

Shri Gurudev

Dr. R.D.Ranade



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SHRI GURUDEV

Dr. R.D. Ranade

(1886-1957)
(Glimpses of Ideal Life)

M.S. Deshpande

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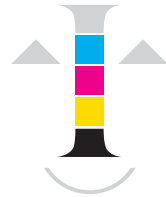
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A SAINT'S LIFE IN WORDS

Gurudev Dr. R.D.Ranade was a great saint with a clean heart, and clear vision. All his life, he walked on the path of devotion, dedication, and deep meditation. He wandered in the wonderful garden of philosophers. He made investigations into the nature of matter, mind, and soul, time, space, and existence.

He was mainly a mystic. He had realised his oneness with God; and felt the presence of that Divine in every being, and every object. Very often, he entered the state of Samadhi; and remained there for hours rejoicing within himself.

He spent much of his life in spreading the gospel of God-realization. He proclaimed that when men fill their heart with divine-devotion, they will be freed from all worries and live joyfully ever-after.

His life was very ideal, beautiful, and noble. It is, even today, a model for young people who aspire to lead a spiritual life; it is a model even for the old ones whose desire is to fill their heart with the nectar of Divine love.

To help these young and old seekers the present book 'Gurudev Dr.R.D.Ranade' was written, years before, by Mr. M.S.Deshpande; and now it is revised, and published.

I admire the efforts of the Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Gurudev Mandir, Hindwadi, Belagavi, for bringing out this valuable biography, and making it available to thousands and thousands of people who take interest in spiritual life.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, an international Institution was founded in 1952 by Dr. Shri. R.D. Ranade, one of the leading saints of modern India. ACPR is a global platform for the call of "Awareness of Unity" given by this modern prophet. It is a global gallery echoing the eternity ever whispering the tune of our philosophical, spiritual, cultural and historical heritage.

Besides the publication of its English Quarterly journal 'Pathway to God,' ACPR publishes books on philosophy and spiritualism for spreading Shri Gurudev's message of peace and harmony among the people across the world.

We are immensely happy that the year 2019-20 has been a year of bonanza of publications. 'Shri Gurudev Rambhau Maharaj' book is the seventh publication within a span of six months. As Shri Gurudev Ranade emphasised, 'The publication work is more durable than work in marble. Instead of raising buildings we should attend to publishing important works.' Accordingly we have ventured upon reprinting his treasure of spiritual literature into booklet forms for the convenience of the young modern spiritual aspirants.

The present booklet on Shri Gurudev is extracted from ACPR's Silver Jubilee Souvenir published in 1978. Shri Gurudev was a great saint, a yogi born in India to complete his spiritual pilgrimage, attain the divinity through God-realisation and plunge into the Divine Bliss.

We are very much indebted to Prof.A.V.Kapileshwar, Member, Editorial Board of Pathway to God Quarterly Journal, ACPR, Belagavi Smt. Vandana Joshi, Belagavi for editing the entire text so meticulously. May Gurudev bestow his infinite Grace upon all these souls.

We are deeply indebted to Shri.P.M.Ganiger, (B.E.FIE) Rtd. Superintending Engineer and President of M.R.Ganiger Education Trust, Neeralkeri, Bagalkot for bearing the entire cost of printing of this booklet. We pray, may the spirit of Gurudev Ranade bestow upon him and his family peace, prosperity and enlighten his spiritual path.

We thank the entire team at Impressions for their elegant printing.

May all the spiritual aspirants derive inspiration and enlightenment from this booklet. We consider it as a true reward for our endeavour thereby a tribute to Shri Gurudev.

Date: 25/03/2020

Place: Belagavi

Shri.M.B.Zirali

Hon. Secretary
ACPR, Belagavi.



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Shri Gurudev Dr. R.D. Ranade

(1886-1957)

Glimpses of Ideal Life

(Shri M. S. Deshpande M.A)



Chapter - 1

An Ideal Student - Aspirant.

Prelude :

Dear *Bhārat* had never been devoid of saints. In fact she is what she is- a Puṇya Bhumi- a holy land on account of the *Tapasyā*-penance of her saints. Other lands also had their saints and sages, no doubt. But *Bhārat* appears to be a land of their special choice. The number of saints in *Bhārat* and the heights reached by them, is really phenomenal. They carried the brilliant torch of spirituality wherever they went and brought

fresh spiritual awakening in their wake, even among the common people.

Like ancient and medieval *Bhārat*, modern *Bhārat* also had her saints and sages. These saints opened the flood-gates of spirituality and released a fresh flow of the same, flooding gradually all the parts of *Bhārat* and trying to reach other lands as well. They have been great power-houses from which spiritual energy is being transmitted and supplied to all the peoples of the world. They have been thus successfully resisting the great onrushing flood of godless materialism.

Śhri Gurudev Rāmbhāu Mahārāj Rānade was such a great saint, one of the precious gifts of dear *Bhārat* to the modern world. Śhri Gurudev's life was a mingled yarn of cotton and silk of intellectual and spiritual eminence, which was beautified by the brilliant embroidery of Silver and Gold-of effulgent Spiritual Visions and Supreme Bliss. However, his intellectual eminence gradually made room for spiritual splendour and ultimately merged in it. Hence when we describe the events in his worldly life we will simultaneously point out how his spiritual life was gaining an upper hand over it and how it engulfed his intellectual life completely at last. Says he "Spiritual life has been my aim from the beginning of my philosophic career; and let me hope, it would be its culmination as well."¹ We will show now how his hope is amply rewarded.

Pious Family and Birth :

Śhri Gurudev appears to be a Yogi who had taken this birth to complete his Spiritual Pilgrimage, attain the Highest Ascent

1) Evolution of my thought.

of God-realisation and plunge in the Bliss Divine. Naturally, as is pointed out by the *Gītā*, he was born in a pious and wealthy family-(*Shuchīnām gehe*).

Shri Bapurao, the great grandfather of Rambhau, who was once the banker of the *Peśhwas*, had later on stayed with the Chief of Ramadurg, as his political adviser. Though he had wealth in abundance, he had no issue. Bapurao was also a great devotee of Shri *Chidambar Swāmi*, the celebrated Saint of Murgod. Once when the Swami performed a great sacrifice, Bapurao put his whole soul in it and tried his level best to make it a grand success. Highly pleased by his devoted service, the *Swāmiji* asked him to choose a boon. Bapurao prayed for a good son which was granted by the exalted *Swāmiji*. This son had two sons. The younger of them, Dattopant, was the father of Rama. Owing to some differences, Shri Dattopant was required to leave Ramadurga and seek service in the then State of Jamakhandi.

Smt. Parvatibai, the second wife of Dattopant, was a very pious lady. She had no issue for twelve years, after the birth of her first daughter. That pained her a good deal. She got herself initiated by a local Saint-Shambhuling Swami, living in the neighbourhood, and as directed by him, she plunged herself in constant meditation, on the Divine Name. No wonder, God was soon pleased with her intense penance and blessed her with the jewel of a son. However, at the time of delivery the mother could not bear the prolonged pangs of labour. All the family members were bewildered. But at the suggestion of an experienced servant of theirs, she was given the *Tīrtha*-holy water-of Shri Rāmeśhwar. When Smt. Parvatibai drank it her

delivery became smooth and safe. In this way was born Rama at about 10 A. M. on 3rd July 1886. The advent of a son sent a thrill of joy in the family. Thereupon the child was named Ramachandra as his birth was the outcome of the Grace of Shri Rameshwar.

A Scion of Grace :

Rama was thus a Scion of Grace Divine. Another event that occurred a few years later, fully confirms this conception. When Rama was about four years old, his mother Smt. Parvatibai took him to her Guru, Saint Shambhuling Swami. She placed the child at his feet, prostrated herself before him and implored him to bless the Child. The Swami looked at the child with steadfast gaze. A genuine feeling of love and reverence glistened in his eyes. It seemed that he had a glimpse of the future greatness of the child. Suddenly he remarked :

‘This boy is a Scion of Grace, mother ! He is a budding Saint who has come down to bless the devotees. Let me pay myself my homage to him.’

This prediction of the future saintly career of the boy by her Master, sent a thrill of joy in the mother's bosom. Tears of gratitude trickled down her cheeks. She respectfully bowed down to the *Swāmiji* and returned home with the child. An unusual feeling of blessedness filled her soul. Immediately after her arrival, she gave the child a good bath, seated him on a raised seat, applied *Kumkum* (saffron) to his forehead, placed a garland of flowers round his neck and washed his pretty feet with her tears of joy.

Rama who was thus born of devotion, as it were, was nourished by devotion and was further brought up in the

atmosphere of devotion by his devoted mother.

A Brilliant Student :

Rama's school and college career was marked by exceptional intellectual brilliance. After completing his Primary education Rama joined the P. B. High School. His keen intellect, retentive memory, humble behaviour and devotional temperament immediately won for him the love and affection of his friends and teachers. Rama's reading was both intensive and extensive. His vast reading outside the regular course of study had greatly developed his mastery over languages. Even when he was reading in Standard VI, Rama had begun to read the works of Swami Vivekanand. He had then the curiosity as well as the capacity to understand the lofty ideas of *Swāmiji*, and acquire a profound knowledge of the English language. Rama's knowledge of Sanskrit literature was yet more profound even at such an early age. His Sanskrit teacher, by his skilful teaching, had instilled into Rama a genuine love and regard for Sanskrit literature and had made him study advanced Sanskrit classics.

Blessing of Shri Maharaj;

During this period, Rama had the good fortune of receiving initiation -the *Divine Nāma*-from Shri Bhausahab Maharaj-the celebrated Saint of Umadi. His flowering intellect thereby had the unique privilege of receiving the spiritual illumination of Divine Grace. Shri Maharaj used to come to Jamakhandi every year for blessing the devotees. In 1901, Kallu Bhokare, Rama's fast friend, had received initiation from Shri Maharaj and had a few spiritual experiences as well. When Rama learnt this from his friend, he also felt a keen desire to have such an experience.

At the same time, Rama happened to attend the discourse of Shri Maharaj in the course of which Shri Maharaj casually remarked: " If one meditated on the Divine *Nāma* regularly one might also pass the examination with credit." This remark intensified his desire for initiation still more. Thereupon he intimated his desire to Kallu who took him immediately to Shri Maharaj.

As soon as Shri Maharaj saw him, he recognised the potential future spiritual greatness of Rama and readily blessed him with the *Divine Nāma*. It was the auspicious day-the fourteenth day of *Kārtik*, popularly known as *Vaikuṅtha Chaturdaśhi* of Saka year 1823 (25th Nov. 1901). The seed of *Divine Nāma* sown by Shri Maharaj in this fertile, pure soil, sprouted in course of time, unawares, shot up into a big tree and was richly adorned with fine foliage, beautiful, fragrant flowers and luscious fruits. Such was the good fortune that befell Rama on that blessed day.

It was in the same year that Rama was married, even though he was still in his teens, in response to the prevailing custom then. His wife Sau. Sitabai was a good-natured pious lady.

Splendid Success:

In this way, Rama's head and heart received the support of Divinity which helped to bring about his all-round growth. Next year Rama was to appear for the Matriculation Examination of the Bombay University. His preparation was excellent. He had chosen Bombay Centre. He answered all the question papers satisfactorily and returned to Jamakhandi. Then he remembered

the words of his Master. A strong innate impulse to know, to experiment and experience, always played an important role in all his activities. The confluence of these three streams was the spring of his progress, So he decided to test the veracity of his Master's assurance by performing the experiment of meditation. He began to meditate on the '*Divine Name*' every day, from 10 P.M. to 11 P.M. He continued this practice till the result of the Examination was declared. Finally, when the result was out, Rama stood second among all the successful candidates. Not only that. He also stood first in *Sanskrit* and secured the much-coveted "*Jagannāth Śhankarśhet Scholarship*" in *Sanskrit*. This unprecedented success filled all his relatives and teachers with delight. But the joy of Rama had one more important element in it, this success had intensified his faith and devotion for Shri Maharaj, Name and the Lord. This salutary change in his attitude was followed by a good spiritual experience as well. He had the vision of a Divine Star, the harbinger of further spiritual realisation.

His College Career :

The scholarship earned by Rambhau consisted of Rs.25/- per month, to be paid for four year. It enabled him to continue his further study in the College. He soon joined the Deccan college Poona, as that was the only College in this part at that time.

When Rambhau started from Jamakhandi, he was blessed with a unique spiritual experience. He had the vision of a Spiritual Star on the rising Sun. Delighted by this auspicious omen, he proceeded to Poona and joined the Deccan College.

His life in the College Hostel was of the orthodox type. The impressions inherited by him from his mother, were deep-rooted. His mother had advised him never to forget the Lord. Rambhau tried to act up to her advice. His simplicity and purity of character remained intact even in the modern atmosphere of the college. He utilised the major portion of his time in study and meditation. As he was a genuine seeker of knowledge, and not a seeker of pleasure like several other students there, he was ever engaged in his study. He studied for the sake of gaining thorough knowledge of the subject, and not merely for passing the examination. Knowledge for the sake of Knowledge was his ideal.

Hence, this ideal student soon attracted the attention and love of all the professors who were intellectual stalwarts. They literally showered their affection on him. Of all the professors, Prin. Bain and Prof. Wodehouse were very much admired and revered by him. Prin. Bain was regarded by Rambhau as his intellectual Master. He recognised only two Masters. Shri Bhausahab Maharaj was his spiritual Master and prof. Bain his intellectual master. Prof. Bain had a unique personality. Though a teacher of history, he taught more philosophy than was taught by a professor of philosophy, and more literature than was taught by a professor of literature. It was from Bain that Rambhau learnt the art of original thinking and research. Prof. Bain also admired the intellectual eminence of Rambhau. Such was the intimate affinity between the master and the pupil.

Prof. Wodehouse taught English and Philosophy. Being a Theosophist he loved spirituality. So Rambhau used to relate his spiritual experiences to him and seek his guidance. He tried

his utmost to persuade Rambhau to join the Theosophical Society. But he resisted the temptation of doing so, on account of his firm faith in his Master. Still, in spite of this refusal, Prof. Wodehouse continued to love Rambhau.

Under the inspiring and scholarly guidance of such intellectual stalwarts, Rambhau's intellectual flowering took place quite well. And the intense meditation in the company of two spiritual brothers, carried on by him, along with the deep study, simultaneously brought about his spiritual flowering as well. His intellectual brilliance was manifested in the unique successes in the examinations; while his spiritual illumination was exhibited in the varied spiritual experiences attained by him.

Prizes in the Examinations :

Rambhau's regular, intense, systematic study, soon enabled him to secure a first class first in the First Year Examination of the College. In the Intermediate-Examination of the University, he not only secured a first class, but got the Varjivanadās Sanskrit Scholarship. But for the B. A, he selected Mathematics as his optional subject along with Sanskrit. He appeared for B. A. in 1907. His preparation was excellent. But unfortunately he got a second class, though he could win the *Bhāu Dāji Sanskrit* Prize. Thereby he was greatly disappointed, as this failure to get a first class, shattered all his long cherished aspirations, of appearing for the I. C. S. in England. But like Shri Aurobindo's failure in the I. C. S. Examination, this failure of Shri Rambhau to get a first class, proved to be a blessing both to him and to Bharat. It is on account of these failures that two great personalities shone in the spiritual firmament and pointed out the pathway to divine life to many a devout aspirant.

Maharaja's Prophecy:

Soon after appearing for his B.A. examination, Rambhau had returned to Jamakhandi. He appears to have developed egoism due to the successes in the examinations. Shri Maharaj, who had been there at that time, tried to remove the same, in his own way. There was *Nāma-Saptāh* going on in the house of Shri Dadasaheb Apte. Rambhau also was taking active part in it. When the *Saptāh* was in full swing, one evening, Shri Maharaj asked Rambhau to read the *Pothi* that day. This unexpected call made him nervous. He hesitated at first. But as he dared not disobey Shri Maharaj, he read the *pothi*. His reading was highly appreciated by all. Praised by Shri Maharaj also, he returned home in a joyful mood.

After the departure of all, some senior disciples, including the grandson of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, went into the room of Shri Maharaj and asked him why he pressed Rambhau to read the *Pothi*. Shri Maharaj replied addressing the grandson :

"I asked him to read the *Pothi*, because this young man will convey the glory of your grand-father beyond the seas. Such is his great good-fortune. I wanted to eliminate his egoism thereby."

These prophetic words made them all overjoyed.

Daxina Fellow :

When Rambhau passed his B. A he was appointed *Daxina Fellow* in the Deccan College. He was entrusted with the work of supervising the hostels in addition to teaching Sanskrit to the first year class. This brought him into close contact with the students. His simple, loving nature, idealistic noble life, and

remarkable intelligence - all these inspired love and reverence for him among the students. They all related their difficulties to Rambhau with the least reservation and received proper help and guidance from him. Thus he had become "a friend, philosopher and guide" to them all. "I have not seen," writes one of his past students, "such a loving personality like you. Hundreds of virtues found in you were not to be found in any other person... You have achieved such great things by staying in *Bhārat* alone. Had you gone to other countries, you would have moved the whole world. "

Spiritual Experiences : their Verification

During this period, Shri Rambhau had some brilliant Spiritual experiences. Once in 1908, he was reading Carlyle's *Sartre Resartus*, along with a couple of friends in the bungalow of Prof. Wodehouse. Suddenly he saw a huge expanse of Light outside the window facing *Ālandi*, reaching the sky. At once he got up from his seat. All others also saw the Light and got up from their seats. This supernatural phenomena continued for a few minutes.

He had once a vision of the Spiritual Sun. Golden and blue spiritual Stars shone before his eyes. The wonderful vision of the Spiritual *Śheṣha*-Serpant, sent a thrill of joy in his bosom. Once when he was witnessing a cricket match, the vision of the whole firmament filled with golden Stars flung him in an ocean of astonishment and delight. This extra-ordinary experience immensely stirred his curiosity and impelled him to ascertain the veracity and value of this experience. He went through the *Rāja Yoga* of Swami Vivekanand within a couple of days. He

even tried to ascertain the same from Prof-Wodehouse, who had the frankness to confess his ignorance about it. But he was greatly astonished to hear these wonderful experiences of his pupil. He took Rambhau to Dr. Annie Besant - his spiritual teacher - at his own expense, and introduced him to her. She was also astonished to hear this account. She asked Rambhau whether he had been initiated by a Master. When Rambhau showed the photograph of his master Shri Maharaj, she cast a keen glance at it and remarked: "You are in safe hands". These words deepened his conviction regarding the greatness of his Master, the genuineness of his path and reality of his experience. He got the verification he was seeking which fully satisfied him.

Rambhau took leave of Dr. Besant and straightway went to Jamakhandi. Fortunately, Shri Maharaj happened to be there at that time. Rambhau gave a full report of what had transpired at Banaras. When he showed the photograph of Dr. Besant to Maharaj he remarked: "The lady has practised *Yoga*." This mutual appreciation of these great souls brought home to him still further, the greatness of his Master.

Rambhau got verification of his experience in another way. When he intimated his experiences to his Master, he repeated an *Abhang* of Jnaneshwara which contained the same experiences. Here is the free English rendering of the same ☉

Rolls of cotton move in the sky,
Spread out is a network of pearls.
A flight of eagles fly before the eye
And seen are *Shesha's* circling coils.

The brilliant diamond dust does glitter
On them does *Vastu** shine,
No limit to joy - says *Jnāneśhwara*
Everywhere see I great Master mine.

Dangerous Disease :

As pointed out by my friend Dr. V. K. Gokak elsewhere, "Shri Rambhau had his share of the cross and the crown - the fortunes and the misfortunes of life. He bore the cross cheerfully and wore the crown with the deep sense of humility." So far, he had worn the crown with humility. Now he was required to bear the cross, which he could also bear cheerfully with the help of the grace of his Master as well as with that of his spiritual experiences. This blessed pair of cross and crown, continued to pursue him throughout his life.

When Shri Rambhau was happily leading his meditative life, God wanted to throw this gold into fire and enhance its brilliance. He was suddenly overtaken by a terrible disease. It was the severe penalty he had to pay for his refusal to take the *Prasād* of his Master on the 5th Jan, 1909. But through his implicit faith in his Master and complete surrender to him, he could recover, and gain the assurance from him of a long life.

⊙ कापसाचे गोळे फिरती पोकळी । मोतियाची जाळी विखुरली ॥
गरूडाचे भरारे जावे दृष्टीपुढे । शेषाचे वेटोळे गुंडाळली ॥
वज्राचिचे चुरा शुभ्रवत दिसे । तयामाजी वस्तु शोभतसे ॥
ज्ञानदेव म्हणे सुखा काय उणे । निवृत्ति पाहिले जेथे डोळे ॥

* spiritual ensign

Rambhau, however, suffered terribly from this dangerous T. B. of the brain cells. As no medicine could have any effect, he entirely relied upon the medicine of Name Divine. Formally he did take medicine from the devout Shri Lagvankar, the well known *Āyurvedic* physician of Poona. At times he was even hovering between life and death. His professors proposed to arrange for his medical treatment in a good hospital. But he decided to stay in the town under the protecting wings of his loving mother. Just before he left the college premises one of his friends was daily reading the Gita for him, in the course of which he fastened his mind upon the following verse :

Maccitah sarva durgāni matprasādat tariṣhyasi

Atha cheṭ tvamahankārāt na śhroṣhyasi vināṅkshyasi

"Place your mind in Me: you will be freed from all the dangers through My grace. But if you don't do so, through egoism, mind, you will perish."

Under the loving care of his mother at home he got some relief. Extreme weakness did not allow him even to sit for meditation. Still his mother used to wake him up early in the morning, seat him up in an easy chair, and gently advise him to meditate as much as he could. Rambhau had lost all hope of life and was trying his best to meditate with supreme intensity as a result of which he could have a few spiritual experiences. They enabled him to bear the pangs of illness with quiet mind.

Soon after these experiences, Rambhau got slight relief. So he went to Jamakhandi and stayed there for a few months. There he got the *Prasād* of Shri Maharaj which brought him more relief. Just as he had received the *Prasād* before it was prayed

for, he also got an assurance of protection from him. It gave him some confidence. Thrice did Rambhau receive the Prasad from his Master as well as the assurance. These brought about some more improvement. His friend, at this time, suggested that he should try to live in the company of his Master for complete cure. Accordingly he went to his Master along with his mother. When they arrived at Inchagiri, the sorrow of his mother suddenly burst out in the form of tears. The all-knowing Master divined the feelings of the mother who was lying prostrate at his feet and assured her with these words: "Don't you worry, Mother. Your son need fear no death for sixty years. He has to carry on a great mission of the Lord."

These benedictory words transformed her tears of sorrow into tears of joy. Both the mother and the son were greatly overjoyed. They decided to stay with Shri Maharaj for a few days. During this stay, Rambhau had the pleasure of taking part in the *Śhravana Saptāh* (1910). He performed intense meditation in the company of advanced disciples and received fresh inspiration from their blissful *Sādhana*. He thus spent one month joyfully in the holy blissful company of his Master and spiritual brothers. As a result of this, he could then actually enjoy superb spiritual experiences as well. He had the vision of Spiritual Light full of various colours. "It was," according to him, "a preliminary stage of infinite lights and colours; it has coercive power in it." In the same way his sound experience also marked a great development. While describing it, Rambhau used to quote a few lines of an Arati of Shri Jnanadeva, the substance of which is given below in his own words :

"When I entered the Sanctuary, my bodily consciousness was lost. My mind was changed to supermind... Reason came to a standstill.... and I saw my own Self. My eyelashes ceased to twinkle. Distinction between night and day was gone. The whole Universe was alight and was filled with the resonance of God. I was merged in the ocean of Bliss and my Beatification was ineffable. ❖

Rambhau, then, enjoyed the Bliss of hearing the chorus of several musical instruments at one and the same time. Such experiences automatically brought about considerable improvement in his health. He, therefore, desired to stay there and requested Shri Maharaj to allow him to do so. But Shri Maharaj replied : "Now you need not stay here. You may return to Poona. If you meditate properly the climate of Poona will suit your health."

A few days after this, they took leave from Shri Maharaj and started for Poona. At that time Shri Maharaj gave them the following message :

नेणपणे जाले ते जाले । जाले ते होऊन गेले ।
जाणपणे वर्तले । पाहिजे नेमस्त ॥
आता चांगले दिवस पाहाल । सुगंध वार्ताही ऐकाल ।
आनंद आनंद होत जाईल । भगवंताच्या कृपाबळे ॥
Things went wrong when light didn't dawn
Well ! done is done, don't worry.

Now at least with wisdom blessed
Improve yourself ! Don't tarry !
You'll see good days, hear fragrant news,
The Grace of the Lord will grant you Bliss.



Chapter II

An Ideal Professor-Seeker



Prelude :

After his return to Poona Shri Rambhau began to search for a suitable job. But maintenance was not the only consideration in its selection. He mainly desired that the job should offer proper facilities for him, to carry on his spiritual meditation well. His prominent ideal even in those days was God-realisation and the propagation of God-devotion among the people. He has expressed this desire in almost all his letters to Shri Maharaj, and has implored him to guide him in his selection of the job.

"I strongly wish," he writes, "that I should not be required to adopt a profession that would increase egoism, lead to the neglect of devotion or hinder spiritual thought. I do not want it even though it is capable of granting me any amount of wealth. My heart hankers after adopting such a profession which would help the development of devotion and enable me to spread the power and glory of the saints everywhere." (20-9-1910). "I have decided a couple of years ago, that I should employ my mind and body in the service of spreading your glory as well as that of spirituality-God-realisation-throughout the world "(17-3-1912).

Thus, the attainment and spread of spirituality had been his life's ideals ever since. His worldly life was intended as a stepping stone to spiritual life. Hence, a few hours' work capable of meeting his creature needs, was enough for him.

Lecturer :

At last he got the post of a lecturer in English Composition, in the Fergusson College Poona, carrying a monthly salary of Rs.40/. Shri Rambhau was satisfied even with that meagre salary and threw himself wholly in his work. He later on received calls offering better salary. Unable to arrive at a proper decision, he approached his Master for guidance. He received the reply in these measured words : "Engage yourself in constant *Sādhana*. The problem of the job would be solved automatically. Take care of the *Sādhana*, and the job will take care of itself." So he gave up the idea of going else where and continued his present work with all sincerity.

Shri Rambhau was an expert in the art of writing essays. The logic of exposition, novelty of thought, flight of imagination, skill of construction as well as simplicity and music of style—all these had lent a charm to many of his early essays. His skill in teaching composition has been well described by Dr. P. K. Gode, who had the privilege of being one of his pet pupils. Says he: "I caught my first inspiration for systematic study from Dr. Ranade... I still remember one of his illustrations of balanced sentence he gave from Bain's Rhetoric, viz. "Books help when friends do not and when books do not, Meditation. Thus did Shri Rambhau teach his students great principles useful for their future career, even when he was teaching a language."

Curator:

Through the grace of his Master Rambhau got in 1913, without any effort on his part, another post, comparatively more favourable for the progress of his spiritual *Sādhana*. He was appointed Curator of the Manuscript Library in the Deccan College, which carried a salary of Rs. 125/- per month, requiring him merely to do research work. Rambhau then began to utilise all his time for reading and meditation. He rarely stirred out of his room. He did not go to the club even for taking his meals. The peon of the club used to bring his food in a carrier and place it outside the door of his room. After the meditation was over, he used to take his meals in the room itself. Constant meditation on the name of the Lord and meditative reading of books on philosophy, on the Upanisads and the mystical literature of the saints, were his principal occupations in those days. So he had to his credit, a good deal of intellectual and spiritual development.

Thus during these three years, (1911-13), Shri Rambhau by his efficient teaching of the art of composition, developed his teaching and writing. His deep and vast study of philosophy both Eastern and Western, enabled him, not only to pass his M.A. with flying colours, but also to adorn his future profession as a distinguished professor. At the same time, at the suggestion of his Master, he occasionally accompanied him in his tours to different places and enjoyed full well the benefits of his holy and inspiring company. Through the grace of Shri Maharaj, he blissfully carried on his *Sādhana* and attained some higher spiritual experiences.

His Master Departs :

When his intellectual and spiritual progress was thus in full swing, unfortunately for him, he was sorely tormented by shock after shock. The departure of his Master was the first rude shock received by him. To Rambhau Shri Maharaj was all in all. Shri Maharaj had granted him new life, shown him the pathway to the Abode of Eternal Bliss and enabled him to tread the Pathway with courage. His illimitable grace had helped him at every step and showered upon him a few brilliant gifts, both of material as well as spiritual splendour. No wonder if the sudden departure of such a Master proved to be a severe shock to him.

As soon as Shri Rambhau received a telegram in the Deccan College, he immediately left for Inchagiri. All the disciples of Shri Maharaj were plunged in sorrow. The sorrow of his senior devoted disciples-Shri Amburao Baba, Smt. Shivalingavva, & Shri Rambhau knew no bounds. Still it expressed itself in different ways. Shri Baba was of a serious nature. He could

control his sorrow and begin to attend to his duties. The tender heart of Shivakka burst out in tears. Shri Rambhau had possessed reason and emotion in an equal measure. His emotion, which was under the control of reason by day, shook it off during night and expressed itself in the form of tears. This went on, we are told, continuously for full five years.

Shri Baba implicitly believed that Shri Maharaj dwelt in the *Samādhi* and that he was capable of fulfilling the desires of his devotees. This living faith was the outcome of his direct experience and source of his sustenance and peace of mind. Blessed is the Master who had such devoted disciples, and blessed are the disciples who have such omnipotent Master! Shri Maharaj attained *Samādhi* on 29th January 1914.

A Genuine Professor :

Shri Rambhau soon recovered from this shock, regained his balance, through discrimination, meditation and spiritual experience and resumed his duties. He began to receive calls from the D. E. Society, to join it as a life-member. But as the salary carried by the post was Rs. 100/- he at first was unable to take a decision. But as this Society was an educational institution with an ideal tradition of self-sacrifice and offered an opportunity of infusing patriotism among the students and as there were numerous holidays with a greater possibility of getting leave as well, Shri Rambhau-an idealist-accepted the offer at last. This brought a kind of steadiness to his life. He joined the Society in June 1914.

In the beginning, Rambhau taught 'Hero and Hero worship' the renowned work of Carlyle, to the students of the B.A. class.

The independent, profound and valuable thoughts of Carlyle had made Carlyle an object of great admiration and respect to him. He used to forget himself while teaching this book. He was completely saturated with Carlyle's thought on account of its close affinity with Indian thought.

Along with teaching he carried on his study of philosophy as well. Rambhau began his study of philosophy in order to test the veracity of his spiritual experience. He studied Indian philosophy - *Vedanta* - to find justification for the co-relation between *Advaita* -Absolutism- and *Bhakti*-devotion. And he studied European philosophy to find justification for the co-relation between reason and intuition to justify Rational Mysticism. He also wanted thereby to be able to expound it so as to make it acceptable to the modern intellectuals.

M. A. Examination :

With such an excellent preparation he appeared for the M.A. degree in 1914 with Philosophy as his principal subject. His unparalleled scholarship and untiring study, together with the supreme grace of his Master, enabled him to secure a First Class First in this Examination. He also won the Chancellor's Gold Medal of the Bombay University assigned to Philosophy that year. He also got the Telang Gold Medal. Nor is this all, the certificate given to him by the examiners excelled everything. In their report they remarked; "The examinee knows more than the examiners." Such was the extraordinary brilliance of this student. Shri Rambhau had a premonition of these awards. One day when he was absorbed in meditation, he had a vision of the following telegram : "First Class First, Chancellor's Medal." He

also heard these words. A few days after this vision he learnt the actual result in those very words.

Rambhau thus enhanced the prestige not only of himself but also of the institution in which he was serving. Thereafter he began to teach Philosophy. Soon he exhibited his great skill in teaching that subject as well, and earned the praise and respect of his students. The proficiency of Prof. Rambhau's teaching philosophy has been very well appreciated by them. Here are the appreciations of two of his students;

"Prof. Ranade's career as a teacher of Philosophy was a truly great event of teaching Philosophy in the College... His greatest contribution to the Fergusson College was the great learning and brilliance which he brought to bear upon his teaching of Philosophy in the class-room which attracted a large number of students even from far off provinces like Bihar and Sindh and others even more distant. He spoke in his class with a sense of inspiration, like a convinced and convincing Prophet and enthused his listeners to philosophic effort."-*prof. Wadekar.*

" Prof. Rambhau's students attended his lectures with one-pointed rapt attention, on account of a wide awareness that they were in the presence of a highly learned professor.... Prof. Rambhau was not a mere professor of philosophy. His students could readily realise that he was a great man of realisation who had found the path for the realisation of Reality, and had merged in its meditation."- Dr. Modak.

Lectures at Bangalore :

In this way Prof. Rambhau's fame spread through other provinces of Bharat. It brought to him invitations for lectures

from various institutions. A *Sanskrit Academy* was then to be started at Bangalore, for the advancement of Culture. Prof. Rambhau received an invitation from Bangalore, to deliver three lectures on *Upaniṣhadic* Philosophy, at the time of the inauguration of the Academy. He had just passed his M. A. and as such he was a novice. Still he accepted this responsible task. This was really an indication of his far reaching fame.

Prof. Rambhau delivered these lectures under the Presidentship of Shrimant Sayajirao Gaikwad, the cultured Maharaja of Baroda. They were highly appreciated by the Maharaja... These lectures formed the nucleus of his future work on the *Upanisads*. He later on developed these lectures and wrote his work: "A Constructive Survey of *Upaniṣhadic* Philosophy" which brought him not only Indian but world renown and honour.

Chain of Calamities :

So far Prof. Rambhau was enjoying the crown of hearty approbation from all sides. He was now required to face and bear the terrible cross again. This time the cross consisted of a veritable chain of calamities. A few years after the departure of his Master, Providence snatched away from him his near and dear ones. Accident deprived him of his money. Jealousy tried to despoil his reputation. Another deadly disease terribly undermined his health and sharp differences among his colleagues forced him to resign his Life-membership. However, each calamity helped to intensify his meditation more and more, granted him higher and higher spiritual experiences and bliss, developed in him the attitude of absolute self-

surrender and thus enabled him to bear the pangs of these calamities with complete peace of mind. In this way, these calamities ultimately proved to be blessings in disguise and taught him lessons of Equanimity so very essential for his future spiritual progress.

Demise of Dear Ones :

Even though Prof. Rambhau's marriage had taken place rather early in life, he had no issue for a long time. It was as late as February 1916, that he had the pleasure of having a son. As the child was the offspring of a *Sādhaka* like Rambhau who was richly endowed with devotion, knowledge and renunciation, the child became the object of deep affection for Rambhau's mother and wife. But soon fate snatched away from them their darling before it could complete ten months. This untimely demise of the child brought unbearable sorrow to them all. Prof. Rambhau bore that sorrow with the same attitude of absolute self-surrender that is present in the following utterance of Job: "God hath given and God hath taken him away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. "

Prof. Rambhau was trying to forget this sorrow through meditation, reading and occasional bliss of realisation. In the meanwhile he was required to bear two more shocks. The terrible influenza epidemic of 1918 carried away first his dear wife and then within a month, his revered mother as well. Still he could bear all that calmly by the grace of his Master and his spiritual experiences. About the demise of his wife he once told his friend : "Through the grace of my Master I had then performed my *Sādhana* quite well. Hence if I had prayed God to

save my wife from the clutches of death, my prayer would not have gone in vain. But since God's wish alone is blessed, I did not think it proper to pray Him like that." Such was the attitude of resignation attained by him then.

His revered mother passed away on 19th Oct, 1918. She meditated on the Divine Name and merged in the Absolute. When the flames rushed from the funeral pyre, he had the vision of *Śheṣha* (hooded serpent) dancing on the flames. This vision assured him that his mother had attained the blessed state. Prof. Rambhau greatly loved his mother. Naturally her departure made him extremely miserable. Still, his spiritual progress enabled him to control his grief and taught him to see the silver lining of happiness in the dark cloud of his supreme sorrow. Like happiness, sorrow also is a gift of God. All that the Lord does is meant for our welfare. It is this conviction that enabled him to lead his solitary life peacefully in the company of the Lord alone.

Adhyatma Bhavan :

We have given so far an account of his sorrow due to bereavements from his kith and kin. Here is the account of his misery born of loss of money. In 1919 Prof. Rambhau purchased a plot of land near Bhandarkar Oriental Institute and got a bungalow built for him. When the construction of the building had been almost completed, he had a dream one day, in which Shri Maharaj told him that Shri Jnaneshwara was angry with him. Hence he went to Alandi to have the Darshana of the *Samādhi* of Shri Jnaneshwara. When he was paying his homage to him there, his bungalow toppled down at Poona due

to torrential down-pour of rain. After his return from Alandi Rambhau observed this strange mishap. Without losing heart he got it reconstructed again by fresh payment to the contractor. He named it "*Adhyātma Bhavan*"-"Abode of Spirituality." This "Abode" has played an important part in the *Sadhana* of Rambhau, both before and after his second illness. On the 13th day of the dark half of *Kārtik* 1841 (20-11-1919) Rambhau arranged a three-days' *Saptāh*, received blessings from Shri Baba and began to stay there. Here he continued his meditation, with utmost intensity. At the same time, he also carried on vigorously his intellectual activities, such as higher research, study and writing books congenial to his spiritual development, in addition to his teaching work in the College. He was then residing with his sister in the town. But at night he used to go to the *Adhyātma Bhavan* to sleep. At times he spent days in *Adhyātma Bhavan* and enjoyed the blessedness of solitude. In the evening he often went for a walk by the side of the river *Mulā*, and watched the horrible sight of the bloodred flames of the funeral pyres in the burning ground nearby. He tried to develop his dispassion by the sight. He also used to go to the hills nearby, for meditation. Thus did his *Sādhana* reach the acme of intensity and granted him spiritual experiences of a higher order.

During this period Prof. Rambhau used to spend at least seven hours in meditation. From 8 to 10-30 in the morning, from 12 to 1 at noon, from 8 to 10-30 in the evening and from 12 to 1 at night, he was performing rigorous meditation. He used to sit for meditation regularly at the fixed time, in the manner described in the *Gītā*, by sitting in a steady pose, and by fixing

his gaze on the tip of the nose. At other times also he was remembering the Name Divine.

Prof. Rambhau was residing in the Adhyatma Bhavana along with Shri Jagannath Lele and Shri Kakasaheb Karkhanis. They were helping him a good deal in his daily requirements and study. He used to relate to them some of his spiritual experiences. Shri Karkhanis has recorded three experiences of Prof. Rambhau of that period. One day he had the vision of the lustrous form of *Śheṣha*, moving round his bungalow. His coils over coils were present everywhere. On a *Hanumān Jayanti* day; the birth day of Shri *Hanumān* he had a vision of Shri Hanuman with flaming face and dazzling golden hair. Once Prof. Rambhau was going to *Alandi* along with Shri Karkhanis in a *tangā*. As soon as the *tangā* left Poona, he began to have the vision of *Shri Krishna*, as described in the *Abhanga* of Shri Jnaneshwara, the substance of which is given below. This vision was present throughout his journey till they reached *Alandi* :

" Your forehead shines with the light of million moons.

You have lotus eyes and a smiling face.

O Krishna! move on ! nod on, my dear !

Speak on lovingly for hours and hours

Lo ! how he stands and swings his arms !

As if beckoning me to come to Him.

Is He not Vitthal, my Holy Father ?"

This beautiful experience had immensely endeared the *Abhanga* ☉ to him.

तुझिये निढळीं कोटिचंद्र प्रकाशे ।
कमलनयन हास्यवदन भासे ॥
कृष्णा हाल कारे ! कृष्णा डोल कारे
घडिये, घडिये, घडिये, गुज बोल कारे ।
उभा राहोनिया कैसा हालवितो वाहो
बापरखुमादेवीवरू विठ्ठल ना हो ।

Flames of Jealousy :

Prof. Rambhau, during this period, was required to face the onslaughts of jealousy. His rapid progress, both intellectual and spiritual, lent him a grandeur which was too much for the petty persons to bear. It enkindled the embers of jealousy in them, the flaming heat of which began to torment him. "He is a *Pandit* drawing a fat salary. How can he attend to *Sādhana* properly?" These were the taunting remarks flung at him by the *Sādhakas*. "Well, he is after all a seeker of the Spirit. Is it possible for him to teach in the College according to the time-table?" Such were the words of censure that were levelled against him, time and again, by his colleagues. Thus had Rambhau become a target of this double attack from his uncharitable critics. But he did not allow them to disturb his peace of mind. Both praise and blame were treated alike by him. He was neither delighted by the praise nor dejected by the censure.

In this way, the loss of life due to the demise of his beloved ones, the loss of money due to the reconstruction of his bungalow, and the loss of fame resulting from the cruel criticism of jealousy, were all borne courageously by him without allowing them to seriously disturb his balance. He carried on his *Sādhana* and duty as usual.

Deadly Disease :

Thus did the Lord test him by removing his relatives, money and fame. But Prof. Rambhau fully stood the test. His faith and devotion, though sorely tried, did not either falter or vanish. On the other hand, it continued to grow day by day. Not satisfied with these tests, the Lord tried to undermine his health as well. He was required to undergo a more severe trial again. The present disease was more terrible than the previous one. If the former was the T. B. of the brain cells, this one was the alarming T. B. of the lungs.

This disease appears to be the outcome of the shocks received by him. In spite of the bliss and peace he enjoyed they could not but affect and undermine his already delicate health. The malarial climate of Poona easily affected his weakened body. With occasional ups and downs, the malarial fever, once lodged in his body, led him straight, in the courses of time, to the portals of death, by developing T. B. germs in it. In the beginning the fever was mild. His high devotion to duty made him neglect it for a long time. This long neglect increased the intensity of the fever, which refused to be controlled by any medicine. All the medicines proved ineffective. His health began to deteriorate more and more. Finally he thought of the holy feet of his Master as his only refuge, took long leave, went to Inchagiri and stayed there. "Let body decline, but God should shine." With desperate resolve, Rambhau relied entirely on the medicine of *Nama Divine* administered by his Master Physician. And he had very high regards for Shri Amburao Maharaj and Shri Amburao also had a very soft corner for him.

His loving company proved very beneficial to him. This illness had practically reduced him to a skeleton. He was not able to digest any food. So he used to live on milk alone.

Under these trying circumstances Shri Maharaj appeared twice in his dreams and gave him various suggestions together with a fresh assurance of protection. He also gave him a medicine in the form of a '*flower*' for curing the disease. In addition to these his Master had granted him higher spiritual experiences. Prof. Rambhau has mentioned a few of them in his Marathi Abhang, ॐ the substance of which is given below:

My *Ātman* shines before my eyes
In infinite vestures bright.
Śheṣhā's coils and moonlight clear,
Are granting superb delight.
Pearl-network and diamond dust.
With a glittering splendour nice
Circle blue in a circle white
Are seen through Master's grace.

He saw the Eye with his eyes. The vision of the "Universal Eye" threw him into ecstasy. Then he had the experience of hearing the *Nama Divine*. When Shri Baba came to know of this superb experience, he asked Rambhau to initiate fresh aspirants, which he modestly declined to do.

Thereafter the health of Rambhau improved sufficiently. He began to eat bread and rice. When he came to Inchagiri he was not able to stand up for the *Bhajan*, but on the last day of the

ॐ अनंतरूपीं आत्मा बिंबविला डोळा !

Māgha Saptah (1921) after the flowers were showered on the Pothi, he suddenly wore his blue silken *Dhoti* and began to serve water to the *Sādhakāṣ* at the time of their partaking of *Prasād*. He even took the Prasad himself. His Spiritual *Vastu*, we are told, was dazzling with extra-ordinary effulgence then, which naturally infused extra energy in him. A few months after the *Saptāh* was over, he took leave and blessings of Shri Baba, returned to Poona and joined his duty. He then continued to reside in the Adhyatma Bhavan.

Second Marriage :

After the restoration to normal health, in response to the command of his Master, Prof. Rambhau agreed to marry a second time. He actually heard the following words of his Master, in a vision : "I shall send the girl after initiating her.. Do marry !" Hence he decided to marry again and conveyed his decision to Shri Karkhanis through a letter :

"... In accordance of the wish of the Master, there appears to be a providential chance of marriage. As yet there is no direct permission to spread the gospel. Till then, it seems, we should develop our spirituality fully incognito. Besides, the Lord appears to indicate that I should develop spirituality while leading a worldly life.. Shri Ekanath Maharaj was required to lead a worldly life even after Self-realisation. Such being the case, what of persons like me" ? (21-5-1922)

In accordance with the pre-intimation of the Master, Prof. Rambhau married Smt Manutai, the daughter of Shri Vishnupant Vaidya of Islampur on 1st June 1922. After marriage, Shri Rambhau and Sau. Sitabai-the new name of his

wife, went to *Inchagiri*. There when Smt. Sitabai was meditating near the *Samādhi* of Shri Maharaj she received the *Nāma Divine* from him on 10th June 1922.

Thereafter Prof. Rambhau had a daughter born to him in January 1925. She was named Shakuntala. After marriage she was called Smt. Vijayadevi Apte, M. A.

Transfer and Resignation :

A couple of months after the marriage, Prof. Rambhau got himself transferred to Willingdon College Sangli, thinking that the climate of Sangli would suit his health. He worked in the College for two years. During his stay at Sangli, he had the first wonderful vision of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj. One day when he was absorbed in meditation in the bungalow of Shivanagi there, he suddenly saw a vast expanse of light, in it a stately, tall figure of fair complexion, with a round, flaming, smiling face and red eyes approached him. It had a black blanket on its shoulders and had a yellow turban on its head. Rambhau instinctively thought it to be Shri Nimbargi Maharaj and reverentially bowed down to it. As soon as he raised his head, the figure took off its turban and said in *Kannada*: "*Ida tago*" - (take this) and placed the turban on the head of Rambhau. It then lovingly looked at him for couple of seconds and said again ;"*In tā*" - (return it). At once Rambhau said: "*Tagolri Māhāraj*"- (take it Sir) and returned it. The figure took it up and the vision vanished. Prof. Rambhau was overjoyed to have the vision of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj and thought it to be an indication of his future spiritual mission.

Very soon, the Sangli climate also did not suit his health. So he used to stay first at *Inchagiri* and then at Nimbargi and go to

Sangli to deliver his quota of lectures in the College. This procedure was not liked by the majority of life-members. They expressed their disapproval as well as opposition to it. Gradually jealousy intervened and gave this difference of opinion an ugly turn. The difference of opinion centred round two issues : whether importance should be given to regular teaching or to research and whether prominence should be given to the letter or to the spirit of the Rules of the Society. It would have been better if the Society had given some special facilities to Rambhau and retained his services. Students this side would have enjoyed the benefit of his unique intelligence and the prestige of the Society also would have increased thereby. But as the divine plan was altogether different, the elders of the Society did not do so and Prof. Rambhau was required to submit his resignation of life-membership of the Society on 20th June 1924. In any way, what happened was for the good. It enlarged the field of Prof. Rambhau's activity and made it national and even international.

Nimbal Ashram :

That a scholar like Prof. Rambhau, fully endowed with modern learning, should like to live in a solitary place like Nimbal, away from enlightened human habitation, was an enigma to many. But those who were conversant with the goal and way of his life knew that it was a divine dispensation. As the climate of Sangli also did not suit his health Prof. Rambhau wanted to stay in a dry place, near Inchagiri, having railway and postal facilities. He asked his friends to find such a place. When they were in search of it, he had a vision at Inchagiri, in his

morning meditation one day. He saw a tall person standing before him. He said : "Shri Nimbargi Maharaj has gone to Nimbai Station." Thereupon Rambhau asked him: "Is he still spreading the Gospel of Devotion ?" To this the Person gave a thundering reply : "Close your eyes, ears and lips and silently carry on your meditation" and disappeared. When Rambhau finished his meditation and came out of the room he received a letter from his friend, informing him that he had selected a plot near Nimbai Station and asking him whether he would go over there for final selection. Thereupon Rambhau accompanied his friend to the Station and selected the site. He could soon purchase 48 acres of land for Rs. 400/- only.

He thereafter got a house built there and when it was ready he occupied it in April 1925. He invited all his spiritual brothers and sisters for the opening ceremony. A Nama Saptah was celebrated with great pomp. A box of holy ashes of his Master was deposited in a niche in the center of the wall, in the main hall and a photograph of Shri Maharaj and his *Pādukās* were placed on it. The *Saptāh* was celebrated for seven days blissfully. It gladdened the hearts of all the brothers and sisters.

Thus this *Āshram* became in course of time an Abode of Bliss and Peace to all the spiritual aspirants.



Chapter III

An ideal Philosopher-Saint



Prelude :

We have seen so far, how Prof. Rambhau evolved as an ideal student-aspirant as well as an ideal professor-seeker. We shall now try to show how he evolved as an ideal philosopher-saint-how his intellectual and spiritual development reached the acme of evolution. Prof. Rambhau expanded later on his intellectual horizon by his profound and extensive study, reflection and teaching of all the branches of philosophy and his spiritual horizon, by his continuous, blissful *Sādhana* and by his ever-increasing, infinite spiritual experiences.

Thus did he evolve, reach a higher stage of God-realisation and attain the power even to bless other seekers. About this

spiritual evolution of his he once remarked : "Through the grace of Shri Maharaj, I have attained the ideal. Now, let the Lord's will be done"! He reserved his future life exclusively for still higher attainments in spiritual life, as well as for the spread of spirituality in accordance with the wish and direction of the Lord. Really the realisation of the Infinite Almighty can have no end. So even though Rambhau attained the stage of a Master, he continued to evolve himself and to bring about the evolution of others.

After leaving the D. E. Society, Rambhau lived in Nimbal for three years. During this period he achieved two important things. : i) The starting of the Academy of Philosophy and Religion, & ii) The publication of his book on *Upanishadic Philosophy*.

Academy of Philosophy and Religion :

Just as realisation of God and propagation of God-devotion was the supreme ideal of Prof. Rambhau, expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through original research in the field of philosophy in order to show how its problems are the same throughout the world, was his supreme intellectual ideal. However he pursued this intellectual ideal, as we have seen by now firstly to justify the reality of the spiritual ideal and secondly to explain the same to the rational mind - of the modern times. He intended to achieve this ideal in the College. But as he could not do so there, he decided to start a fresh institute entitled *Academy of Philosophy and Religion*, a body exclusively devoted to research in all the Philosophies and Religions of the world. He opened the Academy in his *Adhyatma Bhavan Poona*, on 1st

August 1924. Rambhau was its Director and Prof. P. K Gode and Prof. N. G. Damle were its Secretaries.

The Aim of the Academy was to bring together all those who were interested in a philosophical investigation of the Problem of God, through research in all the Philosophies and Religions of the world, through publication of original books on the topics undertaken for research and through lectures on Philosophy and Religion at various centres in India.

The urgent need of such an *Academy* has been stated in the Preamble of the Prospectus in these words :

"The problem of supreme importance to mankind is the problem of the existence of God and His relation to Man and Nature. Philosophy and Religion both concern themselves with the solution of this problem, but while Philosophy engages itself in the intellectual side of this solution, Religion concerns itself with the practical side... Philosophy without the content of Religion would be empty, Religion without the guidance of Philosophy would be shapeless and amorphous. It would thus be necessary to combine the dictates of Philosophy and Religion in the interest of the highest solution of the problem." (1)

"Knowledge has taken immense strides with the growth of time. Scientific inventions have enormously enriched the patrimony of man. The old order has changed and new one has taken its place. Nevertheless the goal of human life as well as the means of its attainment, have remained the same. Unquestionably, the search for God remains the highest

1) Prospectus P.1

problem even today and a philosophic justification for our spiritual life is as necessary today as it was hundreds of years ago." (2)

"True Religion is the direct first-hand relationship of Man and God. Religion is for humanity, its manifestations are for different races and climes. Religion is a matter of eternity; its forms have existence in time.... True Religion has to steer itself clear of both superstition and scepticism and it is the helm of Philosophy which can steer it to a safe and happy haven... Hence we must combine a philosophic view of reality with an empirical study of faiths, so as to be able to find a reasoned justification for our aspirations and attainments. " (3)

"Thus the Academy would try to combine what is valuable both in European and Indian Philosophy and may offer thought-constructions for the future, in the originality of which and in the theopolitan foundations of which alone, may lie the hope of India as a spiritual nation. But this ideal could not be achieved by the Academy for want of funds and workers."

Philosophy of the Upanishads :

The Academy proposed to bring out a series of publications on Indian Philosophy and Religion entitled "An Encyclopaedic History of Indian Philosophy" which had both a national and international significance; national, because it would enable India to vindicate her place in the philosophies of the world: international, because when completed, it was sure to influence the course of world's speculations. If interpreted in terms of

Western Philosophy, the rich and variegated metaphysical and mystical heritage of India would surely leave the mark upon the course of the world's thought in times to come. This series consisted of 16 volumes, the present volume on the Philosophy of the *Upanishads* entitled "A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" was the second in the series.

Like the great *Āchāryās* of the middle ages, Prof. Rambhau thought of writing commentaries on the *Prasthāna Traya*-the Three Sacred Books-viz. Ten *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Brahma Sutrās* universally regarded as authorities on the Philosophy and Religion of Bharat. He wanted to show like the *Āchāryās*, that they supported his doctrine of God-realisation and God-devotion. He studied their doctrines minutely and expounded them clearly in English, in modern philosophic and scientific terminology so as to become intelligible and acceptable to the scientific minds. He thus presented this rare gift of his valuable thought to the whole world.

Prof. Rambhau began to write first on the Philosophy of the *Upanishads* and later on delivered three lectures each on the philosophy of the Gita and that of the *Vedānta (Brahma Sutrās)*. His classical works on the Upanishads and the Gita could see the light of day during his life-time. But the Philosophy of the *Vedānta*, remained only in the form of notes. They were posthumously developed by his disciples and published by the *Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavan* in 1970.

Here we wish to present a few salient aspects of his present volume on *Upanishadic Philosophy*.

Prof. Rambhau usually used to approach a subject from four points of view ; 1) the historical, ii) the critical, iii) the comparative and iv) the scientific. So he approached the *Upaniṣhads* from all the four standpoints, recognised and accepted by all modern scholars. With the help of his keen intellect, he tried to understand the valuable thoughts of the Upanishads, compare them with his own and ascertain their veracity and value. Then he expressed the ideas that he considered true and valuable in the present volume.

At the outset, while delineating the 'Background' he has dealt with such subjects as the time and place of the Upanishads, the authors, the general social condition of the period and the like. Then he has traced the development of *Upaniṣhadic* Cosmogony and pointed out the varieties of their psychological reflection, the roots of later philosophies to be seen in them, together with their metaphysics and ethics. In the last chapter which is by far the most important one, he has described in an attractive manner the Pathway to God of the *Upaniṣhadic* Seers as well as their brilliant spiritual experiences, in their own words. The acme of spiritual realisation, the effects of such realisation on the mystic, as well as the raptures of mystical ecstasy, depicted in the volume are supremely interesting and inspiring.

"The ultimate purpose of this work," states Prof. Rambhau, "is spiritual purpose. The mystical motive has been the most prominent. It would be the problem for the Philosophy of the Immediate Future to place Mysticism on a truly philosophic basis. Rational Mysticism which has been hitherto regarded as a

contradiction in terms must now become a truism. The author shall feel his labour amply rewarded if he finds that his exposition of *Upanishadic* Philosophy makes a contribution, however small, to the realisation of this ideal."(4)

This publication brought Prof. Rambhau, world renown. His brilliant scholarship captivated scholars. They showered profuse praise on Rambhau. "A Permanent monument" declared Prof. Garbe. Mr Muirhead opined that "this important book will have the effect of making the Indian civilization better understood in the West." "A mere glance at the work," says R. Zimmerman, "will show how far you have gone beyond Deussen's Philosophy of the Upanishads "

It would be interesting to see how he began this work in a spirit of absolute resignation to God : "I took shelter" he says, "in thought that God is a great helmsman on a sea where I have to ply my oars as best I may. To begin is human, but to fulfil is divine. In a spirit of sacrifice I place my work as an humble offering at the feet of God."

Invitation From Allahabad University :

Soon after the publication of this monumental work in 1926, Prof. Rambhau was provided by his Master with a better and wider field for his activities. Among the Indian scholars who appreciated and admired its merit highly, Shri Ganganath Jha, the Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University was by far the foremost... He was not content merely to eulogise the work as well as the author, he intently desired to appoint Prof. Rambhau as Head of the Department of Philosophy in his

4) Constructive Survey Preface. P. 15

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University and give his students the benefit of his great scholarship. He intimated his wish to Rambhau. The following extract from one of his letters reveals full well the keenness of his desire and supreme appreciation :

"... Anyway, you can give us a trial for a year; after that, if you do not find the conditions suitable, you can tell me so, and I shall see that the final step towards confirmation is not taken and you are relieved.

Please let me know by the return of post if I have your consent to put up your name before the Committee that selects the professor.

I need not add that personally I shall regard it as my greatest achievement as Vice-Chancellor, if I succeed in bringing to the University a professor of your calibre and attainments. So please don't disappoint."(1-10-1927)

Finally Pandit Jha wrote to him : "It does not matter even if you don't deliver a single lecture. I want to enter your name in the list of Professors of our University." It was impossible to reject such a loving, pressing invitation. There was no alternative but to accept it. Hence, Prof. Rambhau acceded to his request and joined the Allahabad University as Head of the Department of Philosophy on 1st December 1927.

Head of the Department of Philosophy :

Prof. Rambhau used to go to Allahabad at the beginning of July every year and return to Nimbhal during the summer vacation. Thus he worked there for about eighteen years, during the first six or seven years, he voluntarily studied and taught

different branches of philosophy. He made a profound study of metaphysics, ethics, psychology and religion and mastered them thoroughly. His teaching, therefore, was always replete with up-to-date information and supreme interest as a result of which the number of students in the philosophy department of the University greatly increased.

The following tributes to him by two of his students will clearly show how Prof. Rambhau loved, taught, guided and inspired his students :

“Whoever has come in contact with Dr. R. D. Ranade cannot forget him till the end of his life. His was an angelic personality, radiating joy and peace and spiritual light. An electric smile played on his lips and his eyes shone with a brightness reflecting his inner illumination. I never found him ruffled or sour or bitter or stooping to petty things. He was above all narrow considerations of caste, creed and community. People felt uplifted in his presence, and the more one came in contact with him, the more he sought his presence. He was an *Ajātaśhatru* (one who has no enemies) and a friend of everybody, a seraphic soul with malice towards none and charity for all.”

"Prof. Ranade's bungalow at Allahabad was rendezvous for the meeting of all aspiring souls of all ranks in life. In these gatherings, sparks from the anvil of his luminous mind would often fly and enkindle spiritual fire in the hearts of the assembled. On one occasion he said in a very serious mood: "We must fill our lives with God." On another occasion he said forcefully : "We must implant our feet firmly on the back of

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time," meaning thereby that we must transcend the time-consciousness and rise in an awareness of the Eternal."

Dr. Ranade would receive all visitors to him very kindly and graciously and would invariably offer tea. I never found him assuming airs before anybody.

"Ranade was a teacher of teachers. He had his own method of finding out the abilities of students... To all students who joined the post-graduate classes in philosophy, he asked them to write philosophical essays of their own choice... Once I approached for suggesting books on Modern Western philosophy. He gave me a lengthy list of books pointing out particular chapters in many of the books where particular topics were notably dealt with. I was simply astounded by the vastness and thoroughness of his learning. Ranade was global in his outlook. Though deeply rooted in Indian thought and culture he was abreast of the latest currents of thought in Western Philosophy of his times. He always advocated "co-related study of Eastern and Western Philosophies."

Dr. S. N. L. Shrivastava.
(Madhya Pradesh)

"I had the privilege," writes another disciple, "of being his disciple for two years at the University of Allahabad. He taught Indian Philosophy to M. A. (previous) class. I still remember his explanation of '*Tajjalān*' the cryptic word from *Chandogya Upanishad*. All powers in this Universe, physical or mental, are manifestations of His energy. He is the essence of all beings. One who realises Him finds Him in all beings. As the *Gītā* says : "He abides in all multiplicity undivided."

The full import of the term '*Tajjalān*,' only a mystic can realise. And a mystic can explain it the best. Even though the listeners are non-mystics and so cannot enter much deep into its meaning, yet they are impressed. They are aware of a grand presence.

Prof. Ranade's success as a teacher was manifest all the more at the level of guiding research. It was a privilege to be a research scholar under his guidance. Original ideas and scholarly dissertations are his specialities. First rate theses and books by research scholars are the outcome of his guidance.

Not only his scholarship but also his unassuming nature that made Ranade an attractive personality. It was a pleasure to meet him in his lodge. His affable nature and sparkling humour made his company enjoyable. One has the sense of something special about him. And yet, during my two years stay at Allahabad I could never know that he was a God-realiser."

S. K. Gupta M. A.
(Orisa)

His Daily Programme :

Prof. Ranade always loved to live with students. He had been, in a way, a patron of the poor, deserving scholars. He used to offer them free lodging and boarding in his residence and enable them to prosecute their further studies in the University. Almost all the students were well-placed after their graduation. They naturally remembered with gratefulness the loving help rendered by him.

In the beginning Prof. Ranade lived in the 2 Beli Road bungalow up to 1940. Thereafter he shifted to his new

bungalow on the *Draupadi Ghāt*. In both these residences his daily programme, as described by one of his students, was almost the same. He used to get up very early, often between 2 to 4 A.M., take tea and meditate. At times he used to call one of the students, offer him tea and ask him to read English or Sanskrit books or his typed notes. Occasionally, he had flashes, brilliant ideas which he used to discuss with the students with great enthusiasm. These were great moments for the student who got his training into the great truths from the master's mouth. Then he used to meditate till the newspapers came before dawn. A student would then be asked to read first the headings and underline those selected by him with red and blue pencil. Then the details were got read at leisure. In the morning he used either to meditate or get some books or notes read by one of the students.

Between about 10 A. M. to 12 noon, he used to go in his car towards the Ganga in a secluded field, very often on the open site of his bungalow. He used to take one of the students with him, who read out to him his notes of lectures to be delivered in the class. After reaching the place he sat alone in the car to meditate while all others alighted from it. The student carried his own books to read.

After returning from the outdoor meditation he took his bath with quite hot water in profuse quantity which the servant poured on him. After the bath he used to go to the University accompanied by a M. A. student... After his arrival there, he used to summon the students for the class. His lectures were brilliant and full of substantial material, though he did not have much eloquence or oratory.

Prof. Ranade spent one half to two hours in the University including his office work after which he returned home for lunch. He offered all the preparations to his *Guru*. We never saw him dining. But we were told that he only tasted some samples only. He did not take any supper. After the lunch he took some rest, then took tea and got some books read. Then again he went in his car for evening meditation on the side of *Gangā*. After returning he used to go to bed when the night had just begun.

Thus we see that Prof. Rambhau's major avocation there was meditation and study-especially meditation. Teaching and writing were subordinate to them. In the beginning Rambhau used to control meditation; then his meditation began to control him. When the call came, he would at once, obey the call and sit in his room for meditation. He had ordered his people not to disturb it in any account. It was only when the call came from the Vice-Chancellor that they were allowed to disturb his meditation.

Departure of his Spiritual Sister and Brother:

1) Smt. Shivalingavva-the senior spiritual sister of Rambhau-suddenly passed away in 1930, due to the attack of cholera. She had been held in very high esteem by Rambhau. She was the foremost lady-disciple of Shri Maharaj. By her strenuous intense *Sādhana* and the grace of her Master, she had realised her identity with the *Ātman*. Such was the spiritual height she had attained. Rambhau was greatly pained to learn about her sad demise. In his letter of condolence to her sister's daughter -*Muragevvā*- he writes :

"I was immensely grieved to learn about the merging of Shivakka in the Light Divine. The grief I felt cannot be described in words. My heart is sorely distressed to lose such a spiritual jewel like Shivakka. Still what can we, poor human beings do before Divine dispensation? We must take refuge in His *Nāma* only." (26-11.1930).

ii) Shri Amburao Maharaj; his senior spiritual brother-attained *Samādhi* in 1933. He was more than a brother to Rambhau. Their mutual affection and regard were simply unique. Shri Maharaj used to call them "twins." After the departure of Shri Maharaj, Shri Baba was a bulwark of strength and inspiration to him. When he learnt about his sad demise at Allahabad, Rambhau wrote a circular letter of condolence to all his disciples. His supreme regard for Shri Baba is graphically expressed in it. He wrote :

"Nearly twenty years after Shri Maharaja's passing away, Shri Baba helped all the disciples of Shri Maharaj by his constant guidance and inspiration... There was a great indentity of interest and life between Maharaj and Baba and when Baba was left over to us, it was as if we were seeing and hearing Maharaj... The way in which he left his body is quite significant to show how a person like him who had attained to such enormous heights, dies in the midst of God-realisation. From God he is taken and to God he goes. As with Maharaj, so with Baba, their life and death have been sublime illustrations of a perpetual God-communion." "Even when a *Guru* seems to have departed he still remains at the back of all the disciples, to protect them and further their spiritual endeavour." (27-12-1933)

Pathway to God of Marathi Saints :

We have seen by now how Prof. Rambhau intended to write three books on the Philosophies of the *Riṣhis* to demonstrate their support to his doctrine of Rational Mysticism, and had published his first work on the Philosophy of the *Upaniṣhads*. To achieve the same ideal object, he had also intended to write three works on the Pathways to God of the medieval Saints. He wrote and published his first work on the Pathway to God of *Marāthi* Saints. The other two works on the Pathways to God of *Hindi* and *Kannada* Saints were subsequently prepared and published.

The present work published in 1933, was originally named '*Mysticism in Mahārāshtra.*' Its second edition came to be entitled "Pathway to God in Marathi Literature" after the fashion of the other two works. This book is based on four source books, containing selections from the literature of all the saints, published in 1927. "This literature," according to Prof. Rambhau, " reveals the nature of pure spirituality, capable of bringing about synthesis among the religions and of presenting the vision of Rational Mysticism to the readers."

"The book opens with a fine Preface from the author in which he describes the nature of Mystical Experience, its ineffable, intuitive and universal character. Mystical experience affects our whole being and is a source of fine knowledge, chastened feelings and subtle movements. Hence the seers, on account of the impress of the mystical experience on one or the other aspects of their psychic being, exhibit different types. Some excel in knowledge, some in devotion, others, in service."

The book is divided into five parts. Each part deals with the biography of the Mystics, their writings and teachings considered metaphysically, ethically and mystically, ending with a general review of the period, critical and constructive.

Like his work on the *Upanishad*, this work also received the high appreciation of scholars all over the world. "It is a fine and excellent exposition of the essentials of *Mahārāshtra* Mysticism" wrote Prof. Nagaraj Sharma, "which is second to none in the speculative history of mankind." "I earnestly hope," observed Dr. N Macnicol, "that the book...will reveal to many the rich mines of such precious material that are as yet largely unexplored and unknown to the West."

Philosophy of the Spirit :

Public Lectures was one of the agencies employed by Prof. Rambhau for the spread of Spiritual Culture. His illuminating lectures delivered in different cities, were always replete with inspiring thoughts. A few of the lectures were later on developed and published in the form of books.

"Philosophy of the Spirit" was the presidential address of Rambhau delivered at Nagpur, when he presided over the 13th Session of the Philosophical Congress held there in December 1937. In this address, Prof. Rambhau has pointed out with reference to the contemporary discoveries in modern Physics, Biology and Neurology, "how they all tend to prove that Spirit is the only reality, and how Western thought can be brought into harmony with the conclusions of the great Indian Sages and Philosophers." (5)

5) P. E. P. 113.

Finally he has stated that "all politics is determined by the prevailing philosophy of a nation" and that "our politics cannot succeed without a spiritual basis." "Non-violence and Truth are merely the flower of which the root is Spirit" and "universal brotherhood should and could repose upon the spiritual basis only." "A study of the Philosophy of Religion would contribute greatly to the bringing together all creeds and faiths and races."(6)

Hence, Prof. Rambhau declared : "It is only when all humanity comes to recognise the one Spiritual Principle which underlies all things, that we can bring about a harmony between different creeds, nations and races. It is only by bringing them to a common consciousness of spiritual life that we can realise the end which we are striving for. The Philosopher's work is not done when he has realised within himself the peace of mind ... His supreme business is to bring about peace and harmony in the Society, the State, and the World at large. From this point of view, it may be said, without exaggeration that the future of the world rests with the Philosophers. (7)

New Building-New Son :

Almost all the events in the life of Prof. Rambhau, are the results of the directions of Shri Maharaj. This new building also is the outcome of a similar direction. At Allahabad, as we have seen before, Shri Rambhau daily used to go to a particular place near the *Draupadi Ghāt*, on the banks of the Ganges, for meditation. There he got various superb spiritual experiences. One day when he was absorbed in meditation there, he saw the

6) P.E. PP.119-120

(7) P.E. P, 120

vision of Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj. He thought that it was a holy place, where the devotion of Shri Maharaj would deepen and diffuse. So he purchased the plot and got a big beautiful bungalow built in 1940, for his own residence and began to live in it from Jan. 1944. It was there that one of the main branches of the Adhyatma Vidya Mandir was opened and housed.

"I constructed this bungalow", he remarked in 1942. "without any thought to the future. God knows who will use it for spiritual purposes. This is not my concern. One should work like a *Sākṣhī* (witness). God knows the uses of the work done "

In the month of December (1940) Shri Rambhau had a second son. He had also a vision about it. After the boy's birth one day, he saw in his dream his Master feeding the child from his own plate. He had other visions of a similar type which led him to believe that the son born to him, was a great Saint which made him an object of supreme affection. Four months passed in this delightful way. Unfortunately the child passed away in the month of *Caitra* 1941. Thereupon we are told that Shri Rambhau actually quarrelled with God. His main complaint against Him was: "God informed me when He granted the gift; why then should he not inform me when He took it away? .. As God did not do it, I quarrelled with Him." Rambhau himself once related this story.

Spiritual Experiences :

We shall now deal with some of his superb spiritual experiences of this period. About his spiritual experiences Rambhau had once remarked, "I have not mentioned in my books any experience of the saints, which I have not enjoyed

myself." Hence if we try to have a glimpse of the experiences described in his works, we will have an idea about the variety, richness and splendour of Shri Rambhau's experiences. Nor is this all. He had once informed us that he had the privilege of having experiences not yet recorded in any of the works published so far.

However, the limited space at our disposal, does not allow us to describe even a limited number of them. We shall, therefore, mention only a couple of his visions and a superb experience of Bliss here in addition to those described already.

1) Prophetic Vision: Saints see in their Visions the coming events in the lives of individuals, of nations, as well as of the Universe. "Visions reflect the future and the reflected future comes out true." Prof. Rambhau also had such a vision in 1940 and then for one and half years in 1942. In the first half of the world War II Germany was victorious, and in the other half the allies were victorious. This vision clearly indicated beforehand the working of God in these events. Shri Rambhau has suggestively pointed out his vision in this manner.

"How are the two different strata to be seen in the divine picture ? ... Artists and poets might try to depict it in their own way. Would not the necessity of mystic experience, however, require a pictorial representation of the changing fortunes on the heavenly canvas, in which God with an uplifted flaming thunderbolt might strike mercilessly at one side of the battle, during the first period and at the other side in the reverse direction, with the same uplifted thunderbolt, in the second ? A divine thunderbolt is probably the best weapon to annihilate the

contending armies. It would have been extremely fortunate if one had been privileged to see the changing fortunes of the war on the heavenly canvas and to interpret the will of God accordingly. (8)

ii) **Cosmic Vision** : Shri Rambhau had a grand Cosmic Vision in 1943, when he was passing in a train by *Satnā* station between Allahabad and Jabalpur. All of a sudden, he witnessed a sublime vision of cosmic regeneration. He began with a vision of the Cosmic Eye, which gradually developed into this sublime vision.

"When the Eye stood before the eye, a great phenomenon occurred; the world disappeared. The vision of the Eye before the eye, implied an absolute destruction of the sight of the world. When this individual spirit realised its own nature... I found this Creation full of creative joy, so much so that I asked : 'To whom shall I communicate this experience? How is it possible for me to express by word of mouth what beatific joy I feel in the contemplation and realisation of the Absolute Spirit?' Finally after the realisation, I saw a new glory in the world. It seemed as if there was a regeneration or recreation of the world. The whole world from the earth to the top of the mountain, seemed full of the Immaculate Spirit." (9)

iii) **Ecstatic Rapture** : All the higher spiritual experiences of Rambhau, always resulted in ecstasy-blissfulness. When he was in that ecstatic mood, he used to utter loudly, "*Nārāyan, Nārāyan, Nārāyan.*" He was in a state of God-intoxication. He

8) B. p. G. P. 276.

9) P. G.K. P. 283-85

had no consciousness of time and space then. He used to tell us that the Bliss of Self-realisation was superior to *Samādhi* which is merely an ordinary mental attunement with God. There is complete assimilation in Bliss. Then you merge in God entirely. "Spiritual joy hovered like an eagle this morning. When spiritual power descends and envelops, the whole universe appears to be full of peace, power and joy." This is how he described the glory of the experience of Bliss. (17-4-1944)

Vice-Chancellor and Retirement :

Prof. Rambhau, later on became the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and at last in 1945, the Vice-Chancellor of the University. In reply to a telegram of congratulation by his spiritual brother Shri Kakasaheb Tulpule, Prof. Rambhau expressed the attitude of detachment and dedication with which he accepted it.

"I had really no desire to accept this job, but as one must bow down to the will of God, I had to accept it. As my sole ambition has been to carry on my spiritual pursuit as best I may, I had not agreed to Amaranath Jha's suggestion made a year ago. But whatever befalls us, we must discharge dutifully, all the while believing that whatever we do, contributes to the fulfilment of His purpose." (31-3-1945)

Prof. Rambhau retired in 1946. Thereafter the Executive Council of the University created a special honorary post entitled 'Emeritus Professor of Philosophy' in order that the University might maintain its contact with such an eminent scholar till the end. Later on in 1947, the University arranged a special Convocation Ceremony for honouring persons of worldwide fame in Bharat, when the University conferred the

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D. Litt degree on Prof. Rambhau, in recognition of his unparalleled intellectual eminence. Such was the consummation of his professorial career.

As a Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Rambhau had sent the following message to the Harijan boys of the Harijan Ashram at Allahabad where he had been invited to address the students: "God must be the first object of our care whatever work we may undertake during our life. This will certainly enable the boys to give a very good account of themselves, to their Society, Nation, as well as to their own Maker (7th Aug. 1946).



Chapter IV

An ideal Master-Apostle



Prelude :

Dr. Rambhau, after discharging his duty as Ideal Philosopher-Saint or Saint-Philosopher, assumed the role of a Master - (*Gurudev*) Apostle- (*Prabodhaka*) as has been stated by Shri Gurudev elsewhere. "A mystic may be a Philosopher but is not necessarily so. His mystic experience is sufficient for his own elevation into Divinity; but if he philosophises, he may raise thinking humanity into a Divine Kingdom of Ends." (1)"He is of supreme service to humanity, by calling their attention from moment to moment, to the perfection and greatness of God. There have been mystics who have moved the

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- 1) M. M. P. 394. 2) M. M. Preface P. P. 28-29.

world by their Divine Contemplation. Unmoved themselves, they have become men of world-shaking type." (2)

In this way our Mystic Philosopher-Shri Gurudev spent his whole time, thereafter, exclusively for Divine Contemplation and for spreading the Gospel of God-devotion. He carried on this mission mainly from Nimbai where he resided permanently after his retirement as well as from Allahabad where he used to go and stay in his house for a couple of months in winter every year.

Ideal Gurudev :

Shri Gurudev had developed and possessed all the necessary qualifications of an Ideal Master. He had practically reached the zenith of realisation. He had thus acquired the authority to grant to the seekers what he himself had attained. He had not only possessed the Seed-Name (*Sabīja-Nāma*) and superb spiritual experiences, but had acquired some supernatural powers as well. He could realise through them the nature of the aspirants as well as the intensity of their aspiration. He could easily read the minds of others. But rarely did he use them consciously. At times it was God who made use of them through him, even without his knowledge, to spread His devotion. Shri Gurudev strongly maintained that it is not the business of a saint to try to uplift the world by performing miracles. His only duty is to fill the whole world with the resonance of God-devotion through the purity and nobility of his behaviour and the intensity of his devotion and *Bhajan*.

However, Shri Gurudev had once shown a terrible vision to his wife a few months before his departure, the reason of which was known to him only. Here is the glimpse of the vision.

One day, *Shri Gurudev* was sitting alone in his room to prepare his tea as usual. His wife was bringing in, all the articles required by him. When she entered the room for the last time, holding the pots of milk in both her hands, she observed a wonderful phenomenon. *Shri Gurudev's* face had become intensely red and had assumed the face of *Shri Hanumān* with a crown on his head. Above his head was seen a gigantic, brilliant *Śheṣha* (Cobra) with all his hoods spread out. The colour of his body was yellow. His eyes were glittering like red jewels. This astounding vision greatly terrified her, and she began to tremble from head to feet. The milk-pots were on the verge of slipping down from her trembling hands when *Gurudev* spoke in a serious tone: "Well! sit down, sit down, Don't be afraid! Sometimes it does happen like that." So she sat. After some time she was free from fear. *Shri Gurudev* then ascertained from her the details of the incident, smiled and remained silent.

Secondly *Shri Gurudev* was adept in the essentials of both Indian and Western Philosophy. So he could easily solve the difficulties of his disciples and rationally convince their modern, scientific minds. Thus he had been an Ideal Master to guide the modern aspirants from step to step on the ladder of spiritual perfection.

Initiation :

In this *Sampradāya*, initiation consists in imparting the *Seed-Nāma*-Divine Name-by a realised *Sadguru*, to an aspirant. The disciple, then, is to water the seed with the constant shower of one-pointed meditation and reap the harvest of spiritual experience and bliss, through the grace of his

Master. Shri Gurudev began to initiate those aspirants whom he found to be very earnest. But later on, when people from all walks of life began to flock to him for initiation he began to bless all of them. As he advanced further, blessing the aspirants became his very nature. He even especially invited some deserving aspirants and blessed them. Very often he used to tell us that the emotion of affection that arises in the heart of the Master at the time of imparting initiation is similar to the one that arises in the heart of the mother at the time of feeding her child. The mother nourishes the body while the Master nourishes the soul by granting the ambrosia of Divine Name. Is it not in the fitness of things that the spiritual mother should feel the emotion of love more intensely than the physical mother ?

Shri Gurudev like his predecessors, did not directly initiate his disciples. His was an indirect process. The Name he imparted was the one he had realised himself. But he used to impart it through two of his spiritual brothers. He had used this indirect method, because, he never liked the flare and glare of 'Gurudom.' He never loved to shine in the limelight, but to shed a placid illumination from his solitary corner. He always liked the indirect method of guidance. He solved their difficulties also in a suggestive, indirect manner. His silence was more eloquent than his words; suggestion more effective than expression.

Shri Gurudev very often shared the sorrow of his disciples and lightened its intensity and shared his bliss with them and heightened its fullness.

Common Meditation and Inspiring Talks :

To grant intellectual, emotional, moral, and intuitional training to the *Sādhakās*, the Masters of this *Sampradāya*, had

arranged some festivals called *Saptāhas* at *Inchagiri*, ranging from five days to one month. All the seekers were asked to attend them according to their convenience, take part in the common meditation, *Bhajan* etc. in the company of their Masters and listen to the inspiring discourses given by them. Thus during these festivals, the seekers used to get their spiritual batteries charged properly.

Shri Gurudev also made effective use of such festivals for training his disciples. However, he had introduced a few changes in them to suit the needs of his modern disciples. During his time, there used to be four *Saptahās* - two of five days in *Chaitra* and *Kartik*, and two, of one month in *Śhrāvaṇa* and *Māgh*. Instead of giving discourses like his Masters, he used to give informal talks to the disciples.

The common meditation in the company of the *Sadhakas* had been a special feature of this *Sampradāya*. It had been regarded as the most effective means of heightening the intensity of meditation. Moreover, "where two or three gather in My name, I am there," declares the Lord. The presence of God in the gathering of Saints and *Sādhakas*, is supremely inspiring and blissful. When the *Sādhakas* meet together for meditation they enjoy the presence of God.

During his stay at Nimbāl and Allahabad, Shri Gurudev used to give informal talks in Sittings whenever there were a few *Sādhakas* by his side. These talks were given, usually in the afternoon, after his meditation was over.

Shri Gurudev never posed as a Master. He always sat in a corner, along with his disciples, on the same carpet. He never

delivered a sermon. He thus demonstrated as it were, through his behaviour, the way in which an ideal spiritual Master should conduct himself.

"As these Sittings were informal, Shri *Gurudev's* inner thoughts and feelings had a spontaneous expression in them. These sittings were not always serious; they were occasionally illumined by flashes of wit, humour and consequent laughter. Shri Gurudev also took a lively part in them without the least reservation. At times he himself would relate a humorous anecdote or story and begin to have a hearty laugh and plunge all in a hilarious laughter. Generally Gurudev did not take an active part in the discussion; still his silence itself was more eloquent than his words... He always loved to make others speak for him. However, his occasional fine remarks provided a feast of *Bodha-sudhā* - ambrosia of advice - both about spiritual knowledge as well as about divine devotion served along with various dishes suited to the varied tastes of the devotees.

In this way the talks generated love for spiritual life in many; fortified their faith by removing indirectly their misgivings and misconceptions; supplied them fresh inspiration to steadily pursue the spiritual *Sādhana*, by giving them the necessary guidance.

Public Lectures :

Just as Shri *Gurudev* used to give private talks for the edification of the aspirants and seekers, he had also delivered public lectures for the enlightenment of the public in general. The lectures were delivered in some of the cities of Bharat-from Bangalore in the South to New Delhi in the North. Whenever he

was invited by the Universities and other Public Institutions, he used to go there and convey the message of the Saints and Sages to the elite of the place. He used to remove the misconceptions prevailing in the modern minds regarding the efficacy of moral and spiritual values in the practical life of the present day society, by his wide and deep learning and rational treatment of the subject. He thus used to bring to them the supreme value of spirituality and the urgent need of cultivating it in life, in the interest of peace and welfare of the individual, society, nation as well as the world at large.

All these lectures provided sufficient light and inspiration to the aspiring souls that were required to live and move in the all-enveloping dense darkness of aggressive materialism. Hence they were highly appreciated by such persons. Even though there was no flight of eloquence from his smiling lips, there used to have a steady flight of spiritual illumination from his lustrous eyes. Choice words gushed out from the depth of conviction born of spiritual experience. They easily captivated the receptive hearts, and produced a deep impression upon them. Thus did *Gurudev* propagate the Gospel of God-devotion among the public.

A couple of years after he began this mission, *Shri Gurudev* had a vision of Shri Maharaj again. This time Shri Maharaj had held a *Vinā* in his hands. So *Shri Gurudev* thought it to be an indication that he should deliver the message of Saints through the elucidation of their choice songs. From that time he began to make use of such songs in his lectures and explain their spiritual significance. These lectures were later on developed and published in the book-form.

Adhyatma Vidya Mandir :

The genesis of this institution is very inspiring. In 1947 H. H. the Rajasahab of Sangli, who was a sincere lover of Spiritual life, had invited *Shri Gurudev* to his Palace at Sangli. During the stay of *Shri Gurudev* there, he once intimated his inner feelings to Shri Gurudev in these words : "The noblest, the grandest and the most glorious that you can conceive of may be done. You are the architect, we the humble tools in your hands." This request resulted in the starting of the above institution on 26th October 1947. Shrimant Rajasahab offered a munificent annual donation to the Institution for a period of five years and became the Grand-Patron of this *Adhyātma Vidyā Mandir* - a Temple of spiritual Lore. *Shri Gurudev* was Director and Shri G. V. Tulpule M. A. was its Secretary.

The aim of the *Mandir* was to work for the spiritual unity of mankind and consequent goodwill and peace upon earth, through i) religious and philosophic publications, ii) research, iii) lectures, iv) meetings & v) conferences.

The activities of the *Mandir* began under fine auspices. Its branches were opened at Allahabad, Sangli, Dharwad, Belgaum, and Nimbhal was the main Centre. With the help of the donation, research scholarships were given to deserving students. Lectures were also arranged on spiritual and cultural subjects and a few books were published. The Hindi *Paramārtha-sopāna* and the Pathway to God in *Hindi Literature* by Shri Gurudev were the two major publications of the *Mandir*. Thus the activities of the *Mandir* were in full swing for five years. Thereafter, along with the donation, the activities also stopped.

The Pathway to God of Hindi Saints ;

We have already seen how *Shri Gurudev* wanted to write three books on the Pathways to God of *Hindi, Marathi* and *Kannada* Saints. Accordingly, he had already published the book about the Pathway to God of *Marāthi* Saints. He published this second work under the title "Pathway to God in *Hindi* Literature" in April 1954. It is also based on a sourcebook entitled *Hindi Paramārtha Sopāna* which was published in January of the same year at the hands of Dr. Radhakrishnan. It is a book of choice selections of the Padas and Dohas of Hindi Saints, possessing 'novelty of thought and spiritual import.'

The book consists of two parts entitled : i) Pathway in *Pada* literature and ii) Pathway in *Dohā* literature. Each part is further divided into five chapters. It is a constructive work like his work on the *Upaniṣhads*.

The following headings of the five chapters point out the five stages of *Shri Gurudev's* Pathway to God in Hindi Literature; i) Incentives to Spiritual Life, ii) Necessity of Moral preparation, iii) The Relation of God to Saints, iv) The Beginnings of the Pilgrimage and v) The Highest Ascent. The first stage of the Pathway, reveals the causes that lead the seeker to spiritual life, brings about a change in his values and likes and thus contributes to his emotional preparation. The second requires the elimination of vices and the development of virtues and thus contributes to his moral preparation. The third stage describes the glory and bliss received by the saints from the unlimited power and grace of the Lord and gives the seeker a full glimpse of the ideal he is to reach and thus contributes to his

intellectual preparation. The fourth gives an idea of actual pilgrimage. It describes the Master, his method of initiation, the *Divine Name* and its constant meditation and the like and helps to bring about his intuitional preparation. The fifth and the last describes the nature of God-realisation and the Bliss arising from it as well as the effects produced by them on the lives of the seekers and the society.

While dealing with the thoughts of *Hindi Saints* Shri Gurudev has compared them with those of *Kannada*, *Marathi* and *Christian Saints* and pointed out the striking similarities between them. He has also referred to his own spiritual experiences. This is one of the special features of the book.

Pathway to God of Kannada Saints :

This book entitled *Pathway to God in Kannada Literature* was a posthumous publication of Gurudev. It was published in 1960 by the *Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan*, Bombay, on behalf of the *Karnatak University Dharwad*. Shri Gurudev could complete only fourteen out of twenty chapters during his life-time, while the remaining six were written by his disciples and friends with the help of copious notes which he had left behind.

This book has been designed almost on the lines of his book about *Hindi Saints*. This is also based upon a source book—entitled *Kannada Paramārtha Sopāna*, - a book of selections from the writings of *Kannada Saints*. "Novelty of thought coupled with spiritual import" was the criterion of selection in this case as well. The great mystics thus secured the services of an equally great modern mystic—who was also a great philosopher—to interpret them and spread their message in the modern world.

About the object of this volume Shri Gurudev writes :
"...The great *Kannada* Mystics evidently ramify themselves into two schools. *Śhaivite* and *Vaiṣṇavite*. But a real Mystic is he who is neither a *Śhaivite* nor a *Vaiṣṇavite*... My problem is to deal only with their common spiritual experiences and not with their dogmatic difference, and what they have contributed to the development of mystic thought in general." (1)

Here is the great tribute he pays to the *Kannada* Mystics :
"The *Karnātak* Mystics hold a very high position among the mystics of the world and they have contributed a good deal to the world's mystical thought." (2)

Finally, as a great critic has remarked: This book is unique of its kind, inasmuch as it is firmly founded on the first-hand mystical experiences of the author... Shri Gurudev has presented in this volume the quintessence of his mature thought and advanced experience, in a thorough, rational and scientific manner and in a language at once translucent, limpid and impressive."

The unique originality and value of the fresh interpretations of the songs by Shri Gurudev is finely reflected in the following critical appreciation of the same by an eminent modern critic - Dr. V. K. Gokak : "He (Dr. Ranade) shows how the experience embodied in this poetry is the same as that of the mystics all over the world. Many obscure songs suddenly spring to life in the revelatory light that he sheds on them by referring frequently to his own experience. This is specially true of the account he gives of the mystic poets of *Karnātak*. He

1) P. G. K. P. 6

2) P. G. K. P. 11.

penetrates through various philosophical terminologies and diverse credal formations to the core of experience that lies enshrined within them and brings out the universal significance that underlies various forms and beliefs. This serves to underline the unity of Indian thought that persists through a bewildering variety of forms." (3)

Philosophy of the Bhagavadgita

The present work entitled "The *Bhagavadgīta* as a Philosophy of God-realisation" was the second book of Shri Gurudev's *Prasthāna-traya*. Like his first book on the Philosophy of the *Upaniṣhads*, this is also based on a series of three lectures delivered by him under the auspices of the Nagpur University in 1928. His own estimate of the book will reveal its real greatness. "I think," says he, "the present book on the *Bhagavadgīta* would in no way be less important than either my 'A Constructive Survey of *Upaniṣhadic* Philosophy' which has already been published or my work on 'Vedānta as the Culmination of Indian Thought' to be published by the Calcutta University, the three constituting a modern *Prasthāna traya*."

"God-realisation," according to Gurudev, "is the Supreme Teaching of the *Bhagavadgīta*." As this simple doctrine did not prominently dawn upon the ancient and the modern interpreters of the *Gita*, they have produced a labyrinth from which in the absence of this clue of God-realisation, they could not find a way of escape. (4)

"The present work is divided into five parts. The first Part deals with the ancient systems with which the *Bhagavadgīta* comes into relation. The second part deals with the thought of the middle ages where we find the great Vedantic scholars and spiritual teachers throwing light on the meaning of the *Bhagavadgītā*. The third part deals with the veritable labyrinth that has been produced by the interpretations of the modern scholars. The fourth part deals with our solution of the problem in terms of contemporary thought and mode of procedure. The last deals in a general way, with conception of the Sublime ... which has assumed great importance with eminent European philosophers, linking it up with the conception of the Divine."(5)

Part IV is the core of the work. Here we come across the independent, unique and valuable contribution of Gurudev to the interpretations of the *Gīta*. Here we have a glimpse of his integral vision, his synthetic outlook, born of God realisation. The main aspects of Philosophy viz. metaphysics, ethics and mysticism have been properly dealt with in it, from the practical point of view. After dealing with the antinomies embedded in thought of God, World and Soul, together with their solution as pointed out in the *Gīta*, the Problem of God is being taken up for discussion. God has been described as wonder of wonders. However, we are told, that He can be realised though not in His entirety. Then the four aspects of ethics viz. Activism, Moralism, Super-moralism and Beatificism have been discussed. The Activism of the *Gīta* advocates duty not for the

sake of duty but for the sake of the Divine. *Bhakti* or God-devotion is the central virtue in the *Gita*. All other virtues are its emanations and vices, aberrations from it. The Super-Moralism of the *Gīta* requires the seeker to rise above the *Guṇās* and the *Karmās* and become a *Sthita-prajna-Equanimous* Man, which is according to the *Gīta*, the highest ideal realisable by man. This is only possible if he takes resort in God, realises Him and enjoys His Bliss. Really Beatificism is the crown of Equanimity. The Saint is full of Bliss when he becomes one with *Brahman*. In fact Bliss itself is *Brahman*. So far as the mystic aspect of this Philosophy is concerned, after pointing out the criteria of God-realisation, the categories of God-seekers, the methods of meditation have been elaborately dealt with. Thereafter, the Beautiful Self-Vision and the Sublime Cosmic Vision have been described. It has been pointed out that Beauty attracts while Sublimity conquers. These Visions are associated with the feelings of Joy, Peace, Fear and Reverence. Peace, however, does not lead to joy, but joy leads to peace; and hence peace might be regarded as the apex of joy. Finally, it is shown that the Moral, the Sublime and the Divine - all merge in one consummate Philosophy of Spirit in the *Bhagavadgīta*.

This is the last and the best work completed by Gurudev during his lifetime. It is his crowning contribution to the mystical literature. The book was published by the Nagpur University in 1959-two years after his *Mahāsamādhi*

Philosophy of Vedanta (Brahma-Sutras)

This book which was given a fresh title - "Vedānta as the Culmination of Indian Thought" - has been based on a series of

four lectures delivered by Shri Gurudev in 1929 under the auspices of the Calcutta University, on '*Vedānta and Western Thought*'. Later on he twice revised and changed the outline and finally decided to give the above-mentioned title. He divided it into the following ten chapters:

1. The Cosmological Problem.
2. The Metaphysical Problem.
3. The Problem of Logic.
4. The Epistemological Problem
5. The problem of God.
6. Relation of God to the World.
7. Causality and Appearance.
8. Problem of the Self.
9. The Ethical Problem.
10. The *Summum Bonum*.

As we have seen before, this book was written by his disciples with the help of his copious notes and published by the *Bhāratiya Vidyā-Bhavan* in 1976.

As the title of the present book indicates, the Philosophy of *Vedānta of Shri Bādarāyana*, is really, according to Shri Gurudev, a Culmination of Indian thought. *Bādarāyana* has tried to reconcile all the conflicting thoughts of his times and present his synthetic Philosophy to the elite of India. Likewise, Shri Gurudev has tried to reconcile the conflicting claims of all the thought-currents, both Indian and European, and expound his synthetic Philosophy in all his works in Western garb, for the edification of the contemporary thinkers of the world. Thus he has played the role of a modern *Bādarāyana*.

Let us now have a glimpse of the Metaphysics and Mysticism of *Bādarāyana* as expounded by Gurudev in the present work.

6) V.C.T. P. 77

To *Bādarāyana* God is the only Reality, who is called *Brahman*. God is both Impersonal - *Nirguna* and Personal - *Saguna*. He is in a way transpersonal. God is also both transcendent and immanent. As impersonal, God is ineffable and transcendent. As personal, He is immanent and *Sat-Chit-Ānanda*- Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. (6) God is full of Consciousness or Consciousness itself. He is full of Bliss or Bliss itself. The criteria for the proof of God are three-Reason, Revelation and Intuition or *Anubhava* of which intuition occupies a supreme place.

God is immanent in the Universe as its inner Ruler-*Aṅtaryāmin* or as the Spirit that pervades it. He is also regarded as all-inclusive, both good and evil having a place within Him (7). He is the material as well as efficient cause of the world, which is empirically real but transcendently unreal. It springs from God, lives in God and is finally absorbed in God. But the how and why of Creation is mysterious. It defies solution. The world is a mysterious mode of God. *Vichitravāda* appears to be the only solution (8)

The Self is an *Aṁśha*-portion of God. When it is attached to sense-organs through nescience, it is active and is then both doer and sufferer. But " man is neither a free agent nor a bare automaton in the hands of God but he is an actor under the supervision of God...God has given autonomy to man. He does not interfere with man's freedom. This is Divine Self-determinism." (9)

Now what is the *Summum Bonum* of life according to *Bādarāyana*? Self-realisation constitutes his *Summum Bonum*

7) Ibid P. 89 8) V. C. T. P. 112 9) Ibid. P. 128.

or *Purushārth*. For attaining this highest ideal a judicious combination of *Vedānta*, *Yoga* and *Bhakti* has been prescribed by him. "A full-fledged life of mysticism reconciles alike the claims of intellect, emotion and action. It would be wrong to say that mere intellect, or mere emotion or mere action leads to the realisation of the supreme ideal. One or the other may be stressed no doubt, but all must be present in a greater or lesser degree, to enable one to attain to that Divine Bliss." (10) However, *Bādarāyana* maintains that it is only those who practise unitive meditation on the *Ātman* as *Ātman* or the Lord, who will be finally liberated.

Now Liberation which is the goal of meditation is identical with Self-realisation. It is not merely intellectual conviction. It is actual intuitional experience of God and enjoyment of His Bliss here in this very life.

The realised or released Soul - *Jivanmukta* - not only shares the Bliss of the Lord, but also all the powers of the Lord except His power of creation. (11) "He becomes an overlord. This Ideal Saint has omniscience, omnipotence and bliss. He is the one sovereign (*Ekarāt*), who has sway over all that exists and down to eternity. It is he who enjoys real *Swarājya* - the *Ātmanic* imperishable bliss-as the *Saint of Nimbargi* used to say. Thus, the ideal visualised by the ancient *Rishis* at the dawn of human history is the Kingdom Immortal (*Amṛtām Purīm*) which transcends the limits of here and now. The modern frantic cries for a League of Nations or United Nations, all aiming at universal brotherhood, are but distant re-echoes of the

10) Ibid. P. 162. 11) V. C. T. P. 171. 12) Ibid, P. 177.

encompassing oneness of all, tuned in the *Vedic* sing-song, praising the glories of *Theopolity* of the Philosopher-Saint-the very ectype of God." (12)

About this prospective book Shri.Gurudev had remarked. I am going to write a book on *Vedānta*; Its last chapter is Future of *Vedānta*. I shall be stating therein that if *Vedānta* did not expound the Philosophy of God-realisation, it would lose all its importance in future. This is my firm opinion."

Pathway To God :

This is another epoch-making volume designed by the illumined mind of Gurudev as long ago as 1921 or even earlier. Unfortunately it could not take concrete shape even in the form of notes. About this book he has once stated :

"Pathway to God, is the name of a series. The material collected so far is sufficient to bring out five volumes in the series... After all this, God willing, by making use of all this material the fifth book- Pathway to God in World's Philosophy and Religion - will be prepared. All the earlier books would supply material for the construction of this volume. This series will show how One Religion can reign in the whole world, under the name of Universal Religion."

Amṛut Mahotsav - Nectar Jubilee :

Shri Gurudev completed his 70th year on 3rd July 1956. His disciples, friends and admirers of Jamkhandi, wished to invite Shri Gurudev on that auspicious occasion to Jamkhandi and pay him their respectful homage by celebrating his *Nectar Jubilee* on a grand scale. But they were diffident as to whether he would allow them to celebrate such a function. Fortunately

however, he did not reject their invitation this time. He gladly accepted it and agreed to go to Jamkhandi for the celebration, in spite of his well-known aversion for such functions. His consent not only enabled them to pay their reverential homage to their Master but also gave a splendid opportunity to all other disciples from different parts of India to witness and enjoy this grand celebration, which was fittingly called *Amṛut Mahotsav-Immortal Jubilee*.-Nectar Jubilee. Actually the celebration proved itself to be immortal-a Jubilee never to be forgotten, in the memory of his disciples.

The main function of the Jubilee took place on the 3rd July 1956 in the evening under the Chairmanship of the Chief of Miraj. All the reverential tribute paid to Shri Gurudev issued from loving hearts. The speeches were all marked by emotional exuberance. Thereafter, Shri Gurudev began his benedictory address in *Kannada*. There was pin-drop silence everywhere. He began : " A *Guru* is one who reveals the hidden form of the Lord. ... A *Guru* realises his identity with the hidden Form of the Lord. " At this stage the loud-speaker suddenly went out of order. So Shri Gurudev was compelled to stop his speech abruptly, which proved to be disappointing to his devotees.

Though this main function had thus an abrupt and unexpected close, it happened to be a precursor of a coming fuller programme which continued with growing enthusiasm for nearly a full month. During that period of his stay at *Rāmatirth*, there was a regular *Saptāh*. Shri Gurudev, at that time visited all the important places there with which he and his Master had rich associations. He also initiated several seekers of that place.

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He thus filled the atmosphere of Jamkhandi with devotion before he left for Nimbal.

Fury of Prayag :

After his return to Nimbal, Shri Gurudev proceeded with the preparation of his further lectures on "The Pathway to God in *Kannada* Literature" as well as with the writing of his book on the *Gita*. He then went to Dharwad in December and delivered three lectures there. Thereafter he left Nimbal on the 12th March for Allahabad and arrived there on the 14th. For a week his health was quite all right. But on the 22nd there was a terrible storm with heavy rains and thunder-showers. So he was troubled by severe cough, which did not allow him even to meditate properly.

When the pain became unbearable, he decided to start for Nimbal on the 26th evening by the *Kashi Express*. The Vice-Chancellor and almost all the lecturers of the Allahabad University spontaneously came to the Railway Station as if to pay the last touching farewell to Gurudev.

After a short halt at Poona, he returned to Nimbal. All his disciples thought by his assurances that he would improve as he had improved before. But he had given pre-intimation of his departure to his wife.

Mahasamadhi :

Thursday the 6th June 1957 was his last day on earth. On that day Shri Gurudev went in his car for meditation on the road to *Inchagiri*. He spent about two hours in meditation. After his return from meditation he did not leave his bed. In the evening at about 4 P. M. he Intimated his departure to those who were

attending on him, by means of signs. And he was completely absorbed in his meditation, awaiting the call from the Lord. He received it at the time of *Bhajan* at night. He suggested to his disciples to perform the Bhajan, which was duly begun in the adjoining *Dhyāna Maṅdir*. After it was over, camphor was lit for performing *Ārati*. At about 10-30 P. M. the *Ārati* was over; all the disciples loudly uttered '*Vitthal, Vitthal.*' The flame of camphor expired and just then the flame of Shri Gurudev's soul left his body and got merged in the Lord.

From the Lord did he come,
To the Lord did he go
Blessed was he blessed he made
Thrice blessed was great Gurudev

The funeral rites of Gurudev took place the next day in the evening in front of his new house. A *Nāma Saptāh* was performed for three days. All the disciples of Gurudev from all parts of Bharat had gathered there. On the last day a sapling of *Audumber* was planted at the spot of his cremation. The disciples paid their tearful homage and left Nimbal with a heavy heart.

The last letter written by Shri Gurudev to Shrimant Rajasaheb of Sangli, contains his parting message to all his disciples;

"Our only pursuit should be to follow the will of God and meditate on Him. If we do this, I think, He will come to our help in all circumstances." (1-5-1957).

During the last 20 years since the departure of Shri Gurudev, the Ashram at Nimbal, which is named *Shri Gurudev*

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Rānade Āshrām, has developed a good deal. It is being ably managed by his fair-partner- Smt. Matoshri Kakusaheb with the help of some of his senior disciples. A stately, beautiful *Samādhi Mandir* has been erected in the area of his old house and his sacred relics have been deposited in it. A few new rooms have been constructed so as to form a spacious quadrangle in front of the *Mandir* which was later on covered with corrugated iron sheets, A High School has been started within the precincts of the *Ashram*. Three *Saptāhās* are celebrated every year: One in the month of *Śhravana* for one month, the second, in *Māgha* for five days, and the third, in *Jyeshṭha* for five days. It is the *Punyatiṭhi Saptāh* of Shri Gurudev. Several disciples attend them according to their convenience. As none of the disciples of Shri Gurudev could attain his spiritual stature so far, to initiate prospective aspirants a fresh method of initiation through his *Samādhi* has been introduced, which is being taken advantage of, by many aspirants. A *Marāṭhi* Quarterly entitled "*Satsang*," is edited and published on behalf of the *Āshrām* by his daughter, Smt. Vijayadevi Apte M. A.

Like the *Āshrām* at Nimbāl, the Spiritual Centre of Shri Gurudev, his Intellectual Centre at Belgaum - The Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion-founded by him, has also developed a good deal, during this period. The dream of Shri Gurudev, which twice remained unrealised or partially realised, is being progressively realised, through some of his senior disciples, backed by his Grace, especially through the untiring and zealous efforts of Shri. J. V. Parulekar, the Hon. Secretary of the Academy.



Chapter V

Personality and Message



Prelude :

Shri Gurudev was one of the greatest Saint-Philosophers of the modern times. There were saints who were not Philosophers and there were Philosophers who were not saints. In Shri Gurudev, there was a rare combination of supreme spiritual illumination as well as a profound philosophic insight. His intellectual and spiritual evolution took place simultaneously. We have seen by now, how he evolved both as an ideal student and aspirant, as an ideal professor and seeker, as an ideal philosopher and saint, and finally as an ideal Master and Apostle. We have also observed how, a Master - a *Sadguru*, he initiated the aspirants by granting them Divine Name, how he

guided them through his illuminating talks, and trained them in spiritual *Sādhana*, through common meditation functions. We have also observed how he as an Apostle, spread the Gospel of God-devotion among the people, through his lectures, publications and institutions.

Now we would like to have a glimpse at his Ideal Personality and his Universal message to Humanity.

Ideal Personality :

i) **A Saint-Philosopher :** Shri Gurudev was primarily a Saint and then a Philosopher. "He realised the Lord, enjoyed the nectar of His Bliss and carried on the blessed task of distributing it among the disciples till the very end of his life. He maintained that when Bliss is shared with kindred souls, it increases in its intensity." "There is an in-expressible joy" he said, in partaking of Bliss not merely for oneself, but in the company of those who have been the recipients of a similar Bliss. It is in this manner that the saints become responsible for the spreading of God's Gospel." (1)

Shri Gurudev's life was God-centred, God-inspired, God-possessed and God-intoxicated. "Dr. Ranade has been touched with the Grace of God. We merely talk philosophy while he actually lives it. With Ranade, philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom, not a mere intellectual exercise, it is for him meditation on the Spirit, a dedicated way of life." This tribute of Dr. Radhakrishnan is supremely significant. As pointed out already, "A Mystic may be a philosopher but is not necessarily so. His mystic experience is sufficient for his own elevation into

1) B. P. G. P. 269

divinity; but if he philosophises, he may raise thinking humanity into a Divine Kingdom of Ends." (2) Such was the splendid Mission which was entrusted to him by the Lord.

ii) **Denizen of Theopolis** : Shri Gurudev was a lover of humanity. His Universal brotherhood was based on Divine brotherhood. Spiritual brotherhood was the root of which Universal brotherhood was the fruit. He was always loving the devotees. He always advised his disciples to love the devotees of the Lord, to establish and increase the communities of such devotees, because that alone would bring about the Kingdom of Peace on earth. "You have to build and thatch the city of God-devotion, give shade and protection to all those who may come to stay in it and live in it yourself. It is a *Theopolis* where God is the Supreme Ruler and all humanity bound together by spiritual tie become equal and aspiring denizens whose only vocation is to fill the world with the praise and glory of the Lord." (3)

iii) **A Composite Picture** : The Ideal Personality of Shri Gurudev is fully revealed in the following graphic pictures.

a) Shri Gurudev was a Saint who had conquered hunger and thirst and proved in his life that 'man does not live on bread alone'... He defied bodily ailments and refused medicines and treatment. As Rishis of old, he shunned publicity and lived to perfection the teaching 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good work and glorify your Father.'

"The Spirit of the Universe encased in a pale ivory frame, and a frail body, mostly skin and bones; he resembled a feathered bird. A pair of God-intoxicated eyes, glowing

2) M. M P. 394

3) P.G H. P. 294

compassionately in their hollowed sockets, situated beneath elevated eyebrows, the symbol of triumph in his life-long Yoga, an extremely affectionate heart, tirelessly pouring out its life-giving nectar, of spiritual wisdom, in warbling words of Divine melody; Gurudev Ranade was a self-sustained angel of the Lord-in brief, God in flesh and blood." (4)

b) Ranade's spirituality shone clearly through every look, word and act... Much as I appreciate Ranade's spiritual and intellectual attainments, it is his loving personality which I remember best. Surely, for many as for me, he was a friend never-to-be-forgotten. For his disciples he was much more. For India he was one of her great men. In India as in other countries, there are many great scholars, engaged in various researches, many great philosophers with deep insight into Reality, many great mystics with ineffable visions, many great teachers who inspire their pupils, many great souls whose integrity and personality are radiant. But we seldom see one person who is all of these at once. Such a one was Shri Ranade, one of those rare spirits who shows how fine human nature can be." (5)

His Eternal Message ;

Attainment of the Vision and Bliss Divine in the life of the individual and of Universal Harmony and Peace in the life of the Society, Nation and the World, has been the Message Eternal of Shri Gurudev. "To realise God for oneself and for others is and should be," according to him, "the end of human life." It is those blessed souls who enjoy the Bliss of God-realisation that will be able to bring about Harmony and Peace

4) Dr. N. S. Christian. 5) Prof. Burch (U.S.A.)

in the world." Such God-realisers who enjoy divine bliss, consider it their sacred duty to impart the same to others because of the natural feeling of compassion, as well as of the direct command of the Lord. It thus becomes the mission of such a realiser to spread the gospel of God whenever and wherever it becomes possible for him to do so. One God, One World, One Humanity becomes his maxim, *Theopolity* his doctrine." (6)

"The problem of the welfare of humanity," says Shri Gurudev, "would be easily solved, if only a hundred or two genuine God-realisers arise in this world, because spiritual experience alone is the eternal foundation of equality. To the question as to why the mystics do not try to solve the worldly problems, here is my answer. Spiritual energy need not always be active. Because the silent stationary work of the saints is itself of very great importance. Their spiritual activity is not only useful to them, but it is also useful to the society. Moreover, the attainment of spiritual experience for spreading devotion for the Lord among the people, is itself a very valuable way of helping the world. From this point of view, Saints alone are the real benefactors of mankind." (7) "These God-realisers constitute a blessed community and on account of their intense love for the afflicted humanity, they live only for its benefaction and betterment, proclaiming from pole to pole, like a rumbling cloud, the eternal Gospel of God from everlasting to everlasting." (8)

6) B.P.G. P.136 7) Jalks 8) P. G. K. P. 314

With this background, we can very well imagine the nature of Shri Gurudev's Message to the different sections of our society.

To the *Saints* he would implore : "Brothers ! You have been blessed by the Lord, with His Vision and Bliss, along with some of His powers He has commanded you to spread His devotion among the people. But mind you! You should not make use of those powers and perform miracles for attracting people towards you. This would be doubly disastrous both to you as well as to the aspirants. It will flatter egoism in you and engender abject credulity in the aspirants. Both these are greatly harmful to spiritual life. Hence, you should try to propagate devotion only through your pious and noble life as well as through inspiring devotional discourses, and *Bhajans*. This is the most effective method of carrying on your Mission."

To the *Philosophers* he would request : " Brothers! Yours is an intellectual search for Reality. To achieve even tolerable success in it, you should first rid yourself of all your prejudices and approach it with an open mind. Your Philosophy should not be merely speculative. It should be thoroughly practical. "Its veracity and virility will entirely depend upon its capacity to make life noble and divine. What you experience, what you feel and what you realise, that alone should be your Philosophy." It should never be divorced from life. For that you should take the help of Religion. For Philosophy without Religion would be lame as Religion without Philosophy would be blind. Hence both should receive help from each other and enrich life."

Secondly, you should bear in mind that the "Philosopher's work is not done when he has realised within himself peace of

mind. His supreme business is to bring about peace and harmony in the society, the state and the world at large. From this point of view, it may be said, that the future of the world rests with Philosophers."

To the *Religious Devotees* he would intimate: "Friends ! It is good that you have been worshipping the Lord in your own way. But you should be very careful about the two devils that have got entrance into your field-Superstition on the one hand and Scepticism on the other. The former is unworthy view of God while the latter is denial of God. You should hence try to knock them out. To be able to do that you should approach genuine Saint-Philosophers and seek their guidance. They will grant you a correct conception about the nature of God and devotion. If you sincerely follow their instructions and the discipline prescribed by them, then alone you will make real progress in your spiritual life and not till then."

To the *Moralists* he would advise : "Friends ! You are out to cultivate virtues and eliminate vices... But you should, first try to ascertain their real nature. Virtue is that which takes you nearer to God and vice is what keeps you away from God. Thus God-devotion happens to be the Central Virtue. If you develop God-devotion, you will be able to cultivate all virtues very easily. Moreover, you also worship the ideal of Goodness. But you should realise that Goodness really resides in God. Apart from God, it has neither any existence nor any value. Hence God-realisation, through God-devotion alone will enable you to attain real Goodness.

Hence your Morality should be based on this rational spiritual knowledge and aspire to attain spiritual experience.

Moral *Summum Bonum* should merge in Spiritual *Summum Bonum*. Then alone it will become both stable and perfect.

To the *Artists* he would exhort: "Friends ! The Beauty you are worshipping is a faint reflection of that real Beauty which is present only in God. The so-called beautiful form and colour, the so-called sweet music, fragrance, flavour and touch of the material objects that you have been loving so far, are but mere unsubstantial shadows, the substances of which are to be found in the spiritual world. So instead of pursuing these fleeting shadows you should try to realise the real substances and give expression to your reactions and experiences in your works of art. Please don't idealise sensual pleasure. The highest ideal of all Art should be the glorification of the Lord and relief of man's estate, Hence you should try to sponsor the cause of propagating devotion and spiritual bliss and with your consummate skill try to develop a liking for them among the people. Then alone will your Art be helpful for the creation of Peace and Harmony in the world and prove to be a real blessing to Humanity."

To the *Scientists* he would point out: "Friends ! you are engaged in discovering the hidden powers of Nature and trying to harness them to enhance the ease and comfort of human life, for which you richly deserve the grateful good-wishes of humanity. But the infernal engines of destruction you have created, have brought humanity to the brink of total annihilation. In recent times you have exploded the material Atom, released the deadly energy pent up in it, showered a veritable rain of fire on the innocent people, burnt millions, maimed millions for life and brought a veritable Hell on fair

Earth. Don't you repent for the infinite misery you have let loose? Is it not time for you to mend your ways, turn your vision inwards, carry on your researches in the spiritual field, try to discover and explode the spiritual Atom-the Spiriton? Then you will be able to release the blissful energy hidden in it and shower a rain of nectar on the famished people and infuse fresh life in them. You will thus be fortunate enough to bring down the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Blessed indeed would be the day when you would undertake this Divine Mission."

To the *Sarvodaya Workers* he would exhort : "Friends! Your ideal of Universal Welfare is really commendable. But please note that it can be fully realised only in *Swarājya*-in the Kingdom of the Atman or Lord. There God would be the Ruler and God-realisers the subjects. As they are all denizens of the spiritual world, they are all equal. There are no racial, no communal, no national prejudices among them. They earn and give according to their capacity and receive according to their needs. They are entirely free from fear, worry and sorrow. They enjoy perfect bliss and always try to augment their bliss by sharing, it with others. The only struggle that we would observe there is for the attainment of the infinite love and bliss of the Lord. But as everyone is to gain it himself there is no jealousy among them. The experience and the bliss will issue out from within. "Time and space have nothing to do with the eternal and infinite character of their mystical experience. These together constitute a band of Divine Musicians, each contributing his own note all together producing a harmony that is wonderful."(9)

Dr. R.D. Ranade

Such is the nature of the *Swarājya* -the Kingdom of God-of my dream. This the Welfare State - the Ideal you are after. Isn't it?

I have gathered so far, the multicoloured flowers of the Spiritual Garden of Shri Gurudev and have presented a garland to the Lord. I hope and trust that He would be pleased to accept it and bless me with His blissful Vision before He would call me back.

References with Abbreviations

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The Bhagavadgita as a Philosophy of God-realisation	- B. P. G.
Mysticism in Maharashtra	- M. M.
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Dr. Ranade's Life of Light.	- R. L. L.



Chapter VI

His Spiritual Talks and Statements



(1)

Introductory

"Shri Gurudev Dr. R.D. Ranade, as we have seen already was very keen on remaining aloof from the external glamour of "Gurudom". He never used to deliver sermons. But he was required to cater to the intellectual needs of his numerous educated disciples, which he did through his instructive and inspiring "Sittings". His casual talks, at that time, were a sort of intellectual and spiritual treat in which both wit and wisdom had an equal share. It provided a veritable feast of *Bodha Sudhā* - an ambrosia of advice - both about spiritual knowledge and Divine devotion, served along with various dishes suited to the varied tastes of the devotees. The period taken up by these "Sittings" varied from half an hour to three hours or even more. But on

account of the variety of items as well as the inspiring presence and talk of Shri Gurudev, these " Sittings " always proved to be immensely interesting and persons attending them were hardly conscious of the considerable time passed in listening to the talks.

As these "Sittings" were of an informal nature, Shri Gurudev's inner thoughts and feelings found spontaneous expression in them. These "Sittings" were not always serious. They were occasionally illumined by flashes of wit, humour and consequent laughter. Thus the spiritual talks at such "Sittings" generated love for spiritual life in the aspirants, fortified their faith by removing indirectly their misgivings and misconceptions, supplied them with fresh inspiration to pursue steadily their spiritual *Sādhana*, by granting them the necessary light.

Some of his disciples have taken brief notes of some of these talks. We intend to share a few important talks with the readers. They are expected to serve as good beacon-lights and elixirs during their spiritual career. As the disciples who have recorded them, as well as those who have taken part in the talks, prefer not to reveal their identity, their names have not been mentioned. No ideological sequence has been followed in the arrangement of these talks in this series. They have been given in the order in which they have been recorded. These records extend from 1936 onwards. The original *Marathi* and *Kannada* talks have been freely rendered into English for the benefit of the English-knowing readers.

(2)

'Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma'

(All this is verily the Absolute)

One day a disciple, in one of the "Sittings" asked Shri Gurudev : "Sir, some scholars maintain that since the whole Universe is nothing but the Absolute, all our actions in this world partake of the nature of *Brahman*. Naturally Brahman be automatically realised through the intellectual apprehension of its real nature. What need is there, then, they ask, of repairing to the forest and performing *Tapas* there? How far is this view correct?"

"This is wrong !" declared *Shri Gurudev*. "Look here" he continued, "*Sarvam khalu idam Brahma* is the verbal expression of the ultimate spiritual experience. We should not try to build a logical edifice on its basis. Ours is an Inductive Method, not a Deductive one, at all. What little spiritual experience we are blessed with, should itself gradually evolve and culminate in that grand, final experience. Logical theory can neither serve as an experience nor can it be used as a *Sādhana*."

Moreover, mere intellectual knowledge of Reality, is totally different from its mystical realisation. One can not, hence, be a substitute for the other. At the same time, simple intellectual apprehension of Reality will never lead one to actual spiritual experience. Thus it can neither be an end, nor a means, of God-realisation. At the most, it can serve as a minor aid to it."

(3)

Supremacy of Spiritual Life

A young man from Hubli had been once to *Shri Gurudev* for being initiated by him. He was a *Brahmachāri* and had taken an active part in the Non-cooperation movement for about 5 or 6 years. He had some jail-experience also to his credit. He intimated all this to *Shri Gurudev* and expressed his desire to receive initiation from him. He wanted to carry on spiritual *Sādhana* also along with his political activities. While introducing this young man to us *Shri Gurudev* said : "This gentleman is a political worker. He has started and is conducting a *Vyāyāma Śālā* in a village and is also engaged in political activities. Now he is desirous of leading a spiritual life as well. But as political life and spiritual life are entirely opposed to each other, like darkness and light, how would it be possible for him, to live both at the same time? He will have to choose one of them."

Unable to come to a definite decision regarding his final choice, the young man politely took his leave. When he departed from the room, *Shri Gurudev* said "This young man wanted to develop spiritual power to promote his political aspirations. That desire had brought him here. But spiritual life must be sought and cultivated as an end in itself and never as a means to achieve other ends. Then alone we would attain our cherished goal viz. God-realisation; otherwise not. This young man appears to be good-natured. But some more time is needed for him to enter spiritual field."

(4)

Love for Spiritual Life

A seeker once asked *Shri Gurudev* : "Sir ! how should we awaken and intensify our love for spiritual life?" *Shri Gurudev* replied : To awaken and intensify our love for spiritual life, we should try to keep good company (*Satsaṅga*)— the holy company of saints and seekers. There is no means so simple and effective as that. It would ensure our steady progress on the spiritual path. Along with this, good-listening (*Satshravaṇa*), listening to spiritual discourses, is also absolutely necessary. But we should listen with perfect attention, with complete concentration. In fact, we should be fully absorbed in listening and should not be conscious of anything else at that time. Reading is also included in listening. We should always employ meditative method in reading. It does not matter even if we read only a few verses at a time. But ours should be a meditative reading. We should reflect while we read. The idea should sink in our mind. It is no use simply skipping over pages after pages. In spiritual *Sādhana*, meditative reading proves to be very valuable and effective. While reading we should also try to remember the Name of the Lord. That would certainly enhance the utility of reading. All these factors would create a devotional atmosphere round about us that would ultimately awaken and intensify our love for spiritual life."

(5)

Nāmasmaraṇa

(Meditation on the Name Divine)

"Are the four popular *Yogas* viz. the *Jñānayoga*-the Yoga of Knowledge, the *Karmayoga*-the Yoga of action, the *Dhyānayoga*-the Yoga of Meditation, and the *Bhaktiyoga*-the Yoga of Devotion, independent paths leading to God-realisation? If so, how do they enable the aspirant to attain Divinity?" This was the question posed in one of the "Sittings" when *Shri Gurudev* remarked : "These *Yogas* are not only not independent paths, but they are not at all paths directly leading to Divinity. Left to themselves, they will not get even an entrance into the sacred Shrine of Divinity. They can, at the most, reach its portals. The Yoga of *Nāmasmaraṇa* is the only path that can enable the *Sādhaka* to attain God-head. This path alone can take the *Sadhāka* into the inner Sanctuary and grant him the vision and bliss of Divinity. *Nanyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya* - 'there is no other way for it.' All the saints of the world have followed the same Pathway, and have bequeathed it to the coming aspirants.

The *Yogas* of Knowledge, Action and Devotion, are contributory to *Nāmasmarana*. They cleanse our hearts, fortify our faith, remove our intellectual doubts, and facilitate our journey along the Pathway. That is all that they can do. On account of the temperamental differences, the *Sādhakas* begin their *Sādhana*, by adopting one or the other of these *Yogas* that suits their temper most. But, in the long run, they must necessarily take recourse to the primary Pathway of *Nama-*

smarana. Otherwise, they won't attain their ideal of God-realisation. Thus, meditation on the Name Divine is the only Pathway to God. This is the Pathway advocated by saints like Jñāneśhwara"

(6)

Power of Divine Name

Once the method of meditation on the Divine Name was the topic of discussion. Some of the aspirants, assembled on that day wanted to know whether all the factors in the method were equally important and inevitable.. *Shri Gurudev* explained : "Fixing of the gaze on the tip of the nose, observation of the incoming and outgoing breath, mental repetition of the Name along with the breath distinctly- all these are, no doubt, important factors in our process of meditation. They are all, really very useful for our mental concentration. But with all that, if the Name has not been imparted by a *Sadguru* possessing the requisite spiritual attainments, it would never enable a seeker to attain spiritual realisation. The power of the Name rests in the *Tapas-Sadhana* and spiritual realisation of the *Sadguru*. The grace and power of the Lord descend into the Name through the *Sadguru*. We may meditate on the Name imparted by such a *Sadguru* in any way we like. It would not fail to grant the desired fruit of God-vision.

Don't you know that *Shri Bābā* used to meditate with his eyes closed ? I also do the same. On account of biliousness, continuous gaze on the nose-tip produced rings before our eyes. Hence we began to meditate with our eyes closed. But it should be noted that this does not apply to one and all."

(7)

Spiritual “Vastu” is Unique

"A spiritual "Vastu" is visible as all other objects are visible. What then, is the distinction between the visions of them both? Why should one be regarded as an expression of Reality and not the other?" When this question was asked one day, *Shri Gurudev* explained: "There is a vast difference between the vision of "Vastu" and that of other objects. The former is produced within, while the latter is produced without. One is internal, while the other is external. External vision requires an object. Such vision is possible only when the object is present and not possible when it is absent. This is not the case with internal vision. The "Vastu" is first created internally and then it becomes visible to the external organs of sight.

Nor is this all. In both these types of vision, the physiological processes also are quite different. For the sight of an external object, light is required; eyes must be in a normal, healthy condition; and at the same time they must be open. But for the vision of “Vastu,” none of these factors are necessary. "Vastu" can be seen even in darkness. It can be seen even when the eyes are closed and by the blind man as well. You know our spiritual brother *Shri Lingappa Savalgi*, he was blind by one eye. But he could see the "Vastu" even with his blind eye. This is really a fine test of the reality of "Vastu."

"*Yad dr̥ṣṭam̐ tan naṣṭam̐*"- "That which is visible is perishable !" This is a well-known maxim. It is a truism so far as

◉ Supersensuous perception of spiritual light, form, sound, touch, fragrance and taste is called "Vastu" by the saints.

external objects are concerned. But it is not true in the case of spiritual "Vastu." A gentleman who did not know this distinction had once asked *Śhri Bābā* this very question. It was, of course, an outcome of his utter ignorance in this respect.

Western physiologists have recently propounded a new theory. They maintain that the whole brain sees, hears and thinks. According to them, every cell of the brain sees. Sight is not the function of one particular centre. Hence it is not impossible to see with the ear and hear with the eye. *Jñaneśhwara's* utterance in this respect is quite well-known: 'I heard with the eyes and saw with the ears etc.'

(8)

Attractive Power of "Vastu "

"When will our "Vastu" develop the power of attracting us?" asked an aspirant. *Śhri Gurudev* replied : "Our *Vāstu* does possess the power of attraction from the very start, as it is inherent in the "Vastu." We fail to realise the power in the beginning on account of our mental impurity. As soon as our heart gets purified, it begins to realise and appreciate the attraction and to respond to it properly. Between the two types of "Vastu", spiritual sound is more absorbing than spiritual sight. *Śhri Śhankara* has paid a high tribute to this sound in his *Yoga taravali*, in these glowing terms:

नादानुसन्धान नमोऽस्तु तुभ्यं
 त्वां साधनं तत्त्वपदस्य जाने ।
 भवत्प्रसादात् पवनेन साकम्
 विलीयते विष्णुपदे मनो मे ॥

"Salutations to Thee ! O Sound-attunement ! I know that you are the means of attaining Reality. Through your grace, my mind is absorbed at the feet of the Lord, along with the breath." Addressing this very sound, *Śhri Tukārām* says : "Just as the pipe of a snake -charmer attracts and charms the serpent, you have charmed and overpowered me. Such is its inherent power of attraction."

On another occasion, when a disciple complained about his loss of interest in spiritual life as well as lack of attraction in his "*Vastu*," Shri Gurudev remarked: "Religion, it is said, is instinct like hunger and sex. At times, spiritual hunger overpowers us. Then we spontaneously feel impelled to sit for meditation. After good meditation, it gradually subsides. But this spiritual hunger, though naturally present in all, is dormant in some and dominant in others, less intense in some and more intense in others. How to make it more intense is a problem. When our "*Vastu*" becomes permanent, through good *Sādhana*, this hunger becomes intense. This won't be possible merely through occasional glimpses of "*Vastu*". "*Vastu*" should become an important factor in life-a veritable part and parcel of our life. Then alone we will enter into its field of attraction and when this is once achieved, future progress becomes easy and rapid. Then there would be no danger of the flagging of our interest. Till then we must be particularly careful."

(9)

God-realisation and Omnipotence

"A saint who has realised God, is supposed to possess infinite power. Is it really so, Sir?" asked a disciple. " Yes ! Of

course !" emphatically replied *Shri Gurudev*. "It is definitely real. God is the eternal spring of infinite power. Naturally, those who partake of its nectarian waters, share His Powers. 'A genuine saint' according to *Shri Rāmadāsa*, 'actually experiences that all his sins have come to an end, that the round of births and deaths has come to stop, that he has realised both God and Self and that he has completely surrendered his Self to God."

This being the case, such a saint can confidently declare; 'I am the child of the Lord. What is there in the world that I cannot achieve?' If a saint does not possess this confidence, he is not a God-realiser at all. A saint is ever free from fear of any kind, as he is thoroughly convinced, through actual experience, that his "Vastu" would never fail to protect him आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कदाचन ।... कुतश्चन । declare the Upanishads. A saint who has realised the bliss of Brahman, will never be afraid of anything or anybody."

(10)

Nature of Miracles

"What is the exact nature of miracles? How do they take place?" were the questions asked by a visitor to *Shri Gurudev*, when he explained: "Look here! It is the law of Nature that cause and effect should necessarily precede and follow each other. Every cause should produce an effect and every effect should have a cause. If a few links in this chain are absent-invisible, that phenomena is treated as a miracle. Such miracles do happen very often. The Radio of today is a miracle of yesterday. With the aid of the super-natural power acquired

through penance, saints transcend a few steps, and at once reach the top. These sudden jumps, are then regarded as miracles by the common people.

There is another type of miracles with which we are familiar. We may call them 'Psychological Miracles.' Saints possessing supernatural powers, can send messages to their distant disciples instantly, can intimate them beforehand the events that would take place in future, and can actually read the thoughts of others as well. All these things are possible. But *Shri Mahārāj* maintained that events that violate the laws of Nature, such as 'the speech of a buffalo' and 'the movement of a wall' cannot take place. Hence, these miracles attributed to *saint Jñāneśhwara*, might be regarded as the products of poetic imagination.

In this connection, one fact deserves special attention. Miracles should happen of their own accord; they should never be willfully performed. Divine grace should descend. It is always received and never given. Because, the moment the idea of giving it dawns upon the saint, he enters the province of Ego, by transcending that of the Lord. Genuine saints, therefore, never entertain even the thought of performing miracles. Still, it is also equally true that God brings about miracles, through the saints, without their knowledge."

(11)

No Sequence in the Spiritual Experience

The nature of spiritual experience was once the topic of discussion. "Sir! There is rich variety in the spiritual experiences of various saints. The order in which the saints had

them, also appears to be different. Why should it be so? Is there no definite sequence in them?" asked a disciple. Shri Gurudev replied : "No! There is no fixed sequence at all. Every *Sādhaka* has his own peculiar order of having these experiences. Let us just observe the experiences of the saints of our own *Sampradāya*. What do we find there? *Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, Shri Bhausahab Maharaj, Shri Baba, Smt. Shivalingavva* - all these had their experiences in different order. This doesn't mean that there was no similarity between them. But on account of their temperamental differences, there was difference in the emphasis of each of them. That is all.

When we consider this problem we are apt to commit another mistake. Till recently, it was a current belief that spiritual evolution was unilinear. But it is not so. Modern thinkers like Alexander and others maintain that spiritual evolution is multilinear. And they are quite correct. When a bomb-shell explodes, its splinters fly in all directions all at once. Similar is the case with spiritual experience. A seeker gets these experiences all at once. Hence the question of sequence in them becomes absolutely irrelevant. In fact it does not arise at all."

(12)

Morality and Mysticism

One day, a *Kannada* song was being sung in the "Sitting" which described the experience of Spiritual Sound and its effects on the *Sādhaka*. It contained a line in which the poet-saint stated: "As soon as I began to hear the Sound, all my vices vanished automatically." While explaining the significance of this line Shri Gurudev dealt with the close relation between

Morality and Mysticism. He remarked "Morality and Mysticism are very intimately related. In fact, they are interdependent. Morality leads to and supports Mysticism. while Mysticism brings about perfection in Morality. Just look at our vices ! They are the products of our inordinate attachment to sense-pleasure and sense objects. Morality aspires to free us from this attachment by teaching us to control our senses and mind. It thus induces and enables us to cultivate the virtues gradually and leads us to the supreme virtue of God-devotion. But as the *Gītā* tells us : Sense objects turn away from him who does not enjoy them with his senses, but the relish for them persists. This relish also disappears only after he has the vision of the Supreme.

Thus, unless we are morally pure we cannot make any progress in our spiritual life and realise God. And unless we realise God, we cannot be perfect in our moral life. Apparently this is a paradox. Of all aspects of morality, the mystical aspect alone is of utmost importance. In fact, we may say that, that which conduces to mystical elevation is alone moral. All other things are not really moral. We may very well define morality in these words.

(13)

Who Can Fathom the Depth of Divinity?

It was about eight in the morning. *Shri Gurudev* was conversing with the aspirants as usual. When the conversation was going on, *Shri Gurudev* suddenly asked *Nagappa* the grandson of *Shri Nimbargi Maharaj*, who was present there, to sing the Kannada song "Guruve nimmājneyanu". As the song

was being sung by Nagappa in his sonorous voice, *Shri Gurudev* was listening to it with rapt attention. There was pindrop silence among the audience. All at once, *Shri Gurudev* broke the silence with this remark: "Look here? 'यस्यान्तर्बिदुः सुरासुरगणाः' Even the gods and demons could not fathom the depth of Divinity. What of man-a puny creature? Why should he vainly boast of his knowledge? Who is there that can say that he has realised god completely? Here and there we come across a few persons who have attained only a particle or two of this Infinite Treasure. Why should a man, then be unnecessarily elated with this tiny attainment?"

The devotees of God are born in all countries right from ancient times. Every country has been blessed with their holy presence from time to time. Devotion is not, thus, the exclusive monopoly of any one land or community. Still, vainly do people fight in the name of religion. In fact, spiritual life is the only province that deserves to be free from fight of any kind. Is it not strange, then, that this province also should be the hot bed of fierce fight? To be frank, these fights are not really religious: they are essentially political. People fight their political battles in the name of religion."

(14)

Philosophy and Mysticism

Shri Gurudev was once explaining the need of the study of philosophy in this scientific age, in the course of which he remarked: "We are now required to face the Western Scholars and put up a fight with them. Hence we should also be adept in the use of the weapons handled by them. If we are called upon to

argue with a lawyer, is it not necessary for us to study law? Therefore a study of philosophy has become necessary now. Really, it is not essential for Mysticism. But philosophical justification for mystical life is demanded by the modern mind; unfortunately, we find that our mystics are innocent of philosophy and philosophers are not interested in Mysticism. Is it not a matter of regret that even the students studying philosophy under my guidance should not realise the supreme value of Mysticism? But it is a fact that cannot be denied.

Secondly, it should also be noted that philosophy is a fence that does not allow the stray cattle of superstition to enter into the garden of Mysticism."

(15)

Experience of Void or Spacelessness

Once a *Kannada* song was being read out to Gurudev. It contained this line: "*Oṅkāra śhabdavu shūnyavāgide.*" meaning "the word Om has disappeared in the Void." This line had another reading viz. "*Oṅkāra śhabhdavu shūnyavāgade.*" Which meant, "the word Om did not disappear in the Void." Now which of the two readings was correct? When this problem was being discussed, *Shri Gurudev* said: "Some people believe and maintain that as a *Sādhaka* advances in his spiritual career, his spiritual experiences of Sound and Form ultimately disappear and he experiences only a Void. This is a peculiar view advocated by the *Hata-Yoga-Pradipikā*. When this was brought to my notice I referred the matter to *Shri Bhāusāheb Maharaj* and sought his opinion about its correctness. I discussed this problem with *Shri Bāba* as well. Both of them

emphatically maintained: "These experiences do not disappear at all. They simply temporarily move aside, when we get the experience of Spacelessness."

(16)

The Seat of the Soul

An aspirant once asked *Shri Gurudev* : "Sir, some saints maintain that our Soul resides in the right side of our heart. What is your opinion about it?" *Shri Gurudev* replied, "It is true that there are a few passages in the *Upanishads* expressing that the heart is the seat of the Soul. अंगुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषः मध्य आत्मनि तिष्ठति। - "The Soul of the size of a thumb, resides in the heart," says the *Kathopanishad*. अहं हृदि सन्नितिष्ठः- "I reside in the heart," declares the Gita. But modern physiologists have conclusively proved that the brain is the seat of the Soul. The Soul resides in the Pituitary Gland. The heart has been granted only Provincial Autonomy. It can enjoy limited freedom, given to it by the brain. It cannot transcend it."

(17)

Devotion Should Spring Up

One day, when the usual sitting was going on, a disciple asked : "Sir! We are very often told that *Bindu* (Spiritual Atom) is one of the forms of Divinity. Why then, do we not feel devotion and reverence for it? What should be done to develop that feeling about it?" *Shri Gurudev* explained: "Look here, the feeling of devotion should naturally well up in the heart, as a result of deep meditation and higher spiritual experiences. It should never be worked up. Don't you remember *Shri Baba's*

Vachana viz Bindu tithe Sindhu?- "where there is a drop, there is ocean." The drop is a part and parcel of the ocean. In philosophy we speak of 'Qualitative Monism' and 'Numerical Pluralism.' From the point of view of quality there is identity between a *Bindu and Sindhu*; but from that of quantity or number, there is difference between them. Is there any qualitative difference between a lump of boiled-rice and its grain? But as that lump does contain a number of grains, there is difference in quantity. We must admit that. Isn't it?

At the same time, it must be noted that there is a striking difference between a *Bindu* and a grain of boiled rice. While a *Bindu* can produce various forms of Divinity, a grain cannot produce boiled rice at all."

(18)

Nature of Spiritual Energy

When a disciple asked *Shri Gurudev* one day, about the nature of Spiritual Energy, he explained: "We know this much that Spiritual Energy is infinite and eternal and that the whole Universe arises from it and dissolves in it. We cannot, however, ascertain why the Universe comes out of it and merges in it. Meditation on the Name Divine is the only means of generating, developing and stabilising that Energy in us. This Spiritual Energy, *Atman*, Absolute, God, Divinity, are one and the same. When this Energy is generated, it affects the centres of perception in our brain, as a result of which we get the supersensuous experiences of *Nāda* (sound), *Bindu* (form) and *Kalā* (light) etc. This Spiritual Energy, when generated, also produces in us such emotions as love, compassion, modesty,

dispassion, wonder, terror and bliss. The compassion and dispassion produced as a result of the growth of this Energy would alone be stable and enduring. Hence real dispassion, desirelessness and fearlessness, would be possible only when spiritual experiences develop. Self-effort alone cannot achieve them. However, as these virtues are contributory to spiritual experience, we should try to cultivate them. But their perfection can be achieved only by intense *Nāmasmaraṇa*.

(19)

Company of Saints and Sages

Shri Gurudev had implicit faith in the need and efficacy of the company of Saints and *Sādhakās*- "No *Sādhana* is possible in the absence of such a company," was his special injunction to all the *Sādhakās*. He always advised them to seek such holy company. In this connection, he once related an incident in his personal life : "As advised by *Shri Maharaj*, I used to perform *Sādhana* for seven hours every day. But one day I was surprised to hear him remark : 'What can mere *Sādhana* achieve? Good company is needed.' Unable to make out the full implication of this remark, I sought the guidance of a senior *Sādhaka* in this respect, who told me that I should try to stay in the company of *Shri Maharaj* as much as possible. Thereafter I began to accompany *Shri Maharaj* during his spiritual tours whenever I could get an opportunity. Thus I tried to reap the maximum benefit of his inspiring holy company from 1910 to 1914 And after *Shri Mahārāj* attained *Samādhi* in 1914, I took advantage of the company of *Shri Baba* and received inspiration from him."

(20)

Progress in Spiritual Life

Once there was a discussion about the nature of progress in spiritual life, when *Shri Gurudev* explained : "Look here. The Spiritual Pathway is not straight. It is zig zag; it is spiral. Hence our progress along the Path is bound to be spiral. When we are proceeding along the winding path, we have at times, the unique pleasure of having a glimpse of the beautiful scenery ahead. Just then, our path takes a turn and the scene goes out of sight, which gives us a good deal of pain. Still, it does leave a faint memory of it, which enables us to maintain our effort to reach the spot-to have the vision of the scene once again. In this way, such occasional glimpses inspire and goad us onwards till we attain our highest goal."

(21)

Quality of Our Meditation.

"How to judge the quality of our meditation?" was the question asked by a *Śadhaka* when *Shri Gurudev* replied : "Really we should be our own judges of the quality of our meditation. It is in proportion to the bliss we enjoy in meditation, as compared with the standard bliss of which there is an undefined and unconscious standard in our heart. Usually, we get a fraction of it-- a very small fraction. Only rarely is the standard 60% or even greater is reached. *Anandasya mātrām upajivanti*. The degree of bliss, however, does not depend upon the expansion of our experience; it depends upon its quality."

(22)

When is Spiritual Progress Possible ?

There was once a discussion about the circumstances favourable for spiritual progress, when *Shri Gurudev* remarked: "For a devotee, his spiritual progress is of the highest value. Nothing else counts for him as much - not even the freedom of his country. For spiritual progress, peace or *status quo* is chiefly needed and not revolutionary conditions. There is sometimes sudden and great progress in distracted conditions, no doubt. But that is temporary, not permanent. Permanent progress is possible during peace only. The experiences received during distracted conditions, do not re-appear for years thereafter."

(23)

Emotion and Reason

"What is the place of emotion and reason in the spiritual *Sādhana*?" asked a seeker one day, to which *Shri Gurudev* replied: "For being able to perform our *Sādhana* successfully, both emotion and reason are necessary. But excess of emotion, not supported and balanced by reason, is not good. Emotion is the petrol; no doubt, but reason is the steering wheel. One takes to meditation when emotion is strong, but forgets it when the emotion runs down. So, emotion must be supported by reason, if at all we are to reap the full benefit from it in our *Sādhana*."

(24)

Meditation and Physical Pain

"Meditation is possible," remarked *Shri Gurudev* one day, "so long as physical pain is endurable. But when it goes beyond

endurance, meditation becomes impossible. So, we should carry on our meditation so long as health is good enough for that. And at the same time, we must pray God that when pain gets beyond endurance, He should, by His grace, keep His memory alive in our mind. There is no other remedy to remember God, in excessive physical pain. *Shri Bāba* appears to have conquered pain, as could be seen at the time of his demise."

(25)

Hypothetical Faith is Sufficient.

Prof. A had specially come to discuss certain problems with *Gurudev* and get his doubts cleared. He had a long discussion with *Shri Gurudev*. The gist of some of the most important problems discussed, has been given here.

At the outset *Prof. A* referred to the *Mārathi* song विडा घ्याहो नारायणा, which he had heard the previous night at the time of the Bhajan, and remaekd: "Sir, I don't understand the significance of विडा etc. I don't believe in them. What have they to do with siritual life? Moreover".... Before he could proceed with his criticism, *Shri Gurudev* suddenly intervned and said: "Well! You need not believe in them. It is not at all necessary. You may even consider them to be pure superstitions. That does not matter in the least. In spiritual life hypothetical belief is quite sufficient. Mind you ! Such a belief will not be a leap in the dark. The power once communicated to you, by the Spiritual teacher, will lead you on, to infinite progress. It does not require any further help of any kind. The progress will not be merely arithmetical; it will be super-mathematical."

"Progress in spiritual life is of two types: One is slow and cumulative and the other is quick and sudden. One is called पिपीलिकामार्ग or (Ant's way), while the other is called विहंगम-मार्ग or (Bird's way). If we are once in possession of the aeroplane of *Nāma* that carries with it Divine Power, we may rise to any height. The Divine Grace received through our intense *Sādhana* of *Nāma smaraṇa* or meditation on *Nāma*, would definitely ensure rapid progress."

"That which we actually experience and realise, should alone be treated as real. You need not believe even in the *Avatārs* of *Rāma* and *Krishna* and others. You may very well consider them to be merely mythical persons, not even historical personalities. Even saint *Rāmadās* has treated them to be inferior to God. Says he:

राम तो कालचा । सुत दशरथाचा ।
अनंत-युगाचा । आत्माराम ॥

"*Rama*, the son of *Daśharatha*, belongs only to the recent past. But the *Ātman* belongs to eternity. "

We should steadily perform our *Sādhana* and get spiritual experiences ourselves. We should accept that form of God to be real of which we have got an actual vision. We should enkindle the Divine Lamp within us. Then His light would automatically radiate in all directions. If the flower blooms, its fragrance would spread far and wide of its own accord. God is blissful. Spiritual life begins, with the experience of at least an iota of that Bliss."

(26)

Spiritual Bliss

Next *Prof A* wanted to know about the nature of Spiritual Bliss, when *Shri Gurudev* explained: "We get beatific experience through the brain. There are three types of stimuli : i) Physical ii) Mental and iii) Spiritual. The difference is in the source of the stimuli. Spiritual Bliss springs up from within, like a fountain, all of a sudden. We have to adjust our brain to the internal stimuli. Nay the brain is to obey its call. The brain is, thus, a fortunate instrument as it receives the spiritual beatific experience.

Let us take the example of *Anāhat* Sound. Here the tympanum is sounded from within. When we begin to have this experience, the external stimuli are barred. They don't affect the ear at all. And when the internal sound intensifies the *Sādhaka* cannot hear the external one."

At this stage, *Prof A*. asked : "What is the nature of *Samādhi*, Sir?" *Shri Gurudev* replied : "The so-called *Samādhi* is a mere mental attunement with God. Our beatific experience is far beyond that state. Then you merge in God entirely. In that state, the *Sādhaka* becomes one with God. There is assimilation at that time."

"*Shri Śhankarāchārya* maintains that *Samādhi* itself is God." सम्यक् आधीयते चित्तं यस्मिन् स देवः। "Samādhi is God in whom our mind is entirely assimilated." But we must enjoy the experience of bliss. Then alone can we call it *Samādhi*."

"*Patanjali* says: योगः चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः। तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम्। वृत्तिसारूप्यमितरत्र। - *Yoga* is the cessation of mental modifications.

In *Yoga*, the Seer (Soul) is identified with his original form. At other times, he assumes the form of the वृत्ती (mental modifications). As Spiritual Bliss is not an emotion, it does not vanish, even when all the emotions vanish. Being an essential attribute of God, nay—being identical with God Himself, it continues to exist for ever."

"Some scholars maintain that we must transcend the five *Kośhās* and reach the state of *Nirānaṇḍa* - non bliss. This is merely a theory. The state of *Brahma nirvāna* of the Gita includes both *Ānaṇḍa* and *Nirānaṇḍa*. It means beatification and not annihilation. It is not Buddhistic or Nihilistic negative peace. It is positive beatification. To us Bliss is the real entity: We cannot say anything about any state beyond that."

(27)

God's Grace Saved India

Next day the conversation began with a question by *Prof.A.* regarding the then political situation of India (1944). *Shri Gurudev* remarked : "The burning power of war, has now grown so fierce that it is no use talking of independence at such a time. Even though we somehow got Independence, the big powers surrounding our country, that are hourly waiting to pounce upon us, will easily snatch our independence in no time. Our people fly away helter-skelter, when a single bomb explodes somewhere. They are so panicky. They are not able to protect themselves in any way. In this respect no nation in the world is so helpless as India."

"Recently Japan would have created terrible havoc here, in the twinkling of an eye. But the grace of the Saints in our

country, saved us as we are destined to play a prominent part in bringing about peace in the world, after this war is over. It is because *Do Little* flew from China and bombed Tokyo that the calamity mentioned above was averted. Thus really '*Do-Little*' proved himself to be '*Do Great*.' The Almighty prompted him to take that step and saved India. God's ways are, indeed, unfathomable. We cannot imagine the means by which He achieves His objective. We know how, as the story goes, God saved the bird, both from the hunter as well as from the hawk. He made a snake bite the hunter, as a result of which his arrow missed the aim and killed the hawk, instead. The hunter also died of snakebite. And thus the bird was saved. If *Do Little* had not bombed Tokyo India would have been reduced to ashes by the Japanese bombers. A nation that sent the invincible warships like 'Prince of Wales' and 'Repulse' to the bottom of the ocean within a short time, would have easily showered a rain of fire, over India and burnt it in no time.

You should seek independence when you deserve it. What is the testimony of history? We are quarelling with our own people like hogs and dogs. Under these circumstances, we should lay the foundation of physical glory coming out of spiritual glory. I am stating this merely with the help of historical logic. I cannot say when such a time would come. The logic of history requires us to fulfil one of these conditions before we can deserve independence.

- i) The quarrel between Hindus and Muslims must be ended somehow.
- ii) We must achieve scientific development superior to both America and Germany, but this is indeed a stupendous task.

iii) We must rise to such a spiritual height that we must realise that all humanity is one.

It is the fond belief of some people that we can get independence with the help of Russia. That is impossible. Russia is great. He has evil designs on India. In fact, every strong nation has such a design. Russian affection is like that of boa. We cannot say when he would devour us."

(28)

Visions About the Future

"Can we have visions about the future events?" asked *Prof A. Shri Gurudev* replied: "We may have such visions. *Shri Krishna* had such visions at the time of *Mahābhārata*. When *Arjuna* expressed his doubt regarding their victory in the great war, *Shri Krishna* warned him. 'I have slain them already. Fight and you will gain victory.' Let us seek for such visions. Let us wait for such visions. You should not merely imagine them."

"In fact, we would be able to know the future in case we realise and assimilate the Spiritual Principle through intense God-devotion. It is through the power of this Spiritual Principle that *Saint Ramadās* could have such visions. Thus does he describe one such vision. 'The Mother Goddess has come with a bludgeon in her hand and has killed the sinners of old in the Region of Bliss. I see the Goddess walking in the company of the King, intent upon devouring the wicked and the sinners.' It all depends upon the fervour of our devotion to God. What is impossible for God's Grace?

The breaking of one Spiritual Atom will convert the whole world. We should attain that Power which rules the world. Even a single individual possessing that power is enough. *Duryodhana* asked *Shri Krishna* to give him his army but *Arjuna* implored him to grant him his personal presence. Where God is present victory is bound to be there. Hence *Arjuna* attained victory. Really God alone is quite sufficient for the achievement of our object.

We should, therefore, try to seek the Ultimate Reality. We should not merely try to imagine the design of the Lord. We should try to seek it. Then we shall know His Will, even about the future. Future flashes would surely dawn upon us in course of time, though not all at once."

(29)

Spiritual Life and Self-Surrender

"Spiritual life" remarked *Shri Gurudev*, "consists in realising what this Spiritual Power is and in assimilating it. Real self-surrender is not possible unless we realise this Power. You can see the Power definitely. 'अदृष्टपूर्वं हषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा। भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे।' I was overjoyed to see the Power never seen before, and was also overpowered with fear, says *Arjuna*. Spiritual life is a mixture of both joy and fear. Self-consciousness dies after realising this Power and the feeling of fear brings about surrender. If you feel terribly afraid that you cannot lift up your hand without His Power, you will surrender everything to Him."

(30)

The Chakras and Kundalini

Once *Shri Gurudev* was explaining the nature of *Chakrās* and *Kundalini* to Dr. K. of Bombay. He said: "*Yoga* describes six *Chakras*, *Kundalini*, oozing of Nectar etc. We should study this subject in a scientific spirit and in a dispassionate manner. Modern physiologists admit the existence of six Plexuses in the body. These appear to be the six *Chakras*. Of these Naval and Cardiac Plexuses do really exist in the form of glands. The existence of *Sahasradal Chakra* is yet problematic. *Kundalini* has no physical existence. Its description as a serpent occurring in *Jnānēśhwari* is merely poetic.

Kundalini is a power contained in the fluid of the spinal column. When that liquid power becomes patent - when it is invested with energy - it rises up and reaches the *Thalamus* called the *Sahasradal Chakra* - the thousand petalled Lotus and begins to trickle. This might be the flow of Nectar. *Thalamus* possesses the controls of all the nerve-centres. When particular nerves are brought under control, one becomes able to stop heart-beats and pulse-beats. Reflex nerves also are brought under control like the ordinary nerves."

(31)

Hypnotism and Mystical Experience

Dr. K the then Civil Surgeon of Bijapur once asked *Shri Gurudev* to point out the distinction between hypnotism and mystical experience, when *Shri Gurudev* explained: "Hypnotism is dangerous both to the hypnotist as well as to his

‘subject.’ The hypnotic loses his independent individuality, the awareness of which becomes a source of lifelong misery to him. The consciousness as well as the actual state of one's being under the sway of another person, is fraught with great danger. Such a person is always haunted with fear. It is a sort of destruction of the physical mind itself.

I once happened to ask such a hypnotic : "How many parsons are here in this hall?" He answered : "Fifteen." I again asked : "Including yourself or excluding yourself?" Answered : "I cannot say?" This means that the ‘subject’ entirely loses his individual self.

On the other hand, mystical experience is full of bliss and is ever-growing. Hence our mind becomes more and more powerful. Continuity, Universality and Bliss are its criteria. Hypnotic power diminishes by its use, while mystical experience grows day by day."

(32)

Theotropism and Spiritual Waves.

In the course of a conversation about meditation and spiritual experiences *Shri Gurudev* remarked: "Good meditation is an outcome of the Grace of God. According to the spiritual law of tropism, God Himself attracts the devotee and draws him nearer and nearer. It is the growing attractive power of the *Vastu* that heightens the quality of meditation."

“The idea of coining this new word viz *Theotropism* dawned upon me at the time of meditation. Mere tropism might be psychological, mental or imaginary. But theotropism must be a mystical experience."

"The spiritual waves spread out from a spiritually realised soul, influence the world. The sound waves are spread everywhere. But receiving stations are necessary for getting them. Otherwise they will not be felt. In the case of spiritual waves, the receiving set is not necessary. In this case it is creative. Rhythmic energy is created in the human body by meditation."

"If physical sound can produce wonderful result in surgery etc. then *Anāhata* sound can produce more. Sound waves are at source electric waves."

(33)

My Philosophy

Once Shri Gurudev was asked to explain the nature of his Philosophy when he said : " How I live is my Philosophy. I am a *Sthitaprajna* in God-realisation and not in behaviour. My spiritual experience has granted me a firm conviction regarding the existence of God. I am perfectly convinced that God alone is real and everything else - body, creation etc - is unreal. We may define *Sthitaprajna* as one who is firmly fixed in his spiritual experience. But my spiritual experience has not directly influenced my conduct. My anger is still there, even though very often it is an outcome of my physical weakness. Peace is only an outer expression of inner experience. It does not matter even if it is not always present. It is the experience that matters. We do come across people with no spirituality, enjoying peace But we are infinitely superior to them. My peace is not an outcome of effort and is imprinted in my intellect by my spiritual experience."

(34)

A strange Vision

Once in 1908, *Shri Gurudev*, Prof, Wodehouse, Shri Bhadabhade, Shri Vishnupant Karandikar and Shri V.G. Paranjape were discussing in the bungalow of Prof. Wodehouse, about Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. At that time *Shri Gurudev* once casually peeped out of the window in front of him, which was on the side of *Ālandi*. Just then, he saw a huge expanse of light extending high up midway into the sky above. At once *Shri Gurudev* automatically got up from the chair. And when he got up, all others also, automatically stood up, without any intimation from anybody. All of them could see that light and they were looking at it for two or three minutes. Thereafter the light gradually became fainter and fainter and ultimately became invisible. Prof. Wodehouse remarked: "Today my spiritual life began."

"I was not meditating," told *Shri Gurudev* about the vision, "for a long time then. But the quality of my heart had improved a good deal. The incarceration of Tilak, the turbulent political atmosphere etc had agitated the heart. This must have been the cause of that vision of light."

"When our heart is purified, we see God. Mere meditation will not necessarily lead to the vision of God. Spiritual experience depends upon the purity and intensity of our heart."

"In 1908, I used to see brilliant stars on the book. So I could not see the letters, And when they covered the whole book, it was impossible for me to read it. I saw a network of stars of

different colours. Mystical light makes other objects invisible. Mystic sound likewise, absorbs all other sounds."

(35)

Shri Gurudev's Meditation

Once Shri Gurudev intimated the nature of his meditation to some of his intimate disciples in this manner:

"When my meditation is in full swing, I don't feel like leaving it. It is a sort of intoxication like that of tea. Then *Sādhaka* behaves like "*Balonmatta pishāchavat.*" A bee that touches honey will not leave it.

The quality of my meditation at Allahabad is inferior to that at Nimbal. My routine there is fairly regular. This regularity hinders my meditation. During the three months at Nimbal there is a complete revision of my *Paramārth*-spiritual experience. *Shri Maharaj* used to say :

Māge ujalani pudhe pātha, nema karāvā nikaṭa

Bāṣhkalapaṇāchi vaṭavaṭa, kāmā naye.

"Meditate intensely. Revise the old and attain the new. Waste not your time in vulgar prattle !"

This year (1943) I spent the three months at Nimbal in perfect bliss which knew no bounds. This year I used to get up at mid-night or at 1 or 2 A M. everyday and meditate for hours together. Formerly I used to meditate on alternate days.

(36)

Reconciliation of Saguna and Nirguna

Once *Shri D.* referred to an article in a *Marāthi Journal* by *Shri K.* about Saguna and Nirguna aspects of God and stated that *Shri K.* had quoted a passage from *Shri Gurudev's "Mysticism in Maharashtra"* in support of his contention that *Shri Jñāneśhwara* was a devotee of Personal God. At this *Shri Gurudev* smiled and said : "How can these persons understand the relation between *Saguna* and *Nirguna* aspects of God? Once *Dr. Bhandarkar* had asked me as to how we can reconcile these two aspects. I had also given a Proper reply which had satisfied him. Mystical experience alone brings about this reconciliation. How can this be understood by those who are quite innocent of such an experience?"

(37)

Ideal and Process of God-realisation

Shri Gurudev once asked a disciple to read a letter by a saint in a Journal just received by him. It was stated in it: "Realisation of the Highest is the one aim of human life. Our highest duty is God-realisation. Service of humanity is mis-translation of Truth."*Shri Gurudev* expressed his full approval to this remark.

About the process of God-realisation, it was further pointed out in the letter to this effect: "God realisation can be achieved by concentration on the two centres viz: i) Heart and ii) Brain. New spiritual powers are opened up as a result of this concentration. The first process is easier to start with. The

second, more difficult, yet more important." At this, *Shri Gurudev* said : "Yes! it is true. But this distinction vanishes when the Divine Power descends on the aspirant and envelops his whole being. The relative positions of the heart and the brain, as seats of the soul, have been fully described in the *Upanishads* (Vide "Constructive Survey" PP. 94-95. New Edition).

In the same letter there was a reference to a centre above the head from which Infinity descends, which evoked this remark by *Shri Gurudev*: "Yes! it is like a Radio. It is comparatively easier to receive the Power than to transmit it. It is very difficult to become a Transmission Centre. Really the Power should be transmitted from the person without his knowledge. If he becomes conscious of it, it would increase his egoism and transmission would lose its efficacy. Moreover it is also dangerous to the *Sādhaka*."

(38)

Peace and Joy

In the course of discussion, one day a disciple wanted to know the nature of and the relation between Peace and Joy. *Shri Gurudev* explained:

"Peace and Joy are contradictory emotions. Peace (*Shānti*) equalises and Joy (*Ānanda*) lifts up, leads upwards. Emotions are of three kinds: i) Anotropic ii) Metatropic and iii) Catatropic. The first lifts up, the second equalises while the third brings about depression. We cannot say which of the two viz *Shānti* and *Ānanda*-is higher. To some God grants Peace, to

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others He grants Joy. Both are valuable. But they should come as a result of God-realisation, not be mere attitudes to be attained by practice. The presence of both Peace and Joy in the same saint is very rare. *Shri Maharaj* possessed both of them."

"Spiritual Joy hovered like an eagle this morning. When spiritual power descends and envelops, the whole Universe appears to be full of power, peace and joy. Last year (1943) I got this experience at *Satnā Station* while I was proceeding to Allahabad. Then there was spiritual transformation in the very Nature itself."

Shri Gurudev, however, has expressed his final opinion about the relation of Peace and Joy in his book on the *Gita* in these words; (Page 265 First Edition).

"The present writer thought for a long while that Joy was elative and Peace was equanimous and therefore there could not be any compatibility between the two. Joy lifts us upwards and Peace keeps us on a level. The one is anthropic and the other is metatropic. He has, however, come to the conclusion that ultimate Peace would be even a higher category but that Peace could not be attained except through Joy."

(39)

God Would Reside in The Heart That is Free from Passion

Dr. B. of Athani had once come to see *Shri Gurudev*. It was his first visit. Still *Shri Gurudev* felt that he was an old acquaintance of his. Hence the conversation that ensued between them was extremely cordial, free and frank.

"Look here," said Shri Gurudev, "Ours is altogether a different field. God is the driving force of the whole world. Why not of politics? If we once attain Him, what can we not achieve?"

Then Shri Gurudev asked a disciple to read the following *Abhanga* of Shri Tukaram : "*Sarpa bhuloniya guṇṭalā nādā*, the purport of which is as follows : "I have been verily pent up in Samsara as a serpent is pent up within the basket by the music of a juggler. Save me by Thy power... Like a fly I stick in a sweet substance. The more I shake my wings the more I get myself inside. My very life is departing. Save me by Thy power, O God!" A moth, a fish, a serpent, a bee and an elephant are enchanted and deluded by one of the respective objects of form, taste, sound, fragrance and touch. What would be the condition of man who is a prey to the attractions of all the five senses? Is it not necessary then for a man to be forewarned and to keep himself away from them? Should he not hurry up and try to attain *Paramārtha* ? It is only when he gives up the desire for these objects that he would have the benefit of God's vision. "When desire departs, God would reside in the heart" says *Tukaram*.

That which grants us vision of God is our Religion and our Ethics. But Kant thinks otherwise: "I may attain God or I may not. I shall perform my duty." His Categorical Imperative is of that nature. It enjoins the performance of duty for the sake of duty.

It is idle to say: "I shall attend to devotional practice in my old age." Because, "Is life at your command?" asked Shri Maharaj."

(40)

Nature of Nama and Internal Meditation

"How to carry on internal meditation on Nama?" was the question, asked by Dr. K. one evening when Shri Gurudev explained : "There is no End other than *Nāma* is the opinion held by some while others opine : there is no Means other than *Nāma*. Both opinions are equally valid. *Nāma* is both the End as well as the Means. *Nāma* shows the Rūpa (Form) of God. Hence it is a means to the seeker. But to those who are out, exclusively to meditate on *Nāma* without caring for the vision of God, it is an End in itself."

"Shri Tatyāsāheb Ranade got himself initiated by *Shri Maharaj* and in 1904 at 4 P. M. he saw the spire of the temple at *Inchagiri* studded with spiritual pearls. Thereafter, without caring for spiritual experiences, he carried on his meditation as a sacred duty till his death. To him *Nāma* was an End in itself."

"Meditation should be sincere and soulful. Nama is a symbol for realising the Ultimate Reality underlying the Universe. "*Om Ityekāksharam brahma*"- Om is the Absolute. We should understand the significance of this *Maṅtra*. Mere vocal utterance of *Nāma* becomes mechanical. We should properly understand the relation of Rūpa-Form, Bhāva-Devotion and *Nāma*-Name. Form is Mystical entity or Spiritual entity; Devotion is a Psychological entity or moral entity; while Name is Mysterious Physical entity, which includes the other two."

Very often when we have the vision of Divine Form, we remember the Name. Ultimately, Name and Form become one-

identical. It is very difficult to realise that Name itself is Form. The Infinite must be invoked with a devotional heart. But it is very difficult to entertain such devotion, such a passionate longing for the Lord. It is only the company of saints that can induce it."

(41)

How to Intensify Concentration?

When a disciple asked *Shri Gurudev* as to how to make concentration soulful, he explained :

"*Patanjali* has defined Yoga as *Chitta-vrtti-nirodha-* or control of the mental flow. It is also true that mind becomes steady by the control of *Prāna* through the practice of *Prāṇayāma* or breath-control. But this method does not bring about a change in the quality of the mind. This is really a process from the Bottom. *Trātaka* etc. are all external processes.

But there is a process from the *Top* which is really more important. Concentration through devotion is a superior process. A devotee meditates on *Nāma* with his heart filled with devotion and attains the vision of God. In the '*Bottom to Top*' process mentioned above, the physic becomes God. That process is slightly more practical, no doubt. But it may not necessarily lead to God. On the other hand, in the '*Top to Bottom*' process, God becomes God. It begins from the very beginning. For undergoing the process of Hatha-Yoga, our physic must be strong. But for devotional meditation, and concentration, ordinary constitution is sufficient.

Proper time and place are also necessary, for good

concentration. But growth of mental ardour is of prime importance. *Tivrasamvegānām āsannah*. It all depends upon the fervour. Our earnest passion for spiritual welfare should gush up like a fountain towards God. Such a warm zeal can be developed through (i) Discrimination and (ii) Holy company.

i) Intellectual study of the literature of saints will be of some use to facilitate discrimination. But along with it meditation on *Nāma* should be necessarily performed. Otherwise we won't be able to understand clearly the real significance of such literature. The expression of an experience can be properly understood only by those who have got such an experience, or enjoyed it. Others won't. The other day, *Master Krishnarao* sung the *Abhāṅga* of *Jñāneśhwara* viz. "*Krishnā hāla kā re.*" How can he understand its real meaning? This *Abhāṅga* of three lines cannot be understood even by three hundred scholars.

To understand the real secret grandeur of *Paramārtha*-spiritual experience, the literature of all the saints of the world must be properly studied. And the unity of experience presented in it should be ascertained.

ii) This discrimination should be associated with the Company of saints for developing its efficacy. These two would greatly help to intensify devotion and zeal of the seeker. It is only when the intensity reaches a stage in which the seeker is prepared to sacrifice everything for the Lord, that he would have the experience of the Spiritual Energy.

Spiritual Energy descends through saints like *Jñāneśhwara* and others like him. They possess a Reservoir of

Spiritual Energy which oozes down through them. Spiritual knowledge flows unconsciously through them. The company of such saints intensifies our fervour. Even an exchange of thought with them will be of great help. Their mere presence also is quite enough. Even a graceful glance of their *Kūrma - dṛṣhti* would be valuable. But it is not practicable. Things have to be realised or achieved by ourselves.

(42)

The Triple Confluence

In the course of conversation there was once a reference to the *Triveni Saṅgam* of *Prayāg* where there is a confluence of three rivers - *Gaṅgā*, *Yamunā*, and *Saraswati* - two manifest and one hidden. At this *Shri Gurudev* remarked : "There is a spiritual Triple Confluence Do you know? God, Devotee and *Nāma* form this Triple Confluence. Of them, two are visible like *Gaṅgā*, *Yamunā*, and one is invisible like *Saraswatī*. Normally Devotee and *Nāma* are manifest and God is unmanifest,-hidden. In the second stage, Devotee and God (*Rūpa* - Form) are manifest and *Nāma* is hidden. While in the third stage, *Nāma* and *Rūpa* (God) are manifest and the Devotee goes underground. *Shri Maharaj* once remarked : 'Though the Saints depart from the world, the *Rūpa* experienced by them remains as before.' Thus God, *Devotee* and *Nāma* form a Triple Confluence in all the three senses. When the Devotee merges in the Lord, God and *Nāma* alone remain. This is a Confluence of a higher stage."

(43)

Meditation on World as God

About the *Pantheistic* conception of "World is God" *Shri Gurudev* once observed : "It is not enough to consider that God has assumed the beautiful form of the world. It must be directly experienced. To realise the Power that controls and guides the Universe, a different *Sādhana* is required. To observe God in everything and every event in the Universe, is a meditation of a higher quality. God is the beginning and end of the Universe. This fact must be actually experienced. Before our meditation passes from the mental to the spiritual realisation, the process in the middle is extremely difficult-nay, it may even be considered to be practically impossible. To pass from idea to reality is more an ontological argument than a spiritual reality. Meditation on *Nāma* alone is an easy means for its realisation."

(44)

Meditation on Virtues.

Shri Gurudev further continued : "Very often meditation on virtues also is recommended. The Theosophists meditate on virtues like *Abhaya*-Fearlessness, *Satva-samśuddhi* Purity etc. "Today I shall be fearless, charitable. I shall be straight-forward." Such is their repeated auto-suggestion for a number of days, till they feel that they have assimilated the respective virtue. Aristotle says; "Character is produced or formed by the repetition of the same act. Such meditation and practice of virtues becomes a basis for future spiritual achievement. That is all. This *Sādhana* has no more value than that."

"Really we must perceive God in all beings, -in everything. We must be able to see and perceive Him both with eyes shut and open. Spiritual vision is supersensuous. A blind man sees the vision better as there is nothing to blur it.

Unless we have a vision of God, we won't attain the powers and virtues. On the other hand the possession of these powers and virtues will facilitate spiritual realisation. Thus Ethics and Mysticism are inter-dependent. Ethical and Spiritual growth meet in God. They meet in Infinity. There is never a straight line. So parallel lines meet in Infinity."

(45)

Supreme Humility of a Supreme Genius.

Dr. P. K. Gode, the late curator and research scholar of the Bhandarkar Research Institute, Poona, who was a student of Dr. Ranade, wrote a letter to him, requesting Dr. Ranade to allow him to publish a Commemoration Volume, on his 60th Birth-Day, in memory of his signal service to the sacred cause of Education, Philosophy and Spiritual Life. When the letter was read out to *Shri Gurudev* by a disciple, he Peremptorily asked him to take down the following reply :

“Without waiting for a single minute I must write to you that you need not commemorate me on my 60th Birth-Day. I have done nothing for which I need be commemorated. I am no better than an animalcule. You might be remembering what I said to Prof. Shrikhande at the Deccan College; 'To praise a wising friend is to curse him'. That holds good even today."

(46)

Kannada Mystics

Once Shri H. had been to Shri Gurudev from Bijapur, to pay his respects to him. He was a pioneer in publishing vachana literature of *Vīraśhaiva* Saints in *Kannada*. Naturally *Vachana* literature and *Kannada* saints was the topic of discussion that day. "I first came to know," began Shri Gurudev, "about your English translation of the *Vachanas* of *Basava*, by reading the opinion of Mr. Macnicol. They were published in the Indian Antiquary. Isn't it?" "Not all. Some of them were published in it," replied Shri H. Then Shri Gurudev remarked "*Akhaṇḍēśhwara* appears to be a good *Vachanakāra* (a saint who has written *Vachanas*). He combines in him oratory, philosophy and occultism. Really *Vachanas* are a configuration of Prose and Poetry. The mystic literature that we come across in Karnataka and *Mahārāshtra* is rarely to be found in Upper India. You have to seek hundreds of volumes to find out a good spiritual song. What is more? The *Kannada* saints went directly to mysticism and not to mythology, like other saints. The *Vachanakāras* have expressed what they have actually experienced."

(47)

About the History of Indian Philosophy.

Then Shri H. asked Shri Gurudev about the publication of his History of Indian Philosophy. Shri Gurudev gave him details about the proposed publication and said. "You see, want of money and energy is the primary cause of not publishing the

volumes. Moreover, as there are few well-qualified writers, it is best to publish monographs after the German method. Only a few persons should not take the entire responsibility of publishing all volumes. Let them be published in any order."

To explain why there was a break in the continuity of publishing such a series of volumes, Shri Gurudev said: "People care more for political and social advancement and not for cultural, personal and spiritual progress. Hence they are quite indifferent about such publications"

Then Shri Gurudev asked one of his disciples to write a thesis on such cultural subjects for his Ph. D "Such a thesis should preferably be written in English," remarked Śhri H., "so that it should be useful to a wider circle of readers" "Such thesis," observed Śhri Gurudev, "should be written both in English as well as in the regional language. Then it would be useful both for ideological literature, as well as for linguistic and literary expansion. In our Allahabad University, the candidate submitting his thesis in English is required to submit its Hindi translation along with it. In case the candidate is unable to translate it in Hindi, himself, he should get it translated by others and submit it. This would be very valuable for enriching our regional languages."

(48)

About Bodha Sudhe

Thereafter, Śhri Gurudev related to Shri H how his first *Kannada* book viz. "*Bodha Sudhe*" took shape. It contains the *Vachanās* of Śhri *Nimbargi Maharaj*, the eminent Master of his

Master *Śhri Bhausahab Maharaj*. He said : "Originally, they were disjointed stray utterances of *Nimbargi Mahārāj* collected by his *vaishnava* disciple-*Raghunāthāchārya*. It was a bilingual narration of philosophic discussion of the great Saint. We have merely arranged them in the Aristotelean fashion. It is an ethico-religious argument.

We did not want to make it classical. It was kept as it was, to make it individualistic. Not a single new word was introduced. Everything was kept as it was, in proper arrangement. We have done nothing more than a gardener.

The book contains the fundamental principles of ethics. This is something similar to what Aristotle has done, but something beyond him. Aristotle has merely defined the principles of ethics; but we have defined the use of ethical principles for spiritual life. Really ethical principles derive their validity from the mystic experience. *Satya* (Truth) is that which is done in the light of God and *Asatya* (Untruth) outside it.

Then Shri Gurudev asked his disciple to read the contents of the book in which there were two sections titled "*Horakālaga*" (External conflict) and "*Olakālaga*" -(Internal conflict). When these sections were mentioned Shri Gurudev told how every person is required to face two types of conflicts in his life. This has been tellingly described by saint *Tukāram* as follows; "Day and night we are required to fight, with the world outside and mind inside."

Thereafter the disciple was asked to read the entire section viz. Fundamentals of Conduct. When the reading was over, Shri Gurudev asked "What is the ultimate principle of conduct?" and

offered this reply himself. "It is realisation of oneness, of atonement, of *Sāmarasya*, with God. Whatever helps us to develop our insight into God's nature, and enables us to realise Him, is moral. Everything else is immoral."

At this Shri. H. remarked: "This principle appears to be akin to the principle of '*Kāyakave Kailas*'- '*Work is worship*'- of the *Virāshaiva* Saints." "Yes! to a certain extent," replied *Shri Gurudev* "But there is a good deal of difference. Any work cannot be worship. It is only the work that is meant for the realisation of God, that is inspired by God or done under the canopy of His illumination that would deserve to be called Worship."

Shri Gurudev then asked his disciple to sing his 'Prayer to the Great Master' - *Shri Nimbargi Maharaj*. He liked the Prayer very much and intended to publish it at the beginning of his "*Bodha-Sudhe*." In the course of singing when he came across the line: "*Krtiyu belagali ninna belakinalli*" - "Let my activity shine under the canopy of Thy illumination," *Shri Gurudev* remarked: "Then alone the action will be worship." And when the next line. "*Ninna karuṇave anna, ninna karuṇave niru, ninna karuṇave usiru enagāgali*-" "Let Thy grace be my food, drink and breath to me," was recited, *Shri Gurudev* pointed out to Shri H. "Look! how poetry is inspired by religion!" "*Ninna karuṇave usiru*" is specially important. Because even a single breath is highly valuable in spiritual life. Who knows? Even during that short span of time, God's grace might descend upon the aspirant. King *Parikṣhit* was liberated during seven days and *Khatvanga* during 2 hours and a half. If a man could live even for a moment and take one more breath, he must thank

God, for he can meditate on Him during that tiny interval and realise God. Keeping this aspect in view poet *Kalidās* has remarked :

"Kṣhaṇam pyavatisthate śhvasaṇ ṇanu jantuh khalu bhāgyavānasau" "The person who is able to breath even for a single minute is really very fortunate."

(49)

On the Gita (Chapter XII)

Dr. B. of Athani had been to Nimbāl a second time. When *Shri Gurudev* was informed about his arrival, he was at once called to his room. As he entered the room, *Shri Gurudev* greeted him with a smile and said: "Well doctor! you have come again. You must have many serious cases to attend. How could you find time to come here?" At this Dr. B replied: "Sir! my case also is still more serious. It has brought me here." After a hearty laugh, the sitting began. A disciple was then asked to read his selections for the '*Dhyāna Gitā*' which was under preparation. Before the reading began, *Shri Gurudev* said: I have worked very hard on the *Gitā*. Very few might have put in so much labour over it. We are, after all, free lances. Our own experience alone is of supreme importance to us. Nothing else is of any consequence. Since you are all open-minded, I feel like telling you frankly about my personal views about the *Gitā*. In the company of such people one is tempted and inspired to speak freely and frankly."

“Just take for instance the Chapter XII of the *Gitā*. In it a comparison is instituted between “*Avyakta Akṣhara*” on the one

hand and “*Vyakta-Aham*” on the other. Really speaking there is no difference between “*Saguna*” and “*Nirguna*”. God is not merely *Saguna* or merely *Nirguna*. He is both *Saguna* and *Nirguna* combined. What should be worshipped? Is it His four-handed form? or Cosmic form? Mere *Saguna* is after all perishable. What can we gain by worshipping it? Moreover, Shri *Krishna* was a realised Saint of that period. Why should he be invested with four hands, or with thousand hands? In the same manner, mere *Nirguna* cannot be worship of the *Avyakta* is simply meditation upon vacuity. This is only intellectual worship. That won't lead to God-head. Hence the worship of one who is neither merely *Saguna* nor merely *Nirguna*, who is both *Saguna* and *Nirguna*, is the best.

The author of the *Gita*, however, appears to suggest that by following the Absolute, one can reach God. But merely by intellectual constructions God cannot be attained. Still the general tendency among the scholars seems to favour meditation on vacuity. That is after all worship of *Shūnya*—that too of a false *Shūnya*. The worship that leads to the realisation of real *Shūnya* is quite different. How is God attained by meditating on the idea of void, can only be explained by those who have actually attained that experience. The author of the *Gita*, however, characterises it as “extremely difficult” (*Klēśhodhikatara*).

Then Shri Gurudev asked his disciple to read his selections from the 12th Chapter of the *Gita*. When the third and the fourth verses were read, he pointed out that adjectives, “*Kūṭastha*, *Acalo*, *Dhruva* etc.” are applicable, not only to the worshipper

of *Avyakta* - (the Unmanifest) but they are also applicable to a *Bhakta*, a devotee of the Lord. For no great work will be achieved without the control of the senses. The epithet - *sarvabhūtahiteratah* - contains the idea of equal opportunity to all.

When the verse "*Ye tu sarvāni karmāni mayi sanyasya... māṁ dhyāyānt upasate*" (Those who dedicate all their actions to Me and meditate on Me) was read, a disciple asked: "Which of the two viz. dedication and meditation, precedes the other?" Shri Gurudev replied: "It is only after God-realisation through intense meditation that genuine dedication actions to God is possible. Still, in the beginning we should try to practise dedication by way of preliminary preparation. This appears to be the suggestion here."

Thereafter, he began to explain the following line in the next verse ; "*Teṣhāmaham samuddhartā... bhavāmi nachirāt*"- (I soon become their saviour.) "Whom does God save? He saves those who fix their minds on Him, not all. If a person is corrupt, even God has no power to save him. Even if God has the power why should He use it ? If the devotion and faith of the aspirant reaches a sufficiently high pitch, then alone will he be saved by God. Let it be noted here that the word. '*Nachirāt*' (soon) is to be understood from the spiritual point of view. "if our conduct is good," asserted *Shri Nimbargi Maharaj*, "even all the three gods can do us no harm."

◉ There appears to be a pun on the word "*Shūnya*" here which means both void and cipher or *Bindule*.

"The unshot of this Chapter XII appears to be," continued Shri Gurudev, "(i) that work for the sake of realising God is real *Sanyāsa* (Renunciation) and (ii) that God-realisation is the sole aim and end of human life for which worship in the form of meditation should be practised. We should have a firm faith that we work only for the sake of God. But meditation only is actual worship. It alone should be our main item of worship. Thus if we fix (i) God as our ideal, and (ii) practise meditation (iii) with an unwavering, steady mind, we would be liberated *soon*. "Dedicate both your unsteady and steady feelings and attitudes to Me" advises the Lord. Always entertain thoughts about the Lord, about saints or about spiritual *Sādhana*. Imagine "I am a sinner, God is all-merciful. *saṁshayātmakam manah nischayātmikā buddhih*. Mind is full of doubt; Reason is full of resolve. Even your doubts should be about God. Thus fix your mind in Him. If you cannot do that too, serve the saints because service of saints is virtually service of God Himself. "*Tasmiñ, tajjane bhedābhāvāt* (There is no difference between Him and His devotees). Mere moral, psychological and social attitude will not have the merit of service of saints. It is true that God is present in the Universe (*Nārāyaṇa ase viśhvi*). But we must actually realise His presence. Then alone will our social service become service of God."

In this way (i) Firm Devotion (ii) Soulful Meditation and (iii) Service of saints, constitute what is termed '*Matkarma*' by the Lord. This is the path of God-realisation. Mere study of philosophy won't be able to attain it. Philosophy has been defined, by a Western scholar, in this way. "Philosophy is a search for a black cat in a dark place where it is not." Can its worthlessness be described in a better manner?

(50)

Company of Saints

Referring to his remark regarding the 'Service of Saints' *Shri Gurudev* further observed. "A saint himself is God. God Himself is saint. Hence service of a saint is service of God. Our daily meditation should be coupled with the holy company of saints. Then alone will it bear proper fruit. It is in the company of saints that we would realise the real value of meditation. If we try to live in their company for good many days and observe their behaviour minutely we would understand how they have realised their identity with God and possess His Glory.

Take for instance, my own case. It was the year 1909 or 1910. I was then meditating daily for 7 hours: 2 hours in the morning, 1 hour in the afternoon. 2 hours in the evening and 2 hours at night (from 11 P. M. to 1 A M). I carried on my meditation vigorously minute to minute. If I resolved to get up at 2-11 A. M., I used to wake up exactly at 2-11 A.M. without the aid of an alarm clock. Once Shri N. S. Lokur asked me to wake him up at 3-43 A M. The wonder of it was, I awoke exactly at 3-43 and woke him up. Such psychological miracles used to take place at that time. Of course it was an important occurrence.

Once during that period, I happened to pay a visit to *Inchagiri*. *Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj* knew the method of my meditation. Still, one day he addressed me in this manner: "What is the use of mere meditation? We should seek the company of saints. Then we would realise its real worth." I was greatly non-plussed and surprised to hear this remark of

Shri Maharaj I wanted to know its significance. But I dared not ask *Shri Maharaj* directly. He was very strict and stern. Hence I asked his close bodyguard Shri Nandyappa the meaning of *Shri Maharaja's* remark. He told me that I should accompany *Shri Maharaj* when he was on spiritual tour. Hence, soon after I went to Poona, I came to Jamakhandi as *Shri Maharaj* was on tour in villages nearby. I took the chance of accompanying him during this tour. I could then closely observe his divine life and was greatly benefited thereby.

Shri Maharaj performed his meditation regularly. He could ascertain the exact time of his meditation to the minute. His daily meditation was for 9 hours : 3 hours in the morning, 1 hour at noon, 3 hours in the evening and 2 hours at night. He rarely had any sleep. In fact he never needed it. During the month of *Shrāvāṇa*, he used to live on one dried dare per day. At *Inchagiri*, he used to take a few morsels of food only. Such was the austere life he led. Still, so long as his *Sadguru - Shri Nimbargi Maharaj* was alive, he never failed to see him at least once a week and have the pleasure and benefit of his inspiring company. He thus, received the inspiration and guidance of his Master for well-nigh 25 years, before he could attain the higher reaches of spiritual experience.”

(51)

On the Gita (Chapter XIII)

After this, there was a break when Shri Gurudev went out of the room for a few minutes. Soon after his return, he asked his disciple to read his selections from the 13th chapter of the Gita. He had classified the selected verses in five groups. When the

verses in the first group were read Shri Gurudev said : "Here virtues like *Amānitva* etc., have been characterised as *Jñāna* or knowledge by the *Gītā*. The author of the *Gītā* regards knowledge as virtue. To him knowledge means virtue. It does not mean differential Calculus, radio, or bacteriology. Knowledge is wisdom, is a Socratic dictum. This is veritably a bold statement. The climax of all these virtues is exclusive devotion to the Lord. When you imbibe these virtues, you will become a *Jñani*, a wise man. This is the definition of *Jñāna* given here. But in the line *Na hi Jñānena sadṛuṣhaṁ* -" *Jñāna* means illumination or realisation of God '*Kṛtiyu belagali ninna belakinalli*' - 'Let my act shine in Your illumination,' prays a modern poet. We must first experience spiritual illumination and then perform our actions in it. That is real offering our actions to the Lord."

Then the verses in the second group were read when *Shri Gurudev* remarked : "This group contains the description of *Jñeya* - of intellectual Absolute. It is without and within all beings and constitutes both animate and inanimate creation. It is both far and near. Such is God. The whole Universe arises from Him and ultimately merges in Him. "

Then the verses in the third group were read when *Shri Gurudev* said : "This group deals with the four *Sādhanās* mentioned by the *Gītā* . They are : (i) *Dhāyana-meditation* (ii) *Sāṅkhya knowledge*. (iii) Karma-Action and (iv) *Bhakti-devotion*. We should meditate daily for nine hours on God. We should try to think and gain knowledge of God. We should perform disinterested action for God or if that were not

possible, we should have firm faith on some saint worthy of our adoration. "*Ananya prokte gairatra nāsti*" says the *Upaniṣhad*. The saint should ever be absorbed in God, become one with Him. Till then he won't deserve to be called a saint. We should listen to the words of wisdom of such a saint, and carry out his instructions faithfully. Then alone we will attain Liberation."

At this a disciple asked ; "Sir, which of these four paths is superior?" Śhri Gurudev replied: "Really these are not independent paths at all. They are different aspects of the one pathway or *Pañtharāj* as Śhri *Jñāneṣhwara* would call it. In fact, mere knowledge or action will not be able to achieve anything. Meditation on God coupled with faith and devotion is the real spiritual *Sādhana*."

"Once Shri *Gundopant Gadagkar* had asked Shri Baba whether *Karma* (work) was superior to *Jñāna* (knowledge) or *Jñāna* was superior to *Karma* - Shri Baba replied : " Both of them are not superior : only God is superior. "When I came to know about this answer, I asked this very question to the students of the M A. Examination of the Bombay University that year in the following manner; "Show whether works are superior to knowledge or knowledge is superior to works or God-realisation is superior to both." Don't follow merely work or knowledge; follow *Bhakti* devotion."

When the verses in the fourth group were read, *Shri Gurudev* observed : "Just mark the words '*Samadarṣhana*', equality of vision, here '*Samam paśhyaṅ hi sarvatra*,' says the *Gītā*. What is meant by *Samam paśhyaṅ* in this verse? *Sama* means equal and straight. It also means symmetrical and full(*Sampūrṇa*). When we have the direct vision of the full

Swarūpa-one's own form-in all beings and on all beings, that is *Samadarshana* or equality of vision. Once *Shri* Baba was asked to explain the nature of *Samādhi*. He replied: "*Sama Samāna vastu kāṅṅisitu aṅṅdare samādhi āgatada*"-"When the spiritual Form is directly visualised, it is *samādhi*." This experience of *samādhi* is enjoyed without any external demonstration. *Shri Tukārām* mentions, *Samacharana dṛuṣṭi* - symmetrical vision fixed on the 'Pair of Feet of the Lord,' Mystics tell us that such a vision of the Lord's Feet comes last in the series of spiritual visions.

Thereafter the following verse in the fifth group evoked a few comments from *Shri Gurudev* :

*Yadā bhūtaprthagbhāvaṃ ekasthaṃ anupaśyati,
Tata eva ca vistāram brahma saṃpadyate tadā.*

"When the aspirant realises the various beings as resting in One, and evolve from the One alone, then he attains brahma." *Shri Gurudev* remarked: "The whole Universe is centred in one place and this extension has proceeded from the same place. That is the One supreme Being. A person who has directly experienced this-realised this, he alone can be called a Jnani-a realised saint. He realises that God alone does everything. *Shri Maharaj* used to say: "We must realise this Doer." God is the greatest totalitarian of all. Follow God and there will be no room for any conflict."

"Thus all these topics are very useful for meditation. We should repeatedly read and think about them. Our psychology must not move outside spiritual life. *Shri Baba* used to tell us: 'Even in dream he used to perform *BhaJan*, *Arati* etc.' Thus spirituality should permeate our whole life."

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Seat of the Soul

After this, Dr. B. Asked: "Sir what is the seat of the Soul?" Shri Gurudev replied: "The brain seems to possess greater consciousness and power than the other parts of the body. Brain contains conscious cells Latest medical research has revealed that the fluid in the spinal cord keeps the ultimate metabolism of the body. The fluid is the vehicle of soul. The top-most source of the fluid is the seat of the soul. So even if the fluid goes, the soul does not go. *"Idam dharayati iti indrah."* The soul is some power inside the cells. That power when realised is not merely within but is without also.

When you perceive a spiritual *Vastu*, you don't perceive it with the physical eyes. The Unstruck Sound also is not heard with the physical ear. *'Āndhalyāne dekhile, bahiryāne aikile.'* The blind person saw and the deaf person heard, says a saint. In this case the internal impulse proceeds from the soul. It starts from within. It has neither time nor space.

The respective centre in the fourth ventricle appears to be seat of the soul.

It is true that there are a few passages in the *Upaniṣhads* expressing that the heart is the seat of the soul. *"Anguṣṭa mātraḥ puruṣaḥ madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati"*- "The soul of the size of a thumb resides in the heart," says the *Kathopanishad*. *"Sarvasya chāham hṛidi sanniviṣtoḥ."*- "I reside in the hearts of all", declares the *Gītā*. But modern physiologists have conclusively proved that the brain is the seat of the soul. The soul resides in

the pituitary body. The heart has been granted Provincial Autonomy. It can enjoy limited freedom given to it by the brain. It cannot transcend it. ☞

Then Dr. B. gave the following information : "In the seventh month the first organ working is the heart whose function is circulation of blood. Hence the heart might have been regarded as the seat of the soul. At that time there is respiration. Blood is then the carrier of oxygen. Separate existence comes when respiratory centre begins to function. Till then the baby is the parasite of the mother."

At this *Shri Gurudev* remarked : "A philosopher has said that man has three births: (i) the first in the womb (ii) the second when the child is born, and (iii) the third after death - when reborn after death. *Upanayana* is only social birth. Initiation by a *Sadguru* is also birth no doubt. But It is not a birth in the body, but birth in the spirit in fact that is real birth ."

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Some Effects of Spiritual Experiences

Shri Gurudev once remarked about the effects of Spiritual Experiences as given below :

"In the course of spiritual development, all the principles of Radio, X-ray etc. can be experienced. The current has to be

☞ c/f. "The soul in the heart could travel along the course of the pituitary body, and through it to its overlord in the lateral ventricle around which, in the grey matter, are situated the various sense-centres." (Constructive Survey of Upan. Philosophy PP.95-96 second edition.)

established with the Infinite and everything is possible. The limit and condition of Time and Space etc. are no more there. He can see, hear and feel with each and every cell of his body. He can see his own brain or any other internal part and he can understand past, future and everything. The main thing is, we must cultivate our Bhava by constant and continuous *Smarana* and *Satsnga*. Personal touch with saints is more valuable than simple *Sadhana*. Ultimately Grace must descend for real development. Heart is more important than head."

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Supremacy of Spiritual Life.

"For myself, spiritual life has been the most important thing, of which, educational, philosophical, and propagandistic activities are merely the faint expressions. People who have mistaken semblance for fact have taken me as solely devoted to intellectual and philosophical pursuits. But very few know, that my innermost inspiration has been that of spiritual life. Even now, as you see, the time has not come when spiritual work should be the most transcendent factor of my life. Even now, I must wade through the intellectual waters before I can hope to reach the shrine, which lies at the other end of the stream. That shrine I may not be able to reach, but I am certain of this fact that at present, there is for me nothing of greater consequence, nothing requiring more whole-hearted devotion than the intellectual and philosophic life. If I have been prevented from accomplishing the end of my life in a collegiate institution, I must find a new sphere where my philosophic pursuits would be of greater consequence to the world. If I have

been prevented from doing my work I have devoted myself to, I must do it in a far greater institution, an institution much greater than the one in which I have spent the last dozen years of my life. Such an institution cannot be short of anything higher than an Academy of Philosophy and Religion, where representatives of all the Religions and Philosophies must meet together and in which thoughts maybe exchanged for the sake of testifying to the greatness and glory of God. Such an institution is the "Academy of Philosophy and Religion" of which you may partly see an account in the Bombay Chronicle of the 7th August. Whether it is ever possible for me to be free from pecuniary dependence even upon such an Institution, will be settled in course of time. I shall hail the day when free I shall have been, when free from dependence of any kind whatsoever, pecuniary or other, even on such an Institution, I may rise superior and regard the kind of life that may be led even in such an Academy as ancillary to that great spiritual life which is the end, not merely of my own spiritual existence, not merely of that of others who may consent to cast in their lot with me, but I am sure of humanity at large, which is consciously or unconsciously pursuing the Pathway to God. How far we shall be able to achieve such an ideal, remains entirely at the will of God. It is only our business to wait, to watch, to work and to pray." (Letter-14-8-1924)

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Spiritual Experience alone Brings Peace & Joy

"I have always believed that the function of philosophy is for the consolidation and consummation of spiritual

experience, and it is only the acquisition of this spiritual experience which makes a man worthy of being the handiwork of God. The world is torn with dire conflicts today. There is no hope for humanity except on the basis of spiritual experience whose power, when writ large upon the world, can assuage ascerbated feelings, reconcile warring interests, and make humanity a true mirror of the peace, the joy and the glory which is in God."

(Message : July 1941)

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Spiritual Unity through Spiritual Religion

"Shri Swāmi deserves to be heartily congratulated on his very happy idea of holding an "All Faiths Conference" to bring together men of all kinds of religious belief, and creed, on the same intellectual platform, with a view bringing about real understanding, harmony and peace, between communities in India in general and Karnataka in particular. For, it is only the spiritual unity of all communities and creeds that is of an abiding and permanent nature; while all groups based on material principles are but superficial and short-lived, as they are not sufficiently broad-based and selfless in their nature.

Such latter trends of thought deserve to be corrected by a broad and fundamentally unifying principle. And this we cannot find anywhere else except in the spiritual nature of man. Men are generally misled by false ideologies and values in life. These values have to be trans valued in the light of what would be permanently useful and beneficial to the whole humanity without any distinction of caste, creed or nationality. It is only

Dr. R.D. Ranade

by realising the essential unity of human nature and thereby establishing the father-hood of God and the brotherhood of man that the real good of humanity can be achieved. This is the ideal preached and practised by all saints and sages and prophets of the world in the past. Spiritual Religion, the creed of all saints of the world, can alone save us from all separatist, disorganizing and dissipating tendencies and forces."

(Message : 29-4-1978).





Gurudev Dr. R.D.Ranade was a great saint with a clean heart, and clear vision. All his life, he walked on the path of devotion, dedication, and deep meditation. He wandered in the wonderful garden of philosophers. He made investigations into the nature of matter, mind, and soul, time, space, and existence.

He was mainly a mystic. He had realised his oneness with God; and felt the presence of that Divine in every being, and every object. Very often, he entered the state of Samadhi; and remained there for hours rejoicing within himself.

UGADI-25-03-2020

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