached us from Asia indicates sufficiently what fantastic tales were current concerning the religions and customs of these countries. What little we then knew of China, of the interior of Africa and the real state of New-Zealand and Australia, of Indian culture and philosophy, was fantastic in nature and very limited in extent. Since then, great inventions have been made, steam has been pressed into the service of man, electricity has been harnessed and fully exploited. Railways have been built, great lines of steam-ships have been inaugurated, new lines of communication and new pathways have been discovered, new tracts for the navigator, new means of communication also, so that some forty years ago a famous French author could write an exceedingly

entertaining story entitled "Around the World in Eighty Days." That which would have taken perhaps five years to accomplish only two centuries ago, was represented at the time of the production of this novel, written to the delight of many continents, as taking only eighty days. To such an extent had the world been in a process of shrinking, that the world's circumference had dwindled down to a length of eighty days' travel. The world is the same, but man's power of motion has increased; the world has become a world easier to compass, more accessible to survey and smaller to conquer. Further yet, only a few years ago an enterprising French journal sent one of its reporters round the world to beat the imaginary record of eighty days as portrayed in the novel; the man accomplished the voyage in about two months, and on his return went to do homage to the venerable master whose romantic tale, though fiction, had had the effect of opening the eyes of man to the improved possibilities of modern communication. Now-a-days, in the days of the telephone and of telegraphy, with or without wires, we can have conversations—those of us who have the means to do so—between London and New-York or any other similarly distant places. The telegraph flashes questions and answers all over the globe, and distance, which formerly necessitated considerable time for the communication of intelligence from one part of the world to another, has been practically overcome altogether. I only mention these simple instances to show that the world, which not many centuries ago was five years in circumference for travel, has now become a world with a circumference of only two months for bodily locomotion, whilst thoughts can be transmitted by means of the telegraph to all its parts in a few hours only. Thus these steadily increased means of communication

have put increased powers in man's hands, with the result that more and more the white patches on the map, representing unknown parts, are filled in with detailed knowledge, and, consequently, all the mystery and ignorance they were enveloped in, as to the people who inhabit them, and the thoughts, hopes and ideals those people cherish, have now to a large extent disappeared. To illustrate how far this constant increase in knowledge has gone, I have only to remind you of the fact that only a short time ago even the North Pole has been 'discovered', and now tidings reach us as to the discovery of the South Pole also.

But all these discoveries with the additional knowledge they entail are only additions to material knowledge, or, in other words, we have up to now only considered the outward or physical conditions of these newly opened-up parts. Vastly greater in importance is the conquest of modern civilization in that higher field of geography, in the field of mental geography, of the knowledge of man's mind. Within the past century or so the most astounding advance has been made in this direction. A French Officer, named Boussard, found, fully hundred years ago, in 1799, at Rosetta in Egypt, a fragment of a stone with an Egyptian inscription in hieroglyphics engraved on it in one part, while in another part a Greek text was to be seen. An attempt was made to decipher the hieroglyphics by the aid of the Greek text, and it was recognised that the Greek names in the inscription corresponded to certain groups of hieroglyphics the conclusion thus being reached that the Greek engraving was only a translation of the Egyptian text. It was in this way and by further attempts in the same

direction that the deciphering began of the old Egyptian language which was till then a hidden mystery to the world. At the same time a great French traveller, Anquetil Duperron, travelled widely in India, studied the Persian language and came in contact with a most marvellous book, called the Oupnek'hat, which proved to be nothing but a Persian translation of a large number of the ancient Upanishads. He translated them into Latin and in 1802-1804, about 60 Upanishads were for the first time brought to the notice of the Western public. Such was the impression made in the beginning of the last century by the wisdom embodied in this book that Schopenhauer, one of the great philosophers of the West, said that there was one thing for which he was profoundly thankful, and that was that he had become acquainted with the book before his death. So it was with other languages. When the English, French, Dutch and Portuguese settled in India they began to make a serious study of Sanskrit, very meagre in extent in the beginning, and not always very solid in quality. Still they were the pioneers; and rapidly the number of students grew, until in the beginning of the last century, the curtain hiding Sanskrit literature began to unroll very slowly and the marvellous thoughts of Aryan civilization to be unveiled to the West.

You know also how, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, that remarkable Hungarian, Csoma de Körös, penetrated into the monasteries of Little Tibet to study the Tibetan language, and afterwards came to Calcutta where he published his Grammar and Dictionary in 1834, by which the whole Tibetan language, till then practically a secret, unknown to the world, was laid open before the learned public. It is unnecessary to point out

the importance of this work, as it is well known that the body of Buddhist writings, often lost in their Indian originals, have been almost completely preserved in their Tibetan translations.

The whole of the last century was one gradual process of advancement in the decipherment, by modern civilization, of the cultures, literatures, religions, philosophies, thoughts and aspirations of ancient and oriental races, until now—though there are still vast gaps to be filled in, though still many details have to be worked out with greater subtlety, sympathy, insight and knowledge—it may be said that modern civilization is at least in touch with all thought-spheres of the world; in living contact with all civilizations of the past and present of which any traces worth speaking of exist; in contact with all living races wherever they may be found. So you see there is a vast change both in the physical and intellectual world. There is now a greater possibility of people knowing each other, coming more and more in contact with each other. They are no longer shut up in isolated units as was the case only a few decennia ago, when in every country you found new civilizations quite separate the one from the other. Now, year after year, to an increasing extent, you find people of different nationalities and countries living side by side in different parts of the world, in the great metropolises, the great ports, the great centres of trade, learning and diplomacy. Everywhere you find Europeans and Asiatics, as well as others interpenetrating each other. There are witnesses of every nation in every nation. There are historians, reporters, describers of all nations in all nations: people who study, describe and comment upon the foreign living units in order to report them to their own people.

There is no longer any isolation possible, neither physically nor mentally—and he who would keep up isolation out of ancestral pride or lack of knowledge, or prejudice or misunderstanding of the signs of the times, he who would still keep up an outgrown isolation for whatsoever reasons, is bound to perish unremembered and unsighed for. The fatal current of evolution is stronger than man, is stronger than any nation and is stronger than any state or civilization. He who keeps to isolation will fight his battle in vain and will be the first to be swept relentlessly away, the first to go under, “The old order changeth, giving place to new.” Now-a-days we can no longer stand in isolation, but must work in combination; we cannot bear separation, but have to strive for unification; and the man who wants to serve humanity is he who makes for that unification of mankind. Such an one alone can tear down the barriers which ignorance, jealousy and lack of understanding spread around him on all sides. It may be admitted in our best moments that we all mean well; yet all of us are individually after all small and humble people as compared with the forces at play in the destinies of humanity, and the destinies of the world; and when we see the mighty currents of history and progress sweep on resistlessly, crush together nations, and force new paths of evolution, then it is that we see how little the individual can do, yet surely then is it also that we see how much suffering and sorrow might be prevented if only the individuals in the mass prepare the way for peaceful progress and unification. I come then to this point: that we cannot to any extent take up an attitude of isolation either in thought or in physical life. This is true all over the world, so true that those who are strongest in nationalistic qualities, those who love the nation best, are precisely those who silently but most effectively are

trying to cut away the sharpnesses of nationality. There is no nation now that is not connected by ambassadors or representatives to other nations. There is no nation in the world which has not its treaties, entailing obligations of give and take; that has not multifarious relations with other nations; that does not participate in international congresses and conventions and international postal unions, tariff-understandings and various other mutual undertakings; creating on all sides such a net-work of limitations, restrictions and pledges that even those nations who think they are most independent are tied, like Gulliver, by a thousand tiny bonds of responsibility, by limitations which keep them in many senses not free, and compel them to put into the back-ground the idea of one individual nation against all others, and put more and more into the foreground, co-operation, unification, and world-interests beyond national interests. Of course, we are only in the beginning of this movement, but no prophet can predict how far it will go, how much strength it may gather, and what stupendous and glorious results it may attain; so that we recognise that a great activity is going on in the interest of unification, not only of the world at large, but also on a smaller scale, and of more direct importance and in a special degree, of you Indians, because you are indissolubly bound up with the West. There is now a constant influx of Europeans into India, who push their enterprises and inventions into this country; who bring to you their railways and tramways; and you, who rightly use these advantages, brought by foreigners to your door, should in the same way give up some of your prejudices and reserve, some of your sense of separateness. I may say that this remark has a special reference to the caste system in this land. On the Malabar Coast,

I hear, prejudice on the part of the Brahman is still in full vigour, so that even the shadow of a man of a lower caste should not fall on the Brahman. It is true that the old-time Brahmanic aloofness is now-a-days not everywhere so strongly maintained as there. But remember, my friends, how much benefit you can reap by a fuller and readier acceptance of the ideas of give and take, and by giving up prejudices and reserve. I am told that not so many years ago, the relations between a Hindu subordinate and his Sahib here were far from cordial, that an invisible but impenetrable wall of reservation kept them rigorously apart and prevented all subtler communion. But already a great change has taken place; travelling has become more general and a vast amount of mutual adaptation has resulted. I do not say whether this works always for good or for bad, yet much experience and comparison is absolutely necessary before complete mutual good-will can be attained. I am sincerely convinced that increasing good-will on both sides will bring about in the next hundred years, or so, the final bridging of the gulf between the East and the West. As I said before, in India, West and East are indissolubly connected. One cannot go on without the other. The Western tree has taken root too deeply to be uprooted. And this being so—since this ancient Aryavarta is at the present day in this position, there should be no blinking the fact; rather have we to find a solution of the problem than to give up the attempt as not capable of being solved. India is bound up with the West as most colonies are; just as Algeria, Java, the Malay Archipelago, for instance. I have lived in these places, and by experience I have found that there is a contact that can no longer be denied, and therefore, it is no good ignoring the fact. Those who do not want



to throw themselves into the current of historical evolution may be illustrations sociologically of what in medical or physiological language are called tumours. These are independent growths which do not participate in the general metabolism of the body, but go on developing in their own way. The course of a nation is bound up with the general current of evolution, and if for any reason it be cut off from that current it becomes a tumour in the social body. It ought to partake of that general evolution, but if it does not mingle with it, it loses the general vitality of the body and is bound to perish in the end. This is an important law, not only valid for India it is a law which has illustrated itself in the history of many nations at all times and in all countries. We shall merely refer to one or two illustrations. China is a pre-eminently illuminating example. The Chinese, as you know, built up a great wall in order to keep out the invaders at first, and then to prevent emigration. What has been the result of this? The result is too patent to need any explanation. The Chinese have been a notoriously isolated people, their institutions have fallen into stagnation, and a terrible fight is now going on against that spirit of conservatism. Japan was another such country until fully a quarter of a century ago; until she pulled herself forcibly up, in order to march with the times, and by doing so has earned a new lease of life and vitality. Then again, take the case of the Jews. They called themselves the chosen people of God, chosen by Him to do a certain specific work, endowed by Him with specific virtues and qualities; and on that account they kept themselves quite apart from the rest of the world. What is their position now? As a separate nation they have disappeared. They have now been assimilated by other

peoples not of specific Jewish nationality. They have been dispersed homeless. And yet another example is afforded by India itself, where special sections of the people have kept themselves altogether apart, and I hope you will give me the liberty to speak frankly on the matter. I refer to the Brahman and other castes. The Brahmans, as well as other strict adherents of the caste system, by reason of their conservatism and spirit of isolation, are, at the present day, in danger of the same fall as that experienced by the other peoples just spoken of. If they do not throw themselves fully into the vital life of the whole Hindu community, as it is now bound up with the Western communities, they will, sooner or later, go under; not because any punishment will overtake them, but because it is a sociological law, which every student of sociology knows, that people who stand apart, refusing to move freely with the line of evolution of the nation to which they belong, are doomed to perish. I do not know with precision to what exact extent the Brahmans, or any other caste really stand apart, that is for you Indians to see and to note. I confess that the theory of elected qualities, the theory of certain virtues and a certain high state inherent in a portion of the social fabric, is a very easy one to build and one very difficult to give up. Yet the theory must be abandoned after it has ceased to serve a living purpose. We must not only apply these considerations physically, socially and morally, but also mentally. You see that one of the first consequences of all this is the necessity for participation in those vital forces of modern civilization which have been set free amongst us, and which are now working. Amongst these forces are those engendered by free research, scientific study and recognition of the unity of mankind. There is no good applying these only on one level. They

must be applied on several levels; so my plea is that, if we recognise the principle, we must seek for all that unites us here in India—Easterns and Westerns, socially, within the community : classes and castes ; without the community : the various forms of Indian and non-Indian religions ; points of connection and of unification of the different races which are now practically looked upon as independent units. We must work for mutual assimilation of the social life of the European with the social life of the Indian ; we must try to fill the chasm between the two. There ought to be an attempt, intelligent, tactful, discreet, not exaggerated, the manifestation of a sincere general spirit of good-will and of a sincere striving for mutual understanding, not only socially between the two races, but also socially within each of them ; with no sharp separations or distinctions. Though the division into castes may be taken as based on a very deep philosophical truth, and fully justified in its metaphysical principle, yet most of you will agree that its present day application is a little bit exaggerated. Precisely here we find a field for many an application of the higher forms of this principle of unification, and that not only physically, not only socially. I need not elaborate these questions in detail. Everywhere you find social conferences and other conferences taking place, and although there are a hundred and one difficulties in the way of a solution of the questions discussed, the problems they treat of cannot be left alone, even if we so desire. For instance, the question of sea voyages comes up every year, and the question of inter-dining gets more and more difficult, the question of the marriageable age more and more acute. These are questions on which much has been said and will be said, and which yet are far from having found a satisfactory solution. Go one step further, not on the

social, not on the moral and physical planes, but on the religious and spiritual plane, and seek for unity there : the fundamental principle on which my views are based.

As I view it, the comparative study of the various religions, the increased means of physical and mental communication, and the general line of progress have unified not only the outer world, but have also unified the field of human thought. More than ever before it has now become true, that a touch of humanity makes all mankind akin with one another. Our good Americans, Australians, or Asiatics are all good men, not by reason of Australian-ship or American-ship, but because the quality of goodness is an universal human quality. We have now to fix a basis from which to strive against the old tendency, natural to every conservative mind, towards isolation, in the belief of his superior standpoint as compared with that of his neighbours. We must, therefore, study the religions and sacred books of races other than our own, to see and compare the different layers and modes of human idealism. You see that this is an appeal for working up towards a brighter future ; an appeal for the creation of a higher state of being in which we shall not think of yourselves as belonging to this race or that, but merely as respectable, self-relying, self-respecting examples of a common humanity. But in order to reach that state we must get rid of two things, namely : ignorance of other people and too great self-esteem with regard to ourselves. India has always been called the country of idealism. All of you will agree with me when I say that no nation is bad as a whole, and that it can be made good and strong if good ideals are put before it. Give noble thoughts to a nation and the nation will

become noble; on the other hand feed it only with material thoughts and aspirations and it will neither grow spiritually strong nor will it rise beyond the level of materialism. It is the mind that is the master, it is the spirit that is the doer. It is not the body that rules, not the mechanism, which, after all is simply the instrument or slave of the higher master. What is true of the individual is also true of the nations. Give the nation an ideal and it will produce any forms of art, literature, poetry, music, sculpture, law or whatever further manifestations of the human mind and heart may exist. It will work so marvellously that its achievements will stand out and last for centuries, even after the nation itself that has created them has disappeared. If you accept this plea for unity to be striven after, so that a wave of good-will shall pervade all humanity, making co-operation easy and possible, if that is to be achieved then it will not be sufficient to stand alone. Physical isolation will fail to give the necessary incentive; emotional isolation will prove insufficient; the motive must be found in higher spheres, in the mind and heart; it must ascend to the influence of the spirit. That spirit is the spirit that is only found embodied in the highest visions of the great religious founders, is expressed only by the greatest and noblest sages of the world.

It is constant strife or friction, or comparison, that creates and perfects humanity. Physiologists tell us that originally creatures had no eyes. It was constant striving, evoked by outer contacts, that gave them the eye. Similarly, they had no hands, no limbs or claws; it was the striving to do more and more with a particular part of the body that at last created those marvels which we

know as hands. It is only strife, producing striving, that has created the present beings, brought about this gradual evolution. If you only strive to create, then development must come as a reward for the work first done. Development is the end and not the beginning of the work. So you understand that you have to begin with the spiritual feeling of unity: the unity of nations, the unity of religions and the unity of the various units of humanity. You have to begin with the spiritual idea and not with the worldly dress, not with the bicycles that you ride on in common or the foot-balls that you kick about together. It is the striving after the same ideal that can unite the brown and the white man like brothers, not merely eating at the same table. If you want to strive towards a universal humanism which is transcended sectarianism, all these minor things are of no avail: they are for the man who mistakes the shadow for the truth.

If you have any desire to attain to that day of dawning unity, then transcend sectarianism, transcend any particular religion and transcend everything that ties you to selfishness. Seek that Atman within you which can be everything to everyone in every set of conditions. Do not think that this is an appeal to you to give up your religion and your racial characteristics. Far from it. These express quite essential elements in your temperament, in your heredity, and they must on that account be brought out to the fullest extent. I do not enjoin you to throw away these characteristics as nonsense and unessential: but none of us should say that such and such people should not be spoken to on account of their blue eyes or their brown complexion. Colour of skin and eyes should not influence our ideals. Great

patience and perseverance are needed to bring about the result of which I am speaking but if you endeavour to do it, you will undoubtedly succeed ; and if you do not succeed it is because you are not patient and not persevering enough. Study all these facts well in the light of impersonal humanitarianism. Man's highest ideals are expressed in the sacred books of all nations, and although these ideals are variously put they are yet interdependent and after all exactly the same in essence. I will illustrate my meaning. We do not now speak as people did a few centuries ago. Formerly there were no electric lights, no tramways, nor many other products of modern civilization. Present conditions are quite different from the conditions of those days and consequently the colloquial language also is different. But was the consciousness of our ancestors equally different from ours ? When I see a certain object I may be laughing in the Dutch form of consciousness and at the same instant you may be laughing at the same object in a Hindu form of consciousness. But, are we not laughing with the same merriment about the same object ? Each one may be clothed in his own native costume, but what is in the cells of each one's body ? It is the same thing. I say, therefore, that each one should read his own sacred books well, and try to get whatever wisdom and knowledge he can from them. If you Indians read the Christian Bible it will in many places not interest you. All the history connected with the Roman empire and with Palestine, will be dry to your ears because the Bible is not your national scripture. Similarly, the Mahabharata cannot interest a European in the same way as it does you, for all the incidents narrated therein are perfectly familiar to you from your infancy. But one who has studied both intelligently will find that the lessons and

the human side of these books are the same. Then again, if you read the Chinese scriptures you will find that it is a most arduous undertaking to read all their details with any degree of interest. Firstly, you have Chinese names which no one but a Chinaman can pronounce and easily remember. Each word may be pronounced in various tones with an equal number of different meanings. But, if you once get through the jargon and lay aside details, the same wisdom shines forth clearly. All over the world the same beautiful spirit pervades all sacred books, they inculcate the same lessons of sanctity, discipline, humanity, sympathy and purity. If we could only follow these ideals strictly, the earth would be a real paradise at once. If we could only follow the ten commandments whether we be Hindus, Christians, or Buddhists, there would be no need for further evolution, for we should all be saints. The unfortunate thing is that this is just what we do not do. Perhaps one reason for such a state of things is that afforded by the saying "familiarity breeds contempt"; and familiarity breeds very much contempt indeed in religious matters, for we read our scriptures so often that we do not bestow any particular thought to the practical life of the saints, whose lives are narrated in them. Now, by reading the scriptures we can obtain an insight into the lives of the great men of the past. These are very valuable lives: you will see this not only in your own scriptures, but also in the scriptures of all other peoples. A calm contemplation of those lives will infuse a great force for good in you. This is one important advantage gained by a comparative study of religious documents. Another advantage is this: you know that intellectual knowledge, not mystical knowledge, is the result of comparison. There can



be no knowledge without comparison. The whole science of chemistry has practically grown out of one little thing, namely, the balance. Before about the year 1800 the balance was so rough that it could only do rough and approximate work, could not differentiate tiny masses of atoms, of which matter is composed. As a result a few centuries ago chemistry could not make any great advance, till by slow degrees and after much research, a refined balance was at last constructed that could weigh not only milligrammes, but even a hundredth part of a milligramme. Chemistry as a science of minute quantities dates its birth practically from that time, since chemistry is nothing but the science of weighing. On this possibility of comparing minute quantities the whole of chemistry with its gigantic results in all directions, the whole of many modern industries, practically depends.

In the same way, if you want to understand your own religion, you have not only to internally meditate upon it, but also externally to compare it with other religions. So that the acceptance of the teachings of religion should be based upon, and be helped by, a solid intelligence and thus be made useful to the world at large. The higher, or mystic stage of knowledge in religion is a more difficult, though a more real one; and is apt to lead one astray unless sound intelligence is brought to bear upon it; because amongst other reasons, theology and mythology are dangerous things to deal with for a man not having the power of self-analysis. I want you to make a sort of spiritual balance for yourselves. To me, any religion is suitable. What is necessary is only the comparison of such a religion with others. No amount of words can bring out the full value of a thing.

If I say I have a toothache, I say the truth and the whole truth, but none of you can actually feel my ache. So also is the effect of words. Words cannot efficiently deal with consciousness. The consciousness may be full, but words cannot stand any nearer to consciousness than the shadow stands to the body that casts it. So also is the case with religions, with spiritual truths. Great spiritual truths are described in books as beautifully as possible and in many ways, but the description is necessarily shallow even in its most glorious forms. It is mere expression, it is shadow; it is not the reality. The reality is to be found only in the man's heart—in himself; it is the heart that sees the beauty of the flower and perceives the fragrant odour. The seed may be taken up and planted in another man's consciousness, so that in him it may flower also, but what is transmitted is not the flower. As every description is partial, it is needless to say that every great teacher follows his own line, along which he describes these great realities of life, freely bringing his own emotions and feelings to the foreground, accentuating the effect of his descriptions. Take for instance the Bhagavat-Gita or the Upanishads of the Hindus, the Gospel of the Christians or the Chinese religious books. There you will find the same fundamental truths, inculcated in different parts of the world, and in various ways. In the Upanishads you will find philosophical dialogues between the teacher and his pupil. This is the characteristic feature of the Upanishads: contents deeply philosophical, and conceptions highly spiritual; the key word: *wisdom*. Take now the Christian Gospels. Here you do not find dialogue, but the story of a life, the biography of a saint, a perfect man; not so much philosophical as practical, ethical, active. The key-word is not wisdom, but the key-word is *love*, another

aspect of truth. We would say that perfect wisdom includes perfect love, and yet it is another aspect of it. Take then one of the Chinese Scriptures, the Tao Te King for example, and you will find a loose string of aphorisms, no dialogue, no biography—just stray thoughts, each like a lightning flash; its key-word is *rest*, quiet. If you are quiet, God can be all for you, in you and through you. Go then to the Buddhistic writings: There you will find lengthy disquisitions between the Master and his pupils—but not in the Upanishadic sense, not as a revelation, but as a long series of reasonings: disquisitions rather than philosophical discussions, and the key-note is *Nirvana*, the culmination of existence. So we find that all these great religions have their common lessons shown under different aspects and are as sisters in one great family. This fact we have to well understand.

You will perhaps remember that in the middle ages (I am speaking from the standpoint of a Westerner) the belief was that man was a distinct creation by himself, and then came the lower animals and so on. The present age has quite another conception—the idea of a gradual evolution. The stone becomes a plant, the plant becomes an animal, the animal a man, and the man an angel. Modern evolutionists have not yet arrived at the angel; I hope this will come in time. At any rate, the theory of modern evolution accepts a gradual ascent, and oriental philosophy has also more or less the same idea. When this doctrine was promulgated in the West, when it was said that all animals belong to the great family of man, that they are only his younger brothers, the orthodox pandits of the Christian religion said that the idea was more or less a disgrace to humanity. But

evolutionists themselves, though they have accepted the brotherhood of all living beings, are not always prepared to accept at the same time the still nobler conception that all religions are sisters of the same family, that they all belong to the same brotherhood and as such, none of them can claim to be better than the rest. That is I think a point which has to be borne in mind. As long as I have a firm religious conviction about the supremacy of any one religion, so long no tolerance and no complete unification can be arrived at. Therefore, the second great use of the study of scriptures is that those people hitherto so very firmly and exclusively rooted in Vedic or other revelations, in the Koran or other bibles, and only receiving the glimpses of truths therein revealed, may find equally spiritual and useful doctrines in other teachings of the past. They may then find out that besides their own hitherto unique teacher, there have existed others who have just as much claim to reverence and perhaps even adoration, as they themselves claim for their own spiritual guide. Hence, we must strenuously work against the idea of exclusiveness, even in matters of religious inspiration and revelation. If we make a comparative study of all scriptures we shall find that there is no room for exclusiveness. At the same time we should by all means in our power avoid falling into a common error. If we study these scriptures, we must do so in order to enrich our spiritual knowledge, and to rekindle the religious feeling among us, and not merely to become pandits. No amount of the study of sacred books will avail us if we have no religious experience in our hearts. The great mistake of many modern scholars is that an external study of comparative religion goes together with the utter want of mystical phenomena in their

minds and hearts, so that only texts are known, but not the Divine Word of God. This then we have to guard against. We must study for the essence and not for the outward form. The outward form is also an element in the right understanding of the inner spirit, but it is only a means to an end, and not an end in itself. We should again, be on our guard not to fall into the psychological error of those who endeavour to trace the origin of religion to optimism, to mental disease, or to pathological conditions. No doubt all these elements do enter into religion and its making, but they are not its ultimate source. The source is always the inner reality, the inner power. Therefore you will find that in their infancy all religions are nearest to a living source and ooze forth from it. The more they flow out into the world and the more they become the property of the many who do not know, instead of the few who know, the more they become formal and rigid and unreal. No one should read scriptures in order to find out what impossibilities there are in each; in order to prove conclusively that they are all foolish; but the object should be to find out their common essence, to find out what is good in them. Just as a man may stammer and yet speak wisdom, just as a most beautifully built man may still have holes in his coat, just as a man may be very honest and yet have an ugly face, similarly wisdom may be told with very imperfect art, and for all that, would still be wisdom; and wisdom should be respected. There may be many things in the Bible or any other scripture which are physically impossible. You might find lots of impossibilities which some good people believe and others do not: it is not right that people who believe in the Christian miracles should say that it is ridiculous that the Hindu believes in the Hindu miracles,

or that people who believe in the magic as told by Hindu lore should deny the possibility of Christian magic. These are matters with which our best endeavours need not be concerned. What we have to seek is, what amount of wisdom is embodied in the scriptures, and not how many mistakes. We have to seek for all the good things they contain, the study of which would make us better men. Such scriptural study would certainly improve us, and to that end we must transcend the specific forms of religion and go beyond the dependence on the specific form in order to find the inner and universally valid reality behind.

I may now be permitted to summarise the purport of my address :—

(1) I plead for a sympathetic mutual understanding, for good-will amongst races, castes, religious and social units and individuals. To attain such unity we have to find its very roots not only physically, not only emotionally and socially, but above all, spiritually; because the spirit, the ideal, is the root of life, is the root of being. If you do this, if you rise to that level of enlightenment of which I have been striving to give you an idea, then you will find that humanity assumes altogether another aspect.

(2) You will realise a brotherhood which is so deep, so vast, so powerful, so mighty, and so beautiful that you will be dazzled by the possibilities arising in front of you when you, even hesitatingly, throw yourself into the service of that human brotherhood.

(3) You will find that this great brotherhood, when once realised, widens out still further, linking up mankind with the whole creation, and even with Divinity

itself, binding, holding, encompassing all in perfect oneness. And having once seen that oneness, you cannot do otherwise than merge into.

Such consummation is not a mere matter of sentiment, it is the outcome of hard study, of sincere application; but we must always realise that we are doing a spiritual work, not merely preparing for an examination. This spiritual study and work will tend to the growth of our souls, the enlargement of our spirits and will lead us to the service of God.

May all of you take to your heart and take away to your homes, this simple word, this one word, which is so much needed in modern civilization, of which everything that I have said to-day is only an explanation—the simple word tolerance, TOLERANCE and again TOLERANCE.

Be tolerant in your lives, be kind and sympathetic in your lives, and make the brotherhood of humanity not a farce, but a reality. Be only tolerant, wisely, strongly, consciously so, and then will come to the world that bigger unity, that concourse of nations and men which is everywhere pressing upon us for further expression, and which can only fully manifest itself if there be enlightened good-will amongst men.

## CHAIRMAN'S CONCLUDING SPEECH.

At the conclusion of the address, Mr. Richards spoke as follows:—

I am sure, I am voicing the feelings of every one present here when I heartily thank Mr. Johan Van Manen for the broadness of sympathy, for the kindness of spirit, and for the inimitable lucidity with which he has laid before us the subject of his lecture.

I dare say that many of the audience here are wondering why I should have been selected to preside this evening,—I, who am a foreigner, I, who am an official from over the border, belonging to a service which can never do anything right or say anything good. That question I am unable to answer, and I must refer you to my friend Mr. Gopala Charlu. If you ask me why I accepted the invitation, I can give you a ready answer. First, I was won completely by the courtesy of my friend, and secondly I was fascinated by the title given to the address which you heard this evening—especially the phrase “Comparative Study”. I have already put down many notes and anticipated what, to me, is a firm article of faith, that *Comparison is Knowledge* and that *there is no Knowledge without Comparison*. There is no such thing in existence as an isolated fact, there is no such thing as an isolated truth. Take a very simple example. Suppose some one tells you “it rains”. That simple phrase may mean a thousand different things. Its meaning depends on the place where and time when it is uttered. Suppose it is uttered at the present moment, it will mean that Bangalore is to be relieved from the existing scarcity of drinking water, it will mean that the anxiety of the



ryot on account of the mango crop will end. Suppose the same phrase is used later on, after a big heavy monsoon, what does it mean? Suppose the ryot has yet to cut his crop; rain may mean his ruin, the very antithesis of what it means to him now. Suppose you say "it rains" to a clerk going to office; perhaps he has two miles to walk from his home; it may mean to him that he will get wet through and feel very uncomfortable throughout the day and will probably be laid up with fever for a week after. Suppose you say "it rains" to a school boy as school closes; it may mean he will have to do without his game of foot-ball for the evening. You must compare the words uttered with the time when, and the place where they were uttered if you wish to get at the exact meaning they should convey.

In India, especially, there is a very crying need for comparative study. I think that Hinduism is threatened at the present moment with a great danger, a danger which is due to the flood of Western learning and science, a danger which beset Christianity over a hundred years ago—the danger of agnosticism. With the vast strides that have been made in science and in education, the educated classes are beginning to have the foundations of their beliefs shaken. Christianity has gone through the ordeal, and Hinduism must now face it. There are many here who will agree with me—and I am speaking of the educated classes in India—that the dangers of agnosticism are real, and must be bravely met. The Sacred Scriptures of the Christians have had to face the Higher Criticism, and the ordeal has done a good service to Christianity. It has purged away much dross, and I promise you, that, if your Hindu Scriptures go through the same process, you have nothing to fear. Symptoms

of the times are already showing themselves in the light of modern knowledge and science, and I maintain that the Hinduism of to-day presents a number of incongruities. I am not going to criticize the incongruities; I do not even call them inconsistencies. Consider on the one hand the Philosophy of Hinduism, a philosophy unrivalled by that of any other race. The Hindu Philosophy is the glory of India, and will always remain the glory of India. (Cheers). But go from this philosophical atmosphere, (and I do not wish to draw a harsh comparison), go into one of your Brahmanic temples; or go to a Car Festival and there study the sculptures on the car or glance at the excited crowd that draws it; I think a good many people will admit that, comparing the two—the philosophy and the actual worship—they are a little incongruous, one with the other. I have made bold to say this, because the phrase has been put into my mouth by Mr. Gopala Charlu himself; are there not certain features connected with the temple ritual with which educated Indians are not quite satisfied? Go to your villages where there are no Brahman temples and you will perhaps see a man, in the midst of an excited crowd, lopping off the head of a goat, and throwing the blood mingled with rice to the four corners of the village. You will see him perhaps with the entrails of the goat dangling round his neck, his back pierced with hooks and his cheeks and tongue with needles—is that a ritual which a Brahman would be proud to observe? Are such practices compatible with your Brahmanic Philosophy? I think not. And yet we are face to face with such incongruities; and, with the spread of education, the rift will grow wider between the educated classes and the people who worship in the way I have described.

Mind you, incongruities are not confined to Hinduism alone; we find them rampant among Muhammadans, Christians and others. They not only exist, but they are harmful and dangerous; and if you bear with me for a few minutes, I should like to show how they can be harmful and dangerous. I think that by a comparative study of your own Scriptures with those of others, you will be better prepared to face such incongruities. I must not waste time in defining the word "Religion", but I may be permitted to suggest a vague provisional definition. I would describe "Religion" as "Man's relation to God." Religion has many aspects. Religion, from one point of view, may be the following of a Creed, from another, it may be the following of certain Scriptures, from a third point of view it may be the following of a certain ritual, or again it may mean the following of a Philosophy, or of a Moral Code or of a Way of Life.

Comparing religions, one with the other, or the present with the past, we find that there is a distinct development in the idea of the relation of Man with God. Religion always starts with one fundamental idea on which there is no dispute, namely, that "God exists". As to what the word "God" connotes, opinions differ, but all Religions agree that God is a Power outside ourselves. To the primitive mind, as to the advanced mind, God is a Power that does not allow Man to do just what he wants to do. In the first stage of religious development we find Man trying in all sorts of peculiar ways to compel God to act in accordance with human wishes and to induce Him to abstain from doing what is not agreeable to Man. That is the elementary idea of religion. I maintain that it is a *non-moral* idea, that it is an *un-ethical* idea. I do not say it is immoral; it is not against morality, but morality has

no part in it. To my mind, it is a purely utilitarian, material idea, and its dominant note is *fear*.

Another fundamental axiom is this—that not only “God exists”, but that “God is good and just”. This aspect of God is due to the growth of an ethical ideal and such ideal is the mark of all the higher forms of Religion. It was out of this that Philosophy has blossomed. If you study it, you will find that the ideal inculcated is progressive. It is not good for us to get all that we want, but we have to submit to the Divine Will. The key-note of this resignation to the Divine Will is to be found in the beautiful phrase “made perfect through suffering”: “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures”. This is God’s answer to our selfish prayers.

The point is—though these two stages are different, yet they co-exist. Ask a number of people why they are Christians. One will tell you that he is a Christian, because he believes in miracles. Now I am not so foolish as to deny that miracles can happen, but it seems to be the fate of every religious reformer to have his life and teaching obscured in a cloud of miracles, ascribed to him by his contemporaries and by after-generations. An unkindly critic has said that Muhammad tried to perform a miracle and could not; it would I think be fairer to say that he was too honest to tarnish his life and teaching by pandering to the vulgar craving for the supernatural. Jesus speaks strongly on this universal human craving for the miraculous when he stigmatises a “generation that seeketh after a sign” as “wicked and adulterous”. No true religious reformer is a miracle-monger. Miracles cluster round Sri Sankarāchārya, and Sri Rāmānujāchārya, but miracles form no essential part of their teach-ings.

You may call me a materialist, but I maintain that the distinction between the natural and the supernatural in this world is a distinction due to the imperfection of our knowledge. If God created and controls the natural world, then all natural phenomena have their source in Him, and to say that the supernatural is of God and the natural is not is to deny the omnipotence of God. To a perfect intelligence the natural and the supernatural are one and admit of no distinction; both are of God.

Another Christian will say he is a Christian because he believes in the Bible, the Written Word of God. As has been ably pointed out to-night, words are imperfect means of conveying thought and feeling. In fact, sceptics have gone so far as to say that language has been invented for the purpose of concealing thoughts. I have not the faintest intention of discrediting the Sacred Scriptures of any Religion. What I do say is this—Scriptures do not constitute the whole of Religion, and those who never go beyond them become sterile and unfruitful. Sacred Scriptures are of immense value, and from their study you will derive enlightenment. “God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets”. Is not that as true of Hinduism as it is of Christianity, Judaism, or Muhammadanism? “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.” But knowledge does not remain stationary; it grows with the ages, “while earth rolls onward into light.”

Again, a Christian may say he is a Christian for reward, either in this life, or in the life hereafter. But surely to adhere to a religion *solely* for the reward it brings, either in this world or in the next, is a pitifully materialistic and utilitarian ideal.

Others again will tell you that they are Christians because of their "spiritual experiences," and others because the ritual of the sect they favour appeals to their emotions; others are Christians because the ideal of a Christian life or the code of Christian ethics commands their love and respect. Others may say they are Christians, because Christianity appeals to their intellect. Such a view is important for India, because naturally Indians are highly intellectual. There are two kinds of intellect; one is "intensive" or "abstract," and the other what I may call "extensive" or "concrete." I would ask your pardon, if I lay emphasis on the concrete type; you may ascribe it to my crude Westernism. The development of Hindu Religion and Philosophy has been intensive and abstract, and it has attained great perfection. On its concrete side, I maintain it is capable of further development. All the different aspects of religion above referred to are all in some sense true. Difference in such matters is a question of emphasis, a question of individual temperament, of intellectual taste. The problem that Hindus have to face at the present day is Sectarianism. This is evident from the address of Mr. Van Manen and from previous addresses recorded in the proceedings of the Srinivasa Mandiram. Sectarianism is the bug-bear of educated India, and it is the very antithesis of humanism and universal sympathy, of which our Lecturer has spoken so well. Sectarianism reminds me of the Parable of Two Knights, who were once travelling to the same city, by different roads. A few miles from the city, the roads met. As each of the knights passed the junction of the roads he saw a shield hanging on a tree. When the two knights met in the city they began to converse about the shield. One said it was of gold, and the other said it was of silver. The difference of opinion led to a

duel, in which both of the knights were slain. The towns-folk then went and examined the shield, and found that it was gold on one side and silver on the other. Is not this story an apt illustration of the real nature of so many religious disputations? Is not the many-sidedness of Religion the very lesson that India is now teaching the West? The old idea was that "my own opinion is right, and every other man's opinion is wrong." That is the Sectarian view. India has something better than that; she says, "my religion is one of many aspects of the same thing. Respect my view, and I will respect yours. I am satisfied with my view, and I admit that your view satisfies you, and that you are better qualified to speak on it". This is the essence of toleration and there is a World of Humanism and of Universalism in it.

The Philosophy of your Religion requires no improvement. Study the *History* of your Religion. You will find that all your Scriptures were not written by one man, and in the same place, and at the same time. If I say "it rains", the meaning of that little phrase varies with the time and place of its utterance. An habitual disregard for time and space, a disregard for chronology is a characteristic of the Indian mind. Study the History of your Religion and find out what is before and what is after; try to trace out historical synchronisms and to view everything in its historical setting. Picture for instance Sri Rāmānujāchāryā as living in days of tremendous activity, days when the foundations of the great Hoysala Kingdom were laid, whose civilisation inspired some of the most beautiful monuments that India can boast of; think of Sri Rāmānujāchāryā as the moving spirit of that golden age.

A few concrete instances will perhaps make my meaning plainer. Blood sacrifices were offered by the Jews till the first Century of the Christian Era. In their earlier history human victims were offered. Human sacrifice was strenuously opposed by the prophets of Israel and Judah, and, thanks to their opposition, the practice was expunged from their ritual. At the dawn of the Christian Era the temple at Jerusalem was a vast slaughter house, but in the course of the First Century A. D. the Jews abandoned the rite of blood sacrifice altogether. Yet the idea of sacrifice has had a deep influence on Christianity, but it is not the sacrifice of bulls and rams. The crude primitive idea has been spiritualised and sacrifice survives as a figure of speech, typifying the resignation of the individual to the Divine Will. There is a vast difference between the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter and that beautiful Psalm which tells us that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Yet though the advance in spirituality is enormous, we know by comparative study, it is continuous. Do not the *Yagasalai* and the *bali-pitam* of a Brahmanic temple bear witness to a similar advance in spirituality in India? Are not these familiar objects survivals of an age, a very remote age, when the blood sacrifice was an usual accompaniment of Brahmanic worship? Do they not betoken the up-lifting of Hinduism from a lower to a higher spiritual plane? Nay more, do they not tell us that the Brahmanic worship of Siva and Vishnu is an advance on the cults of village deities whose delight is in the blood of buffaloes, goat and fowls; that a Brahman who pollutes himself with blood sacrifice is degenerate; that the masses who still observe these sanguinary cults are backward and need up-lifting?



Consider again the sign of the Cross. It was known as religious symbol for several thousand years before the Christian Era; it was the symbol of life, a magic symbol that conferred material well-being. The symbol survives, but its meaning is spiritualised; to-day it stands for spiritual regeneration, for purity of heart, for self-renunciation, for service on behalf of those who are sick in body, mind or soul. Hinduism too has its symbols, symbols the history of which can be traced back into the remote past. Are they looked on as conferring material well-being, or are they symbols of spiritual regeneration? This is a question which I press for your serious consideration. Examine the symbolism of your temple ritual and of your domestic ceremonies. Do they speak to you of material well-being, or do they speak of spiritual regeneration, or are they dead forms devoid of meaning? Will not comparison convince you that so long as these symbols remain mere outward forms, so long as they are regarded as conferring material benefits, those who use them are on a low plane of spirituality, and that unless they are accompanied by an inward spiritual cleanness of heart and mind, they have no value in the sight of God?

A comparative study of your Scriptures will, I submit, teach you four lessons:

1. Comparison will teach you that there is such a thing as *progress* in religion; religious ideals have progressed in the past and will progress in the future, and without this idea of progress no improvement can be made.

2. Comparison again will teach you that the last word has not been said on Religion, and more is yet to be revealed to the earnest seeker after truth. Finality in Religion means *stagnation*, and is the death of progress.

3. Again, by comparison you will be able to recognise *survivals*, and to regard these survivals in their true light, purging away their material elements and spiritualising them into symbols of a true moral regeneration of heart.

4. Lastly, comparison will guard you against *reversion*, against slipping backwards to the lower planes of religious thought from which your great reformers have raised you.

Study, therefore, your Scriptures fearlessly and be not slaves of the Written Word. God is not afraid of truth, nor is He a fool to be deceived by outward forms. It is purity of heart and mind that He requires of us, and we cannot dupe Him. Comparative study will teach you to discriminate between the real and the sham, between the essential and the superfluous, between the life-giving and the moribund, between the spiritual and the material, between the progressive and the degenerate. And all this will make for a higher spiritual life.

Study earnestly and fearlessly. Success I cannot guarantee. You will meet with disappointment, perhaps with persecution. Be not discouraged by failure, for you learn more by failure than by success, and unvarying success is harmful to the human soul. Let your hardy ryots teach you; "a sower went forth to sow, and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell on stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them. But others

fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold."

Judge not by success, for "by their fruits ye shall know them." "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." And what fruits are you to look for? "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and to the poor the good tidings is preached." Yes, material provision for the sick and poor, hospitals, orphanages and the like, all these are good and noble; but better still is provision for the spiritually blind, the spiritually deaf, the spiritually dead, for the morally crippled, the morally leprous. For such needs was the Srinivasa Mandiram established, and its guiding spirit is the spirit of Sri Rāmānujāchāryā. "An evil tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit." The Srinivasa Mandiram is the fruit of a good tree.

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When the Chairman resumed his seat Mr. Gopalacharlu rose and said as follows:—

### **MR. GOPALACHARLU'S SPEECH.**

Gentlemen,—Now it is my great pleasure and privilege to propose a hearty vote of thanks to our worthy Chairman and to our no less worthy lecturer. It is our good fortune this year to have been able to enlist in practical from the genuine sympathies of these two eminent personages in the cause of the Mandiram. The lecturer, who is well-known in Europe for his wide culture and broad sympathies, has, at great personal sacrifice, come here all the way from Madras, simply because, when his co-operation was sought for, he was highly pleased

with the objects which the Mandiram desires to promote, however imperfect it may be in actually realising them ; and with characteristic promptitude, he kindly consented to deliver the discourse he has just now delivered. I need hardly say that his has been a labour of love for the Mandiram. Our Chairman, who, by reason of his great talents and character, holds the position of a most highly trusted officer of His Most Gracious Majesty our beloved King-Emperor in the most distinguished service of the Empire, has been taking a deep interest in the welfare of this Institution, ever since he came to know of it, and when I requested him only the other day to honour us by presiding on this occasion, he readily consented to do so, notwithstanding the fact that he has daily, nay hourly to perform his multifarious and onerous duties. How well both these gentlemen have discharged their respective functions here is clear from the excellent reception you have given to their highly interesting and instructive speeches, and I cannot sufficiently thank them for the same.

In taking our stock for the past year, I am very sorry to have to bring to your notice the losses the Mandiram has sustained by the death of some of its very important supporters. Foremost of these, I should mention the name of the Jagad Guru H. H. the Swami of Sringeri. His Holiness was for years one of the greatest Patrons of the Mandiram and always influenced the work of the Mandiram not only by liberal gifts but also by his saintly character for which he was held in the highest estimation by all classes of people throughout the length and breadth of India. His deep learning and the unexampled purity of his life ever attracted the attention of the public from the prince to the peasant and his loss is universally mourned over to-day all over India. The eminent

personages I desire to mention next are His late Highness Asaf Jah Muzuffur-ul-Mamalik, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Nizam-ud-Daulah, Nawab Mir Sir Mahbub Ali Khan Bahadur, Fateh Jung, G.C.S.I., the Nizam of Hyderabad, His late Highness Sir Nripendra Narayan Bhup-Bahadur, G.C.I.E., C.B., the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and the late Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, C.S.I. These were the first Patrons who during, my tour in Northern India, gave very liberal donations to the Mandiram and thus enabled me after my return to Bangalore to successfully begin the work of the Mandiram and justify its existence to the public. But for the support I derived from these great personages, the Mandiram should have ceased to exist long ago as a beneficent factor in the uplifting of our poor and needy countrymen. Next I would mention the late lamented Sir P. N. Krishna Murthi, K.C.I.E. He was the premier nobleman of this State and was also a great administrator, as you all know, and he held the high and responsible office of Dewan for five years. At a very early period of his brilliant career, he came in contact with the Mandiram, and found out how well suited to the times a largely state-aided institution like the Mandiram was as an increasingly useful and potent instrument for the welfare of the public, and during the greater part of his eventful life, he endeavoured as far as possible to make the Mandiram a free Institution. In his death, the Mandiram has lost a valuable guiding hand, and it will be long indeed before the Mandiram can hope to obtain a supporter of his prestige and influence. Then I have to bring to your notice the sad and untimely death of Mr. P. N. Purnayya the worthy brother of the last mentioned illustrious Dewan. He was very sympathetic towards the Mandiram, and took a deep interest in its affairs in conjunction with his brother. In

his death we have lost indeed a true personal friend. Again the death of Mr. Weir, which has cast a gloom over the educational interests of this Province in general, has no less affected the work of the Mandiram in particular. Although I had not had the benefit of personal acquaintance with him, yet his influence as the head of the Educational Department indirectly did much to encourage me in doing the work of the Mandiram on progressive lines. We all feel his loss very keenly at this juncture. Next in order, I have to mention the sudden death last month of Mr. M. B. Sreenivasa Iyengar, M.A. He delivered the very first of the present series of lectures ; and in doing so he did full justice to the work he so willingly undertook to do. He was all his life connected with the educational institutions of this Province, and his one aim throughout was to educate the poor and ignorant masses. He led a life of strenuous activity, and did his best to achieve the object he ever had in view under the holy banner of religion. Accordingly, he did much to popularise the Hindu religion by publishing several religious tracts with meanings in most of the languages of Southern India ; and it may fairly be said to his credit that he succeeded to a degree in bringing religion to the very door of the poor and the low, and thus had the satisfaction of having done some thing for uplifting them. That the Mandiram is, in its own humble way, also working for the elevation of the poor and the low is evident from the hearty co-operation it received at the deceased's hands. Though these good souls have departed from this world, yet their spirit is at work with us and will always influence the work of the Mandiram for good, and I have every hope that new men will arise to strengthen it and make it achieve better and more enduring results than has hitherto been the case.

Gentlemen, once for all I may tell you that the Mandiram works on no narrow basis. It is broad-based upon the eternal principles of love and charity. Nor does it work in any spirit of rivalry. It has room enough and to spare for men of every race and every country and its method is the ever progressive method of conciliation and co-operation. For nearly a generation now it has been under the fostering care of the Mysore Royal House and of the great British Government, and has deserved well of the state and of the people. The time is nearing for it to enter upon a career of greater expansion and usefulness. To this end, it is desired by some sympathisers of the Mandiram to organise an expert body of workers who would work in various spheres of usefulness under the guidance and control of the Mandiram itself as the central Institution. Of these sympathisers, Mr. D. Ramanujiah of Egmore, Madras, is one. He has desired me to place before this meeting his proposal to found a central institute here to advance the moral and material development of India by placing before it on occasions like these grand ideals and noble truths for which all our Indian teachers and prophets worked and which may be called peculiarly India's own. I leave this suggestion at present for your kind consideration. Should it prove acceptable to all the parties concerned, then strenuous efforts will have to be made for getting the funds required for it, and I have every faith that the Government and the public will with kindly magnanimity respond to my humble appeal for funds as far as may be practicable and necessary.

Gentlemen, you have been told by the lecturer to-night how the Sacred Books agree in teaching the solidarity of man, that is to say, in teaching about the eternal liberty and equality of man; and I dare say you know

that our Chairman, with his inborn love of freedom and of law, is daily putting into practice the same eternal principles in regard to the people committed to his charge. With such brilliant examples as these, I have every hope that, in the fulness of time, the *Federation of Mankind* will take place; and if, in arriving at this consummation, the Mandiram can show, at least now and then, signs of fulfilling its destined part, however humble, however unworthy that part may be, it will have served its purpose.

Gentlemen, I have done. With my heart overflowing with gratitude to our Lecturer and Chairman, I propose with your consent a hearty vote of thanks to them, which, I am sure, you will all carry with acclamation.

I thank you all, Gentlemen, for your having assembled here to-night, and for having thus shown your interest in the cause of the Mandiram; and I humbly pray that your interest in its welfare may ever remain unabated.

The Chairman and the Lecturer were then garlanded by Mr. Gopalacharlu.

The meeting terminated with the calling of three cheers for His Majesty the King-Emperor, and three cheers for H. H. the Maharaja, and three cheers for H. H. the Yuvaraja, which were all loudly responded.





# THE ŚRĪNIVĀSA MANDIRAM AND CHARITIES, BANGALORE.

ESTABLISHED IN 1883.

The objects of this Institution are as follows :—

1. Under the first branch known as the *Srinivasa Mandiram* come, (a) the study of Comparative Religion and Philosophy and thereby the acquisition of a rational knowledge of God, His attributes and His relation to Man and the Universe ; (b) the practical conduct of the worship of God in the Mandiram :

2 Under the second branch known as the *Srinivasa Mandiram Orphanage* come, feeding, clothing and the education of destitute orphan Hindu children :

3. Under the third branch known as the *Srinivasa Mandiram Free Reading Room and Library*, which is also called the Oriental and Mixed Library, the object is—

(a) to make a large collection of valuable books in general and of oriental books in particular :

(b) to enable people to understand the harmony of religions ;

(c) to organise the delivery of lectures on scientific, philosophical, historical, religious, social and moral subjects and to invite discussions on those subjects from the members of the Institution :

(d) to issue tracts for the diffusion of useful knowledge ;

(e) (a) to endeavour to promote the brotherhood of man and, (b) to encourage the right of private judgment in all matters, and especially in matters of religion :

4. The fourth branch is the newly opened (1907) Ladies' Section. This is intended to help on the development of the moral and mental qualities of our women, and to promote the feeling of sisterhood among them, by making all the advantages of the Mandiram Reading Room and Library available for them also.

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## THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE MANDIRAM AND CHARITIES.

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The Government of Mysore gives a small grant supplemented by a Palace allowance for the maintenance of the first department of this institution; the second department (*i.e.*, the orphanage) receives a grant of Rs. 600 a year. Notwithstanding these grants, both these departments have to depend largely upon public support. The third department, namely, the Library and Reading Room, gets a combined Government and Municipal grant of Rs. 600 a year. The Government of India supply it with their publications from time to time. The fourth department is maintained by means of subscriptions and donations.

