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The Glimpses of

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Shri Gurudev Ranade

Editor : Prof. B. R. Kulkarni



Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion, Belgaum.

Glimpses of Gurudev R.D. Ranade

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**Academy of Comparative Philosophy
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Publisher's Note

The Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belagavi is a Public Trust registered by Shri Gurudev R.D. Ranade in 1952, with the following aims and objects.

“To work for the spiritual unity of mankind and consequent peace and goodwill upon earth bringing together intellectually and spiritually minded persons through 1) spiritual symposiums, 2) study and research, 3) lectures, 4) meetings and conferences and 5) religious and philosophical publications.”

We are publishing this book - Gimpes of Shri Gurudev R.D. Ranade - in furtherence of these aims and objects. The Treatise is eminently readable and has a unique place in the literature on Gurudev as it contains reminiscences of those who had first-hand acquaintance with him. They cherished nostalgic memories of those charming days. Their's was a privilege to meet Gurudev, talk to him, attend sittings at Nimbal, get their problems solved by him, receive Nama while he was still with us, partake in his blessings and enjoy his holy company. The articles here, therefore, have a warm personal touch.

We are thankful to Prof. B.R. Kulkarni for selecting these Glimpses from old Numbers of Pathway to God and arranging them broadly in two classes, personal memories and philosophical discussions. Prof. Kulkarni is the author of 'Critical and Constructive Aspects of Prof. R.D. Ranade's Philosophy'. He has lived and moved with Gurudev. He was thus the right person to undertake the present work. His Editorial Note gives a good and correct picture of Gurudev. Prof. Kulkarni's services deserve our appreciation and we are grateful to him for his labour of love in bringing out this brochure.



In the Bhagavadgita, Arjuna asks Shrikrishna -
स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।

स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत् ब्रजेत किम् ॥ (२.५४)

(What is the description of a Sthitaprajna, equanimous man, a man always in the presence of God, who is merged in the superconscious state? How does a Sthitadhi speak?, How does he sit and how does he walk?) Gurudev has all the characteristics of a Sthitaprajna and Sthitadhi described in the subsequent verses of the Gita. Those who have come in contact with Gurudev, can very well say that they were in the presence of a Sthitaprajna. Some of these Glimpses will disclose such traits in Gurudev.

These Glimpses will inspire a discerning reader to live a moral life and to follow the spiritual path preached and practised by the Master. We are happy to place this piece in the hands of readers with a hope that it will make their lives sublime.

We are obliged to Shri. D.R. Pathak of Pathak Studio, Kolhapur, for sending four photographs for inclusion in this book.

Our sincere thanks to Prof. M.V. Bagi as also to Prof. S.N. Krishna of R.L. Science Institute, Belagavi, for correcting the proofs carefully and diligently, and that too as selfless service.

J.V. Parulekar,
Chairman,
Academy of Comparative Philosophy and
Religion, Belagavi.



Editorial Note

This is a collection of Glimpses of Gurudev's life recorded by different persons who were fortunate to come into contact with him. These were first published in Pathway to God, the quarterly run by the Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belagavi. The narratives reveal Gurudev's rich personality and eloquently exhibit the writers' reverence for the Master. Each person plays his own tune and together they produce a Leibnitzian harmony. Gurudev's versatility inspires different attitudes in different individuals. If some revere him as an ideal teacher, another cherishes affection for him as a loving father. Some look upon him as a magnanimous man, while others respect him as an intellectual luminary. His affable manners attract one and all and his participation in divinity serves as a pole-star to every seeker after Truth. That which lies at the back of all these approaches is the yearning for spiritual life. For aspirants, all roads lead to Nimal.

Some passages are recollections of people of their first meeting with Gurudev; some are jottings of students who came under his tutelage; some represent the impressions of those who heard his inspiring lectures or read his enlightening works. Some others are records of discussions which took place almost daily. Mostly they are recalled from memory, and were rarely taken down at the time of discussions. The narratives are direct transmissions by the aspirants and as such are authentic. But most of them being recountings from memory, memory plays its own role in the reproduction. Passage of time of a day or even of an hour, interferes with the accuracy and completeness of the reports, inspite of best intention and utter sincerity of



the reporter. As a universal characteristic, the subjective element invariably enters a report. Each reporter looks at an event from his own viewpoint and hence reports of a self-same event, given by different people differ in shades, if not in colours. Not infrequently an epitome of discussions gives a picture of the writer's own mind as his own ideas are projected there in. At times his 'I' meets the reader's eye here and there. Not without a sound psycho-epistemological basis did Kant state that every perception is a combination of the 'given' and the 'contribution of the mind'. If this is the fate of direct perception, what to speak of memory which, after all is a secondary evidence? Yet such draw-backs of memory tend to be over-shadowed by the earnestness of the narrator. Philosophical discussions are interspersed in the text, and the liveliness with which the incidents are unfolded, displays a personal touch with all the warmth and intimacy associated with it. The spiritual current is flowing throughout and one can feel its force. There are accounts of Gurudev's sublime mystical experiences. All this is quite inspiring. Add to this the practical hints for spiritual practice which are liberally strewn in the text, and you get a marvellous result. A study of these elevating impressions is really moving and 'one's heart must indeed be frigid if it does not gradually thaw.'

Some of the sketches were originally written in Marathi and were afterwards translated into English, before they were published in Pathway to God. Wherever possible, quotations occurring in the articles have now been documented and their translation provided either in the text or in the Foot Notes. In respect of Gita quotations, Principal D.S. Sharma's translation has been mostly followed. Gurudev highly appreciated the accuracy of this translation. Some articles remain anonymous either because the original articles did not carry any names or



because some contributors did not want their names to be mentioned.

As the memoirs are spread over more than half a century and as dates of events are not always provided, arranging articles chronologically was impossible. Hence an attempt has been made to classify narrations on the basis of their contents. Roughly there are two groups - personal reminiscences and philosophical discussions. As many an article carries both reminiscences and philosophy, a strict classification was out.

The book begins with a train journey and takes station after station of personal recollections. As we roll down the path, we find how Gurudev's heart was full of love - for a stranger, a classmate, a student or a disciple. As the journey proceeds, we get various panoramic views of different facets of Gurudev's personality. If the Master himself goes to a disciple's house to honour him, what a joy it is for the latter! We read how Gurudev did pay such unexpected visits. At the next station we are informed that a student of Philosophy, who later on became an ambassador to a foreign country is asked to remember always the great cultural heritage of India. After meeting Gurudev, a number of visitors realised that the apparel does not always proclaim a man, Shakespeare notwithstanding. Most of the contributors entirely agree that even a single meeting with Gurudev would leave an abiding influence on the visitor's mind. We love to linger at a certain station to look at a beautiful pen-picture of Gurudev as a young enthusiastic professor. Here we find many old familiar faces. True to the Indian tradition where a teacher desires to be defeated by his own student, Gurudev always helped and encouraged his students to go ahead, even ahead of him. To wit, he would tell a student, 'There is not much of a difference between you and I. Only I have read a few more books than



you have done.’ Who does not know that ‘a few more’ means a few hundred more! In our train journey through the narratives, we get a jolt to find that Gurudev actually named a student ‘meta-Kant,’ a supreme compliment from a teacher to a student. As we wind our way, there is a halting station. We stay here for quite some time. Here is a *resume*, very lively and very objective, of Gurudev’s life - academic and spiritual. ‘To love God, is Ranade’s doctrine and Ranade’s life,’ is a message spread by an eminent professor of Philosophy who later became, as we know, The President of India. The train whistles through depictions of Gurudev’s saintly qualities. Here we take a pause, so to say, to change horses.

The second leg of our sojourn takes us to a terrain of Philosophy and mysticism. We learn that, a life-long student of Philosophy, Gurudev stressed both the value and the limitations of intellectual knowledge. He always held that God-realisation is the highest end of life and that intuitive apprehension of God alone matters. He insisted that morality is a prerequisite for mystical life and that meditation on the name of God is the only way to attain to divinity. Towards the fag end of the journey we come across a vivid picture of how mere worldly success does not grant peace of mind and how absolute resignation to the will of God is the only way out. The destination of our journey is reached with the assurance of Gurudev : if complete self-surrender comes, can God’s grace be far behind?

B.R. Kulkarni



Before you start reading

Some terms appearing in the text have a special denotation or connotation and a reader's acquaintance with them is necessary for appreciation of the text.

1. Abhanga A metre of Marathi verse
2. Arati i) Waving lights before God;
 ii) Prayer-song.
3. Ashrama Residence where aspirants stay
 for meditation and prayer; a
 hermitage.
4. Baba Amburao Maharaj, a senior
 spiritual brother of Gurudev.
5. Bhajana Recitation of prayers in a
 particular manner; liturgy.
6. Bhakti Devotion or love of God.
7. Brahmarandhra The aperture in the brain through
 which the consciousness of
 Yogins is said to reach the highest
 seat of the spirit in the body.
8. Chakras Plexuses in the body.
9. Darshana Visit to a temple to offer prayer,
 or to a saint as an expression of
 reverence.
10. Kundalini The serpent power, the seat of the
 subtle and potential power in
 human beings.
11. Nada, (Anahata) Unstruck sound experienced by
 an aspirant.
12. Nama, Nama-mantra The name of God imparted by the
 spiritual teacher.
13. Namasmarana or Meditation on the name of God.
 Nema



14. Nimbargi Maharaj The promulgator of the spiritual school to which Gurudev belongs. He was the spiritual teacher of Bhausaheb Maharaj, Gurudev's spiritual teacher.
15. Nirguna . Devoid of qualities, impersonal Absolute.
16. Rupa Form of God
17. Sadgaru Spiritual teacher.
18. Sadhak A spiritual aspirant.
19. Sadhana Spiritual practice
20. Sadhu A saint.
21. Saguna Having qualities, personal God
22. Sahasrarachakra or Sahasradala Kamala The thousand - petalled lotus; the seat of the highest spiritual consciousness in the brain.
23. Samadhi Absorption in God or communion with Reality.
24. Shivalingavva A senior spiritual sister of Gurudev.
25. Sitting Gathering of disciples for discussing different matters with Gurudev.
26. Trikala Bhajana Practice of reciting prayers thrice a day.
27. Umadi Maharaj or Maharaj Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar, Gurudev's spiritual teacher.
28. Vastu Reality of which an aspirant gets spiritual experience.



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Appendix : Notes on two incidents



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Part I

အဖွဲ့အစည်း



Down the Memory Lane



1. Calm and serene he radiated joy

- Dr. Veni Shankar Jha

My First meeting with Prof. R.D. Ranade was purely accidental; but it still remains one of the most charming memories which I cherish dearly. It was some time late in 1927, I think, Prof. Ranade got into a first class compartment at Jabalpur one evening on his way to Nagpur. The narrow meter-gauge train is one of the most rickety and uncomfortable trains ever designed by human genius. It is known as "Boneshaker", it jolts in the most unexpected manner and, if you are not careful, it may throw you off your berth. Prof. Ranade appeared to have accepted the erratic performance of the ramshackle train with philosophic calm. His health was none too robust and he knew that the chances of a good night's rest were remote for him; they would be even in a more comfortable train. He spread his scanty bed on a lower berth and sat cross-legged in immaculately white "dhoti" (Loin cloth) and "kurta" (Shirt) while his long coat and turban hung on one of the pegs and his "Puneri Jode"¹ lay on the floor in front of him, ready to accommodate, when required, his dainty little feet which, I learnt later, were touched reverently by hundreds of his grateful disciples and admirers.

I entered the compartment when the train was about to start. I did not know Prof. Ranade nor had I ever heard about him. However, I was deeply impressed by his quiet, serene and dignified presence and I bowed to him in



courtesy. I had just finished my education in London and was back at home in search of a job which in those days was a difficult one to get. I had played hard tennis in the evening and had a good dinner at home. I was naturally sleepy and although we were the only two in the compartment, I preferred the upper berth in front of Prof. Ranade lest I should be disturbed by the incoming passengers during the night journey. Hardly I had stretched myself, I was lost in the sweet land of sleep.

The berths in the miserable train were narrow, too narrow to allow a lusty, tired youth to fling about the dangling parts of his anatomy in the various dimensions in the oblivion of deep sleep. Time and again my legs or hands would be hanging out of the upper berth; perhaps one goodly jolt and I would be flat on the floor. I was too far gone in sleep to be aware of the inexorable operation of the law of gravitation; but the kind professor, who unfortunately could not sleep nor could read because of the dim lights and unceasing jolts, kept a constant vigil on me. He got up every time he feared danger of my being tossed out and pushed my heavy unruly limbs back into the berth. He did this exercise all through the night; but the beneficiary was totally unaware of care and attention he received from one of the most eminent thinkers in the country. As is wont with me, I got up early in the morning, rushed into the toilet and emerged fresh after a shave and a bath. Now we got talking for the first time. We were still strangers to each other. He was as quiet and serene as ever. He told me how very much he admired my sleep and what he had done for me during the night. I was deeply touched by his kindness. I felt as grateful as guilty.

We changed at Gondia and got into a better train this time. We were again the two in one compartment and we



both settled down to read in the train. I took out a copy of the philosophical journal, 'Mind' to read. This naturally attracted the attention of Prof. Ranade and he enquired of me who I was and how I happened to be interested in philosophy. Slowly and with unfailing charm and sincerity he started asking me questions one after another. Little did I realise that I was in for another *viva voce* examination. How delighted he was when he learnt that I was a student of Prof. G. Dawes Hicks, one of the top-most thinkers of the age. His questions led me unsuspectingly to Moore, Wittgenstein, Susan Stabbing, Alexander, Russell and to others in the reigning galaxy of the period. He made me recall some of the most fascinating philosophical problems of the Greek Philosophy, the obsessions of medieval scholastic logic, the new fields into which Broad and other thinkers were leading us to. I would have felt offended if it had appeared to me that this man was trying to size me up or to locate my weakness. The impression, which I carry to this day, is that he was enjoying himself and was trying to appreciate how much I enjoyed thinking on philosophical problems. The unscheduled interview came to an end when we reached Nagpur. I had by now come to know who Prof. R.D. Ranade was. I had found a loving senior and a guide, a sincere and humane friend. Our association lasted till he lived.

I heard his lectures at Nagpur. Once he did me the honour of staying with me for a day at Nagpur. I recall his loving presence at home and how he radiated joy to everybody he came in contact with, by his very simple way of life. He was fond of tea; he could do with it every half an hour throughout the day. Whenever I went to Allahabad I called on him and every time I met him I had to have several cups of tea and to undergo a subtle *viva voce*



examination which I believe was reserved only for those whom he favoured.

I was sad when I heard that he was no more. I had the luxury of having spent a few quiet and joyful hours with him. The sense of void is still there; how very much the students of philosophy today need the inspiration and guidance of such an honest, independent and clear thinker as Prof. R.D. Ranade. Giants in the world of philosophy are rare.



2. My Father as I saw him

Mrs. Vijaya Vishvanath Apte

Regarding Gurudev's view of life, people very well know how from his childhood he had a keen bent of mind for God-realisation. To describe his life as such, will take a lot of time and, it has been already done by many a writer in Marathi, English and Kannada. To be brief, I would say that he led a very simple and noble life with uncommon ways. His nature was sweet and affectionate towards all who came near him, including even the poorest inmate of the house. He used to get annoyed at times, but would clam down immediately. He appreciated all and praised their achievements, what to say of his only daughter. I still remember his joy when I passed my first degree examination. It is a very minor thing, but the expression of love and affection that he had for me is more valuable than anything else in the world. Though he was not bound by etiquettes or worldly ties, he used to observe the necessary etiquette without fail. Once when I asked him whether I should accept the post of a lecturer in Gwalior he wrote to



me to seek the permission of my father-in-law, Sardar M.S. Apte, in the first place and then accept the post. In Jamkhandi (his birth-place) in 1956, I delivered a lecture at a women's meeting. He was surprised to see the big audience and just for fun said : "Shake, (that was how he used to call me) are you going to attract more audience than I do?" The death of my only younger brother, a child of three and a half months, was a bolt from the blue to all of us. My mother was very seriously ill at that time. I was alone. All of a sudden he came in and patted me saying : "Shake, inscrutable are the ways of God. Why do you weep? I am everything for you." One can not imagine what I felt when I saw the mountain of courage incarnated before me. धीरोदात्त that he was, his face was filled with the glow of divine luminosity. I will never forget this incident in my life. When I studied Sanskrit for my B.A., I read Shakuntala's going to her husband's house in Kalidasa's Abhijnana Shakuntalam. But when I left my dear father's place after my marriage, I was reminded of Kanva's words:

यास्यत्यद्य शकुन्तलेति हृद्यं संस्पृष्टमुत्कंठया ।
 कण्ठस्तंभितबाष्पवृत्ति कलुषश्चिन्ताजडं दर्शनम् ।
 वैक्लव्यं मम तावदीदृशमिदं स्नेहादरण्यौकसः ।
 पीड्यन्ते गृहिणः कथं नु तनयाविश्लेषदुःखैर्नवैः ॥

(4-6).

(At the thought that Shakuntala would be going today, my heart is overcome by great anxiety. My throat is choked with the flow of tears. My sight has become dull. If such is the affliction of mine -a forest dweller - through attachment, how indeed, would be the tormentation of the house-holders when their daughters are separated from them?)

A Rishi like Kanva could not control his paternal feeling for the adopted child, then what to say of Gurudev!



The disciples of Gurudev know how much importance he attached to the high moral standard and how vehemently he used to keep to it. Morality according to him was the basis of a perfect life. He had an utter disgust for the worldly show. He was full of a spirit of humbleness and led a life of tranquility, truth, penance, insight, forbearance, courage and right pursuit. He himself says that unless these conditions are fulfilled, the aspirant after spiritual life may never hope to realise the self. He never directly told what he was or what his views were, but a true thinker could discern his views, in his description of some great saints. Mere moral preaching bereft of moral practice could have no place in his scheme. The meetings or the 'sittings' or the discourses which were held in his presence in the midst of friends and disciples, were quite enough for our guidance and moral equipment. Actually, I felt that whatever Jnana (knowledge) he imparted to the disciples in general, was meant for everybody's well-being. If not direct, it was an affectionate indirect guidance to me from my revered father. His moral standard was so high and his personality so hallowed that one could approach him only with humility.

Further, his spiritual backing was all the more valuable. It is needless to say more about it because all his followers know how much spiritual support they have received from their Guru. Should I not call it an exclusive privilege for me and my respected mother? Let me express here that most of the spiritual discourses have rarely been missed by us, how so ever sacred they might have been; or, if I am to put it more frankly, every such sacred discourse was arranged in such a manner as we could get guidance from it. After many days, all of a sudden, he used to ask my mother and myself some questions regarding the earlier discourses only to test whether we were attentive. The



object was only to lead us towards the higher path of God-realisation. He used to enlighten us sometimes by narrating incidents from the life of Shri. Bhausahab Maharaj, or by blessing us with a spiritual experience, अनुभव. Once in 1956, when he was to go to Jamkhandi he was having a spiritual discourse with many Sadhakas at Nimbai. I was there, and all of a sudden an idea occurred to my mind: “Gurudev is leaving this place to participate in the Amrita Mahotsava to be held in his honour at Jamkhandi and now who will protect Nimbai?” All of a sudden, I saw a lustrous halo encircling his holy face and he was smiling serenely! Thus he used to come to our rescue.

Lastly I come to Gurudev as a mystic. He says : “Mysticism is a way of spiritual life which binds all humanity together”¹ As I have said earlier, the world values him as a great mystic and God-realiser. He was engrossed in meditation all the time except when he was doing intellectual work. Very little time was given for his routine work. He was so much of a perfectionist that he actually re-drafted a page eight days before passing away. As Sir Radhakrishnan has aptly said, ‘He not only taught philosophy but lived it’. The whole life of this philosopher saint was thus spent in the pursuit of God-realisation, with direct, first-hand spiritual experiences. His works, A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy and the three Pathways, in Karnatak, Maharashtra and Hindi Literatures, The Bhagavad Gita as a Philosophy of God-realisation and his other works go to show his profound life-long study and intuitive experience. “Mind is purified, intellect is clarified and the soul is sanctified by the study of the Gita.”² Again, “That state of beatificism is itself Liberation. It is not to be found after death.”³ “Mysticism denotes that attitude, which involves a direct, immediate, first-hand, intuitive apprehension of God.”⁴ This he says on



the strength of his own mystical experience. But this state of God-realisation is due to the कृपा (grace) of the spiritual teacher, reiterated Gurudev. The preceptor who shows the Truth in its real form is called a सदुर्गुरु. सत्याचे गुप्त रूप दाखवतो तो सदुर्गुरु. This view is upheld by all the great mystics of the world: Jnaneshwara, Tukaram, Kabir, Mahipati, Purandaradasa, St. Teresa, Plotinus and others. Gurudev lived a pure life of mysticism and taught a full-fledged morality for the individual and life of absolute good to society. If each and every-body could achieve his own good by following the mystical path, then one day the whole world would surely and unmistakably reach the ultimate good. Thus we see that he placed mysticism on a sure philosophical basis. His writings prove him to be a grammarian of mysticism परमार्थ-पाणिनी. Whatever knowledge I have achieved about the mystical method, is due to the affectionate and spiritual guidance of a great saint-father, so sure am I. One can not judge the merits of a great man unless one lives in close contact with him for many days continuously. In that respect, I am fortunate enough to have spent much of my life-time with him. What to say of my respected mother, who has lived and let live others with him for 40 years. To be fully aware of the greatness of a great man, one must become like him. As Tukarama says :

तुका म्हणे अंगे व्हावे ते आपण ।
तरीच महिमान येईल कळो ॥

It is not possible and it is not at all practicable for a common man. Even then, some idea of his greatness is gained by being a member of his saintly family. I am rather forced to conclude here, for, the flow of these spiritual remembrance is unending. I am reminded of Longfellow's unforgettable lines :



Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Foot-prints in the sands of time.

My most revered father has built the spiritual edifice and has shown us the divine path to be followed rationally. Thus he has left behind him for the aspirants a vast legacy of divine brotherhood to catch up the “Pilot Perennial.”

1. Pathway to God in Kannada Literature, 2003, P.1.
2. Bhagavadgita as a Philosophy of God-realisation, 2008, p.261
3. Ibid, P.169
4. Mysticism in Maharashtra, Preface P.(1).

3. As I recall the past

Shri. P.R. Khadilkar, Sangli

The spiritual side of Gurudev Ranade is entirely unknown to me; my contact was merely personal.

As I was very ill at the age of ten (in 1900) and lost a year, my father kept me at home and taught me English and Arithmetic personally. Gurudev said to me about that time, “Tatya, as I am your father’s favourite student and you are his son, both of us get the benefits.” My father used to explain to us some portion from ‘Macaulay’s Essays.’

About December 1902, we appeared for Matriculation examination of the Bombay University. Gurudev got the first Jagannath Shankarshet Scholarship and also stood second in the list of successful candidates; the first was Nadkarni from Karwar who was detained by



his teachers in the Matriculation class for three years in order that he should rise up. He joined the Elphinston College, but his subsequent career was not bright.

I have heard, Gurudev used to say, “There are sources of energy other than calories. I know them. You do not know them as yet.” I have also heard that Amburav Maharaj, when he had been to the house of Ramanna Anikhindi at Rabkavi, felt as fully fed before lunch. He asked Yamanakka, Ramanna’s sister, whether he was not already fed, on which she showed him the kitchen utensils in which food was prepared, and which were still full. Amburav explained to her that when a man makes साधन continuously for three hours, he feels as if he has drunk half a seer of rich milk.

About March 1957, Narayanrav Gadgil and myself had been to Gurudev at Nimbale. He welcomed us both. Then Narayanrav requested him to give him initiation personally and not through any one. He added that this should not be difficult as Gurudev was talking freely with us. But Gurudev did not grant his request; he used to give Nama through G.V. Tulpule or G.G. Karkhanis.

When I was in Fergusson College for M.A. in 1908 and 1909, I used to go sometimes at night to Gurudev’s house in Natu’s Chawl in Shaniwar Peth, stay there during night and return the next morning. Once at about 10 p.m. when Gurudev’s mother and myself were sleeping downstairs, Ganu Karandikar of Sangli was upstairs with Gurudev and asking him questions. His (Gurudev's) mother said that he ought to have cut short the interview and gone to sleep; I said that I fully agreed with her. She said that people flattered him and he yielded to them and sacrificed his own comforts. (रामू शहाणा, रामू शहाणा असे म्हणून त्याला हरभऱ्याच्या झाडावर चढवितात व हे खुळे चढते).



Gurudev once said to me, “Tatya, you should make साधन at least for a few minutes everyday; do you do so?” I said that I sometimes did, but in fact everyday I did not do even a little. He asked, “Is it necessary to give you a thrashing to compel you to do so?” I smiled and kept quiet.



4. Harbinger of Renaissance

Dr. V.K. Gokak, Bengaluru

I was privileged to come into contact with Dr. Ranade on a few occasions. As an undergraduate in Dharwad as far back as 1928, I thrilled to his eloquence when he lectured on the upanishads. Through his close disciples who were my friends, and through Prof. N.G. Damle¹, I could get vivid glimpses of the manner in which he was evolving into a great seer. He presided over a lecture that I delivered on Aurobindo at the residence of Shrimant Rajasaheb of Sangli. As the then Dean of the Arts Faculty of the Karnatak University, I arranged for one of his extension lecturers. I had the honour of receiving him at my residence at Dharwad and when he passed away, I had a strange intimation of it in a dream, a few hours before I read about it in my morning newspaper. I treasure these memories of the great man and I am sure that thousands of individuals all over the country do so in their own way.

The dawn of the Renaissance is slowly but inevitably breaking into day. I salute Dr. Ranade as one of the harbingers of this Polar Dawn.

1. Gurudev’s elder sister’s son (Tatyasaheb/Narahari/Naraharpant)



5. Guru is a mine of love

Shri. M.M. Bongale, Hubli

Professor R.D. Ranade used to teach us two texts : 'Heroes and Hero-worship'¹ and 'Unto this last'², when I was studying for B.A. in the Fergusson College, Pune. I had great respect for him since then, but I was not acquainted with him, as I was only one of the many students.

After many years, I came to know through one of his disciples about his Ashram, his spiritual greatness, his guidance to the aspirants on the Pathway to God and about the programmes in the Ashram. Gurudev Ranade was kind enough to bless me with the Nama-mantra on 13-12-1954. That was the golden day in my life as I obtained spiritual guidance on that day. The Nama-mantra was given to me through Kakasaheb Tulpule.

Later, when once I was going to Pandharpur in the month of Kartik, I got down at Nimbale to have Darshan of Gurudev. When we were talking together, Kakasaheb told Gurudev that I had studied the Jnaneshvari. Gurudev asked me to deliver a talk, but I was abashed. How can an ordinary person like me speak in the presence of such a great scholar? But Gurudev pressed me and I spoke as follows :

Devotion, detachment and knowledge are essential for a vision of God; without these, realisation is not possible. Namadeva had reached the highest peak of devotion, as can be seen from a prayer. He prays to Vitthala that he may be placed at the threshold of the temple, in whatever form he may be ... By the time I said this, it was time for my train. Gurudev asked one of his servants to see whether the signal was given for the coming train. He arranged for my refreshments and asked me to sit till he



took bath. When he returned from the bath, I saw him wearing a long shirt, only his feet were visible below the shirt. I felt that he was standing there without any body-consciousness. That form very clearly stands before my mind's eye even now.

The servant who had gone to the railway station returned and informed that the train had already left. "That too is welcome," Gurudev said, "Bongale, have your meals. You may go by the evening train,"

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1. Thomas Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-worship
 2. John Ruskin's Unto this last.

6. Grace of the Guru comes to our succour

Dr. R.V. Chitnis, Sangli

I had two occasions in my life to have experiences of the grace of Gurudev Ranade. In 1948 I was to appear for the B.A. examination of the Bombay University with Marathi as my principal subject, at which रामदास वचनामृत¹ edited by Gurudev was a text prescribed for one of the seven papers. That book was not available at that time in book-shops in Kolhapur, when I was badly in need of it. Late Shri. Shankarrav Dharmadhikari, my cousin, a devotee of Gurudev Ranade, and once a stenotypist to Gurudev, was residing at Bijapur at that time. I had been to him once and told him my difficulty in getting the book. He directed me to visit Nimbale and make a request for a copy, to Gurudev directly. I did so. When I reached Nimbale, Gurudev was engrossed in meditation and was not available for a couple of hours. I waited for the time and



when he came out I bowed to him with a साष्टांग नमस्कार and to my wonder, he stared at me for about five minutes and said, 'असं क्वचित् मिळतं. वाहवा, असं क्वचित् सापडतं!' (Really it is rare, very rarely found!) He ordered somebody to give me, on my request, the book I wanted. I did not understand the meaning of what he uttered that time, nor am I able to understand it even today.

Another incident is a unique one according to me. A few years ago, about 1965-1966, I was invited to Jamkhandi by Bhaurav Apte, retired civil judge, to deliver two lectures on Sufism. It must be the month of श्रावण. A series of lectures was arranged by him in the Gurudev Ranade Mandir. I reached there a day before and was well prepared for the lectures. But from the mornings of the days of both the lectures I could not utter even a word because of sore throat, inspite of medical help. It was certain that the lectures had to be cancelled. But nothing was announced till the time of lectures and I was ordered by Apte to occupy the seat on the व्यासपीठ^१. I did so with a prayer to Gurudev and to my astonishment and of all, I could deliver lectures for continuously two hours on both the days. Before and after the lectures I suffered from sore throat and could not utter even a word throughout the two days. I think that this was due to the grace of Gurudev only and nothing else. Apte, Professor N.G. Deshpande, Professor of Marathi in Jamkhandi College at that time and his wife and many others know this incident perfectly well.

This is what really happened. I have added nothing of my own.

1. To prostrate
2. The seat from where the discourses are delivered.



7. Fulfilment of a devotee's desire

Shri. Shankarrav Bapat, Pune

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of India had agreed to visit Sangli in 1954 for publication of the book, परमार्थसोपान written by Gurudev Ranade. Gurudev was in Nimbal and the Rajesaheb of Sangli was to send his car to bring Gurudev from Nimbal to Sangli. Matushri Kakusaheb Ranade¹ was at the same time to go to Islampur, the home of her parents. I and my elder brother, Pandutatya went a day in advance to Nimbal to chalk out a detailed programme for Gurudev's visit to Sangli and Matushri's visit to Islampur.

After the Satsanga (sitting) that afternoon, Gurudev took a decision that after his morning meditation the next day, he would go straight to Sangli from Nimbal without entering the city of Bijapur and that Prof. Tatyasaheb Damle would accompany him in the car. He said that he might not stop in Bijapur where I was living. He further told us that Matushri Kakusaheb would travel by train from Nimbal to Bijapur and that we should reach her to Islampur in our car and then attend the function in Sangli. Vasudevrao Ranade² was to accompany her in our car upto Islampur. After the programme was thus fixed, we brothers returned to Bijapur.

Early before dawn the next day, I had a dream and in that dream I saw Gurudev entering my house in Bijapur, having a cup of tea with us and then proceeding to Sangli. In the morning that day, Prahlad Kulkarni³ came from Nimbal and told us that Gurudev would go direct to Sangli in the car of the Rajesaheb of Sangli and that Matushri Kakusaheb would reach Bijapur by train as previously decided. I told him the contents of my dream and said that Gurudev might come to our house according to the



indications in my dream, take tea with us and then proceed to Sangli. As Prahlad had brought the message that Matushri Kakusaheb would reach Bijapur by train, I told him that we should have our lunch and then go to the railway station to receive her. Before I went for lunch, I asked my servant, Durgappa, as a precautionary measure, to clean the hall and put carpets etc., so that if Shri Gurudev eventually came to our house, as per my dream, we should be ready to receive him. I also made necessary arrangements for his tea. After my lunch I just stepped out of my house to go to the railway station.

And lo! The car of the Rajesaheb of Sangli suddenly came to my doors with Gurudev, Matushri Kakusaheb, Prof. Damle and others. When Gurudev entered my house and looked at the arrangements, the first question he asked was : "Did you know that I was going to visit your house just now?" And he looked at me with a smile. I replied, "Your message with Prahlad was that you would not come to us; but in my dream, I had received a message that you would have tea with us." Gurudev again smiled. He was then absorbed in meditation. After that he took tea and proceeded to Sangli with Prof. Damle in his car. I drove Matushri Kakusaheb Ranade to Islampur with Vasudevrao Ranade.

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1. Wife of Shri. Gurudev
 2. A close relative of Gurudev
 3. A student-disciple of Gurudev.



8. He came, he saw, and he blessed

Shri. Shripad Keshav Joshi, Shedbal

It was in November 1951 that Gurudev was to go by car from Nimbal to Belagavi. I waited on his way at Shedbal. When Gurudev saw me, he asked the driver to halt. I went forward, bowed down to his feet and requested him to come to my place on his return journey from Belagavi. Gurudev looked at me steadily for a moment and said that he would come. The other persons accompanying him asked me, however, not to be sure about it and not to make my arrangements.

On his return journey when the car came to Kagwad, Gurudev asked how far Shedbal was from there. Being told that it was two miles away he asked the driver to take the car to Shedbal. It was about 6.30 p.m. when he reached my house. I had not made any preparation. I ran to him and brought him into my house. He sat in the verandah where I had kept the photo of Shri. Bhausahab Maharaj. Smt. Kakusaheb had accompanied him. Gurudev was happy to see the room wherein Shri. Amburav had sat for meditation in 1926, when he had come to Shedbal. Gurudev asked others to start Bhajan. Then he prepared tea and gave it to all there. The importance of repeating God's name given by the सद्गुरु for spiritual advancement was explained and Gurudev blessed my family with a kind glance.



9. How I found my Gurudev

Dr. N.S. Christian, Aurangabad

... I had been practising Kundalini Yoga without a Guru to guide me, by just following instructions given in books on the subject. One night, during my deep



meditation, I experienced a terrible psychic shock, pertaining to the awakening of Kundalini-shakti, the details of which are too long to be recorded here. Since then, I had experienced a strange mental and bodily distress, ranging from a sense of fullness and intoxication to a fear of impending death, with fluctuations in my pulse and varied and vague symptoms, probably due to a disturbance of my autonomic nervous system. Sleep had completely disappeared and often I got into ecstatic states and trances with the development of visual and auditory signs pertaining to yoga. My friends who took me in a jeep to Ganeshpuri witnessed these trances during the journey. We visited Swami Nityananda late in the evening and I implored him to bless me. He placed his hand on my head and exclaimed, "Achha, Jav, Abhi milega Jav." We reached Mumbai late at night and rested at the guest-rooms of the Archaeological department, situated on the Fort at Sion. The next day was Ashadhi-Ekadashi¹. I woke up early at 4a.m. and was reciting ललिता सहस्रनाम². My friends were snoring in their slumber after the tiresome journey of jeep drive the previous day, a distance of 250 miles, in torrential rain all along the journey. On reaching the closing lines which mean, Imperishable embodiment of compassion, light in my darkness etc., while reciting the thousand names of the divine mother of the Universe, I fell into a trance and lost myself in ecstasy with a vision of the mother. My friends woke up to see me moaning with a flushed face, tears pouring out of my eyes. They were greatly perturbed until I recovered after nearly half an hour. The whole day I was in a blissful state. Dr. B.S. Kulkarni noted fluctuations in my pulse and he took me to our friend Dr. T.H. Tulpule, eminent Cardiologist and Professor of Medicine at the J.J. Medical College, residing



at Dadar, and who is a great devotee and pious soul. The learned doctor found nothing abnormal in me. The cardiogram and X-ray revealed a perfect heart. I was experiencing a sense of fullness and intoxication and a feeling that my body would burst out. I requested the doctor to prescribe medicine. Dr. Tulpule advised me to see Gurudev Ranade of Nimbal and said that there was nothing wrong with me. We returned home. I continued my Sadhana and had two memorable dreams. The first was; Nityananda took me on his lap and threatened to slap me when I suddenly woke up. The second was : Gurudev Ranade whom I had never seen before, appearing and telling me in Marathi, "Doctor, tumhi Nimbalala ya, mi, samadhi-yoga dakhavito" meaning, "Doctor, come to Nimbal. I will teach you Samadhi Yoga."

Three weeks later, I went to Nimbal with my friend M.N. Deshpande³, guided by Dr. S.G. Tulpule, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Marathi, Pune University and illustrious biographer of the great Master⁴, who happens to be cousin of his name-sake in Mumbai. At the 'Abode of Peace' I found my Master, the divinest soul I have ever met. His mystic touch set me free from all my spiritual ailments. Every time I visited the Ashram, I rejoiced in the sanctity, aura and affection of Gurudev. He graciously initiated me in the supreme Yoga of meditation on God's name. He gave me a Christa-Nama without distracting me from my Ista-Devata and added me to his large family of devoted disciples.

Gurudev Ranade's writings on mysticism and Yoga are masterly, revealing the highest attainments in the history of speculative and mystical philosophy. He has placed before the aspirant, secrets of incalculable value, effectively leading him into the Pathway to God. His comparative study of mystics of different lands and



religions is extremely fascinating and informative. His original method of explaining difficult themes in simple language is unique. He depicts in a systematic manner the incentives, technique of spiritual practice, experiences and achievements of the saints and sages of all ages and countries. He gives sources of his writings which are exhaustive and complete. His book, "A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" is a scholarly exposition of the truth and richness that came out of the age of the Aranyakas. His incomparable treatise on "The Bhagavad-gita as a Philosophy of God-realisation" is a work of great value to a Sadhaka on the Pathway to God. The book takes a survey of various commentaries on the great scripture of India. Through different views expressed by scholars and devotees of the Lord of Kurukshetra, Gurudev Ranade places before a student of Yoga, the avenues of God-realisation and the diverse forms in which God reveals Himself to a seeker.

Gurudev Ranade was a saint who conquered hunger and thirst. He proved in his life what Christ had said that "Man shall not live by bread alone."⁵ For many years he was sustaining himself on a few cups of tea a day. He defied bodily ailments and refused all medicines and treatment when he happened to be ill. As the Rishis of old, he shunned publicity and lived to perfection the teaching: "Let thy light so shine before men that they may see thy good works and glorify thy Father who is in Heaven."⁶

The afternoon of my arrival at Nimbal, I was sitting in a gathering of devotees with Gurudev Ranade inspiring and thrilling us with his spiritual discourses. All of a sudden he summoned me affectionately to his side and asked me to recite a sacred hymn. During my recitation of a verse from the works of the saints of Shaiva Siddhanta⁷, I fell into a trance with the experience of Samadhi which



Gurudev had promised me in a dream. When I regained myself, I found, myself laying down in ecstasy, with my eyes full of tears of joy, and my head on the lap of my Master who sprinkled water on my face and was passing his frail hands on my back. I got up and sat when he asked me, "Is that what you wanted?" I replied "I do not know, Gurudev! But whatever you have given me, is a blessing." I returned home and one night, after my meditation, in a semi-sleepy state, I saw Gurudev in front of me. He said to me, "Doctor, your head is full of some worms and I shall remove them" and he pulled out long thready worms from my left ear and threw them out. Ever since that memorable event, all those disturbing symptoms which I had developed after my shock during Kundalini-Yoga disappeared for ever. Then I realised the beauty of having a spiritual Master and appreciated the writings of the great Shankaracharya on the subject. Thus I met my Gurudev.

With the dazzling brilliance of the rising-sun, the Master's face reflected the vast Universe. Everytime I sat beside him amidst the devotees at Nimbai with his favourite green shawl covering his body, he appeared to me to have resembled the ancient mystic parrot, reciting the infallible Vedas. He has been a perfect preceptor after the Ideal described by Shri. Shankaracharya in Vivekachudamani. He had not even the slightest taint of egoism. He was an embodiment of humility.

The spirit of the Universe, encased in a pale ivory frame and a frail body, mostly skin and bone, Gurudev Ranade resembled a feather-stripped bird, with a pair of God-intoxicated eyes, glowing compassionately in their hallowed sockets, situated below elevated eye-brows, the symbol of triumph in his life-long Tapasya⁸, an extremely affectionate heart, tirelessly pouring out its life-giving



nectar of spiritual wisdom in warbling words of divine melody. Gurudev was a self-sustained Angel of the Lord, in brief. "God in flesh and blood."

The Master has left us and departed to the abode of the Gods whom he resembled, "Mingled after death, with the Whole Universe, whose voice is on the rolling air and who stands in the Rising Sun and who may be seen in star or flower or wherever the eyes may be cast."⁹

"He is made one with nature : there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of the night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself wherever that power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains from beneath and kindles it above."¹⁰

1. Eleventh day in the month of Ashadhha. This is considered to be sacred.
2. A prayer to a Goddess, Lalita
3. Retired Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India and disciple of Gurudev.
4. Gurudev R.D. Ranade
5. Matthew 4.4
6. Matthew 5.4
7. A school of Indian Philosophy
8. Penance or Meditation
9. Tennyson, in Memoriam, 130
10. Shelley, Adonais 42.



10. A Supernal experience

Padmashri. Ganesh Govind/Kaka/Kakasaheb Karkhanis

Shri Gurudev was once invited for the annual function by "Varakari Shikshana Samstha" at Alandi.¹ Gurudev travelled from Adhyatma Bhavan, his residence in Pune, to Alandi in a tanga. I accompanied him.

A few years later, Master Krishnarav, the renowned actor and singer of Maharashtra, came to see Gurudev at Pune. Gurudev asked him to sing some Bhajan. He sang the well-known Abhanga of Jnaneshwara "A thousand moons shine on your forehead," तुझिये निडळी कोटि चंद्र प्रकाशे..."

Once, while referring to that Abhanga at Nimbai, Gurudev said to me, "Do you remember, Ganpatrav, that we had been in a tanga to Alandi for a lecture on the occasion of the annual function of the "Varakari Shikshana Samstha?" "I very well remember," I replied. Gurudev said, "The experience contained in that Abhanga was continuously appearing before my eyes since we started from Adhyatma Bhavan till we reached Alandi."

This was sometime in 1918, which shows how Gurudev had advanced spiritually even at that early age. Once Gurudev told me: "Only Jnaneshwara could compose such an Abhanga; none else can." Many have observed the fact that when Gurudev himself used to recite this Abhanga, he used to be completely engrossed in it. It appears that the image of Lord Krishna used to stand before his vision beckoning him.

Once Gurudev asked me to explain that Abhanga in an assembly. I was abashed to speak in the presence of Gurudev who had an intuitive experience of that Abhanga. But I had to speak.

1. A small town near Pune where the Samadhi of Jnaneshwara stands.



11. How Gurudev came into my life

V.G. Apsangi, Jamkhandi

As I went through various articles in the series of the Bhavan's Journal, "How God came into my life," I was often tempted to write about my own experience, humble, but very significant experience, an experience that has become the sole support in my journey of life, the main source of inspiration and guiding factor in my life.

I am reminded of such an event in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who enjoyed the bliss of spiritual experience to the highest extent possible. He was intoxicated by the bliss of spiritual experience to such an extent that he could not hold it for himself alone, and within himself. So he went to the terrace of the Kali temple and cried aloud, "Oh my disciples, come from all quarters of the world. Where are you? Why do you delay? The mother wants me to bless you, liberate you and this is to be done for the emancipation of the world." Then followed a train of people—men and women, yogis and Bhaktas, the educated and the uneducated, the advanced and the non-advanced, in short, those who were bound to be his disciples. He could recognise everyone that went to him for initiation and emancipation. For he had an idea of it already in advance. How Swami Vivekananda was moved by the overwhelming kindness of the great Ramakrishna at the very first meeting, is known to all who have read or heard about Swami Vivekanand. Such an overwhelming kindness of my Guru has been my great good fortune. The account that follows is in the least exaggerated.

I had the great good fortune of being a pupil of philosophy at the feet of Gurudev R.D. Ranade, the great philosopher-scholar-saint, at the Sangli College. I am still thrilled whenever I am reminded of his lectures in the



college classes, on the existence of God; a Delphic oracle. His great scholarship and insight into the realm of spiritual realisation, are too well known to the world, to be reminded here. But being too young then, most of the lectures were beyond my comprehension. But the impressions of his lectures were too deep to be forgotten. They have remained as a rich treasure in my brain. But then Shri. Rambhau Ranade was nothing more than a professor, a professor of great scholarship and wonderful insight into the mysteries of philosophical problems. I had no idea then, that this very frail figure could draw support from the great ocean of divinity. He was then carrying on "Sadhana" and was not a recognised Guru of any soul.

I happened to see him and come in contact with him for a period of a few hours only, and that too after a lapse of years when he happened to come to Jamkhandi, his native place, where the great soul spent his school days. He then asked me to sing a song of Purandaradasa, the great musician-saint of Karnatak. It was a pleasure to me to recite a song for him. He was so pleased with my humble performance that he asked me if I could go with him and stay with him at Nimbhal, working as secretary. But I was then recently married and I had to shoulder the responsibility of four younger brothers who were still to be educated. I was the main support of my aged father. So I refused the offer and missed a great chance, which brought me great repentance in my later life.

Time passed and I forgot everything. In due course of time I heard that many people of Jamkhandi got initiated by the great saint of Nimbhal. I observed their lives. Strangely enough there was no practical change in their lives. Moreover, I was deeply conscious of my failings and weaknesses which made me hesitant to approach the revered Gurudev for being initiated. Hence I had never



entertained the idea of being initiated by him. But they say and indeed, Truth is stranger than fiction.

The previous day of Ananta Chaturdashi, about a year before he left his mortal coil, he appeared in my half-conscious state and said, "What! when are you going to awaken yourself? You have grown white hair. When would you come to me?" The tone was quite familiar and full of compassion. He had then a turban on his head, instead of 'Pagadi' and the figure that I saw in my half-conscious state was much different and changed from the usual appearance of Gurudev Ranade, that I was familiar with. I was set to think of the strange experience. Was it a simple hallucination of my mind? Why should he appear in my half conscious state, when I had refused to go to him? Is it that he is waiting for me to go to him for being blessed? I mused within myself. The whole day I was restless and I consulted one of my intimate friends. He put a stop to the restlessness of my mind, saying, "Nimbal is not a far away place. Let us go to him and see what happens."

Immediately within an hour we started by a car and reached Nimbal on Ananta Chaturdashi. My heart throbbed to approach him. Lo, when I was taken into His presence, and when I beheld him with my physical eyes, he had a turban on his head and had the same changed figure which I had seen in my half-conscious state. Still more strange, he uttered the very words which I had heard in my half-conscious state, "What! when are you going to awaken yourself? You have grown white hair. But good, you have come at last."

Just imagine what a thrill I might have experienced in his presence, who was ready to bless me, who had made me run to him so that I might be aroused though late, from poisonous slumber. In short he wanted to save me. I spent the most blissful days of my life in his holy presence. He initiated me and...



This is how Gurudev appeared and came into my life. Later on I came in close contact with him. He was all compassion for me. Now I cannot meet him and see him with my physical eyes. But I am now more than convinced that his saving grace is always there. He has shown me the path and now it is for me to travel on it. Can we say, "The gracious Guru is always waiting for the disciple to be blessed and saved?"

12. I was face to face with a Sage

Dr. Indu Prakash Singh

It was the spring of 1951. A fellow-student of Philosophy Department in Allahabad University informed me that Prof. R.D. Ranade was going to give a talk on "Mysticism in Hindi Literature," later in the evening. I had heard a great deal about Prof. Ranade as Head of the Department of Philosophy, as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and as Vice-Chancellor of the University. I also had read some of his published works. But I had never met him till that time. Even though I had an instinctive conviction that mysticism had reached great heights in Hindi poetry I did not feel much attracted by the topic of the lecture. The desire to meet Prof. Ranade was, however, so powerful that I made it a point to attend the lecture. For some reason I don't remember, I reached late. When I entered the hall, the speaker was explaining the significance of Meera Bai's famous Bhajan - जोगी मत जा मत जा।¹ He was talking about a most crucial line of this Bhajan. The earlier part of this line meant : "The path of love and devotion is strange." The



latter part had two known versions: हम को गैल बता जा। and हम को गैल लगा जा। meaning "You show me the Way" and "you escort me along the way". Prof. Ranade was explaining how the difference between these two versions symbolized the two systems of spiritual discipline in this country, namely, the path of knowledge and the path of complete submission and identification with God.

This deep analysis, given in clear and simple words, in the characteristic swift delivery of Prof. Ranade, in which a lot of meaning was given by the expression upon his face rather than words, made me feel for the first time in my life that I was face to face with a sage, who deserved to be in line with the seers whom this country has produced since times immemorial. Thereafter, I kept a close watch on his speaking programmes and made an effort to see that I did not miss any of his lectures. But, this was not enough for me. Through a close friend of mine, who used to visit the residence of Prof. Ranade, I reached his place within a few weeks of my meeting him for the first time. Thereafter, I did not miss any excuse for going to his house. In the evenings, his drawing room used to be full of high dignitaries - senior Government officials, Judges of High Courts, Ministers of States and of Central Government or big political leaders. The thing which impressed me most in these gatherings at his house was the absence of any forbidding sense of aloofness or artificial mystery which people of lesser spiritual merit in this country tend to create around themselves.

For the next two years, I continued to see the great thinker, who was also an accomplished speaker and expert in social engineering. But the craving in my mind to know Ranade, the man, remained unfulfilled till the spring of 1954. When I became a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Ganga Nath Jha Hostel where I was staying,



asked me to quit the place as I was no more a student. Some friends of mine invited me to stay with them. Instead I asked my friend, Satish Chandra Verma, to explore the possibility of our staying with Prof. Ranade. The same evening Satish came to me to say that Prof. Ranade had agreed to our request. It was an unbelievable news and I shifted forthwith. I knew the discipline of staying in the house, which, without so boasting, was an Ashram in the true sense. We all slept on thin Durries on the ground and ate the simple meal prepared in the house-hold kitchen. Of course, these things were not compulsory. However, the atmosphere in the house was such that we all felt happy and elevated in leading such a life. It was in a surrounding like this that in my innermost heart, I accepted Prof. Ranade as my Guru.

Gurudev used to be in meditation for hours every day. Occasionally, Madhukar Kumathekar² would ask me to lead some special visitors to his room. I keenly awaited such opportunities. While it was not necessary for me to wait, once the visitors were in, I used to linger inside as long as possible in an effort to imbibe as much of Gurudev's presence as possible. Gurudev as the host in his drawing room was completely different from what he was in his private room. His was an indescribable presence which caused an overpowering sensation, on those who were around. Occasionally, he would only look at the persons for quite a few seconds before starting to talk. During this silence, one got the impression as if he was communicating.

The most striking feature of Gurudev's personality was his ability to talk and to think at the level of the person with whom he was at any time. It was an exhilarating experience to see the great mystic discussing the grossest problems of the people around him. On many occasions, I saw him



agitated over the domestic problems of his peon - Bhagwan Deen, who used to live in the servants' quarters and was like the Grand Chamberlain of the house-hold. It gave an ironical delight to see this great man upset over the fact that Bhagwan Deen's cow had not been traced or his nephew had fared poorly in his school. Once these problems were resolved, Gurudev expressed a childlike happiness. Similar problems, personal and official, used to come to him from various quarters. He had time for every one.

Alongside lecturing in the University, I was also preparing for the Indian Administrative Service and Indian Foreign Service examinations. Gurudev used to ask me from time to time how my preparations were going on. Early in 1955, when the results of the competitive examinations came out, I was in a dilemma whether to join the Indian Foreign Service, in which my name was first in the list or the Indian Administrative Service. I took my problem to Gurudev. He solved it for me in no time. He told me that knowing my temperament he would advice me to join the Foreign Service. I touched his feet and sent my reply to the Government of India. In the month of April, he gave me a most touching send-off to Delhi. I had an occasion to see him a year later. In between I was engaged. I sent him a letter seeking his blessings while entering the life of a householder. After my marriage, I visited Allahabad with my bride to receive his Ashirvad³. That meeting turned out to be our last as I left India a few weeks later for training in diplomacy at the Oxford University. Gurudev Blessed us. He told me that in my service abroad, I must remember always the great cultural heritage of India. I left him with the promise to see him as soon as I returned from my foreign tour.

At Oxford, during 1956-57, Madhukar wrote occasionally to me about Gurudev's further studies in



mysticism in Marathi and Kannada literatures. One morning I went to Blackwells, the well-known booksellers in Oxford, and requested them to order a complete set of Gurudev's writings for me. I returned in the evening to my room to find a letter from Madhukar informing me that Gurudev was no more. I cried like a child as I have done on very few occasions, indeed.

Our country's greatest wealth has been the unbroken chain of our Saints and Seers. While I have respect for thinkers and holy men whom I have personally met, I have an instinctive revulsion from god-men who are surrounded by a fence of pre-frabricated holiness. I am of the view that it is much easier for an ordinary man to appear saintly than it is for a saint to appear human. Gurudev Ranade carried his spiritual greatness in an invisible reservoir. The man in him was never sidetracked by the Sage.

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1. Oh my Spiritual Teacher, do not depart.
 2. A student - disciple of Prof. Ranade.
 3. Blessings.

13. Divine Support¹

Dr. N.S. Christian, Aurangabad

Before our beloved Gurudev gave me the Nama, he said, "Doctor Christian, I have given you the Nama with the hope that you will see your Christ in flesh and blood one day." Last Sunday² morning, just before I got out of my bed, I was semi-asleep; I could hear the noise of passing cars and people speaking and the music of the birds when I saw the Lord standing in front of me and he said, "I am always with



you." I tried to wipe out the little sleep that was lingering, to see him more clearly and he appeared at a different position and said, "I will fulfill all that I have promised." Now I got up and sat on my bed to see him more distinctly and saw him for a third time, when he concluded by saying, "The seas and mountains shall disappear but my word will stand."³ Twenty years ago, I had a similar vision when I saw Lord Jesus ascending up the Heavens and he had asked me, "What do you want?" I replied, "Make me a good Doctor." Then he said, "Yes, I will make you a good Doctor," and I woke up. I have a large painting of the Lord in front of me in my meditation room. I had not spoken of it to Gurudev when he was with us in flesh and blood, but he had once appeared in my dream and asked me to keep a large painting of my Ishta-Devata as I had seen him. All these things are really wonderful. So many problems were in my mind on the previous night of the recent experience and I got such a great relief next morning. On the first of August⁴ I was called by the people of the city to preside over two Shri Lokamanya Tilak Anniversary celebrations, one in the morning and the other in the evening. They persisted that I must accept though I had declined and advised them to have a good Marathi speaker or some officer. In the evening the gathering was large. Hon. Minister Shankarrao Chavan was the main speaker. I remembered Gurudev whose presence I felt at the time and addressed the people in Marathi, with a few English sentences here and there. The audience was immensely pleased and applauded me. God knows what I spoke but I gave one of my outstanding orations. Who has done it? Certainly not I.

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1. An extract from Dr. N.S. Christian's letter dated 9.8.1962 addressed to S.D. Dabade, Bijapur.
 2. 5-8-1962.
 3. Matthew 24.35.
 4. 1-8-1962, Wednesday.



14. The apparel does not always proclaim a man

Shri. V.S. Page, Mumbai

I attended a ceremony at Sangli in Ganpati Mandir when Gurudev R.D. Ranade and Sir S. Radhakrishnan were present. Shri. Radhakrishnan was then the Vice- President of India. Thereafter, somehow, I was called to the Mal-bungalow, a palace of the Rajesaheb of Sangli, by Gurudev. I was specially called to place before him my views regarding Vedanta Philosophy, as given by Nishchaladas, in his book Vicharasagara. This was because, I guess, somebody must have whispered into his ear about me. I was a bit surprised at this call. I was called at 3.00 p.m. to the Mal-bungalow. Accordingly I went there. My maternal uncle, late D.M. Varadkar, was with me. When I went there I found that Gurudev was closetted in a room and was deeply immersed in writing something. The devotees sitting outside the room told me that nothing could be sure about his coming out though he had called me at 3.00 p.m. However, exactly at 3.00 p.m. Gurudev came out. Though I had seen him many times earlier, the pose in which I saw him was rather startling. I was amazed at his mannerism. He held a पिकदाणी, a small vessel for spitting in, in his right hand. Under his left armpit there was a bundle of shirts. Perhaps, he wanted to change shirts within a short span of time. He wore dhoti in a loose fashion. As soon as he came out he asked me, "Are you Mr. Page?" I said, "Yes, I am Page." A thought crossed my mind as I was looking at him. I thought : Is this a learned man whose manners seem to be quite eccentric, if not anything else? He started going out along with me to the main hall in the palace. As soon as the thought mentioned above crossed my mind he looked at me, almost stared at me, and asked me a question, "Have you read Contemporary Indian Philosophy,¹ published by



George Allen and Unwin?" I said, "No, I have not read it." He said, "Read it." I asked, "What am I supposed to read in it, what in particular?"² Gurudev said, "I have written an article in it. Do read that article. You will find answers to your questions." Then I was silent. I need not tell what happened thereafter. We went in the main hall. I gave a brief talk. Gurudev was very much pleased to hear me and he encouraged me by words of blessings. He told me that exposition of Vedanta doctrines, as I gave, was very correct and that he was pleased with my talk. Thereafter I returned home. I then procured the book he asked me to read. I read his article. There I found the explanation of his mannerism.³ A reader can profitably go through that article. In short, the reason for his behaviour is given by Jnaneshwar⁴ in his commentary on the Bhagavad-gita, briefly.

I hope I need not write much. Though Gurudev behaved like an ordinary man, his every action was purposeful, and the purpose was purely a spiritual one. Without a shred of doubt he read the thought in my mind and gave a proper answer to me. This is not possible for an ordinary Yogi. It is only those who have identified themselves with the Universal Consciousness that can read correctly the minds of others and give proper answers. This is an incident which has left an indelible impression on my mind of the grandeur of Gurudev's spiritual height. I have narrated here the same as briefly as I could. Readers are free to draw their own conclusion. I can say this much that I have faithfully recorded the event though it took place many years back, may be in 1950-51.⁵

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1. The book was edited by Radhakrishnan and Muirhead and was published in 1936.
 2. The article is 'The Evolution of my own thought'. It was reprinted in 2001, by Shri Gurudev Ranade Samadhi Trust, Nimal R.S.



3. Shri. Page thought that Gurudev's manners were eccentric. As suggested by Gurudev, Page got the explanation in Gurudev's article (The Evolution of My Own Thought, 2001, P.5).
4. Jnaneshwari, 13.191-192.
5. The ceremony, mentioned by Page in the beginning of the article, was held for releasing Gurudev's book, परमार्थ सोपान. It was held on 9-1-1954.



15. A diamond does not proclaim its value

Smt. Vasudha B. Modak, Dharwad

It was in the year 1955 that I had the opportunity to see Gurudev.

That might be the 16th or 17th of March. Newly married, myself and my husband, on our way to Pune visited Nimbal for a day. Till then I knew nothing about Gurudev. I had no idea who he was and what his abilities were. I only knew that we were to visit Sri Gurudev's Ashram at Nimbal. I went to Nimbal expecting the Darshan of a typical saint.

We reached Nimbal in the morning. On our way from the railway station to the Ashram we met many people. Though not I, my husband was well acquainted with them. Affectionately we were welcomed to the Ashram. Even in the Ashram, people spoke to me so lovingly that it made me forget that I was a stranger and that it was my first visit. I felt as if I was with my relatives. My husband went for meditation in the meditating room for gents. I went to the



ladies' meditation room. Though faith, devotion and urge to do service were not new to me as they had come to me from my parents, meditation was a new thing. Devotion, I thought till then, was regular worship of the deities and singing Stotras (prayers) and devotional songs. So I was surprised to see people meditating for hours together, sitting in one place in perfect silence. Though new to me, this kind of peaceful atmosphere pleased me and touched my inner being. After a definite interval of time, a devotional song was sung which pleased me more. Soon I became one among the devotees.

From the words that I heard from a few devotees, I came to know that the Rajesaheb of Sangli had come to see Gurudev and was residing in his own house near Gurudev's new house. Many devotees were seen busy with their allotted tasks. I was told that all of them had come there since Gurudev was to leave for Allahabad. My curiosity to see him increased. A kind of unknown adoration grew in my mind, adoration to him whom people from far and wide had come to see and in whose Ashram every programme went on very smoothly.

At about 5 o'clock in the evening we had our meals in the open area in front of Gurudev's new house. The proceedings were disciplined and peaceful. An old and lean man asked us about our well being. Everybody went for a walk after the meals. By night we had to leave for Pune. I watched all the activities in the Ashram throughout the day but could not get an opportunity to see Gurudev. It was like visiting a temple but returning without having the Darshan of the deity. But I hesitated to ask the people around me about Gurudev.

At 8 o'clock in the evening all of us were called for a 'sitting' at Sri Gurudev's new house. I was told that Gurudev would speak to every one of us at the time of the



sitting. The low-voiced whispers stopped at once when Sri Gurudev entered. I was very much surprised to see that he was the same old, lean person whom I saw at the time of our meals. I had thought him to be some higher authority in the management.

The atmosphere became holy and delightful with the gracious personality of Gurudev. I was struck with a kind of awe and surprise. Gurudev of my imagination was far from the actual personality. I had thought him to be a typical Sadhu with saffron dress and matted hair. In reality our Gurudev was like any other person and also spoke freely. It was because he dressed like a common man and behaved like a lay man, that I could not recognise him when I saw him for the first time. Gurudev talked to everybody, asked them about their problems and suggested suitable remedies. At his suggestion some devotees sang devotional songs.

On seeing the lustre of his eyes and his gracious behaviour I could perceive the extra-ordinary personality behind the ordinary appearance. Naturally I bowed down to him. At the same time my mind was soothed by the idea of being under the warm protection of an elderly person whom I knew as if since long.

16. Discerning merit in a student and launching him on an academic voyage

Dr. Pandharinath Hari Prabhu

After graduating with honours in Philosophy from the University of Bombay, I was appointed a University Research Scholar in 1933, in the University School of



Economics and Sociology in its Sociology Department. Dr. G.A. Thoothi, D. Phil (Oxford), then Reader in Sociology was my guide. I registered under his guidance for the M.A. and planned to work in the area of social psychology.

Dr. John Mckenzie who was then Principal of Wilson College and my professor of psychology and ethics in the Philosophy group in the College, advised me to join the University School and work with Professor Thoothi who was a past Wilsonian and later an Honorary Professor in Wilson College. He sent me with his note of recommendation to Dr. Thoothi.

Dr. Thoothi left it to me to select my topic for the M.A. research. I had already had a vague idea that our original Sanskrit literature had enormous resources and potential for preparing a systematic work on social science principles. I was a fairly good student of Sanskrit and had read many of the Sanskrit dramas, poetry and a few other philosophical and literary works. Among the works in English that had profound influence on me in those days, were Professor R.D. Ranade's "A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" and Professor S. Radhakrishnan's two volumes on 'Indian Philosophy' and his 'Hindu View of Life.' I had also read Dr. S.N. Dasgupta's books on Indian Philosophy. I had a lurking but strong urge to write on a constructive survey of Indian social science, or behavioral science, which is the more appropriate title as used in modern times, along the lines of Gurudev Ranade's 'A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy', based on the original and authentic sources and not on translations. Gurudev Ranade's book, thus, had a profound, fundamental and formative influence on my initiation into research Vidyarthi (scholar) stage, a Sanshodhanashrama, so to speak, which transcends the Brahmacharya Ashrama and into which I was initiated for



life - call it Maunji Bandhana¹ of a sort - for which, I can say, my Gurus² were Gurudev Ranade and Dr. Thoothi. I had heard most interesting and most thrilling anecdotes from my professors and other philosophy scholars about Gurudev Ranade, when I was a first year college student in Sangli and in Mumbai and Pune in late twenties and early thirties. I finally graduated from Wilson College, Mumbai.

After some preliminary explorations, I decided that 'The Ideological and Psychological Foundations of Hindu Social Institutions' as gleaned from the early Sanskrit literature was going to be the theme of my M. A. research. After working for about a year-and-a-half on my research project, I submitted a short preliminary draft of systematically collected and organised material to my guide, Dr. Thoothi. He went through it, and suggested that although I was initially registered for M.A., looking to my progress so far, he would recommend me straightaway for Ph.D. registration without appearing for the M.A., if I were willing to put in some more effort in the same direction. The University of Bombay had just then instituted the degree of Ph.D. I was, of course, going to do more work anyway, because I had not thought that I had covered all that I wanted to in that first short draft and I wanted to take more time to fill a few gaps, amplify the work and also rewrite it more systematically. And so Dr. Thoothi's suggestion suited me admirably. I was a University Research Scholar in 1933-36; while I was still working on the thesis, I was promoted to the position of University Research Fellow in 1936-37. I was permitted by the University, on the recommendation of Dr. Thoothi, to change my registration direct for the Ph.D. degree. For completing the thesis for the Ph.D., I took about four years.

After working for over three and-a-half years, exploring the relevant materials through vastly scattered original Sanskrit literature from the Vedic, down to the



recent period, and also modern works on social sciences and collecting, organizing, integrating and interpreting the same, I submitted my thesis for the Ph.D. in early 1937. It seems Dr. Thoothi had proposed the names of Professor S. Radhakrishnan and one or two other British Psychologists who had also some familiarity with Indian conditions as alternative referees for the thesis. Apparently, in the University there were certain interested 'academicians' who wanted to discredit Dr. Thoothi, if possible. They saw their opportunity here. They voted out Dr. Thoothi's suggestions and voted by a majority to refer my thesis to Professor R.D. Ranade in the hope that, being a profound scholar of Sanskrit and of Indian literature on the subject, he would expose the thesis-writer's lack of knowledge of Sanskrit and also other weaknesses in the thesis, thereby not only leading to the rejection of the thesis for the degree, but also devaluing of Professor Thoothi as a University teacher and guide.

As soon as Dr. Thoothi and myself came to know of this development, the immediate effect on both of us naturally was of apprehension about my success in getting the thesis accepted for the Ph.D. Although, on my part, I had perfect confidence in my explorations of the Sanskrit literature and its understanding, yet, being a young student who had to face a renowned scholar like Gurudev Ranade as an examiner, I did feel a little shaken about the referee's possible report on the thesis.

After the thesis was submitted and sent to Professor Ranade, two months passed by without any response from him to the University. So both my guide and myself began to harbour anxious thoughts. When I inquired with the Registrar of the University, he assured me that he would send an "express delivery" letter to Prof Ranade for an urgent reply. About two weeks after this I again enquired with the Registrar, who advised me to wait for about a



week more for the referee's response. Two weeks after this I saw the Registrar again, who then assured me that he was going to send a telegram to Prof. Ranade requesting him to expedite his report. When I saw the Registrar two weeks after this, he showed me Prof. Ranade's reply to the telegram saying that a thesis of the kind that he was examining could not be examined carefully in less than three months. He had added that his report was being prepared and would follow within a week or a fortnight. All this upset me further and I now became much more apprehensive about the result of the examination of the thesis. Yet, something in Prof. Ranade's reply to the Registrar's telegram seemed also to tell me that the report was not likely to turn out to be unfavourable, because with that possibility in mind Prof. Ranade would not have said that such a thesis cannot be examined within less than three months. But I was also feeling that this might have been my own wishful thinking and I was naturally becoming increasingly apprehensive of the possible report by him.

At long last, Prof. Ranade's report came to the Registrar over three-and-a-half months after the thesis was sent to the Professor. The period of waiting anxiously for the report was more than worth it. Prof. Thoothi immediately sent for me and, beaming with great delight, informed me that my referee was exceedingly pleased with my thesis. Dr. Thoothi then requested Prof. Ranade to give me a personal testimonial based on his evaluation of the thesis. The testimonial given by Gurudev Ranade reads, in part, as follows: "I have great pleasure in bearing testimony to the scholarship and academic abilities of Dr. P.H. Valavalkar³, whose Ph.D. thesis on "Hindu Social Institutions" I have read with satisfaction and great interest in the capacity of the sole Referee appointed by the



University of Bombay. I have gone through the thesis with great satisfaction and delight; it evinces a just sense of sympathy and tolerance, so necessary for the right comprehension and interpretation of the higher things of human life, tradition and culture. This is due, in my opinion, to the great qualities of head and heart which Dr. Valavalkar possesses; for, his work reveals a wide and sympathetic reading in the principles of Sociology and Social Psychology, as also a good acquaintance with Western as well as Indian Philosophy. Moreover, it gives evidence of a first-hand knowledge of the original Sanskrit sources of Hindu law, culture and social institutions. I would also like to say that in the pursuit of his inquiry concerning the Hindu Social Institutions Dr. Valavalkar has made a judicious use of modern developments in psychology, ethics, metaphysics and education. In sifting the evidence for the interpretation and conclusions of his inquiry, he has shown great insight and acute judgement. The very attractive style of his thesis, coupled with a lucid presentation of facts, keeps one intensely absorbed while one is reading through the work..."

This testimonial was sent to me with a covering letter wishing me "a very happy and prosperous career and with best regards", in his beautiful and characteristic signature in violet ink.

The reader can understand the immense joy and deep personal satisfaction that both my guide, the late Prof. Thoothi, and I derived from Gurudev Ranade's highly appreciative report of personal appreciation of my humble effort and of my Professor's guidance.

Subsequently, I revised the thesis for publication as a book for which the University sanctioned financial assistance. Dr. Thoothi and I decided to request Prof. S. Radhakrishnan to write a "Foreword" to the thesis. His



response to our request was favourable. Gurudev Ranade's testimony and Dr. Thoothi's recommendation must have had much to do with his consent.

It is interesting to note that the book was appreciated by modernists and reformers like Jaykar and the Indian Social Reformer⁴ for its progressive outlook on solid cultural foundations.

This book has now gone into five editions. It has received appreciation and compliments from authorities, in the East and the West, in Indian lore and in psychology and sociology.

I am immensely grateful to Gurudev whose works had been a constant source of inspiration in my research studies. My feeling has always been that my success in the academic field is mainly due to his kind blessings and encouraging words in the testimonial issued to me in appreciation of my thesis. Other scholars in the field who were Gurudev's contemporaries endorsed his opinion. This, I believe, indicates the unique position he held in the academic world. I consider myself fortunate enough to have been blessed by such a distinguished scholar and saint.

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1. A rite performed around eighth year, after which the boy goes and resides with the teacher for studies.
 2. Teacher or preceptor.
 3. Foot Note by the author :-
I changed my surname in 1949 from "VALAVALKAR" to "PRABHU" by legal notification. Prabhu has been our family surname for many generations; Valavalkar refers to the village Valaval which was the family's ancestral home town, and means "of or belonging to Valaval."
 4. Name of a Publication.



17. I remember, I remember

Prof. K.P. Kulkarni

Another of our popular professors was Rambhau Ranade. He taught us Carlyle's 'Heroes'. The town Kolhapur was a common bond that had fostered between us a sense of reciprocal kinship. Bapurao Ranade, his step-brother, was a teacher to all of us and Rambhau made frequent trips to Kolhapur to meet him. Rambhau was also the maternal uncle of Narahari Damle, a member of our close circle. At every university examination, Rambhau used to rank first and make a rich haul of prizes and scholarships. Naturally everyone of his visits to the Damale's drew us thither in curiosity as well as admiration. Of course in the heart of hearts we were making mental notes all the while of the ideal scholar's style of walk and talk, his general turn out, his bearing, his fads and what not! Being with him, at least for a while, was a matter of self-gratification for us. That year particularly Rambhau had secured the much coveted Chancellor's Gold Medal for philosophy at the M.A. examination. Fergusson College, therefore, held for us the dual attraction of Dr. Gune and Rambhau Ranade. Sharp of intellect, sweet in nature and unassuming in disposition, he always impressed one at first sight. He was a personification of good nature. Physically, however, he looked somewhat frail. But his profound erudition more than compensated this shortcoming. He used to be dressed in a very simple style. A clean bright 'Dhoti', a pair of typical red Pune slippers (जोडा), a loose none-too-fashionable shirt with thread buttons, a spacious tight collared shortish coat buttoned up straight, a fairly long muslin muffler (उपरणे) slung casually around the neck, a liberal saffron coloured paste mark on the yawning forehead, a headgear, (pagdee) typical of Pune perched at



ease and indifferent on the crest, and a baggy dark gown rather shuffling about in careless defiance of all order - in such a uniform if it could be called one, he used to enter the classroom walking unusually fast. Sometimes he carried a book or two extra in his hand, while going to the class. The projection of his personality would easily profess the subject he taught - philosophy. From the moment he entered the classroom the stream of his eloquence flowed unfaltered till the bell tolled signifying the closure of the hour. The English he spoke was pitched low but delivered fast and was profound yet lucid. It was packed with meaning cast in classical mould, and somewhat ponderous yet within the easy grasp of the student. It had about it the sanctity and majesty of the Ganges. Everytime the student felt unmistakably that he had heard something novel and extraordinary, that he had made a successful sojourn into the realm of the Unknowable and that it was a charmed moment that had yielded some rare acquisition, an experience bordering on the ecstatic. There was a special Ranade-touch about everything of his, unfolding the depths of Carlyle's thoughts or his superbly fluent eloquence, the uncanny tact of making the student gravitate towards him, the magic touch inducing love of literature in the student, and the masterly way of re-establishing the ancient tie of the teacher and the taught which seemed to mock at the heterodox spirit of modernity. The impression that he made on us, then, stands out in bold relief even now, after a lapse of fortyfive years.

The Upanisadic sage :

Often Ranade asked the students to write essays and after going through them he returned them to the students with his own comments, suggestions and opinions, pointing out mistakes therein, if any. At times, he also called them for discussions over the subject-matter of the



essays. He had two spacious rooms constructed just beyond the Fergusson College Hostel; while his family residence was in Shaniwar Peth. Ranade often spent long studious hours in these rooms. We had nick-named them as Carlyle Cottage. Students considered it a rare honour and privilege whenever they were summoned by Rambhau Ranade for discussions. By temperament Rambhau was a person of transparent candour. With a childlike innocence he used to mix with students shaking off typical aloofness teachers are normally prone to maintain. This in turn imposed on the students a sense of embarrassment and awkwardness which compelled them to talk some garbled stuff, sitting under great constraint. At the cottage he looked a veritable skeleton of skin and bones flitting about in his 'dhoti' with its back strip amusingly shaggy and the bulging loops and falls in front helplessly dragging along and with his hair lock atop the crown, jumping about in unintentional mischief. Looking at him one felt one was squatting before some Rishi for a session of sermons. Rangarao Diwakar (who later became Governor of Bihar) was one of his favourite pupils. Like him many others whose essays earned his appreciation received invitations to the cottage from him. Once I too had the good fortune to receive it.

What an essay to write !

He liked one of my essays immensely and so he sent for me. How surprising! 'I felt I had hit the jackpot!' In the whole class and especially in our own Kolhapur circle my stock went high at rocket speed. When I reached the Carlyle Cottage I was greeted by him with his own words of esteem, "God bless you! What a wonderful stuff you have written!" Writ large on his face as it were ! Knocked out by this reception I sat before him a bundle of nerves. Relevant portion of my essay was once again read aloud, embroidered with comments, of course. After all, I knew,



my essay was not quite a miracle to merit all that. On second thoughts I realised how the occasion was more a testimony to Rambhau's obliging nature, his magnanimous heart and an attitude of encouragement than anything else.

He is a genius indeed :

A pure guileless innocence was the main stuff of his mind. He viewed all people as essentially good. He had a firm faith in the warrantability of inherent heroship in every man. And hence fancying that as 'the divine element' ever present in man he used to address himself to this divine principle in all humility whenever it manifested itself in some person in some way or the other. Once he was invited for a dinner to the Eighth Club. Knowing my close relationship with him I too was invited for the dinner by my Kolhapur friend, Sada Padhye.¹ The cook in the Eighth Club had a reputation for preparing excellent Dal-Soup (आमटी). It had a great standing demand from even other clubs on the campus. It was a treat. On learning of Rambhau being invited for food, the cook that day employed all the ingenuity at his disposal in the preparation of the item. Really it was an A-1 preparation on that day. After the food Rambhau sent for the cook, while cracking the betel nut. As he came up Rambhau made a few casual affectionate enquiries with him about the dish and in a remarkably frank, sincere fashion gave his appreciative confession, "He is a genius indeed!"

The Saint of Nimbal :

About forty years later, on one occasion he recalled my essay for its outstanding quality. Rambhau Ranade and I were the referees for the award of Ph.D. to a student of mine for his thesis on "A critical survey of the Abhangas of Tukarama". The thesis had already won Rambhau's



approbation. I was summoned to Nimbhal for the verdict to be passed by us jointly. As Rambhau had made Nimbhal his abode, it had since become a shrine hallowed with sanctity. I was already very eager to go over there for two reasons. First, it would give me an opportunity to have a Darshan of my professor, my Guru. Second, my native place - Islampur, being also the native place of Rambhau's wife, before marriage. I would also get an occasion to see her after a long time as I was in my childhood a play-mate of her - a nostalgic craving ! I remembered, we used to play together in the courtyard of Mr. Vaidya, her father - a close friend of me though pretty senior to me. Rambhau had probably forgotten all about me then. He practically considered the job a routine affair, part of his academic obligations. And so he took me to be just a co-referee until the day we met. I arrived in Nimbhal at about eight in the night. My host had already made careful arrangements to despatch one person to the station to receive me and have me lodged comfortably. About 10 o'clock at night Rambhau called on me at my room and as soon as he saw me he expressed his pleasant surprise saying, "Oh ! is that you Mr. Kulkarni? Well, I know, he is my student, a Fergussonian! I still remember very clearly that excellent essay of his." I was dumbfounded. A strange mixture of joy, gratitude and several undiscernible sentiments filled me. After brief formalities he left. I was very happy to extend my stay there for two more days in the enchanting, beatific atmosphere charged with the holiness of the saint Rambhau Ranade. When I left, I had the contentment of a fulfilled mission.



Look, Gentlemen! He is transported to Superconscious state:

Nimbal is a place about half a furlong away from the railway station. Rambhau chose this place because the Samadhi of his Guru is very near from here. He instituted here his 'Ashram' for the sake of contemplation and solitude. There are not many houses situated in this locality, about seven or eight at the most. He has built a spacious house for himself, a prayer chamber, a few cells (ओबऱ्या) for the convenience of disciples, an office room, a kitchen and a dining hall. H.H.² the Rajesaheb Patwardhan of Sangli is one of his great admirers. The Rajesaheb has constructed a special residence for himself there. At present his son Yuvaraj camps there, engaged in devotional service. Not fewer than fifteen or twenty of Rambhau's pupils would be in station there always. Strictly speaking, he commands a large group of disciples as well as followers who hold him in high reverence. Life in the Ashram there is exceedingly disciplined. Everyday in the morning light breakfast is served. At noon is served lunch, and then in the evening, "Prasad" is distributed after evening prayers. Disciples camping there have to make their own arrangement for tea separately, if required. The routine expenditure in the Asrama is made from the Kothi funds. At about 4 or 5 p.m. a talk by some guest-devotee is an occasional feature. Twice everyday, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, a sitting was held in which Rambhau participated. Both times he usually sits in the company of disciples. The prayer meeting is marked with singing of devotional songs or a learned talk or a symposium in Marathi or Kannada by men well-versed in the language.

When I had gone there, I was called upon to give a talk on विवेक सिंघु.³ Besides me at that time were also present Dr. N.S. Christian of Aurangabad and Shri M.N.



Deshpande of the Archeological Department, who had come to have his 'Darshan' for the first time. Predictably strange was the reason for Dr. Christian's visit. Just a few days earlier, it was learnt, Rambhau had appeared in his dream-vision, though the doctor had never seen him before. The doctor on arrival frankly admitted that he had seen Rambhau in his vision exactly in the same form as the one he now witnessed with the naked eye. A doctor's dilemma of several dimensions indeed! A reputed doctor of Aurangabad with a thumping practice was squatting here by the side of saint Rambhau - baffled, tamed, disarmed and de-egotised. A little later Rambhau signalled for routine activity like seminar, singing of devotional songs questions and answers to start. Finally came the turn of the Doctor. He was given the option of prayers and the language of his own choice. It appeared he consented. But we had observed in him since morning that day a gradual surreptitious change in the state of his mind. The first Darshan of Rambhau had sparked off a chain of reactions in his psychic domain. The atmosphere of the prayer session only accelerated and augmented the process of explosion. The perfume sticks, the burning incense, steady oil lamps of flicker less flames, clanging of cymbals, tense minds straining at the knowledge of Brahma and its mystery enveloped with a relentless pursuit in the course of deliberations - all this welded into a sort of alchemy for the susceptibility of the strange stranger or what, God alone knows. But the Doctor now suddenly burst into singing. Scarcely had the first couple of words escaped, his lips couched in their sound garb, when he switched on to a quaint rhythmic humming. What contortions and what with sobbings and yellings - it was all a grand mess as though he was seized by a ghost! And yet there was a method in the madness for the eyes that had the power to perceive. Eventually, the sitting posture of the Doctor's



body succumbed to a flat-out stage. But that very moment Rambhau had offered his lap like a pillow to the falling body. He passed his hand on the Doctor's body in a fond caress. "Get thee calm doctor, be at peace" said Rambhau. Meanwhile Mr. Datar had slipped out, fetched some cold water and started gently stroking his face and crest with it. Strangely enough, before we could extricate ourselves from the impact of the fantastic, the doctor had come to consciousness. In the meanwhile, the assembly automatically dispersed without the least flutter. Some of us helped the doctor reach his room and rest in bed. Somehow in a mood of characteristic objectivity notwithstanding all that, I recalled Chakradhara's Lilacharitra. The followers of महानुभाव cult⁴ have left it on record how they were used to attaining to a superconscious state in the magnetic field of Lord Chakradhar. Descriptions of this wild state are far and few between throughout the महानुभाव literature. The doctor's case was an exact replica of what I had only read about. Prof. S.G. Tulpule⁵ also could not help remarking, "Today, it was indeed an experience beyond all words. All these years I have been visiting Nimbai; but this event was the first of its kind and a class by itself. It beats me completely."



1. The late Dr. Sadashivrav Padhye. The Padhye family migrated to Kolhapur from Marathwada.
2. His Highness.
3. A work by Mukundaraja, probably the first great writer in Marathi literature.
4. An early religious movement in Maharashtra.
5. Retired Professor of Marathi and a disciple of Shri Amburav Maharaj.



18. Encouraging Scholars

Prof. A.C. Bose, Kolhapur

I had the privilege of hearing a lecture of Gurudev Ranade on saints, in the Rajaram College Hall at Kolhapur, and of meeting him year after year at Allahabad, when he was Professor in the University. He gave me much encouragement in my work on Indian Culture and religion. Before leaving for Dublin in 1936 for research work on Mysticism in Poetry (with illustrations from W. B. Yeats, A.E.¹, and Ravindranath Tagore), Prof. Ranade wished me to present a copy of his book "A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy" to Yeats. I received the book in Mumbai and presented it to the Irish poet after his recovery from a stroke of illness. There is a reference to the gift in Yeats's biography by J.M. Hone.

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1. Pseudonym of George William Russell, 1867-1935, Irish Poet and Essayist.



19. Is it that easy to obtain the divine Nama?

Shri. Vitthalrav G. Jamkhandi, Dharwad

It was sometime in November 1954 that Shri Gurudev Ranade was at Dharwar for a few days for delivering lectures on Pathway to God in Kannada Literature, under the auspices of the Karnatak University. It was my rare privilege to be with him during this period. I was initiated by Gurudev Ranade only a few months earlier in July and I did not know much about his habits and ways of meditation. However, intimation had been given to me by



senior Sadhakas that he would go out for meditation in a car. Accordingly, a car was kept ready for him so that it could be available any time he desired.

On the very first day after his arrival at Dharwar, at about 11-15 A.M., Gurudev said he would go out for meditation. He took with him a disciple, Bhaurav Nimbargi, and asked me also to accompany him. Gurudev sat on the right side in the back seat and I was on the left side. Bhaurav Nimbargi was in the front seat. After we drove about a mile along the Belgaum road, Gurudev asked the driver to stop immediately. He had a peculiar and rather, inexplicable way of asking the driver, in quick succession, to turn to right or left and then stop abruptly; and only an expert driver could correctly follow his instructions. On one occasion, it happened that the car was stopped blocking the passage for other vehicles but nothing came that way until his नेम (meditation) was finished. After the car was stopped, Gurudev asked the driver and Sri Nimbargi to get down for some time, but asked me to sit for meditation there only along with him. I thought it was a rare opportunity for me to sit within 2-3 feet of Gurudev for meditation, though I must frankly confess, I hardly knew then what real meditation meant. I then saw a most wonderful sight which I had no occasion to see earlier, and have not been privileged to see thereafter. Gurudev started uttering loudly and continuously 'Narayana, Narayana¹', which was the divine Name received by him from his Sadguru and, within a minute he went into complete Samadhi. I was overwhelmed by a feeling of awe, reverence and wonder. I had only read about Samadhi which great saints like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa have experienced; but I had never seen any one actually going into Samadhi. About 20 minutes later, Gurudev opened his eyes and said he had very good 'नेम'



and asked me to call the driver and start back. As soon as the car started, Sri Gurudev asked Sri Bhaurav Nimbargi to recite some song and to my very great surprise he recited a song² by the great saint Purandaradasa in which the divine Name given to me by Sri Gurudev was eulogised and was said to be the rarest privilege for any human being to secure. By the time the song was finished we reached home.

This is what happened and the whole incident, the context of facts and the close sequence have made an indelible impression on my mind. I am not going to offer any explanation for it, but my feeling is one of the most respectful and deepest gratitude to my Sadguru who, out of his infinite compassion, was pleased to give me an actual demonstration of spiritual Samadhi which could be attained by meditation on the divine Name. He was also graciously pleased to convey to me, through the song of saint Purandaradasa, the unsurpassed potency and significance of the divine Name and this conviction has been strengthened and reinforced in me during all this period and now it has veritably become a part and parcel of my being.

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1. The name which was imparted by Bhausaheb Maharaj to Gurudev was known only to the Teacher and the disciple. It is the writer's surmise that the name was Narayana.
 2. The song under reference is सुम्मने दोरकुवदे रामन दिव्यनामवु (Is it that easy to obtain the divine Nama of Rama ?)



20. Meditation alone will bring bliss

Shri. Balawant D. Godbole, Dharwad

Looking to my spiritual aptitude, my friend late Gopalrav Asundi, a classmate of Gurudev Ranade, advised me to go to Inchageri. He gave me a letter to be given to Gurudev. In January 1926, I went to Nimbale and as per the instructions of Gurudev, proceeded to Inchageri, of course on foot. I met Sadguru Amburav Maharaj alias Baba there. I stayed with him for a few days. I used to sleep on one of the two stone-platforms on either side of the main gate. Sadguru Baba asked me to read Dasbodha, the Gita and Manache Shloka¹. One day Baba said to me "I will not give you Upadesh (Nama)." "Then I will not go back to Dharwad till I get it" I replied.

One early morning at about 5 a.m. Sadguru Bhausaheb Maharaj came riding on a horse. He got down and tied the horse to a Neem tree there. I got up and bowed down to him. Then he vanished. (This must have been a dream or a vision, for Bhausaheb Maharaj had left his mortal coil in 1914; but I was supremely happy to see him). At day break, Baba came out of his room and said to me, "Balvantray, today you saw Sadguru Bhausaheb Maharaj. So I shall give you the Nama." I was astonished to listen to these words. I asked him whether Sadguru Bhausaheb used to ride on a white horse, whether there was a Neem tree in the Ashram and whether the turban of Bhausaheb had a printed design on it. Baba replied to all these questions in the affirmative. It was Thursday. I had my bath and bowed down to Baba. He said, "My Sadguru has given you Upadesh (Nama). I am only instrumental." Thus Baba was totally free from egoism. I used to give him water for bath, rub his body and pound betel for him. After a few days I brought Baba to Dharwad via Bijapur, Hotgi, Solapur,



Gadag, Kundagol and Hubli having visited the disciples of Baba at these various places.

When we reached Dharwad, we sat in a Tanga to go to my place. Baba said to me, "Balvantray, I have given Nama to your wife. Do you know this?" I replied in the negative. When we reached home, Baba called my wife and asked, "Have you received Upadesha?" "Yes" she replied. "From whom?" "From yourself." "Where?" "At Belagavi." "Were you married then?" "No." I was wonderstruck to listen to this conversation. How did Baba know that I was married to a lady to whom he had given Upadesha? This was indeed beyond my ken!

We once went to the famous Datta temple at Dharwad. While coming out, Baba told me that he could not see anything but clear light in the inner sanctum. I could not grasp this, as I had not progressed spiritually then. Many years later in February 1970 I went to Pavas, a place near Ratnagiri to meet revered Swarupananda. I introduced myself to him and requested him to permit me to sit for meditation by his side. In the meanwhile revered Swarupananda was in a trance; I came outside and stood there watching him. After half an hour he returned to consciousness, looked at me, called me inside and asked me to sit by his side for half an hour for meditation. I sat there. We were only two in the room. After a few minutes my eyes opened themselves. I could see nothing but clear moon-light; not even the figure of the Swamiji was seen by me. After a few moments, I could only see his smiling face. Then I came to know the significance of what Baba had said previously and could appreciate his spiritual heights.

Gurudev Ranade breathed his last on 6th June 1957. In December 1961, when I was staying at Dharwad, I saw Gurudev entering my house at dawn. I bowed down to him. He said, "You were complaining that I do not come to you.



See, I have come." He was having an English book in one hand and a twig of Tulasi in the other. He lay down on the cot and started reading loudly. I asked him what he was reading. He called me near and asked, "Do you give talks now-a-days?" "Yes, occasionally," I replied. "Do not indulge in such things," he advised, "that creates egoism and becomes an impediment in the spiritual path. Meditate regularly with devotion and faith. That alone will bring you bliss." Since then my Nema (meditation) is going on regularly by the grace of Gurudev. I am quite happy.

1. These are religious texts often read in Maharashtra.

21. Who is a Guru?

Shri M.L. Vaikunthe

In 1952, I was introduced to Shri Gurudev and went to Nimbai for his blessed Darshan. At that time I had not been initiated and was against the tradition of Guru-worship. When the disciples of Shri Gurudev recited verses in praise of a Guru, and prostrated to pay respects to Gurudev, I did not approve of it and a number of doubts about the qualification of a Guru arose in my mind. It was a most lucky hour when Gurudev gave a ring and all the disciples and devotees gathered in the hall and Gurudev had some discussion with the devotees on the qualities of a Guru without my asking this question to him. He said that a Guru must have the following qualifications :



1. He should be himself a Self-realised soul having a deep insight into the Shastras.
2. A real Guru need not expect any-thing from his disciples. He should look to the welfare of his devotees.
3. The personal life of a Guru should be above board and should accord to the injunctions of the sacred books. He must not indulge in any practices not recommended by the Shastras on the plea that he is omniscient.
4. A Guru is omnipotent like God and he should be bestowing both worldly and spiritual benefits on his disciples.

On hearing this explanation of Shri Gurudev I immediately decided to get myself initiated by him. I was lucky to receive initiation the next morning.

In the afternoon, it so happened that the disciples and devotees were sitting for meditation along with Gurudev. By an accident, a thunderbolt¹ struck upon the roof of the hall, went penetrating to the ground, almost touching the head of one of the disciples. It was really a very horrible and frightening incident, but none of the persons in meditation was affected. All kept on sitting silently for the duration of meditation. At the end of an hour Gurudev merely enquired about the matter and advised to install a lightning-conductor. He was quite indifferent to the happening.

The food served to the devotees was quite simple and Gurudev used to bless it by looking at it, before it was served. He himself was a very abstemious eater and advised that minimum quantity of food should be taken. Otherwise one will not be able to sit for meditation for a long time.

At that time I had been unjustly demoted to the post of Tehsildar after working as Sub-Divisional Officer and



Assistant Secretary to the Government for about four years. When I was about to depart from the Ashram, Gurudev of his own accord asked me when I would become an Assistant Collector, i.e., S.D.O. What reply could I give to this question? But soon after my return from the Ashram, I was unexpectedly promoted to the post of Assistant Collector. It was only due to the grace of Gurudev. Even today, though I have to face a number of difficulties in life, they get resolved and eventually, I find myself in quite easy circumstances, and have no liabilities and worries which generally trouble a worldly person. It is all due to Gurudev, who is always alive and takes due care of his disciples and devotees. I am quite sure that the grace of Gurudev will grant me love of God and lead to Bhagwan after this gross body dissolves.

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1. For additional information see 'Pathway to God' in Kannada Literature, 2003, p.184.



22. The Spiritual Teacher confers material welfare as well as spiritual good

Dr. B.R. Modak, Dharwad

It was in 1952 that I first met Gurudev Ranade at Nimbal. I had heard about him and read his books, but had not met him personally earlier. Gurudev was very happy to learn that I had offered Sanskrit as my principal subject and had stood first class first in Karnatak University. He asked



me in the 'Sitting' to sing a devotional song and I sang a song¹ urging a devotee to be attached to God's feet.

Next year when I went to Nimbai again, Gurudev called me one morning to his room and gave me a cup of tea. He showed me a file containing the synopsis of his proposed book, "Vedanta the Culmination of Indian Thought," In the meanwhile, one of the elderly disciples came there and informed that his (the disciple's) wife was ailing. Gurudev took out a bottle from his cupboard saying, "Give her these six pills". As he put a part of the contents of the bottle on his palm, exactly six pills were there. "See just six pills have come out," he said, handing them over to him. I had known that Gurudev Ranade was a Doctor of Literature; but I did not know that he was also a doctor who would give pills.

Gurudev once asked me to speak on the Bhagavad-gita. When I had spoken for half an hour, my speech was interrupted by the arrival of one very important guest. I wanted to go to Pune the same night; but Gurudev asked me to complete the talk the next day and then go. The next day 'Sitting' was not held due to some reason. So I had to complete my talk on the third day. I referred to the interpretations of the Gita by Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha as well as other scholars and pointed out how the Gita teaches active devotion based on knowledge.

Gurudev's Amrita Mahotsava was held at Jamkhadi in 1956 on his completion of seventy years. In the large hall of the Ganapati temple at Ramtirth, a number of disciples from various parts of our country had assembled to see him. Gurudev asked them to sit down and directed one of the Sadhakas to narrate his reminiscences about Bhausaheb Maharaj. That Sadhaka narrated as follows :

"Once a devotee came to Bhausaheb Maharaj and said that he was not blessed with a child, though a number of



years had passed since his marriage. Maharaj asked him to eat daily Laddus made from the flour of green gram (moong), jaggery and ghee taken in equal proportion and directed him to sleep in the Ashram at night for six months. The disciple followed the instructions properly. In course of time he was blessed with a child."³

The Sadhakas could thus know that a Sadguru caters not only to the spiritual needs of the devotees, but also to their worldly welfare.

गुरु हा घाली ज्ञानांजन, गुरु हा दाखवी निज धन।

गुरु हा सौभाग्य देऊन, स्वात्मबोध नांदवी।।⁴

1. The song is गुरुचरणकमलदल्लि
2. A sweet preparation.
3. For a similar instance see Appendix I (a)
4. The spiritual teacher administers collyrium of knowledge to the disciple, opens his eyes to the inner treasure and blesses him with illumination. The lines occur in a famous prayer of Jnaneswara in praise of his spiritual teacher.

23. Dr. Radhakrishnan's Tribute¹ to Shri. Gurudev

I enjoyed his friendship and affection from the time I met him in 1925 at the first Indian Philosophical Congress in Calcutta. His simplicity, his integrity, his sweet and affectionate nature impressed all who came into contact with him.



For many years he taught philosophy at Pune, at Sangli and at Allahabad. Philosophy for him, was not a profession but a consuming passion. He thought, not merely with his intellect but with his whole life.

He had a remarkable linguistic equipment. Apart from his mastery of English, he knew Greek and German and had a command of Hindi, Marathi and Kannada. He made very valuable contributions to our knowledge of mysticism in Marathi, Hindi and Kannada literatures. He expressed his deepest convictions in words and ways intelligible to the ordinary reader...

1. Excerpts from the message of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of India, on the occasion of the release of Pathway to God in Kannada Literature, at Nimbal on 5th June 1960, third death anniversary of Gurudev.



24. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan inaugurates Gurudev Mandir at Belagavi

I am delighted to be here and inaugurate this building set up in honour of one whom I had known for nearly 40 years of my life. I met him about the twenties of this century and have had to do a great deal with him when he was in Allahabad University... Ranade, to the best of his ability performed meditation throughout his life and was trying to see God face to face, to have direct encounter with Reality or Personal communion. That is what our sages



have spoken to us to be the true end of religious life... Ranade was a man, who by sheer exertion, by real practice, meditated for long hours and tried to catch the spirit of God and see God face to face. That is the great thing which he has achieved. If those who would live in this building are able to catch something of his spirit, to feel that religion is experience and not intellectual gymnastics, they would have done well. I wish this Institution all success.¹

1. Excerpts from the Address delivered by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, on 8th December 1965.



25. A Peep into the Future

Kaka Karkhanis, Bijapur

The following incident occurred in 1915. I was studying then in the Deccan College. My eldest brother, Dr. Balkrishna Govind alias Annasaheb Karkhanis L.M. & S. was serving as Chief Medical Officer at Jamkhandi. Once he had been to Mumbai with Shrimanta Bhausaheb, the Raja of Jamkhandi. When he was returning, I was to see him at the Pune railway station. My brother gave me two copies of the photo of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj prepared by Shri. Devhare photographers and asked me to keep one copy for myself and to hand over the other to Rambhau (Gurudev Ranade). I returned to the College, but as it was very late in the night, I gave the photo to Rambhau the next day. He was then working as Manuscript Librarian and used to stay on the first floor of the East Wing of the Deccan College. When I told him that my brother had given one



copy of the photo of Bhusaheb Maharaj for him and one for me, he smiled and said, "I knew last night itself that the photo was sent for me."

26. A peep into past and future

Kaka Karkhanis, Bijapur

Gurudev once told me his experience as follows :

"When I was progressing in my Sadhana, a stage arrived when I was able to see the past and the future of the person sitting in front of me. I grew restless thereby and requested Maharaj that I did not want any of such Riddhis and Siddhis¹. I told him that I wanted nothing but Bhakti and prayed to him to stop all that. After this prayer of mine those visions came to an end." All such events happened in the life of Gurudev prior to 1915. He lived thereafter for about 42 years. He did not waste even a single breath as he always engaged it in Nam-smarana. So one can easily imagine how much spiritual power he must have attained during that long period.

I participated in the national independence movement in November-December 1922 when I was chief of the Svavalambana Rashtriya Pathashala at Chinchwad (Pune). I was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for four months. Before I went to jail, I wrote a few letters, one of which was addressed to Gurudev. He was then staying in the house of Bhaurav Nadgouda at the village Nimbali. After my sentence was over, I went to Alandi, had the Darshan of the Samadhi of Jnaneshwara and proceeded to Bijapur. On my way I got down at Nimbali and went to see Gurudev Ranade. He told me that even before he received my letter, he knew that I was in trouble and that he had informed



Prof. Krishnarav Gajendragadkar² and Jagannath Lele³ accordingly. I asked him, "How did you know that?" He replied, "When I was in meditation, I heard the words 'Ganapatrav, Ganapatrav.' So I thought that you must be in some difficulty. This was confirmed later by your letter that you were sentenced to jail for a period of four months."

1. Riddhi is prosperity and Siddhi is occult power.
2. Professor of Philosophy and student of Gurudev.
3. A close relative of Gurudev.

27. A Peep into other's minds

Dr. S.N.L. Shrivastava

When after joining the Allahabad University for my post-graduate studies in philosophy, I went to meet Prof. Ranade at his residence for the first time and saluted him with folded hands; he too returned the salutation with folded hands and with a beaming face. Evidently he was overjoyed at meeting me. In fact, as I learnt later, he had already been desiring that I should meet him at his residence. I, being of a shy nature, would not do so. One day an old peon of the Philosophy Department, named Jogi, said to me : "Saheb¹ is much pleased with you and would be happy to meet you at his residence. Why don't you go?" This gave me an impetus to go and so I went. Before we were seated, Prof. Ranade stared at my face for a couple of minutes and remarked about me to those standing nearby, "He is not only an intellectual but something more," meaning thereby that I had not only



intellectual avidity but spiritual aspiration too. This was my first opportunity of knowing that Prof. Ranade had the spiritual capacity of probing into the inner thoughts and dispositions of a person before him. A second opportunity came later. In 1940 I lost my father. As is customary on such occasions in Hindu families, I had my head clean shaven. Then I went to Allahabad for the Shraddha² ceremony of my deceased father. On seeing me shaven-headed, Prof. Ranade said: "You have been cherishing reverence all these years for Vivekanand in the sanctum sanctorum of your heart till you have begun to resemble him now in physical appearance too." I was stunned on hearing this, for though from my very boyhood I had been a great admirer of Vivekananda (which I still am) I had never told about this to Prof. Ranade.

1. A term of respect given to persons of high rank; here the reference is to Gurudev.
2. Obsequies according to Hindu religion.



28. The future of the world rests with the Philosophers

Dr. S.N.L. Shrivastava

Professor Ranade was the General President of the 13th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress held at Nagpur in December 1937. I attended this session of the Congress with an added enthusiasm as Professor Ranade was presiding over it. Dr. Radhakrishnan was also present during this session. Both Professor Ranade and Dr.



Radhakrishnan were putting up with Justice M.B. Niyogi of the Nagpur High Court. On reaching Nagpur the first thing I did was to call upon Prof. Ranade at Justice Niyogi's residence. I sat with Prof. Ranade for an hour or so, talking over many things at random. Then I had to leave him, as not much time was left for the inauguration ceremony of the Congress, where Prof. Ranade had to deliver his Presidential address. I attended the Inaugural function. The Congress was inaugurated by Sir Hyde Gowan, the then Governor of the present day Madhya Pradesh. After Sir Hyde Gowan's inaugural speech, Sir Hari Singh Gaur, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Nagpur University, gave the welcome speech. Then came the wonder of wonders - an absolutely extempore Presidential Address by Dr. Prof. Ranade, no slipshod address, but a very substantial address which sought to press into service the latest researches in Physics, Biology and Neurology for the cause of spiritual philosophy. A substance of this address, as prepared by Dr. C.D. Deshmukh of Morris College, Nagpur, was later published in the Review of Philosophy and Religion (Vol. VII, No. 2, Dec. 1938). In the course of his welcome address Sir Hari Singh Gaur had castigated philosophy as full of difficulties and obscurantisms to which Prof. Ranade gave a prompt and fitting reply in these words, "It is only too true, as Sir Hari Singh Gaur has just now told us, that philosophy is beset with difficulties, subtleties, obscurantisms and so on. I do not deny that these things exist. But I beg to submit that the kernel of philosophy is not the difficulties or the obscurantisms, but a metaphysical and moral pith which constitutes the essence of all philosophy whatsoever."

The next evening I again went to Justice Niyogi's residence where I met both Prof. Ranade and Dr. Radhakrishnan sitting in the same room. Prof. Ranade



introduced me to Dr. Radhakrishnan saying that I was a deeply devotional man and could sing a devotional song. He then asked me to sing a song. I felt embarrassed. I said, "I possess no good voice for singing nor do I remember at the moment any song." Thereupon Prof. Ranade handed over to me a booklet called Ashrama Bhajanavali (a booklet of Bhajans used at the Gandhi Ashram) and asked me to select a Bhajan and sing it. I selected one and sang as well as I could. Both Prof. Ranade and Dr. Radhakrishnan enjoyed it. That very evening after a short while Dr. Radhakrishnan had to deliver a public lecture on "The future of Religion" under the auspices of the Indian Philosophical Congress. He started preparing to go. He would not, like Ranade, go unprepared and deliver a lecture extempore. He took out some typed sheets from a brief-case and started glancing through them. I attended Dr. Radhakrishnan's lecture. It was a brilliant performance. After delivering the Presidential Address, Prof. Ranade never went to any meeting of the Philosophical Congress, in spite of repeated entreaties from the organizers. He would remain closetted in his room in Justice Niyogi's residence and carry on his meditation as usual.



29. A Meta-Kant

Dr. S.N.L. Shrivastava

Prof. Ranade was very generous in praising others. Finding me very regular and punctual in all matters in the daily routine of my life down to my evening walks, he named me "Meta-Kant." He always spoke words of



encouragement and never of disparagement. In encouraging earnest and intelligent students, he would go so far as to tell them : "Well, go ahead. There is not much of a difference between you and I. Only I have read a few more books than you have done." Once when I visited him, I recited to him a poem of Kabir which captivated his mind. "When you go home" he said to me, "You send to me by post some poems of Kabir with their English translation." I did so. He thankfully acknowledged receipt and requested me to send more. I sent to him poems of Kabir in several instalments. On a subsequent visit he said to me, "You have aroused my interest in Hindi Mysticism and I am planning a book on that subject."

30. An Angelic Personality

Dr. S.N.L. Shrivastava

Whoever has come in contact with Prof. R. D. Ranade can not forget him till the end of his life. His was an angelic personality radiating joy and peace and spiritual light. An electric smile ever 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 one sought his presence. He was an अजात शत्रू (one who has no enemies) and a friend of everybody (सर्वेषां यो सुहृद् नित्यम्), a seraphic soul "with malice towards none and charity for all."



31. Utter humility

Dr. Parashuram K. Gode, Pune

Dr. P.K. Gode, the late Curator and Research Scholar of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Pune, who was a student of Prof. R.D. Ranade, wrote a letter seeking his Permission to publish a Commemoration Volume on his 60th Birthday. When the letter was read out to 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 Birthday. 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. Shrikhande¹ at the Deccan College, 'To praise a rising sun is to curse him.' That holds good even today."

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1. He later became Professor at the Holkar College, Indore.



32. Four in one

Shri. V.G. Apsangi, Jamkhandi

While Prof. Ranade was a professor at the Fergusson College, the then Viceroy was once a distinguished guest. Wrangler R.P. Paranjape, the then Principal, received him at the gate. By the side of the Wrangler were three professors, one of Sanskrit, another of English, the third of Philosophy (Professor Ranade). The Wrangler, after



introducing himself as Professor of Mathematics as well as Professors of Sanskrit and English to the distinguished guest, is reported to have said, "Well, you see in each of the three of us a Professor of this and that subject; but in Professor Ranade, you can see not only a Professor of Philosophy, but of all the four subjects rolled into one."



33. An Exemplar of a true Indian Philosopher

Dr. S.N.L. Shrivastava

When Prof. Ranade came to Nagpur to deliver the University Extension Lectures¹ on the Bhagavadgita sometime before 1930 (I do not remember the exact year)², I had the first opportunity of seeing and listening to him. I was then an undergraduate student in the Government College, then known as the Morris College. I had offered Sanskrit and Philosophy for my B.A. Examination and was particularly interested in philosophy. I do not think I followed Prof. Ranade's lectures very closely but his personality and erudition impressed me. I still remember how my attention was particularly rivetted on Prof. Ranade's explanation of the verse from the Gita : अदृष्ट पूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे। (11.45). Explaining this, Prof. Ranade said that when a mystic has such a divine vision, he is beside himself with joy; but he is also overwhelmed with fear at the unprecedented sight.



The confident tone in which Prof. Ranade spoke, smiling joyfully all the time, assured me that his explanation was backed by his own mystical experience at first hand. I could not help feeling that I was in the presence of a man who was not only an erudite scholar but also a man of spiritual illumination. I decided to join the Allahabad University for my post-graduate studies in Philosophy. During the academic sessions 1931-32 and 1932-33 I was a post-graduate student of philosophy under him. It was during these years that I came in very intimate contact with him, meeting him very frequently, sometimes almost every day.

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 to write philosophical essays of their own choice. On my joining I wrote an essay on the Mandukyopanishad under the caption "The Psychological Basis of Advaitism." Prof. Ranade was highly pleased when he read it. "What is your age?" he asked me. "Twentyone, Sir," I replied. "No" he said, "Your age is 42, for your essay evinces maturity of that age." He at once forwarded the essay with a note for publication in the Vedanta Kesari, Chennai, where it was duly published. That was my first philosophical publication.

Once I approached him for suggesting to me books on Modern Western Philosophy. He gave me a lengthy list of books, pointing out particular chapters in many of the books where specific 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 a "correlated study of Eastern and Western Philosophies."



Philosophy with Ranade was not merely an intellectual pursuit, but also, as he often used to say, a way of life. In his own way of life, Ranade was, to my mind, an exemplar of a true Indian philosopher.

1. These are "The Ravbahadur Bapuravdada Kinkhede Lectures."
2. The year is 1928.

34. Evening meditation at Draupadi Ghat¹

Dr. S.N.L. Shrivastava

Gurudev Ranade's life was a life of absorption in meditation. He was a Dhyana Yogi par excellence. I can best describe his life as a personification of the following verse of the Bhagavad-gita² :

विविक्त सेवी लघ्वाशी यतवाक्काय मानसः।

ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥ (18:52)

Every evening Prof. Ranade used to go out in his car to the banks of the Ganges at Draupadi Ghat for quiet meditation for some time. He would take us also with him. When the car reached the chosen spot, Prof. Ranade would ask everybody seated therein to get down and stroll along at some distance till the horn of the car was blown which was a signal for us all to return to him. The horn sounded and we would then all be seated again with Prof. Ranade in the car and return home. This was a daily practice.



Prof. Ranade's bungalow at Allahabad was a rendezvous for 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 time; meaning thereby that we must transcend the time-consciousness and rise to an awareness of the ETERNAL NOW."

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

Gurudev is physically no more with us but the memory of his seraphic life shall ever remain green in our minds.

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1. A famous Ghat on the banks of Ganga at Allahabad.
 2. 'Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, restraining his speech, body and mind, and ever engaged in meditation and concentration; and cultivating freedom from passion.'



35. He shows how fine human nature can be

Prof. George B. Burch, U.S.A.

(Professor George B. Burch taught philosophy at Tufts College, Metford, Massachusetts. In 1953-54 he and his family were in India, when Professor Burch came to discuss philosophy with Indian philosophers, prominent among whom was the Late Prof. R.D. Ranade. In sending this article Professor Burch writes :-



"It is customary, when a great man dies, to publish eulogies of him which, written under the stress of the occasion, are often uncritical and exaggerated. It may be better to wait a year or two. If he still seems great in retrospect, his life can be appraised in a more objective spirit. R.D. Ranade is a man whose stature, in my estimate, has only grown in retrospect."

We are glad indeed to publish this vivid and interesting account based on the author's own recollections as a tribute to the late R.D. Ranade).¹

Ramchandra Dattatraya Ranade was born in 1886 at Jamkhandi, given a Mantra by a Guru named Bhausahab at the age of fourteen and educated at Deccan College. He acquired only a distaste for Philosophy here, where the Professor of Philosophy assigned no reading except Aristotle's Ethics, Wallace's Kant, Mill's Logic and Martineau's Ethical Theory, and lectured from the same notes for twenty years. But in other fields he got a fine education. He specialized in Mathematics, studied English with Clark² and learned Sanskrit from Pathak. He learned the techniques of scholarly research from Rawlinson, to whom he taught Sanskrit in exchange for tutoring in Greek. His most influential teacher was F.W. Bain, later Professor of Economics at All Soul's College, an English man with a deep appreciation of Hinduism, whose beautiful stories of the Rajput era, written in the form of pretended translations from the Indian originals, evoke visions of India even by their titles (A Digit of the Moon, A Heifer³ of the Dawn, In the Great God's Hair, The Ashes of a God). When Bain left Deccan College, a spokesman for the students said in a public eulogy that they had learned more philosophy from him than from the Professor of Philosophy and more literature than the Professor of Literature. It was from Bain that Ranade received a vision of eternal beauty and truth.



While in college he began his life-long habit of devoting three hours a day to meditation (even during examination periods, as one awed disciple told me without really expecting me to believe it). In 1908 the year he received his B.A. from the University of Bombay, he began having mystical experiences which continued throughout his life. At first he found these experiences confusing. He went to Benaras to discuss them with the well-known Annie Besant of the Theosophical Society and she assured him that they were real.

He became a fellow of Deccan College after graduating, was appointed curator of manuscripts in 1912, and received the M.A. in 1914. During this period he became interested in philosophy, first of all in Aristotle's philosophy. With his command over Greek, he undertook the ambitious project of making an exhaustive commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This project did not get very far, but it made a good start. The *Metaphysics* begins with a critique of the pre-Socratics, and the beginning of the proposed commentary produced a series of articles, eventually published separately on various Pre-Socratic philosophers. These studies had a considerable influence on his later thought.

In 1914 he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the *quasi-monastic* Fergusson College in Pune. In 1916, when his friend, the philanthropist Pratap Seth, founded the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner, Ranade gave technical advice and selected the books for the library. Academically this was the happiest period of his life. He later recalled with pleasure his intimate association with the excellent students of Fergusson College. Personally it was a tragic period. The great influenza epidemic of 1918 took his mother and his wife, and left him in a state of poor health from which he never



Completely recovered, and which compelled his retirement six years later.

Bhauasaheb died in 1914, and was succeeded as Guru by Ranade's fellow-disciple Amburav. In 1921 Ranade established an Ashram in the outskirts of the small village of Nimbal. (This is some thirty miles north of Bijapur, a city which Ranade urged me to visit, not only to accept an invitation from one of his disciples but also to see the Gol Gumbuz, a building he considered "Sublime," whereas the Taj Mahal was merely "beautiful.") When Amburav died, Ranade was persuaded, although reluctantly, to undertake the responsibilities of the Guruship. He moved to the Ashram in 1924, assumed the spiritual guidance of his former fellow disciples, and also began initiating disciples himself.⁴ I was told in 1954 that he then had about 2,000 disciples, living in various parts of India. For them, he was their Gurudev, their teacher, to be revered like a God. His three years at Nimbal were fruitful not only spiritually but also scholastically.⁵ Besides the works on the pre-Socrates, he published a comparative study of Greek and Sanskrit, an edition of Carlyle's essay, two books on Indian Philosophy, a four-volume Source Book of Maharashtra Saints in Marathi, a monumental Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy and a volume on the Creative Period for a proposed eight-volume history of Indian Philosophy.

His health some what improved; he accepted an appointment as Professor of Philosophy in the University of Allahabad in 1927. He stayed there, as Professor and sometimes dean, for nineteen years, but he never enjoyed teaching there as he had enjoyed teaching at Pune. He lived in a big rambling bungalow in the suburbs. When I went to Allahabad for the Kumbha Mela in 1954, although Ranade was not there, I stayed in this house as Pratap Seth's guest,



browsed in his fine philosophical library (with its complete set of Mind), and also of Hibbert Journal and met some philosophy students living there. Ranade's book on Mysticism in Maharashtra, based on the earlier source Books was published in 1933, and he continued his research in the field of popular mysticism by extending it to the oral tradition in Hindi. Whenever he met anyone, in any walk of life, he would ask him if he knew any songs, and if he got in reply a song with any spiritual significance, he would write it down. In this way he gathered material for his book on Hindi mysticism, published in 1954, under the title 'Pathway to God in Hindi Literature.' Eventually he added a volume on Kannada mystics, thus completing a trilogy on the mystical traditions in three vernaculars with which he was acquainted.

He retired from teaching at sixty, but stayed at Allahabad another year as Vice-Chancellor of the University. After 1947 he resided at the Nimbai Ashrama, but usually returned to his Allahabad home for the cold season. His personal life became extremely ascetic. I was told that he gave up eating entirely, except for drinking tea with milk and sugar. He devoted his time to meditation, scholarly research and writing and the spiritual direction of his disciples. It was at Nimbai that I met him in 1954.

When I went to India to study Vedanta, several persons spoke to me of Ranade as the best teacher of mystical philosophy. This was not my chief interest, but I became curious about the man personally. A physics professor described him as the most advanced person he knew and refused to express an opinion as to whether he was a Jeevan-mukta. I was warned not to try to visit him at the Ashram, where life was too austere for a Westerner. I did have doubts about this warning, but on very different grounds. Hindu Gurus as a class have a mixed reputation,



sometimes seeming (at least to a Westerner) to be arrogant, pompous or conceited. I had heard of Gurus, including quite famous ones, who kept themselves in seclusion, refusing to see their own disciples, let alone visitors. But I took a chance, wrote Ranade a letter asking permission to visit him and was invited to come.

The man I met was the opposite of what I had expected. Small, slight and frail, a mere wisp of a man whom you would expect the slightest breeze to blow away, he was nevertheless vigorous, not only spiritually and intellectually but also physically. His brisk, sprightly step was characteristic of his whole lively personality. Pomposity or unctiousness would be impossible in this animated person. Hypocrisy would be impossible in this humble man, who kept his perspective and sense of humour even though surrounded by disciples for whom he was divine. He was frank and friendly, eager to talk with me, to learn as well as to teach, to discuss both his intellectual interests and mine. After telling me about his education, he asked me to tell him about mine. Rapport was established when we discovered a common interest in the pre-Socratics, and we exchanged off prints in this field. We became close friends immediately. I did not get the impression however, that this was anything special about me. I believe that he was that way with everybody. But, for all his humility, a visitor at Nimbai could never be mistaken as to which man was the Guru. Ranade's spirituality shone clearly through every look, word and act. He did not have to pretend to be a saint, because he obviously was one.

The Ashram was a group of five small stone buildings. The only neighbours were Lamanis⁶ living in eight mud huts - fine, dignified people who, as I found, would do favours for me but would not take Baksheesh. Nearby were



a miraculous never-failing well which Ranade had dug on a spot revealed in a vision after the old well did fail, and a ten-foot pit into which Ranade used to go for his meditation on days when the Ashram was crowded. Living in the Ashram were Ranade, his second wife, his daughter, his two small grandchildren and about fifteen disciples. They came from different social backgrounds : a young Raja,⁷ a retired Postmaster-General,⁸ college professors, doctors (one of whom, Ranade's physician, was trying to get him to supplement his tea with orange juice), lawyers, businessmen, clerks, the local station master, a Harijan (who, coming to Ranade in distress when his children were starving on his forty rupee school teacher's salary, was assisted by him to get a hundred-rupee social worker's position). They had been drawn to religion by various influences - one, a Chennai doctor,⁹ through the frustrations of bureaucratic regulations, another, a lawyer¹⁰ with an international practice, through the company of saintly men he met during three years in jail. This lawyer said Ranade had instructed him to see that I did not starve. Actually they went to considerable trouble for me, obtaining canned food they thought I would prefer to their usual fare and other conveniences for my comfort. While I neither requested nor especially wanted this special attention, I was touched by and appreciative of this hospitality towards a self-invited guest.

The day began at six, when the disciples assembled for devotions, chanting a hymn to the Guru. We were expected to imitate the Guru's practice by meditating together for three hours, but actually began leaving after about an hour. In mid-afternoon a bell, indicating that Ranade had finished his own spiritual exercises, summoned us to his presence for readings and discussion, followed by the ceremonial burning of camphor, inhaling



the smoke and distribution of prasad. Each evening someone gave a talk, and there was a final chant before retiring. The hymn to the Guru ("Jai Guru Jai Guru Jai Guru Jai") accompanied by cymbals, was chanted before photographs of Amburav, Bhausahab and the latter's Guru's tomb (no photograph of him being available). In their own homes, at least those I visited, the disciples also had photographs of Ranade. I am sure they had him principally in mind when singing "Jai Guru", but there was no picture of him, nor was he himself present at these devotions. If anyone ever made any gesture of veneration in his presence, I did not observe it.

Interesting and edifying as these spiritual exercises were, my philosophical conversations with Ranade were more so. His philosophy, which he called Beatificism, meaning the search for Beatitude as Self-realisation, was a mystical philosophy in the tradition of Vishishtadvaita and Bhakti-marg. He rejected Advaita and Jnana-marga¹¹ as dangerous teachings opposed to mysticism. One day a disciple recited a humorous poem¹² on "Ten Great Saints", in which the eulogy of each saint was qualified by a statement of the defect in his sanctity. The ten saints were Prahlada, Dhruva, Narada, Vyasa, Shuka, Bhishma, Arjuna, Valmiki, Hanuman and Uddhava; in the case of Shuka the defect was that he was an Advaitin. All speculative philosophy, according to Ranade, is uncertain; all we can know of metaphysics is that all things come from God and tend to return to God. What we can know is the self.

The means of self-realization are fourfold. First, moral behaviour, both the pre-requisite for, and the evidence of, true mysticism. Second, the company of good people hence the importance of life in the Ashram. Third, a Guru. Ranade rejected the theory, often advanced, that the Guru chooses the disciple, and maintained that the disciple



must seek and choose his Guru (When he told me this, a sudden emotion swept over me. Had not providence, or Karma, brought me to this venerable man, probably the most spiritually advanced person I shall ever know, to whom I was already bound by ties of mutual affection, in order that he should be my spiritual preceptor? Should I not ask him then and there to give me initiation? I rejected this impulse, however, and in retrospect, I am sure that I was right. He could only have been embarrassed by so intemperate a suggestion, since initiation doubtless requires a preliminary discipline, while from my point of view I, as a Christian, already have my Sadguru in Christ.) Fourth, meditation - intellectual, moral and mystical. The all-important thing is love of God, which is a response to his love for us, and this is attracted by the moral goodness resulting from our own efforts. This, I take it, is the "monkey theory of salvation : to be saved we at least have to hang on. It is by devotion, not deeds or knowledge, that we are united with God. When, after returning to America, I was asked to give a lecture on contemporary Indian teachers, I spoke of Vinoba as teaching the way of action, Malkani as teaching the way of knowledge and Ranade as teaching the way of love.

To love your family and your friends and, above all, God was Ranade's doctrine and Ranade's life. Spiritual meditation and mystical contemplation were the central activity of his daily life. He was a mystic in the perennial tradition of the mystic saints. Did he then attain their final goal of mystical union with God? The answer must be, No, unless it was after I knew him. He told me that he had never yet enjoyed the "unitive experience" described by the great mystics. To me that frank and humble statement was far more impressive than the exaggerated claims to extraordinary experiences made by some gurus and holy men.



Ranade saw me off at the station with expressions of friendship and devotion and an invitation to return, bringing my family, the next time we were in India, but that time never came. He ended his long life full of fame and favour. A seventieth-birthday celebration in his home town Jamkhandi was observed with typical Hindu ceremony : a civic address, a portrait unveiled, a volume of articles published, congratulatory letters and cablegrams. The invitations described him as "world renowned philosopher mystic". I do not believe that he enjoyed that sort of adulation, merited though it was. When he died in 1957, Shrimati Ranade received letters of sympathy from the President and Vice President of India, Rajas, governors, Union and State ministers, institutions and individuals in India and abroad.

Much as I appreciate Ranade's spiritual and intellectual achievements, 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 also in other countries, there are many great scholars engaged in various researches, many great philosophers with deep insights 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 Ranade, one of those rare spirits who show us how fine human nature can be.

1. This article was first published in the August 1959 Number of Aryan Path. The introductory note is by the Editor of Aryan Path.
2. Professor Clark was teaching English in the Deccan College, Pune.
3. Heifer means a young cow, that has not yet had a calf. In German it also means an imaginary animal.



4. He began to initiate aspirants from 1937, not from 1924.
5. The writings mentioned by Mr. Burch do not belong to the three years, from 1924-1927. Works on pre-Socratics were mostly published before 1920. A Comparative study of Greek and Sanskrit came out in 1915. The book on Carlyle's two Essays saw the light of day in 1916.
6. A Nomadic Tribe.
7. Yuvaraja of Sangli, Madhav Chintaman Patwardhan.
8. Shri. Ganesh Vishnu Tulpule (Kaka).
9. Dr. Raghavendra S. Padaki.
10. Barister M. P. Ankalikar, Bijapur.
11. '...in the tradition of Vishishtadvaita ... opposed to Mysticism' are rather bold statements which are based on the misconception that Advaita and Bhaktimarga are totally opposed to each other and therefore are not compossible and further that Bhakti can go only with Vishishtadvaita. But Bhakti is not a monopoly of Vishishtadvaita. Gurudev's Mystical Philosophy was in the tradition of Advaita and not Vishishtadvaita. Gurudev did not reject Advaita and Jnana-Marga. On the contrary he reconciled Advaita, Jnana and Bhakti. This is Jnanottar Bhakti, where the dualistic Bhakti has metamorphosed into Advaita-Bhakti, which is a result of mystical experience. How can, then Advaita and Jnana be dangerous to mysticism? Long back has Jnaneshwara taught, off and on, Advaita-Bhakti. तैसी क्रिया कीर न साहे । तन्ही अद्वैती भक्ति आहे। हे अनुभवाचि जोगे । नव्हे बोलाएसें ॥ (ज्ञानेश्वरी 18.1151)
12. The poem is भक्त नेंदरे भक्त प्रल्हादनु (Pathway to God in Kannada Literature, 2003, pp. 125-127).

36. Ranade the Saint

Shri. S.K. Gupta, Baripada, (Orissa)

A sketch of a God-realiser by one who is not so, is hardly adequate. Unless the spiritual depth which Ranade attained is fathomed, one can hardly depict him



appropriately. Before I attempt a description of Ranade from the standpoint of a non-realiser of God, I bow down in veneration to the 'Mysterium Tremendum'¹ that is Ranade.

I had the privilege of being his disciple for two years at the University of Allahabad. He taught Indian Philosophy in M.A. (Previous) class. I still remember his explanation of 'Tajjalan' - the cryptic word from Chhandogya Upanishad², that from which all things originate, into which they are ultimately resolved and in which they live and have their being is 'Tajjalan'. 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 Gita³ says, He abides in all multiplicity undivided.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्यय मीक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेशु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ (18.20)

The full import of the term 'Tajjalan', only a mystic can realise, and a mystic alone can explain it the best. Even though the listeners are non-mystics and so can not enter much deep into its meaning, yet they are impressed. They are aware of a grand presence. An impression of a life time is created.

1. This is how Rudolf Otto characterises the Ultimate Reality in his book The Idea of the Holy.
2. 3.14:1
3. "The knowledge by which one imperishable essence is seen in all beings, undivided in the divided", know thou that knowledge as pure."



37. Gurudev as a teacher

Shri. S.K. Gupta, Baripada

His 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 specialities of the research students. First rate theses and books by research scholars are the outcome of his guidance. Dr. Chandra Dhar Sharma, author of that excellent book 'A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy', was a research scholar under Ranade's guidance, when I was a student of M.A. class. His book contains scholarly dissertations and views of Ranade. I happened to meet him, when he came to Orissa as President of All Orissa Philosophy Association. He agreed with me that his book contains Ranade's views, which adds much to its excellence.



38. A God-realiser writing on God

Shri. S.K. Gupta, Baripada

It was not only his scholarship but also his unassuming nature that made Ranade an attractive personality. It was a pleasure to meet him at 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. Several years after I passed out from Allahabad University, I happened to read his epoch making book "Pathway to God in Hindi



Literature." I realised then that he was a God-realiser. A book on God written by a God-realiser has an amazing depth and a wonderful charm. The reader realises that here is something above the ordinary. Such a book stands out from other books on God, written by non-realiser. There is a book on Contemporary Indian Philosophy,¹ wherein the philosophies of eminent modern philosophers of India including Ranade are given, through their own writings. I noticed therein that Ranade's essay surpassed all other essays in depth. The other essays have high philosophical acumen, but not the depth of Ranade, which is the outcome of God-realisation. All the books written by Ranade are outstanding. They bear the stamp of his deep spiritual insight. Though he is physically no more, one can feel the influence of that liberated soul, through his books. It can lead a person to immortality.

1. Edited by Radhakrishnan and Muirhead published by George Allen and Unwin.....
2. The Evolution of my own Thought.

39. His meditation and message have made him immortal

Prof. Sangamlal L. Pande, Allahabad

व्याख्यातोपनिषत्तत्त्वं रहस्यवादभास्करम्।
श्रीरानडेगुरुं वन्दे ज्ञानभक्ति जगद्गुरुम् ॥1॥
प्रथम ज्ञानदेवादीन् कबीरादीस्ततः परम् ।
व्याख्यातुं बसवादीश्च सोऽवातरन्महीतले ॥2॥



उमदीमुनिशिष्यो यो निम्बर्गीमतशङ्करः ।
सन्तो वदन्ति सर्वे तं भक्तवाणी विनायकम् ॥3॥
प्रणीतं सन्निधौ तस्य मया रैदासदर्शनम् ।
सम्पादितं च भाषायां रानडेदर्शनं पुनः ॥4॥
द्रष्टुं ज्ञातुं परं तत्त्वं रानडेजीवनं तथा ।
अलं साधकसर्वस्व रानडेदर्शनं मम ॥5॥

Between 1952 and 1956 I was in close contact with Prof. R.D. Ranade. He used to come to stay at Allahabad every year from January or February to April or May. During his stay I was privileged to meet him almost every day. So I got the opportunity of holding numerous sittings with him. But in each sitting I found him in a new perspective. The spirit in him was ever new. It was difficult to understand him completely. The only gain was that I got a new inspiration to meet him again. Each encounter with his personality invariably led to another. Such was the magnetic attraction in it.

Today he is no more in his earthly coil. But still I continue to see him or rather remember him, as I used to do during the fifties. Indeed hardly a day passes off when I do not see him in his meditational pose. His personality is, undoubtedly, immortal, not only because it is enshrined in his immortal works, but also because it is living in the lives of his numerous admirers and disciples. I fully subscribe to the view of the great Hindi saint, Nabhadasa who says in his Bhaktamala that, love for God, the man who has this love, God and the teacher of the man - these four constitute one single personality. So wherever there is love for God initiated by Prof. Ranade or his disciples, there he is living in the very form his earthly existence signified. The continuity of his spiritual tradition, message and meditation have made him immortal in the true sense of the word. Those who have this sense can see him even now.



I have many memories about him and it is not possible to record all of them here. So I shall describe only two or three of them and leave the rest for some future occasion. Prof. Ranade had attained to the state of desirelessness. There was no trace of any desire or longing in him. He did not suffer even from the last infirmity of human mind, viz., Love for fame. When Prof. S. Radhakrishnan became Vice-President of India, I asked Prof. Ranade to comment on his appointment. He expressed his happiness over it and said that it augured well for the good of the nation. But when I asked him whether he himself wished to be the Vice-President or President of India, he replied emphatically in the negative and said, "I have dedicated my life to God-realisation. Is there anything more valuable? Why do you think of the undesirable?"

These talks with Prof. Ranade have revealed to me one thing, *inter alia*, that he was completely committed to philosophy and religion. Whereas his contemporaries and colleagues sought the reward of their services to philosophy and religion and then took leave of philosophy for political and social work. Prof. Ranade did not do so, for, he was above the State. He was in the line of Indian Rishis and saints that were not enamoured of State and its power.

Such was his love for philosophy. I have yet to come across a teacher of philosophy who is as devoted to philosophy as Prof. Ranade was. In fact, he was philosophy incarnate and whosoever came in his contact became a philosopher in his own right. To know him was to know philosophy. To know the philosopher was to be a philosopher. ब्रह्म देव ब्रह्मैव भवति।



40. अपराविद्या पराविद्या का साधन है।

डॉ. धीरेन्द्र मोहन दत्त, शांतिनिकेतन

आचार्य रामचन्द्र दत्तात्रेय रानडे का भौतिक शरीर अब भूतों में विलीन है। देहमुक्त ब्रह्मर्षि की पवित्र स्मृति अब मानस में अधिकतर उज्वल हो रही है।

डॉ. रानडे यशस्वी विद्वान थे, प्रसिद्ध ग्रन्थकार थे। प्रख्यात अध्यापक थे। प्रमुख दर्शनिक थे। परन्तु यह उनका यथार्थ परिचय नहीं है। उनके जीवन का मूलस्रोत था ब्रह्मास्वाद। बाकी सब था उसीका बाह्य प्रकाश। ब्रह्मचिंतन में ही उनका अधिक समय व्यतीत होता था।

गणित, संस्कृत, ग्रीक दर्शन आदि बहुशास्त्रों में उनका पाण्डित्य था। किन्तु उनके लिए सभी अपरा विद्यार्थें पराविद्या ही का साधन थी। अध्यापन भी अध्यात्मिक जीवन ही का परिपोषक था। उपनिषद्, रहस्यवाद और सन्तों के विषय में ग्रन्थरचना तो मानो उनकी आध्यात्मिक साधन का अंग-सी थी। उनके पावन संस्पर्श से विद्यार्थियों को अपराविद्या के साथ पराविद्या की झलक भी कुछ मिल आती थी। महाराष्ट्र के संतों के सदृश आपके जीवन में भी ज्ञान और भक्ति का मधुर समन्वय हुआ था। शरीर उनके पूर्ण वश में था। वह आत्मा का लघुतम वाहन और साधन था। देखने से ही प्रतीत होता था कि उसे जब चाहे छोड़ सकते हैं।

गृहस्थ होते हुए भी आप संन्यासी थे। गृह उनका आश्रम था। कुटुम्ब, अतिथि, विद्यार्थी, मुमुक्षु, सभी का वह एक अपूर्व संगम था। तप, स्वाध्याय, ईश्वर-प्रणिधान, शास्त्रार्थ, सत्संग, भजन, कीर्तन और आदरसत्कार का सतत प्रवाह वहाँ चलता था।

कई बार उनके घर में ठहरने का सौभाग्य मुझे प्राप्त हुआ। अन्तिम बार चले आने के पूर्व आपने शिशु दौहित्र¹ से गीता जी के इन दो श्लोकों की आवृत्ति कराकर मुझे बिदाई दी :

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।

तदहं भक्त्युपहतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ (9.26)

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ (9.27)



कर्णों में अभी तक उस शुककंठ की प्रतिध्वनि
आ रही है और संकेत दे रही है। यह
आत्मसमर्पण ही उनका मुख्य उपदेश है।

1. दीपक आपटे.



41. Gurudev - a magnanimous man

Shri. G.V. Saraf, Belagavi

Gurudev Ranade was acting Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University, when he retired from service in 1946. After his retirement he had come to Nimbai for his stay. Sri Gopalrao Gajendragadkar¹ came to know that Gurudev Ranade was to receive a substantial amount from the University on account of his provident fund etc. He told me of it and said that we two should go to Nimbai and try to secure that amount as deposit in the Belgaum Bank Ltd. We were then Directors of the Bank. Accordingly, we went to Nimbai. Gajendragadkar was acquainted with Gurudev Ranade and he opened the topic. Gajendragadkar : You are to receive a good amount from the University, are not you ? Gurudev : Yes, the University is to pay me some amount.

Gajendragadkar : Will you kindly deposit it in our Bank? We shall give you a good rate of interest and we too shall be benefitted.

Gurudev : I shall consider it when I get the money.

Gajendragadkar : When do you expect to get it ?



Gurudev : I do not know. The University will pay when it will be convenient for it to do so.

I then intervened in the talk and suggested that amount is due and if it is not paid soon, we can give a legal notice to compel the University to pay it soon. Gurudev became a little perturbed to hear that and said, "the University is in financial difficulties and I can not think of giving a notice to it for payment of my money. No. No. I shall not even demand it at this time. It will pay me when it will be possible for it to do so. I would forgo my claim rather than give a notice for payment.

We were surprised to see this benevolent attitude of Gurudev. What a great man! How magnanimous ! A God-realised soul indeed !!

1. Retired Deputy Collector



42. I have no opponents

Shri. S.D. Dabade, Bijapur

Gurudev Ranade owned lands in Ramdurg and Gonnagar. The Bombay Tenancy Act was to come into force. Under the Act, the tenants were to become owners being the tillers. Mr. Digambarpant Mhaiskar, a disciple of Gurudev, was managing these lands. He had taken documents from the tenants that they were tilling the lands as servants and not as tenants. After the Act was promulgated the Manager came to Nimbale along with the cultivators. They all met Gurudev and narrated the facts. Gurudev called the late Barrister M. P.



Anklikar, Mr. S. M. Wali the then Assistant Commissioner, Indi and myself and told us that we should settle the matter in such a way that injustice should not be caused either to the tenants or himself. The tenants were called in to our room. They admitted that they had given in writing that they would not claim the rights of tenants under the Act and they were willing to cultivate them as servants of the landlord (Gurudev) and should be allowed to cultivate them in future also. This was communicated to Gurudev who told Mr. Mhaiskar to continue the lands to be cultivated by them in future.

The tenants then went back to their place and after a week or so wrote a letter to Gurudev as follows :

"Though we had agreed to continue as your servants and cultivate your lands, we are sorry to inform you that our sons and other members of our family are not agreeable to the arrangement."

Gurudev then told Mr. M. P. Anklikar and myself to take such steps as were suitable. We both went to Ramdurg and filed applications to get them evicted. The matter came up for hearing. The tenants would come up to the Court building and would not enter the court-room to adduce their evidence. After giving them three chances the Mamlatdar (Tehsildar) recorded evidence on behalf of applicant (Gurudev) and examining the documentary and oral evidence, gave his verdict in favour of the applicant (Gurudev). They then went in appeal to the Revenue Assistant Commissioner who rejected the same. Also their revision petition to the Revenue Appellate Tribunal and the Writ to the High Court were summarily dismissed. On receipt of the certified copies of these decisions Gurudev sent for me and asked me to read them. I then started reading first the decision of the Mamlatdar and began reading the names of the parties. When the names of the



cultivators were read they were described as "Opponents" and hearing this word Gurudev asked me to stop and took exception to the word "Opponent" which according to him was jarring. I explained to him that the Act itself describes the parties as such. He then said, "I have no opponents and these people are not my opponents." All my efforts to convince him that the word were used in the Court language, were of no avail and he did not agree and walked into his room and sat long for meditation.

It then occurred to me when Gods like Ramachandra and Krishna had their opponents in Ravana and Kamsa why did Gurudev say that he had no opponents? I could not ask him to get my doubts clarified as he hurriedly left the place to his room and sat for meditation.

In course of time my doubts were cleared when I came across, — समोऽहं सर्वं भूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः । (The Bhagavadgita, 9.29) and also the verse देवानां दानवानां च सामान्यमसि दैवतम् । (Mahapurush Vidya Stotra) which mean respectively 'I have no friends nor foes' and 'you are equal to both Devas and Danavas' etc.

I was convinced of his greatness and of the fact that he was a God-realised Guru.



43. When the stomach secretes nectar; hunger and thirst cease to torment

Shri. Jagannath Vasudev Parulekar, Belagavi

Gurudev Ranade severed his connection with the D.E. Society,¹ Pune in 1924 and after tendering his resignation, went to live in Nimbal. Early in 1926 he had no money in



hand to meet his expenses and therefore he wrote a letter to a close friend, D.B. alias Balasaheb Deshpande, Inamdar of Malikwad in Chikodi taluka, then serving as Mamlatdar of Bagalkot, to come and meet him in Nimbal. Balasaheb went to Nimbal immediately and after hearing Gurudev, he placed before him a few hundred rupees and promised to send more money after going back to Bagalkot. Gurudev however, declined to accept the money as it was परद्रव्य^२. His book, A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, was just then published and he requested Balasaheb to arrange for the sale of about 200 copies so that he may get enough money in hand to meet his expenses. Balasaheb readily agreed to do so and the next day, he left for Belagavi with Gurudev and the books in his car. They went to the bungalow of V.B. alias Kakasaheb Parulekar who was then Assistant Commissioner under the Divisional Commissioner, controlling six districts in the Southern Division of the then Bombay State. Kakasaheb was a close friend of Sri Balasaheb Deshpande and knew Gurudev Ranade also well.

The wife of Kakasaheb, Kaki as she was known to us, was then in indifferent health and she invited my wife to help her in cooking and serving food to the guests. My wife told her that she would go to her a little late as she was required to cook food for me. Sou. Kaki replied that I too should dine with the guests and informed me accordingly. It was then that I was first introduced to Gurudev Ranade. Balasaheb introduced me to Gurudev. We all four used to sit together for meals both morning and evening. Gurudev was almost always confined to his room and came out only for tea and food. I was told that he was having tea 4 to 5 times a day. Sou. Kaki prepared several good dishes for the guests, both in the morning and in the evening. Gurudev was however hardly eating any food. He just touched the dish.



Sou. Kaki was marking all this and when the party left after 3 days, she remarked, "This gentleman is not eating any food. He has only skin and bones and he does not eat even a morsel of food. He may not live long." She did not know - and I too did not then know - what Jnaneshwara has said :

जैसा अमृताचा निझरू। प्रसवे तयाचा जठरु ।
तथा क्षुधेतृषेचा अडदरु । कांहींच नव्हे ॥³

(How can hunger and thirst matter to one in whose stomach the spring of nectar is flowing ?)

Immediately on reaching Belagavi, Balasaheb told Kakasaheb Parulekar the object of his visit to Belagavi. Kakasaheb was taken by surprise and could not decide what he should do to sell out the books. A plan was suggested to him by Balasaheb and accordingly, telegrams were sent to the Head Clerks of the six districts to come and meet Kakasaheb Parulekar. The telegrams created a nervous feeling in the hearts of the Head Clerks and they all rushed to Belagavi to meet Kakasaheb. The Head Clerk of Belagavi, Shri Hubli was the first person to make enquiries about the telegram, but he could get no information from the office as to why he was called by Kakasaheb. He went to the bungalow of Kakasaheb early in the morning, when he met Balasaheb in the bungalow. Kakasaheb was sitting inside his room and he came out. He told Balasaheb to speak to Shri Hubli and again went in. Sri Balasaheb explained the object of the telegram. Shri Hubli felt relief and asked how many copies he was expected to sell out. Sri Balasaheb told him to sell out 60 copies. He agreed and went back in his Tonga to his house and came back with the full price of the books. The money was given in the hands of Balasaheb. Hubli had then tea with Kakasaheb, when I was also present. I was then serving under Hubli. The other five Head Clerks came one after



another and took away copies with them, agreeing to send the price to Balasaheb in a couple of days. It was a surprise to Gurudev that some 200 copies were sold out in a couple of days. He was happy and expressed his greatfulness through his eyes. Kakasaheb and Balasaheb were both happy that they were of some service to Gurudev. The party left for Nimbale on the 4th day. I thus met Sri Gurudev in 1926. Unfortunately, I did not then know that he was a God-realised Soul and great .saint and I had to wait till 1950 for my initiation in Nama-mantra by him.

1. Deccan Education Society.
2. Money belonging to others. Non-acceptance of such money is one of the cardinal tenets of spiritual life. This is an ancient teaching.
3. Jnaneswari, 2.339

44. Gurudev's spiritual powers

Shri. J.V. Parulekar, Belagavi

I received initiation in 'Nama-mantra' from Gurudev Ranade in 1950. Thereafter, I used to visit Nimbale twice or thrice every year, when I used to stay with R.P. Sondur (Retired Deputy Collector) who was staying in Nimbale almost throughout the year. We were required to sit for meditation in a room in the house of Gurudev from 8 a.m. to about 12 noon. Thereafter we had some rest for about half an hour. Then Satsanga (sitting) would begin. This was followed by the afternoon Bhajan. It was at about 5 P.M. that food was served. The Sadhakas who were present, used to get up at about 3.30 A.M. and sit for meditation up to 6 A.M.



I was in Ratnagiri in 1953. I took leave and went to Nimbal to stay there for a few days. After 3 days, I requested Gurudev to permit me to go back. Gurudev replied: "How can you get any benefit by coming here in a hurry and rushing back so soon? You will have to stay here for a fortnight or for a month and absorb yourself in meditation to get some fruit." I dropped the idea of returning to Ratnagiri and agreed to stay on in Nimbal.

As usual, I and Sondur got up at 3.30 AM. the next day, and sat down for meditation. And suddenly, I had a delightful vision. There was full light before my sight. Gurudev appeared with a smiling face and I could get a taste of spiritual experience. I felt blissful; and the vision disappeared in about 5 minutes.

Sondur and myself meditated up to 6 A.M. Sondur then spread his bed and lay on it. I was sitting and talking to him. Just then, Sri Gurudev entered our room. Sondur got up from his bed and removed it. We could not know why Gurudev came to us at that early hour. He enquired how we were doing. He talked a few words and left for his house. We followed him. He stopped on the way, looked at me and asked, 'Does your stay benefit you or not?' I could immediately see that he was referring to the vision which I had during my meditation in the morning. I could know that it was a gift from him and felt very humble in his presence. I replied, "Yes, it does benefit!" Gurudev then said, "You have to continue your meditation with zest and vigour and reach that stage." He then proceeded to his house and we both returned to our room. I felt in my heart that it was due to the grace of Gurudev that I could get the spiritual experience that morning. What would His grace not do? And this brought me close to the feet of Gurudev (अनुभव जे जाणती ते गुरूपदीचे अभिलाषी).¹



After we returned to the room, Sri Sondur asked me what happened in my meditation in the morning. I gave him an outline. He was happy and exclaimed : "How fortunate you are!" He then prepared the morning tea and I had my exhilarating cup of tea also.

1. This line occurs in a famous Marathi eulogy of the spiritual teacher. It means : Only those who are blessed with spiritual experience take resort to the sacred feet of the Master.



45. Gurudev- a Sthitaprajna¹

Shri. Kaka Karkhanis, Bijapur

The first annual gathering of the P. B. High School, Jamkhandi, was celebrated in 1916. Gurudev Ranade was invited to deliver a talk on that occasion. He was staying in Pune then. When I went to him he said, "A telegram is received that Venkatesh is serious." Venkatesh was his son from the first wife. She was then in Kolhapur. We went to Jamkhandi. On the day of the annual gathering when I approached Gurudev, I saw his nephew lamenting. Gurudev told me, "Ganpatrav, a telegram has been received from Kolhapur. Venkatesh passed away. Lord hath given and Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." We were amazed to see that he then quietly resumed his work. He went to the High School and spoke to the gathering for about an hour. Gurudev was such a Sthitaprajna! Later I asked him why he did not go to



Kolhapur. He said, "When I reached Miraj I had an intimation that it was no use going to Kolhapur. Hence I came straight-way to Jamkhandi."

1. An equanimous man.



46. Saints live for others

Shri Kaka Karkhanis, Bijapur

During the period of his last illness Gurudev had become very weak. He could not even talk. It was Saturday, one of the days in a week when new aspirants were initiated. It was June 1, 1957. I was at Nimbai. Some doctors from Mumbai had come to examine Gurudev. They examined him and were stepping out of Gurudev's residence. I was about to enter when, one of the doctors, Dr. S. S. Ajagaonkar stopped me and expressed his desire to get initiated. I asked him, "Have you come to take नम ?" "What?", he said, "Do you think I have come to examine him? I have come to take नम. " I got all information from him about his family deity and other details and went to Gurudev. He was lying in the verandah, frail and extremely weak. He was lying on the right lateral side. He saw me and asked me by the sign of his hand, why I had come. I told him about Dr. Ajagaonkar's desire to get himself initiated. Gurudev had already given initiation to two or three people on that day though he was too weak even to talk. In spite of that, he smiled - that was perhaps his last smile - and



showed his assent. All details about Dr. Ajagaonkar were told by me. He then wrote by the fore-finger of his left hand the Nama that was to be given. I repeated it to him to make sure the correctness of that नाम. When he confirmed the correctness, I bowed to him as usual, went to Dr. Ajagaonkar. He was thus initiated. Indeed what a fortunate soul is Dr. Ajagaonkar to get Nama under such circumstances! And what benevolence of the great saint of Nimbai to take trouble in spite of such weak health ! Saints live for others.



47. The mystical character of Virashaiva literature

Shri Phakirappa Gurappa Halakatti, Bijapur

Once Shri H¹ from Bijapur, had been to Gurudev to pay his respects. He was a pioneer in publishing Vachana-literature² of Virashaiva saints of Karnatak. Naturally Vachana literature in Kannada saints was the topic of discussion that day. "I first came to know," began Gurudev, "about your English translation of the Vachanas of Basava, by reading the opinion of Mr. Macnicol. They were published in the Indian Antiquary. Is it not?" "Not all. Some of them were published in it" replied Halakatti. Then Gurudev remarked, "Akhandeshwara appears to be a good Vachanakara (one who writes Vachanas). He combines poetry, philosophy and mysticism. Really Vachanas are a configuration of prose and poetry. The mystical literature that we come across in Karnatak and Maharashtra is rarely



to be found in upper India. You have to seek hundreds of volumes to find out a good spiritual song. The Kannada saints went to mysticism directly and not through mythology like other saints. The Vachanakaras have expressed what they have actually experienced."

1. Shri H. refers to P. G. Halakatti who spent his lifetime for the resuscitation and publication of Virashaiva literature. He is known as Vachana-pitamaha, the grand sire in the field.
2. Vachanas (sayings), are prose-poetry in form and ethico-mystical in content.



48. Great Undertakings require team-work

Shri. P.G. Halakatti, Bijapur

Halakatti asked Gurudev about the publication of his History of Indian Philosophy. Gurudev gave him all the 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 was¹ a break in the continuity of publishing such a series of volumes, Gurudev said, "People care more for political and social advancement and not for academic, cultural and spiritual progress. Hence they are quite indifferent to such publications."



Gurudev asked one of the aspirants² there, to write a thesis on such cultural subjects for his Ph.D. "Such a thesis should preferably be written in English," remarked Halakatti., "so that it should be useful to a wider circle of readers." "Such a thesis," observed Gurudev, "should be written both in English as well as in the regional language. Then it would be useful for the development of both thought and language. In 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."

1. Gurudev had an idea of Preparing a comprehensive History of the development of philosophical ideas in East and West, including mid-east. Many scholars were to be invited to write on different subjects. With this purpose he had planned two schemes, one of eight volumes and the other of sixteen volumes. (Critical and Constructive Aspects of Prof. R.D. Ranade's Philosophy, by Prof. B.R. Kulkarni, Published by Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belagavi, 1974, pp. 167-180).
2. This refers to Sri M. S. Deshpande of Athani.

49. Bodhasudhe

Gurudev related to Halakatti how the Kannada book, "Bodhasudhe" took shape. The book contains the Vachanas of Nimbargi Maharaj. He said, "Originally, they were utterances of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj, which were collected by his Vaishnava disciple Raghunathacharya



Adya. The book is a narration of moral and mystical discourses which the great saint used to give daily. In Bodhasudhe we have merely arranged them in the Aristotelean fashion. We wanted to preserve its authenticity and personal touch. Not a single new idea was introduced, for we did not want to make it a classical treatise. In properly arranging the sayings we have done nothing more than what a garland maker does. This is something similar to what Aristotle has done, but it goes beyond him. Aristotle has merely defined the principles for moral life. But ethical principles derive their validity from mystical experience. सत्य (truth) is that which is done in the light of God-experience and असत्य (untruth) outside it. This mystical element is eminently present in Bodha-sudhe.

Then Gurudev asked one aspirant to read the contents of the book in which two sections titled होर काळग (external conflict) and ओळ काळग (internal conflict) occur. When these sections were read Gurudev told how every person is required to face two types of conflicts in his life. This has been tellingly described by saint Tukarama¹ as follows : 'Day and night are we required to fight, with the world outside and mind inside.' Thereafter, the first chapter, the Fundamental Principle of conduct, was got read. When the reading was over, Gurudev asked, "What is the ultimate principle of conduct?" and offered the reply himself. "It is the realisation of one-ness, of atonement, of सामरस्य (communion) 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 Halakatti remarked, "This principle appears to be akin to the principle of कायकवे कैलास (Work is worship) of the Virashaiva saints." "Yes, to a certain extent," replied Gurudev. "But there is a good deal of difference. Any work



can not be worship. It is only the work that is meant for the realisation of God, or is inspired by Him or done under the canopy of His illumination, that deserves to be called 'worship'."

Gurudev then asked the reader² to sing his 'Prayer to the great Master', Nimbargi Maharaja. He liked the prayer very much and intended to publish it at the beginning of Bodhasudhe. When the singer came to the line, कृतियु बेळगलि निन्न बेळकिनल्लि (Let my action shine under the canopy of Thy illumination) Gurudev remarked, "Then alone the action will be worship." And when the next line, निन्न करुणवे अन्न, निन्न करुणवे नीरू, निन्न करुणवे उसिरु एनगागलि (Let Thy Grace be my food, drink and my very life breath), was recited, Shri Gurudev pointed out to Shri H., "Look ! How poetry is inspired by religion!" निन्न करुणवे उसिरु 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 Parikshit was liberated during seven days and Khatvanga, during two and a half hours. 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 Kalidasa has remarked : क्षणमप्यवतिष्ठते श्वसन् यदी जन्तुर्नु लाभवानसौ³ (The person who is able to breathe even for a single second is really very fortunate).

1. रात्रंदिन आम्हा युद्धाचा प्रसंग/अंतर्बाह्य जग आणि मन ॥
2. The poem under reference is देव हिरि गुरुराय तिळियदै निन्न माय composed by M. S. Deshpande. The poem is an invocation to the Saint of Nimbargi. (Pathway to God in Kannada Literature 2003, p.96).
3. Raghuvansha (8.87).



50. The hour of departure arrived

Dr. P.D. Khanolkar, Solapur

Gurudev Ranade, a Guru to a large number of aspirants both in the North and the South, attained Samadhi on 6-6-1957 at Nimbai in Bijapur district, thus creating a deep void in the minds of his followers.

I myself was all along under his spiritual guidance and came not only to revere him but like him as my father. His child-like simplicity, earnestness of purpose and the effective manner in which he conveyed spiritual truth to us was beyond imagination.

The feeling of great attachment was remarkable to all his Sadhakas. He made no distinction between any of his followers. He was always found dancing to the tune of the Maker, completely forgetful of worldly surroundings. He was one with divinity. Everyone found something new in his approach to Sadhaka's problems. Such a dynamic personality he was. Since July 1956 he was gradually retreating from the world. He saw particularly that Bhakti was spread as much as possible.

I had the good fortune of examining Gurudev Ranade just after his return from Allahabad. On 16-5-57 he paid a surprise visit to Solapur. I was informed from Hotgi railway station that he would reach Solapur by about 5 p.m. I contacted all his disciples in Solapur immediately and some of them told me that he had gone very weak. I then took my hospital ambulance and a wheel chair and reached Hotgi railway station in my car. Gurudev was sitting in the first class compartment, absorbed in meditation. I entered the compartment and prostrated before him. He signalled me with his hand to sit down and meditate. After about 15 minutes he stood up and got down the train briskly and started walking. He entered my car and we reached my



bungalow. He said to me, "That is how the meditation gives a person dynamic energy." Some disciples were with me. We had tea and then I examined him. I found that he was having a hacking cough. His lungs showed congestion particularly on right side. He was X-rayed. X-ray showed that he had old healed tuberculous lesions at both apices and a patch of hazyness in the right costophrenic angle. He himself said that he was able to visualise both his lungs without X-ray. It was apparently to verify the facts that he came to Solapur. I gave him antibiotics and sedative tinctures, but he did not use them at all. He then returned to Nimbai by the night train. I again went to Nimbai after about 7-8 days with X-ray machine and got him X-rayed. We had to support him whilst taking X-ray. I clinically examined him and found that his lungs were clear which was confirmed by X-ray. He was also examined by eminent doctors who came to the conclusion that his lungs were clearing.

Particularly during the last 3 days, he was completely detached from the world. He got himself examined by Dr. Paripatyadar to confirm that he was free from disease and got his bowels cleaned by laxative.

Thus the revered Soul departed in a bliss of joy with complete control over his disease. Just before his departure his pulse was regular and breathing was normal. Thus Gurudev attained Samadhi on 6-6-1957 at night, just as Kabir saying "I am giving away the body as clean and pure as given to me : झीनी झीनी बीनी चदरिया, Jhini Jhini bini chadaria" and Shri Nimbargi Maharaj saying : अप्पा गुरूराया निंदु निनगे ओप्पितु, O God, I am returning to you the body as normal as it was given to me."

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Part II A

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A. Philosophical Discussions



51. 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 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 a 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 students of 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."



52. Inadequacy of mere intellectual knowledge

One day a disciple in one of the sittings asked Gurudev, "Sir, some scholars maintain that since the whole Universe is nothing but the Absolute, सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म¹, all our actions in



this world partake of the nature of Brahman. Naturally, Brahman can 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 Tapas² there? How far is this view correct?"

"This is wrong", said Shri Gurudev. सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म 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 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 Sadhana. Moreover, mere intellectual knowledge of Reality is totally different from its mystical realisation. One cannot, 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.

1. Chhandogya Upanishad, 3.14.1
2. Penance



53. Reason Vs Intuition

About the pantheistic conception of 'World is God,' Gurudev once observed, "It is not enough to consider that God has assumed the form of the world. It must be directly experienced. To realise the power that controls and guides the universe, a different Sadhana is required. To see God in



everything and every event in the Universe, is a result of meditation of a higher quality. God is the beginning and the end of the Universe. This fact must be actually experienced. The process from rational conviction to spiritual realisation is extremely difficult, nay, it may even be considered to be practically impossible. To pass from idea to reality is more of an ontological argument than a spiritual reality. Meditation on नाम alone is an easy means for its realisation."



54. Who can fathom the depth of Divinity ?

It was about eight O'clock in the morning. Gurudev was conversing with the aspirants as usual. When the conversation was going on, he suddenly asked Nagappa, grandson of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, who was present there, to sing the Kannada song गुरुवे निम्माज्ञेयनु मीरदे नडेदवनु.¹ As the song was sung by Nagappa in his sonorous voice, Gurudev was listening to it in rapt attention. There was pin drop silence. All at once, Gurudev broke the silence with this remark, "Look here! यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणाः.² Even the gods and demons could not fathom the depth of Divinity. What to speak 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 by 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 at least one province that deserves to be free from conflict 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."

1. Kannada song by Kudaluresha. The means - Oh my Guru, one who never disobeys you... (Pathway to God in Kannada literature, 2003, P.278).
2. This is the last line of the verse of Gita dhyana which begins as यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेंद्र....



55. God would reside in the heart that is free from Passions

Dr. B.S. Kulhalli of Athani had once come to see Gurudev. It was his first visit. Still Gurudev felt that he was an old acquaintance of his. Hence the conversation that ensued between them was extremely free and frank. "Look here," said Gurudev, "Ours is altogether a different field. God is the driving force of the whole world. Why not of



politics also? If we once attain to Him, what can we not achieve?"

Then Gurudev asked a disciple to read the following अर्भंग (verse) of Tukarama - सर्प भुलोनिया गुंतला नाद, the purport of which is "I have been verily pent up in संसार (worldly affairs) as a serpent is pent up within the basket, by the music of the juggler. Save me by Thy power... Like a fly I stick to 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!" Other saints have expressed the same idea.¹ A moth, a fish, a deer, a bee and an elephant are enchanted and deluded by one of the objects of sense, namely, form, taste, sound, fragrance and touch respectively. What would be the fate of man who is a prey to the attractions of all the five senses? Is it not necessary, then, for man to be fore-warned and to keep himself away from them? Should he not hurry up and try to attain Paramartha (God-realisation)? It is only when he gives up the desire for these objects that he would have the benefit of God's vision. 'When desires depart, God would reside in the heart', says Tukarama. It is idle to say, 'I shall attend to devotional practices in my old age.' Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj asked, "Is life at your command?"

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1. See for example the song, नयनेंद्रिय विषयदिंद पतंग... (Pathway to God in Kannada Literature 2003, p.21).



56. Emotion and reason

"What is the place of emotion and reason in the spiritual साधन (spiritual practice or meditation)?" asked a seeker one day to which Gurudev replied : "For being able to perform our साधन 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 साधन."



57. Morality and Mysticism

One day a Kannada song¹ was being sung in the sitting, which described the experience of spiritual sound and its effects on the साधक. 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 Gurudev dealt with the close relation between morality and mysticism. He remarked, "Morality and mysticism are very intimately related. In fact they are inter-dependent. 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 virtues gradually and leads us to the supreme virtue of God-devotion. But as the Gita tells us, sense-objects turn away from the embodied soul who ceases to feed on them, but the relish for them persists. This relish disappears only after he has the vision of the Supreme. (2.59).

"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."

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1. The song is नादव केळुत निद्रेय माडुत (Listening to Anahata Sound in the ecstatic State) by Chidananda, (Pathway to God in Kannada Literature 2003, p.248).

58. Dhyana-gita

Dr. B.S. Kulhalli of Athani had been to Nimbai a second time. When Gurudev was informed about his arrival, Dr. Kulhalli was at once called in. As he entered the room, 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?" The Doctor replied, "Sir, my own case is still more serious."



It has brought me here." After a hearty laugh, the sitting began. One disciple was then asked to read selections from the Dhyana-gita¹ which was under preparation. Before the reading began, Gurudev said, "I have worked very hard on the Gita. Very few might have put in so much labour over it. We are, after all, free lancers. 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 Gita. In the company of such people one is tempted and inspired to speak freely and frankly."

"Just take for instance Chapter 12 of the Gita. There a comparison is instituted between अव्यक्त अक्षर² on the one hand and व्यक्त अहम्³ on the other. Really speaking there is no difference. सगुण and निर्गुण both are God. Then, which of these two should be worshipped? Is it His four-handed form? or the acosmic Brahman? Mere Saguna is after all perishable. What can we gain by worshipping it? Moreover Shrikrishna 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 can not be worshipped. No worship is possible in that case. The so called worship of the Avyakta is simply meditation upon vacuity. This is only intellectual worship. That will not 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 can not be attained. Still the general tendency among scholars seems to favour meditation on vacuity. That is after all a worship of the शून्य, that too of a false शून्य. The worship that leads to the realisation of the real शून्य is quite different. How is God



attained by meditation on the idea of void, can only be explained by those who have actually attained that experience. The Gita, however, characterises it as extremely difficult क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषाम् (12.5)."

Then Gurudev asked his disciple to read his selections from the twelfth chapter of the Gita. When the third and the fourth verses were read, he pointed out that adjectives, कूटस्थ, अचल, ध्रुव⁴ (12.3) etc. are applicable, not only to the Avyakta but also to the devotee of the Lord. For no great work will be achieved without control of the senses. The epithet सर्वभूतहिते रताः (12.4) contains the idea of equal opportunity to all.

When the verse ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि (12.6), those who dedicate all their actions to Me and meditate on Me, was read, a disciple asked, "Which of the two, namely, dedication and meditation, precedes the other?" Gurudev replied, "It is only after God-realisation through intense meditation that genuine dedication of 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 : तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता... भवामि नचिरात् (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 नचिरात् (soon) is to be understood from the spiritual point of view. "If our conduct is good, not even all the three⁵ Gods can do us any harm" assures Shri Nimbargi Maharaj (Bodhasudhe,3).



"The upshot of this Chapter appears to be that (i) work for the sake of realising God is a real सन्यास (renunciation) and (ii) 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. Meditation alone is actual worship. Always entertain thoughts about the Lord, about saints or about spiritual साधन. Imagine 'I am a sinner, God is all-merciful'. संशयात्मकं मनः निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः। (Mind is full of doubt, reason is full of resolve). Even your doubts should be about God. Thus fix your mind on Him. If you cannot do that too, serve the saints because service of saints is virtually service of God Himself. तस्मिन् तज्जते भेदाभावात्⁶ (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 (नारायण असे विश्वी). But we must actually realise His presence. Then alone will our social service become service of God."

"In this way (i) firm devotion (ii) earnest meditation and (iii) service of saints, constitute what is termed मत्कर्म (My work, that is divine work). This is the path of God-realisation. Mere study of philosophy will not be able to attain it. Philosophy has been defined, by a Western scholar as, 'a search by a blind man, for a black cat, in a dark room, where it is not.' Can its worthlessness be described in a better manner?"

Referring to service of saints Gurudev 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 a good many days and observe their behaviour minutely we would understand how they have realised their identity with God.

"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 N. S. Lokur⁷ asked me to wake him up at 3:43 a.m.! The wonder of it was, I awoke exactly at 3:43 a.m. and woke him up. Such psychological miracles used to take place at that time. Of course, it was not an important thing."

"Once during that period, I happened to pay a visit to Inchageri. Shri. Bhausahab Maharaj knew the method of my meditation. Still, one day he said, "What is the use of mere meditation? We should seek the company of saints. Then would our meditation be fruitful." I was nonplussed to hear this remark of Maharaj. I wanted to know its significance. But I dared not ask Maharaj directly. He was very strict and stern. Hence I asked his intimate disciple Nandyappa the meaning of Maharaj's remark. He told me that I should accompany Maharaj when he was on spiritual tours. Hence after going to Pune, I came back to Jamkhandi as Maharaj was on tour to villages nearby. I took the chance of accompanying him during this tour. I could then closely observe his life and was greatly benefitted thereby.

"Maharaj performed his meditation regularly. He could ascertain the time of his meditation to a 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 Shravana he used to live on one piece of dried



date per day. At Inchageri he used to take only a few morsels of food. Such was the austere life he led. He never failed to see Nimbargi Maharaj at least once a week and have the benefit of his holy company. He thus received guidance from his Master for well-nigh 25 years."

After this, there was a break when Gurudev went out of the room for a few minutes. Soon after his return, he asked his disciple to read his selections from chapter 13 of the Gita.

He had classified the selected verses under five groups. When the verses in the first group were read, Gurudev said, "Here virtues like Amanitva (humility) etc. have been characterised as Jnana or knowledge by the Gita. The Gita regards knowledge as virtue. Knowledge does not mean expertise in differential calculus or bacteriology. 'Knowledge is wisdom,' is a Socratic dictum. This is veritably a bold statement. The culmination of all these virtues is exclusive devotion to the Lord. When you imbibe these virtues, you will become a wise man. But in the line न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशम्⁸, Jnana means illumination or realisation of God. कृतियु बेळगलि निन्न बेळकिनल्ली (Let my act shine in your illumination) prays a modern poet. We must first experience illumination and then perform our actions. That is real offering of our actions to the Lord."

Then the verses in the second group were read. Gurudev remarked, "This group contains the description of Jneya (the philosophical Absolute). It is within and without 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."

The verses in the third group were read when Gurudev said, "This group deals with the four Sadhanas mentioned by the Gita. They are : (i) Dhyana (meditation),



(ii) Sankhya (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, and should have firm faith in our spiritual teacher. अनन्य प्रोक्ते गतिस्त्र नास्ति says an Upanishad⁹. The spiritual teacher should ever be absorbed in God, become one with Him. Till then he will not deserve to be called Sadguru. We should listen to the words of wisdom of such a master 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?' Shri Gurudev replied, "Really these are not independent paths. They are different aspects of the one pathway or Pantharaja (the royal pathway) as Jnaneshwara would call it. In fact, mere knowledge or mere action will not be able to achieve anything. Meditation on God coupled with faith and devotion is the real spiritual Sadhana. Once Gundopant Gadagakar¹⁰ asked Baba whether Karma (work) was superior to Jnana (knowledge) or Jnana superior to Karma. Baba replied, "None of them is superior, only God is superior." When I came to know about this answer, I set this very question to the students of the M. A. examination of the Bombay University that year : 'Show whether action is superior to knowledge or knowledge superior to action or whether God-realisation is superior to both.' Do not be merely after work or knowledge; follow Bhakti."

When the verses in the fourth group were read, Gurudev observed, "Just mark the words 'Samadarshana' (equality of vision) here. समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र says the Gita (13.28). What is meant by 'Samam pashyan' in this verse ? समं means equal and straight. It also means symmetrical and full (Sampurna). When we have the vision of God in all beings and on all beings, that is Samadarshana or equality of



vision. Once Baba was asked about the nature of Samadhi, he replied, “समसमान वस्तु काणिसितु अंदर समाधि आगतद” (Samadhi means an equal vision of reality everywhere). This experience of Samadhi is enjoyed without any external stimuli. Tukarama mentions समचरण दृष्टि (symmetrical vision) of the 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 Gurudev :

यदा भूतपृथग्भावं एकस्थमनुपश्यति।

तत एव च विस्तारं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥ (13.30)

(When the aspirant realises the various beings as resting in the One and evolving from the One alone, he attains Brahman). Gurudev remarked, "The whole universe is centred in one place and the world has proceeded from the same place. That is the One Supreme Being. A person who has directly experienced this, can alone be called a realised Saint. He realises that God alone does everything. Maharaj used to say, 'We must realise the all-doer.' God is the all-ruler; 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. Baba used to tell us that even in dream he used to perform Bhajan, Arati etc. Thus spirituality should permeate our whole life."

1. This work by Gurudev consists of selections from the Bhagavad-gita arranged under specific topics. It is meant to be a help for meditation.
2. Impersonal Absolute.
3. Personal God.
4. The immutable, the unchanging and the eternal.
5. The Indian trinity, namely, Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the saviour) and Mahesh (the destroyer).



6. Narada Bhakti Sutra, 41.
7. Retired Judge.
8. The Bhagavad-gita 4.38. It means : There is no purifier on earth equal to divine knowledge.
9. Kathopanishad 1.2.8
10. Shri. M.H. Gadagkar, a devout disciple of Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj.



59. Progress in spiritual life

Once there was a discussion about the nature of progress in spiritual life when Gurudev observed, "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 top, 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."





60. When is spiritual progress possible ?

There was once a discussion about the circumstances favourable for spiritual progress when Gurudev said : "For a devotee, his spiritual progress alone 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 a 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 reappear for years thereafter."



61. The Chakras and Kundalini

Once Gurudev was explaining the nature of Chakras and Kundalini to Dr. R.H. Karmarkar of Mumbai. He said , "Yoga describes six Chakras, Kundalini or oozing of nectar etc. We should test them in the light of modern science of physiology. We should study this subject in a scientific spirit and in a dispassionate manner. Modern physiologists admit the existence of 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 सहस्रदल चक्र is yet problematic. Kundalini has no physical existence. Its description as a serpent occurring in Jnaneshwari (6.221 onwards) is somewhat poetic."



62. The seat of the soul

An aspirant once asked Gurudev, "Sir, some saints maintain that the soul resides in the right side of our heart. What is your opinion about it?" Gurudev replied, "It is true that there are a few passages in the Upanishads expressing that the heart is the seat of the Soul. अंगुष्ठ मात्रः पुरुषः मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति (The Soul of the size of a thumb, resides in the heart), says the Kathopanisad (2.4.12.) सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि संनिविष्टः (I reside in the hearts of all), declares the Bhagavad-gita (15.15.) But modern physiologists are reported to claim that the brain is the seat of the Soul, that 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."



63. One view of the process of God-realisation

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 aim of human life. Our highest duty is God-realisation...."

About the process of God-realisation, it was further pointed out in the letter that it can be achieved by concentration on the two centres, : (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, somewhat difficult, yet more important. At this, Gurudev said, "Yes, It is true. But this distinction vanishes when the divine power descends on the aspirant and envelopes his whole being. The relative positions of the heart and the brain, as seats of the soul, have been fully described in the Upanishads." In the same letter there was a reference to a centre above the head from which Infinity descends. This evoked a remark from Gurudev, "Yes! It is like a radio. It is comparatively easy 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 Sadhaka."

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1. A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy (Second edition), pp 94-95.



64. Hypnotism and mystical experience

Dr. K., the then Civil Surgeon of Bijapur, once asked Gurudev to explain the distinction between hypnotism and mystical experience, when Gurudev said: "Hypnotism is dangerous both to the hypnotist as well as to his subject. The subject loses his independent individuality, the awareness of which becomes a source of life-long 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 by fear."



It is a sort of destruction of his individuality. I once happened to ask such a person, "How many persons are here in this hall?" He answered, 'Fifteen.' I again asked, "Including yourself or excluding yourself?" He answered, "I cannot say." This means that the subject entirely loses his individual self. On the other hand, mystical experience is Self-awareness, 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."



65. Nature of Miracles

"What is the exact nature of miracles? How do they take place?" These were the questions asked by a visitor. Gurudev replied, "Look here, it is a law of nature that a cause should necessarily precede an effect. Again every effect must have a cause. But if a few links in the causal series are not known, a phenomenon is treated as a miracle. Such 'miracles' do happen very often. The radio of today was a miracle of yesterday, because the mechanism was still not known. With the super-natural power acquired through penance, saints skip a few steps and at once reach the top. These sudden jumps are then regarded as miracles by common people."

"There is another type of miracles with which we are familiar. We may call them psychological miracles. Saints possessing super-natural powers, can send messages to



their disciples staying at a distance, 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 Bhausaheb Maharaj maintained that events¹ that violate the laws of Nature, such as the 'speech of a buffalo' and the 'movement of a wall' can not take place. Hence these miracles attributed to saint Jnaneshwara, might be regarded as products of poetic imagination."

"In this connection, one fact deserves special attention. Miracles should happen of their own accord; they should never be wilfully performed. Divine grace should descend. It is always received and never given. Because, the moment the idea of giving dawns upon the saint, egoism may raise its hood. Real saints, therefore, never entertain even the thought of performing a miracle. But, it is equally true that God brings about miracles, through the saints, without their knowledge."

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1. This refers to two incidents in Jnaneshwara's life, (i) To demonstrate that God is equally present in all beings Jnaneshwara made a buffalo recite the Vedas. (ii) Jnaneshwara made a mud-wall move to show that Atman enlivens a so called material body. The two incidents prove that the spiritual principle is immanent in the whole of the universe.



66. Quality of Meditation

"How to judge the quality of our meditation?" This was the question asked by a Sadhaka. 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 ideal bliss of which there is an undefined and unconscious standard in our heart. Usually, we get a fraction of it - a very small fraction of it... Only rarely the standard of 60% or higher is reached. आनंदस्य मात्रा उपजीवन्ति। The degree of bliss, however, does not depend upon the expansion of our experience; it depends upon its quality."



67. No sequence in the spiritual experiences

The nature of spiritual experience was once the topic of discussion. "Sir, There is a 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?" To this question Gurudev replied, "No, there is no fixed sequence at all. Every Sadhaka has his own peculiar order of having these experiences. Let us just observe the experiences of the saints of our own Sampradaya. What do we find there? Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, Shri Bhausahab Maharaj, Shri



Baba or Smt. Shivalingavva - all these had their experiences in different orders. This does not mean that there was no similarity among 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 Samuel 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 may get these experiences all at once. Hence the question of sequence in them becomes absolutely irrelevant. In fact, it does not arise at all."



68. 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?" 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. Do you not remember the Vachana which Baba used to quote, namely, बिंदु तिथे सिंधु (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 contains a number of grains, there is difference in quantity. We must admit that. Is it not?"

"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 can not produce boiled rice at all."



69. Theotropism and spiritual waves

In the course of a conversation about meditation and spiritual experiences, Gurudev observed, "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, namely Theotropism dawned upon me at the time of meditation. Mere tropism might be physical, mental or even imaginary. But theotropism must be a mystical experience. The spiritual waves spread out from a spiritually realised soul and influence the world. The sound-waves are spread



everywhere, but receiving stations are necessary for getting them. Otherwise they will not be caught. In the Case of spiritual waves, the receiving set is not external, it is creative. Rhythmic energy is created in the human body by meditation. If physical sound can produce wonderful results in surgery etc. then Anahata sound can produce more. Sound waves are at source electric waves."



70. Reconciliation of Saguna and Nirguna

Once Shri D. referred to an article in a Marathi Journal by Shri K. about the Saguna and the Nirguna (personal and impersonal) aspects of God and stated that K. had quoted a passage from Gurudev's 'Mysticism in Maharashtra' in support of his contention, that Shri Jnaneshwara was a devotee of a Personal God. At this Gurudev smiled and said, "How can these persons understand the relation between the Saguna and Nirguna aspects of God ? Once Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar¹ had asked me as to how we could reconcile these two aspects. I had also given a proper reply which had satisfied him. Mystical experience alone can bring about this reconciliation. How can this be understood by those who are quite innocent of such an experience?"

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1. The great orientalist, after whose name the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute at Pune stands.





71. The 'Vastu' is unique

"The 'Vastu' is visible as all other objects are visible. What, then, is the distinction between the two? Why should the one be regarded as an expression of Reality and the other not?" When this question was asked one day, Gurudev explained, "There is a vast difference between the vision of 'Vastu' and that of other objects. The former is produced from within, the latter from without. One is internal, the other external. External vision requires an empirical object. Such vision is possible only when the object is present and not when it is absent. This is not the case with internal vision. As regards 'Vastu,' there is central initiation, that is, it is created internally and is experienced without external paraphernalia."

"Nor is this all. In both these types of vision, the physiological processes also are quite different. For the vision 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 is 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 Lingappa Savalgi. He was blind in one eye. But he could see the 'Vastu' even with his blind eye. This is really a fine test of the reality of the 'Vastu'."

“यत् दृष्टम् तत् नष्टम् (that which is visible is perishable). This is a well-known maxim. It is a truism so far as empirical objects are concerned. But it is not true in the case of the Vastu. A gentleman who did not know this distinction had once asked Shri Baba this very question."

"Western, physiologists have recently propounded a new theory. They maintain that it is the whole brain that



sees, or hears or thinks. According to them, every cell of the brain sees. Sight is not the function entirely of one particular centre. Hence it is not impossible to 'see' with the ear and hear with the eyes. Such interchange is however a special feature of mystical experience. As Purandaradasa says, 'He hears by the eyes and sees by the ear.' The pada of Purandaradasa referred to, is कण्णिलि केळुव'..."

1. Pathway to God in Kannada Literature, 2003, p.226

72. The attractive power of the 'Vastu'

"When will the 'Vastu' develop the power of attracting us?" asked an aspirant. Shri Gurudev replied, "The 'Vastu' possesses the attractive power from the very beginning. Power is inherent in the 'Vastu'. We fail to realise the power in the beginning on account of our mental impurity. As soon as the process of purification of our heart starts, we begin to realise and appreciate the attraction and respond to it properly. Between the two types of spiritual experience - sound and vision - the former is more absorbing than the latter. Shankaracharya has paid a high tribute to the Anahata sound in his Yoga-taravali in glowing terms :

नादानु सन्धान नमोऽस्तु तुभ्यम् । त्वां साधनं तत्त्वपदस्य जाने ।
भवत्प्रसादात् पवनेन साकं । विलीयते विष्णुपदे मनो मे ॥

(Salutation to Thee! Oh divine sound! I know that you are the means of attaining Reality. Through your grace, my



mind, along with my breath, merges in the holy feet of Lord Vishnu.) Addressing this very sound, Tukarama says : 'Just as the pipe of a snake-charmer attracts and charms the serpent, you have charmed and overpowered me.' Such is the inherent power of attraction."

On another occasion, when a disciple complained that he no longer had any interest in spiritual life and that the 'Vastu' had ceased to attract him, Gurudev remarked, "Religion, it is said, is an instinct like hunger and sex. At times, spiritual hunger over-powers us. Then we spontaneously feel impelled to sit for meditation. After good meditation, the hunger gradually subsides. But this spiritual hunger, though naturally present in all, is dormant in some and fully awake in others, less intense in some and more intense in others. How to make it more intense is a problem. When the experience of 'Vastu' becomes permanent, through earnest Sadhana, this hunger becomes intense. This will not be possible merely through occasional glimpses of 'Vastu'. 'Vastu' should become an important factor in life - part and parcel there of. Then alone will we enter into its field of attraction, and when once this is 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."



73. The triple confluence

In the course of conversation there was once a reference to the Triveni Sangam at Prayag where there is a confluence of three rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, two manifest and one hidden. At this Gurudev observed,



"There is also a spiritual triple confluence. Do you know ? God, devotee and Nama form this triple-confluence. Of them, two are visible like Ganga and Yamuna and one is invisible like Saraswati. Normally devotee and Nama are manifest and God is unmanifest, hidden. In the second stage, devotee and God (His Form) are manifest and Nama is hidden. While in the third stage, Nama and God are manifest and the devotee goes underground. Maharaj once remarked." Though the saints depart from the world, the Form experienced by them remains." Thus God, devotee and Nama are a triple confluence in all the three stages. When the devotee merges in the Lord, God and Nama alone remain. This is a confluence of a higher type."



74. Experience of the void or Spacelessness

Once a Kannada song¹ was being read out to Gurudev. It contained the line *ॐकार शब्दवु शून्यवागिदे*, meaning 'the word Om disappeared in the Void.' This line had another reading *ॐकार शब्दवु शून्यवागदे*, which meant 'the word Om did not disappear in the Void.' Now which of the two readings is correct? When this was being discussed, Gurudev said, "Some people believe and maintain that as a Sadhaka 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 Hathyoga-Pradipika.² When this was brought to my notice, I referred the matter to Bhausahab Maharaj and sought his opinion about its correctness. I discussed this



problem with Baba as well. Both of them emphatically maintained that these experiences do not disappear at all. They simply temporarily move aside when we get the experience of Spacelessness."

1. The song is कण्णु मुच्चिदरू काणबरुतदे प्रणव स्वरूप (the form of Om is seen even with eyes closed) See परमार्थमंदिर, 1963, p. 53).
2. The composer is स्वात्माराम स्वामी.

75. Spiritual Bliss

Prof. R.B. Athavale from Ahmedabad wanted to know about the nature of spiritual bliss, when Gurudev said, "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 has to obey its call. The brain is thus a fortunate instrument as it receives the spiritual or beatific experience.

"Let us take the example of Anahata sound. Here the tympanum is stimulated from within. When we begin to have this experience, the external stimuli are barred. They do not affect the ear at all. And when the internal sound intensifies, the Sadhaka can not hear the external one."

At this stage Athavale asked, "What is the nature of Samadhi, Sir?" Gurudev replied, "The so-called Samadhi is a mere mental attunement with God. Our beatific experience is far beyond that state, there you merge in God



entirely. In that state, the Sadhaka becomes one with God. There is assimilation at that time. Shankaracharya maintains that Samadhi itself is God. सम्यक् अधीयते चित्तं यस्मिन् तदेव (Samadhi is God in whom our mind is entirely assimilated). But we must enjoy the experience of bliss. Then alone can we call it Samadhi. Patanjali says - योगः चित्तवृत्ति निरोधः (Yoga Sutra 1.1) तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपे अवस्थानम् (Yoga Sutra 1.3) and वृत्ति सारूप्यं इतरत्र (Yoga Sutra 1.4) - 'Yoga is the cessation of mental modifications. Then, the Soul abides in its own form. At other times, the soul assumes the form of 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 Koshas and reach the state of Nirananda - nonbliss. This is merely a theory. The state of Brahma-Nirvana of the Gita includes both Ananda and Nirananda. 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 can not say anything about any state beyond that."

76. Nectar on the tongue

Kaka Karkhanis

Govindbuwa Marathe, an earnest follower of the Ramadasa Sampradaya, used to stay at Pavanagad near Kolhapur. He once wrote to me that he had followed the instructions as given in Hatha-yoga-Pradipika. He had cut



his tongue at its root and thus by elongating it, he had inserted it into the nasal cavity at the top of the mouth. This was meant for enjoying the nectar that is said to ooze down from the cerebrum. But he did not get any experience of that nectar. Hence he requested me in the letter to ask Gurudev Ranade the reason for not getting that experience.

I went to Nimbal and read out that letter to Gurudev in the after-noon sitting. When he heard that Govindbuwa had cut his tongue at its root, he said, "What horrible practices these people follow!" Later I asked him, "What shall I write to Govindbuwa? What is the reply to his query?" Gurudev suddenly replied, "Write to him that the experience of the nectar etc. can be had through Nama-smarana. It is not necessary to follow such terrible practices as cutting the root of the tongue." Accordingly, I wrote to Govindbuwa. But that was of no avail. A few days later I learnt from an investigating Police Inspector that Govindbuwa burnt himself to death.

Jnaneshwara has pointed out in the sixth Adhyaya of his great commentary on the Gita that the experience of nectar etc., can be had through Nama-smarana. He has referred to it in the ninth Adhyaya also. Gurudev Ranade has described at length the experience of the mellifluous juice through the words of Kabir, in his book, Pathway to God in Hindi Literature. Tukarama had the same experience as can be known from his Abhanga - नाम घेता मन निवे । जिन्हे अमृतचि स्रवे ॥ (the mind becomes quiet when one repeats the Name, and nectar flows on the tongue).

It need not be added that such was the experience of Gurudev also. He wrote only what he had actually experienced. He followed the precept that speech without experience is of no use. He considered it a sin to speak without actual experience. He incidentally expressed in my presence and of others, who were close to him, that he



has never written in his book any thing that he has not himself experienced. Gurudev was a living example of Amanitva (humility). Hence he never wrote that his experience was such and such. He always made a constructive survey of realisation in his works by quoting various saints. It should ever be remembered that his writing is itself his autobiography.

77. My Philosophy

Once Gurudev was asked to explain the nature of his philosophy when he said : "How I live is my philosophy. 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 (an equanimous man) as one who is firmly fixed in his spiritual experience. In that sense I may be called Sthitaprajna, but I am not so in behaviour. My spiritual experience has not yet completely covered my conduct. My anger is still there, even though very often it is an outcome of my physical weakness. Calmness 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 maintaining calmness. But spiritual experience is infinitely superior to outer calmness. My peace is not an outcome of effort and is imprinted in my intellect by my spiritual experience."



78. A Strange Vision

Once in 1908, Gurudev, Prof. Wodehouse,¹ Shri. Bhadabhade², Shri Vishnupant Karandikar,³ and Shri V. G. Paranjape⁴ were discussing in the bungalow of Prof. Wodehouse, about Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. At that time Gurudev just casually peeped out of the window in front of him, which was on the side of Alandi. Just then, he saw a huge column of light extending high up midway into the sky above. At once 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," said Gurudev about the vision, "for long hours at that time. But the quality of my heart had improved a good deal. The incarceration of Lokamanya Tilak, the turbulent political atmosphere, had softened 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 on 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."

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1. E.A. Wodehouse, Professor of English at the Deccan College Pune.
 2. Baburav Bhadabhade was Gurudev's colleague
 3. Karandikar later became a theosophist.
 4. Paranjape was professor of Sanskrit at Fergusson College. He was Gurudev's Colleague.



79. Spiritual life and self-surrender

"Spiritual life," remarked 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 experience the Power definitely. अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे (The Bhagavad-gita 11.45). 'I was overjoyed to see the Power never seen before, and was also overcome with fear' says Arjuna. Spiritual life is a mixture of both joy and fear. Self centeredness dies after realising the Power and the feeling of fear brings about surrender. If you feel terribly afraid that you can not lift up your hand without His Power, you will surrender everything to Him."



80. Power of initiation received by Gurudev

Kaka Karkhanis

The incident I am relating happened in 1920. We four - Baba (Amburav Maharaj), Gurudev, Jagannath Lale¹ and I - were then at Inchageri. One day, I was in my room (Tukaram Sutar's² room), when Gurudev came to me. He told me that a sound of mingled, indistinct words, was buzzing near his ears and asked me what it could be. I said, "What can I tell you? Maharaj (Bhausahab Maharaj) may tell you." What else could I say ?

After about 7 or 8 days, Gurudev again came to my room and told me that the buzzing, indistinct sound had become clear. It was the sound of the Namas (Names) of Gods in different Sampradayas (religious faiths).



It was usual in Inchageri at that time to assemble in Baba's room after the night Bhajan. On that day also, we went there. Gurudev then told Baba about the Namas he had heard. Baba was overjoyed. He said,

“निन्न नामके नाम आगेद. इन्न नाम कोडलिके अड्डियिल्ल
ईग एष्टो मंदि नाम कोडतार, अवरिगे हींग नाम आगेदेनु?”

(Namas have sprouted from your Nama, given to you by Bhausahab Maharaj. Now you are empowered to initiate others into spiritual life. At present there are some persons who are initiating others. But have they really any Namas sprouted from Namas like this?).

The Namas thus received are Sabija Namas, they have the potency to sprout in spiritual experiences as they are received from God.

Gurudev, however, did not give initiation till about 3-4 years after Baba's passing away. He started initiating 17-18 years after he was thus empowered to initiate.

1. A Close associate and relative of Gurudev.
2. He belonged to Bijapur. He rendered help in anything and everything for the Inchageri Math.

81. Gurudev's meditation

Once Shri Gurudev intimated the nature of his meditation to some of his disciples:

"When my meditation is in full swing, I do not feel like leaving it. It is a sort of intoxication. Then the Sadhaka behaves like बालोन्मत्त पिशाचवत्.¹ A bee that touches honey will not leave it."



"The quality of my meditation at Allahabad is inferior to that at Nimbal. My university routine at Allahabad had to be regular. This regularity hindered my meditation. During the three months at Nimbal there was a complete revision of my Paramarth or spiritual experience. Maharaj used to quote the following lines from Dasabodha -

मागे उजळणी पुढे पाठ । नेम करावा निकट ।
बाष्कळपणाची वटवट । करुंच नये (12.9.10).

(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. every day and meditate for hours together. Formerly, I used to meditate in this manner on alternate days."

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1. Hilarious, like a child or a wild ghost.

82. 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. Gurudev replied, "Peace and joy are contradictory emotions. Peace (Shanti) equalises and joy (Ananda) lifts up, leads upwards. Emotions are of three kinds : (1) Anotropic (2) Metatropic and (3) Catatropic. The first lifts up, the second equalises while the third brings about depression. We can not say which of the two namely, Shanti and Ananda is higher. To some God grants peace, to



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. 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. There was spiritual transformation in the very Nature itself. Last year I got the above experience at Satna station while I was proceeding to Allahabad.

83. Visions about the future

"Can we have visions about the future events?" asked Prof. Athavale. Gurudev replied, "We may have such visions. Shri Krishna had such visions at the time of Mahabharata. When Arjuna expressed his doubt regarding the victory in the great war, Shri Krishna assured 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 Ramadas could have such visions. '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'¹ It all depends on the fervour of our devotion to God. What is impossible for God's Grace ?



The breaking of one spiritual Atom will change 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 goal."

"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 will surely dawn upon us in course of time, though not all at once."

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1. रामवरदायिनी माता । गर्द घेऊनि उठली ।
मर्दिले पूर्विचे पापी । आनंदवन भुवनी ॥
प्रत्यक्ष चालली राया । मूळमाया समागमें ।
नष्ट चांडाळ ते खाया । आनंदवन भुवनी ॥

84. Nature of spiritual energy

When a disciple asked 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 can not, however, ascertain why the Universe comes out of it and merges in it. Meditation on divine name is the only means of generating, developing and stabilising that



energy in us. This spiritual energy, Atman, Absolute, God or Divinity are one and the same. When this energy is generated, it affects the centers in our brain as a result of which we get the supersensuous experiences of Nada (sound), Bindu (form) and Kala (light) and so on. 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 can not 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 Namasmaraana."

85. A Healing touch

Kaka Karkhanis, Bijapur

In 1918-19 Gurudev Ranade was staying with Prof. N. G. Damle in Shaniwar Peth, Pune. The wife of Prof. Damle was suffering from an eye-sore. Treatment was going on but one day the pain became unbearably acute. Nobody knew what to do. Shri Digambar, younger brother of Prof. Damle, came to Gurudev and said that his (Digambar's) father Ganeshpant Damle (husband of Gurudev's sister) had a vision in which God Dattatraya said, "Take Tirth¹ from Rambhau and apply it to the eyes of



Prof. Damle's wife." Ganeshpant was a devotee of God Dattatraya. "Have you faith in this?" Gurudev questioned. "Yes", was, of course, the reply. Gurudev asked him to place some water before the photo of Bhausaheb Maharaj. He performed Arati and asked him to apply the Tirth to the painful eyes. The eye-sore subsequently subsided. Later I asked Prof. Damle about it. He confirmed it. Gurudev once told me that after that incident Prof. Damle's attitude towards him changed completely.

1. Sanctified water.



86. A Saint's Participation in Divine Power

"A saint who has realised God is supposed to possess infinite power. Is it really so, Sir?" asked a disciple. "Yes, of course," Gurudev emphatically replied "It is definitely true. God is the eternal spring of infinite power. Naturally, those who partake of the nectarean waters of that spring, share His power as well. 'A realised saint,' according to Ramadasa, actually experiences that all his sins have come to an end, that the round of births and deaths has come to a stop, that he has realised both God and Self and that he has completely surrendered his Self to God."¹

"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 can not 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. आनंद ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कदाचन । न बिभेति कुतश्चनो, declares the Upanisad.² (A saint who has realised the bliss of Brahman, will never be afraid of anything or anybody)."

"But this does not mean that he can make two plus two equal to five. God always obeys His own laws. He never transgresses them even though He can do so. He designs different bodies to fulfill different purposes. Hence, in addition to the common function of spreading the gospel of God-realisation, the saints perform that work ordained for them by God. They can not do anything else."

1. Dasabodha 10.8.21-22

2. Taittiriya 2.4.1



87. Hypothetical Faith is Sufficient

Prof. Athavale had specially come to discuss certain problems with Gurudev and get his doubts cleared. He had a long discussion with Gurudev.

At the outset Athavale referred to the Marathi song विडा घ्या हो नारायणा,¹ which he had heard the previous night at the time of the Bhajana and remarked, "Sir I do not understand the significance of विडा etc. I do not believe in them. What have they to do with spiritual life?"



Moreover"... Before he could proceed with his criticism, Gurudev suddenly intervened 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 at all. 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, but 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 पिपिलिका मार्ग (an ant's way), while the other is called विहंगम मार्ग (a bird's way). If we are once in possession of the aeroplane of Name that carries with it divine power, we may rise to any height. The divine grace received through intense Sadhana of Nama-smarana or meditation on Nama 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 Avatars of Rama and Krishna and others. You may very well consider them to be merely mythical persons, not even historical personalities. Even saint Tukarama has treated them to be inferior to God. Says he, " राम हा कालचा सुत दशरथाचा । अनंत युगाचा । आत्मराम ॥ (Rama, the son of Dasharath, belongs to only recent past. But the Atman belongs to eternity)."

"We should steadily perform our Sadhana and get spiritual experiences ourselves. We should accept that form of God to be real of which we get an actual vision and enkindle the divine lamp within us. Then His light would automatically radiate in all directions. If the flower blooms, its fragrance spreads far and wide of its own



accord. God is blissful. Spiritual life begins with the experience of at least an iota² of that bliss."

1. 'Kindly partake of the betel leaf, Oh God.' बिडा is a betel leaf with betel nut, lime, clove, catechu, cardamom, grated cocoa-nut, nutmeg, saffron and so on rolled into it.
2. Very small amount. The word comes from the Greek letter 'i' pronounced iota.



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Part II B

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B. Practical Hints



88. God's grace saved India

Next day the conversation began with a question from Prof. Athavale regarding the then political situation of India (1944). 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 if we somehow get independence, the big powers surrounding our country that are hourly waiting to pounce upon us, will easily snatch away our independence in no time. Our people fly away helter-skelter the moment a single bomb explodes. 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-little¹ 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 divine the means by which His ways are fulfilled. We know how, as the story² 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. 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 like Japan that sent the invincible warships like 'Prince of Wales' and 'Repulse'³ 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 quarreling with our own people like hogs and dogs. Under these circumstances, we should lay the foundation of material glory coming out of spiritual glory. I am stating this merely with the help of historical logic. I can not say when such a time would come. The logic of history requires us to fulfil at least one of the following conditions before we can deserve independence.

- i) The quarrel between Hindus and Muslims must be ended.
- ii) We must attain to the scientific development superior to both America and Germany, but this is indeed a stupendous task.
- iii) We must rise to such a spiritual height as would make us realise that all humanity is one. The last is the most important but, at the same time, the most difficult.

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1. Lt. Col. James Do-little, an American, dropped a bomb on Tokyo from the aircraft B25 on 18.4.1942. This mission, known as Do-little Raid, was meant to boost up the morale of the Allies who were downcast after Japan's terrible attack on American warships stationed at Pearl Harbour.
 2. This story is told in Sanskrit, Marathi and Hindi (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature 1997, pp.158-100).
 3. 'Prince of Wales' a battleship and 'Repulse', a cruiser were employed by the allies in the hunting of the 'Bismark', a powerful German warship, in May 1941, in the Atlantic ocean.



89. Agriculture for the body and culture for the Soul

Shri. Shyamrav Nilkantha Deshpande

When I was first blessed by Gurudev with an intimate interview in June 1934, I was beyond myself with a sense of exhilaration, gratification and sublimation in life. Even before I entered the four walls of his holy abode of meditation at Nimbai, the repeated, thrilling, musical exclamations of the divine Nama 'Narayana Narayana Narayana' maddened my Soul as these God-intoxicated utterances penetrated my heart like a sudden flash of a rumbling column of light from the blue. The inexperienced young boy of twenty in me had become extremely impatient and eager to see in person, the unseen and unknown personality of Gurudev. In my childish fancy I had mentally painted my own picture of Gurudev as a tall, stout and impressive figure like that of Swami Viveka-nanda. Within a few moments I was surprisingly disillusioned to perceive a thin, lean and an emaciated figure of Gurudev looking like a bony skeleton wrapped in lustrous silky skin. The splendour of his spiritual self was ebbing out of his glowing looks and his soothing words which in course of time, bathed me in unique compassion, love, kindness and inspiration never before experienced in my life. The child in me felt that it had regained its long-lost mother.

I was on the threshold of joining the agricultural college for shaping my academic career in life. After a few words of introductory talk, Gurudev suddenly and most unexpectedly referred to my plan of joining the agricultural college and endorsed the idea with the following thoughts. In the words of Carlyle, he advised us to become peasant saints. To earn the bread for the body we have to take to agriculture and to cater to the needs and aspirations of the



spirit, we have to cultivate saintliness and reap the harvest of life divine. Hence agriculture and culture of the spirit should form the two pillars of evolution of the body and the Soul simultaneously.



90. You can not serve God and mammon¹

A young man from Hubli had once been to Gurudev for being initiated. He was a Brahmachari² 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 Gurudev and expressed his desire to receive initiation from him. He wanted to carry on spiritual Sadhana along with his political activities. While introducing this man to the Sadhakas who were present, Gurudev said, "This gentleman is a political worker. He has started and is conducting a Vyayama Shala³ 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 is not much congenial to spiritual life, 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 leave. When he departed from the room, 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 for and cultivated as an end in itself and never as a means to achieve other ends. Then alone we



would attain the cherished goal, namely, God-realisation, otherwise not. This young man appears to be good natured. But some more time is needed for him to enter into the spiritual life."⁴

1. Wealth
2. One who leads a life of celibacy
3. Gymnasium.
4. Gurudev would ask many an aspirant to wait, sometimes for a couple of months or sometimes even for a year before initiating him. He had asked some persons to go to the holy place, Inchageri, or to undertake daily reading of sacred texts like दसबोध and come again to Nimbal. All this was to see whether the person had a real interest in spiritual life and was earnest in his resolve.



91. Streamline all faculties for the worship of God¹

Dr. Ramachandra Hari Karmarkar

How varied and all-pervading interest he had in all branches of science can be judged from another instance which I quote from personal experience. Shortly after my return from England in 1938, he engaged me in a talk on experimental neurology, in one of my visits to Nimbal. He asked me several questions on the experimental works of Mr. Head whose researches on the function of the thalamus had proved it to be the seat of emotions. Head's experiments formed a part of the syllabus of applied physiology which I had to study for primary F.R.C.S.² I



gave answers to Gurudev as best as I could, but I realised then and there that I was facing an intellectual of Himalayan heights. This conversation took place after his Presidential Address delivered at the thirteenth session of the Indian Philosophical Congress held at Nagpur in December 1937. It was here that he had dealt with Philosophy, Biology and Neurology and coined the word 'spiriton' corresponding to the term 'Bindule' used by Jnaneshwara and other mystics. Further he did not stop at the questioning but pursued the matter by suggesting that I could very well utilise my time, possibly in his seat of learning, the Deccan College, which was then likely to be converted into a Research Institute and do experiments like Mr. Head on the ventricles of the brain and its relation to the various mystical experiences. I quote this incident at length to illustrate not only the high ideals of Gurudev, but also his advice to a Sadhaka to employ his natural faculties and material gains towards one end only, the spiritual : ज्या ज्या मज काही होतील बा शक्ती। त्याही हा श्रीपती अलंकारु।।

1. An extract from the inaugural address delivered by Dr. R.H. Karmarkar on 3-3-1973 at Gurudev Mandir, Belagavi.
2. Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons

92. Meditation on virtues

Gurudev once said, "Very often meditation on virtues is also recommended. The Theosophists meditate on virtues like अभय (fearlessness), सत्त्वसंशुद्धी (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 a repetition of the same act.' Such meditation and practice of virtues becomes a basis for future spiritual achievement. That is all. This Sadhana has no more value than that."

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

"Unless we have the vision of God, we will not 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 at Infinity. Parallel lines meet at Infinity."



93. Namasmaraṇa the only Pathway

"Are the four popular yogas, namely, Jñānāyoga (the Yoga of Knowledge), Karmayoga (the Yoga of action), Dhyanāyoga (the Yoga of Meditation) and Bhaktiyoga (the Yoga of Devotion) independent paths towards God-realisation? If so, how do they enable the aspirant to attain to divinity?" This was the question posed in one of the 'Sittings'. Gurudev replied, "These Yogas are not only not independent, 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 Namasmarana is the only path that can enable a Sadhaka to attain Godhead. This path alone can take a Sadhaka into the inner sanctuary and grant him the vision and bliss of Divinity. नान्यः पन्थाः विद्यते अयनाय, (Shvetashvatara Upanishad, 3.8) there is no other path for going there. All the saints of the world, have followed the same Pathway and have bequeathed its knowledge to posterity."

"The Yogas of knowledge, action and Devotion are contributory to Namasmarana. 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 temperamental differences, the Sadhakas begin their Sadhana by adopting one or the other of these Yogas that suits their nature best. But, in the long run, they must necessarily take recourse to the primary Pathway of Namasmarana. Otherwise, they will not attain their ideal of God-realisation. Thus meditation on divine Nama is the only Pathway to God. This is the Pathway advocated by saints like Jnaneshwara."

94. The nature of Nama

"How to carry on internal meditation on Nama?" This was the question asked by Dr. K. one evening. Gurudev replied, "There is no end other than Nama," is the opinion



held by some, while others opine that "there is no means other than Nama." Both opinions are equally valid. Nama is both the end as well as the means. Nama shows the Rupa (form) of God. Hence it is a means to the seeker. But to those who are out, exclusively, to meditate on Nama, without caring for the vision of God, it is an end in itself. Tatyasaheb Ranade got himself initiated by Bhausaheb Maharaj; and in 1904 at 4.00p.m. he saw the spire of the Temple at Inchageri studded with spiritual pearls. Thereafter, without caring for spiritual experiences, he carried on his meditation as a sacred duty till his death. To him Nama was an End in itself."

"Meditation should be sincere and devout. Nama is a symbol for realising the ultimate Reality underlying the Universe. ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म (Om is the Absolute). We should understand the significance of this Mantra (hymn). Mere vocal utterance of Nama becomes mechanical. We should properly understand the relation of Rupa (form), Bhava (Devotion), and Nama (name). Form is a mystical entity devotion is a psychological or moral entity while Nama is a mysterious entity, which includes the other two."

"Very often when we have the vision of the divine Form, we remember the Name. Ultimately the Name and the Form become one, identical. It is very difficult to realise that the Name itself is the Form. The Infinite must be invoked with a devotional heart. But it is very difficult to entertain such intense devotion, such a passionate longing for the Lord. It is only the company of saints that can induce it."



95. Concentration more important than posture

One day the topic of discussion was 'the method of meditation on the divine Name. Some of the aspirants, assembled on that day, wanted to know whether all the factors in the method were equally important and inevitable. Gurudev explained, "Fixing of the gaze on the tip or top of the nose, observation of the incoming and the outgoing breath, mental repetition of the Name along with the breaths distinctly - all these are, no doubt, important factors in the process of meditation. They are all, really, very useful for concentration. But with all that, if the Name has not been imparted by a worthy spiritual teacher, it would never enable a seeker to attain spiritual realisation. The efficacy of the Name rests in the intense Sadhana and spiritual realisation of the Sadguru. The Name is the carrier of the grace and power of the Lord Himself. We may meditate on the Name imparted by such a Sadguru in any posture that helps concentration. It would not fail to grant the desired fruit of God-realisation."

Gurudev continued, "Do you not know that Baba used to meditate with his eyes closed? I also do the same. On account of billiousness, continuous gaze on the nose-tip produced rings before the eyes. Hence I began to meditate with my eyes closed. But it should be noted that this does not apply to one and all."





96. How to intensify Concentration ?

When a disciple asked Gurudev how to attain to intense concentration, he replied, "Patanjali has defined Yoga as चित्तवृत्ति-निरोधः। (Yoga-sutra 1.1), i.e. Yoga is control of mental modifications. It is also true that mind becomes steady by the control of Prana (breath) through the practice of Pranayama 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. Trataka 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 Nama with his heart filled with devotion and attains the vision of God. For undergoing the process of Hatha-Yoga, our physique 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. तीव्रसंवेगानाम् आसन्नः (Yoga Sutra 1.21) meaning that 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 should be necessarily performed. Otherwise we will not be able to understand clearly the real significance of such literature. The account of an experience can be properly understood only by those who have got that experience and have enjoyed it, not by others. The other day, Master Krishnarav sang the Abhanga of Jnaneshwara, कृष्णा हाल का रे. This



Abhanga of three lines can not be understood even by three hundred scholars. To understand the real secret grandeur of spiritual experience, the literature of saints of the world must be properly studied. The unity of experience presented in it should be ascertained, (ii) This discrimination should be accompanied by 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 at which a seer is prepared to sacrifice everything for the Lord that he would have the experience of the spiritual energy. Spiritual energy descends through saints like Jnaneshwara. They possess a reservoir of spiritual energy which oozes 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 is quite enough. Even a graceful glance of their Kurma-drishti would be valuable. But it is not practicable. Things have to be realised or achieved by ourselves."

97. How to intensify our love for Spiritual life ?

A seeker once asked Gurudev, "Sir, how should we awaken and intensify our love for spiritual life?" Gurudev replied, "To awaken and intensify our love for spiritual life, we should try to have सत्संग (the holy company of saints and seekers). There is no other means so simple and effective than that. It would ensure our steady progress on the spiritual



path. Along with this, सत् श्रवण (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 of sacred texts is also included in listening. We should always employ the meditative method of reading. It does not matter even if we read a few lines only at a time. But ours should be meditative reading. We should reflect while we read. The idea should sink in our mind. It is no use simply skipping over page after page. In spiritual Sadhana, 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 which in turn would ultimately awaken and intensify our love for spiritual life."

98. Meditation and physical pain

"Meditation is possible," said 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. 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. Baba appears to have conquered pain as could be seen at the time of his demise."



99. Spiritual life is not a bed of roses

Jagannath Vasudeo Parulekar

I had gone to Nimbal and was staying in a room occupied by the late Dr. R.S. Padaki¹ and R.P. Sondur¹. Bhau Aroskar¹ also came there from Vengurla, probably for the first time. This was in 1953. One day, we all had our lunch at about 7 p.m. 'Nuchchu'² was served to all the persons. There was no other dish. Shri Aroskar, who was sitting by my side, enquired whether rice would be served and received a negative reply. Jowar bread was prepared; but it was not to be served until the whole stock of Nuchchu was exhausted. Jowar was welcome to me but not Nuchchu. When it was served for the second time, Aroskar and I did not take it. Aroskar did not relish Nuchchu at all and when we came out of the hall for washing our hands, he remarked, "I can not continue to stay here any longer, if rice was not available." I looked at him and said, "I too do not like Nuchchu."

The next day at about 3.30 a.m. Sondur and I got up and sat for Nema (meditation). Dr. Padaki continued to have sleep till about 6 a.m. and when we ended our Nema, he told us that he had no good sleep on account of bugs and mosquitoes and showed rash on his arms. He asked us how we did not suffer from mosquito bites and how we could sit quietly for Nema. I replied that I had good Nema from 3.30 a.m. to which he said, "You are lucky."

That day in the afternoon, we were having a 'sitting' (Satsanga) in the Dhyana-Mandir.³ Gurudev was present. About 25 Sadhakas including Prof. N.G. Damle, were present. It was about 2 p.m. Gurudev pointed his fingers to two of the old Sadhakas and said to them, "You were always moving with Maharaj. Tell us some reminiscences about him. Hanmantrav Kannur⁴ then told us the following story:



"It was in about 1904. One morning, Maharaj, as usual took a pot of water, left his room and proceeded towards open fields to ease himself. We both⁵ followed him with pots of water in our hands. We walked some distance; prickly pear was grown here and there. Maharaj reached a spot where there was a small piece of stony land and he suddenly sat down for Nema on that spot. As there was prickly pear round about, we put down our pots and stood up looking at Maharaj. He was fully absorbed in Nema. Just then a scorpion climbed up his body. Our heart-beats became fast; we became nervous and were almost perspiring. What, if it stings? That was our fear. We were gazing at it. Maharaj had given us instructions that he must never be disturbed when he was in Nema. So we could not remove the scorpion from his body. Slowly, it got down from the other side and went away. When Maharaj got up, we asked him, "Maharaj, is this a place suitable for Nema?" He replied, "What can I do? I was helpless. As soon as I reached this spot, I was compelled to sit down for Nema. That was God's wish." Then he enquired why we asked such a question. We then narrated how the scorpion climbed up his body and how we became nervous. If it had stung you, how painful it would have been! Maharaj smiled and said, "When I was in Nema, was it my human body? No, no, it was God's and how can the scorpion dare sting God?"⁶

At this stage, Gurudev stopped the two Sadhakas, looked at Dr. Padaki and addressed the gathering. "Look here. There are persons who complain that the bugs and mosquitoes bite them and that therefore they are not having 'Nema'. They do not even care to get up and sit for Nema. Absorb yourself in Nema and even the scorpion would not sting. What of mosquitoes?" Dr. Padaki looked at me and suggested that this talk was meant for him. He felt very sorry. He became quite punctual in his Nema thereafter and



was very much advanced on the pathway to God. Gurudev then asked one of the Sadhakas to sing a song. The man started to sing about Shrikrishna and Sudama. Sudama goes to Shrikrishna with a handful of parched rice as a present. Shrikrishna receives him with all affection and dignity and gives him full honour. He then asks Sudama, "What have you brought for me to eat?" Sudama hesitated to tell him that only a handful of parched rice was with him. Shrikrishna presses Sudama, who at last, produces the parched rice. Shrikrishna jumps to receive it and eats it with great relish. At this stage, Gurudev stopped the song, looked at Aroskar and said to the Sadhakas, "If you want to stay here and progress in spiritual advancement, you will get Sudama's parched rice only. Nuchchu you will get here; you must eat it with great relish and spend your time in Nema. I give you what I can afford, Sudama's parched rice, Nuchchu. You come here for Nema and not for good and spicy food." The sitting ended at about 5 p.m. when Gurudev left the Dhyana - Mandir for his bath.

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1. Disciples of Gurudev.
 2. Coarsely ground and cooked Jowar.
 3. Name of the hall at Nimbal where meditation and daily prayers were carried on.
 4. A disciple of Bhausahab Maharaj.
 5. The person accompanying Kannur were probably either Mahadev Bhataji Nimbargi or Laxman Bhataji Nimbargi.
 6. For another incident, see Appendix (b).



100. A seeker's prayer for mental peace

Gangadharrav Deshpande.¹ Belagavi

"When Guruvarya Rambhau Ranade asked me last night to give a brief talk this morning, I was greatly puzzled. I could not decide what I should talk about. During the last 55 years of my public life, I have delivered a good many lectures. I have addressed huge gatherings, even for two hours at a stretch. But today, I do not wish to give such a lecture. I wish to lay bare my heart, to unburden myself this morning. It is a sin, no doubt, to talk without inspiration or authority. But it is a greater sin to disobey one's Master. Hence I decided to prefer the lesser sin and speak out my mind as desired by Guruvarya.

I have spent the last 55 years in national work, in public service. In the beginning, I worked as a follower of Lokamanya Tilak, during his life-time. After his demise, I began to work as a follower of Mahatmaji. After the departure of Lokamanya, there was a keen controversy regarding the correctness and propriety of the opinions of both these leaders. My friends and fellow workers also differed a good deal about them. But I did not bother myself about the controversy. I thought that Mahatmaji was simply bearing the banner of Lokamanya and decided to follow him.

During the last 55 years, I have worked quite honestly and sincerely. I have done many good things and at times, might have done some bad things as well. I possess both good qualities and bad qualities, generally to be found in ordinary persons, possibly in a somewhat intense form. Without being vain, but with due deference to my self-respect, I can claim a lot of good things to my credit. But, with all that, for the last 4 or 5 years, I have been keenly feeling a need of mental peace, of inner satisfaction. Really peace is the fulfilment of life. But in the evening of my life, I



have been pining for peace. This mental unrest of mine has greatly upset me. I do not get sound sleep at night. So the problem that confronts me is : While engaged in national work, Lokamanya could enjoy peace. Mahatmaji could experience peace still they were not disturbed like me. Why, then, should I be disturbed like this? When I began to ponder over this problem, I found that the peace enjoyed by Lokamanya, was a result of his deep faith in God. He had implicit faith in God. Very often I heard him utter the following words: 'If God wills'. 'If God blesses'. At times, he used to conclude his lectures with a following remark : "May God grant you the will to act up to instructions given so far." In the beginning, I considered this to be, merely a mode of speech with the elderly persons. But later on, I actually asked Lokamanya as to why he talked about God in this manner. He replied, "Look here, God is the real doer, nothing can take place, but by His will. In spite of our utmost efforts, no work would succeed except through His grace." I was not very well impressed by this answer then. Mahatmaji also had a similar faith in God, if not more intense than this. He used to describe God as Truth and Non-violence, no doubt. However, like Lokamanya he also had an implicit faith in a mysterious power that transcends everything. I may say, by the way, this was the main reason that goaded me to follow Mahatmaji. Whenever I would launch upon a fresh venture, I used to ask myself, 'What would Lokamanya, have done under these circumstances?' And when I satisfied myself that he would have done the same thing that had suggested itself to me, I used to begin the work. I never felt any difference between Lokamanya and Mahatmaji.

I tell you once again that Lokamanya had an unshakable faith in God. I once asked him, "Sir, what will you do after we get Swarajya (independence)?" He replied,



"If we get Swarajya during my life-time, I shall repair to the banks of the holy Ganges, take Sanyasa there as my grand father had done and spend the remainder of my life in meditation on God and contemplation on the ultimate Reality." But he departed before the advent of Swarajya. Several of my colleagues also were denied the privilege of having a glimpse of Swarajya. But fortunately, I could have the privilege. My ideal of freeing my country from the foreign yoke has been fulfilled and now I am breathing the free atmosphere of Swarajya.... My financial condition also is not bad.... I have earned sufficient fame by now and have a good position in society. And after Swarajya, I could easily have shone in newspaper columns by engaging myself in similar public activities. However, I am sorry to say that I do not have any peace of mind. I do not quite understand why I should not get peace even though I have been successful in my personal as well as my public life, and even when I am not without faith in God. I am, therefore, anxiously in search of peace and tranquility. I have done good deeds so far, but I must confess that I could not rid myself of my defects. When I begin to compare my merits and defects, I find that the latter out-number the former. I am stating this not through a false sense of modesty. I am sincerely unburdening myself today setting aside both pride and modesty. The consciousness of my defects has been weighing upon me. It has snatched away my peace of mind, and has left me greatly disturbed for the last few years.

Fortunately, about 2 or 3 weeks ago, Guruvarya Ranade came to see me during his recent stay at Belagavi. We had no prior acquaintance with each other. Even though I knew full well about his great scholarship, his pure character, his spiritual experiences, I had no direct contact with him. When I came to know that he was coming to Belagavi, I wrote to him a letter requesting him to spare some time for me during



his numerous engagements here so that I might find some solace thereby. Immediately I got a reply of assurance from him and accordingly, he did come to see me. During our talk, he informed me that he would soon be going to Sangli. I told him that I wished to see him again at Miraj at that time. I was, thereafter, extremely eager to see him at Miraj. Hence I requested the Rajasaheb of Miraj to intimate to me the date of Guruvarya's arrival there. Accordingly, I got a telegram from him as well as a letter from Guruvarya. So I could see him at Miraj, have the pleasure of hearing his spiritual talks as well as the blessing of his spiritual guidance. All these events have taken place during the last three weeks. But they have reduced my disturbance and have been gradually granting me some peace. I don't claim to have attained perfect peace as yet. But I have got the satisfaction of getting the path of peace. Mahatmaji used to tell us, "I have not seen God; but I have discovered the path of seeing Him. That is the source of satisfaction to me." Similarly, I may say, that I have found the path of peace which itself gives me a good deal of solace.

When I begin to consider my present condition, I feel extremely sorry to observe the miserable plight of our young men today. I have very often mixed with the youth of our country quite freely. At first I advised them to prepare bombs and pistols and bring about political revolution. I was also engaged in similar activities at that time. Later on, I advised them to take part in Satyagraha. Even now, I do mix with young men and talk to them, but it pains me to find that they have lost all faith in high ideals. In fact, they have no ideals at all. Very often, I meet very intelligent students studying for B.A. and M.A. degrees. When I ask them to let me know their ideals, they are dumb-founded. Why has such a state come to pass? Why has the sun of the ideal disappeared from the horizon, producing darkness in the hearts of young men?



Recently when I read the following remarks of Panditji- "I do not quite understand the meaning of Hindu Culture" - I was extremely pained. Lokamanya, Mahatmaji and other great leaders of our land, cherished high respect for Hindu Culture. If our leaders now begin to deny the very existence of such a culture, what would become of our nation? I, however, do not dogmatically maintain that Hindu culture and religion are superior to all other cultures and religions; I do admit that they have got their own excellence. But if our leaders begin to deny the very existence of Hindu Culture, I shudder to think of the future of our nation. Today our young men have no ideals to strive for. How, then can they raise our nation ?. You are all advanced in age and experience; you are all engaged in spiritual Sadhana. Since you are all superior to me, I do not wish to tell you anything. But I want to tell my young friends, with all sincerity I can command, "Friends! You should never remain without an ideal. If you do not realise its supreme value at this stage, what would you do, when, in the evening of your life, you would be disturbed like me? Who would then show you the path to peace? Fortunately, I could get proper guidance at least at this late hour. What would be your plight ? Hence, approach the person whom you revere most, and try for the attainment of high ideals, and illumine your lives."

101. Gurudev's Assurance

"After such a fine lecture, really, I should not speak at all. Gangadharrav is senior to me by about 16 years. I do not think it proper to speak after him. However, I can not but add



a few words by way of expressing my feelings about it. Formerly, when I was quite young, Laxmanrav Chhatre, an acquaintance of mine, was residing in the Nene Chawl, Mumbai, where Lokamanya and Gangadharrav used to meet. Since then, I have entertained a very high regard for them. Later on, Gangadharrav entered politics and I began to study philosophy. Hence there was no contact between us."

"Really God-realisation does not depend merely upon prolonged Sadhana. We cannot be sure of having the vision of God after performing Nama-japa for 25 crores of times. God-realisation requires a tenderness of heart and an intense hunger for it. When these are present, God is near. At this advanced stage, the tenderness and yearning of Gangadharrav, is really remarkable, unique. Such a softness is rarely to be found in old age. Where this exists, God is not far away.

Gangadharrav referred to the remarks of Pandit Nehru. The word 'secular' carries a double meaning. It means irreligious and it also means 'Super-religious' Panditji had used the word in the sense of 'irreligious.' But recently through his contact with persons like Mata Anandamayi and Justice S.K. Dar, a change has taken place in his ideas. Really the word 'secular' ought to be taken to mean 'Super-religious.' A universal religion should be established by leaving aside all religions and creeds. In 1936, Sir R.P. Paranjape had delivered his Presidential Address of the Liberal Federation at Nagpur, in which he had advocated the banning of all religions. By way of reply, I had stated there that the social and political handicaps resulting from the differences in religions and creeds, can be overcome in two ways : firstly, by bidding good-bye to all religions; secondly, by establishing a Universal religion... I would ever maintain that the advent of a Universal religion is the only proper panacea.



I was glad to hear the heart-felt words of advice which Gangadharravji has just given to our young students. The Bhagavata also has given the same advice :

कौमारादाचरेत्प्राज्ञः धर्मान्भागवतान् हि तान् ।

(The wise should practise Bhagavata-dharma right from the early age). But we cannot say how far this advice would be really effective. Unless our heart feels an attachment for spiritual life and dislike for material pleasure, such advice would never be fruitful. As soon as the feeling of 'dispassion' arises in the heart, we must at once renounce everything and take up to spiritual life says the Upanisad :

यदहरेव विरजेत् तदहरेव प्रब्रजेत् । (Jabalopanishad, 4).

(The moment the feeling of dispassion arises, one should renounce every thing.) One should begin to practise spiritual Sadhana. Even though we feel dispassion in old age, it does not matter. If we perform our Sadhana with proper intensity, God will surely bless even in our old age. If Gangadharravji performs Nama-smarana, for one or two years, with the same zeal and intensity with which he served our nation for so many years, God will not fail to bless him by His Grace."





Appendix

Notes on two incidents

(a) An instance similar to the one recorded in article 22.

Shri. Allappa Shikhareppa Dhaduti of Chimad was a disciple of Bhausahab Maharaj. He had no progeny. When once Maharaj was camping at Chimad, Allappa's mother came and bowed to him. "Our house is childless. Prithi let the house be blessed with a child", was her supplication. "It will come to pass, do not worry", said Maharaj. On reaching home, a thought struck her, "Well, I said that there is no child in the house and we long for one; and Maharaj gave his blessings. What if I myself get a child and my daughter-in-law remains childless?" So she went back to Maharaj along with her daughter-in-law and after paying her respects, implored, "This is my daughter-in-law. I pray that she be blessed with a child. I myself do not want any." "What is wrong in it? You may get one and she may get one." "No, no, Maharaj, let her alone be blessed." "So be it," said Maharaj. He then told Allappa a remedy. Allappa was to prepare Moong (green gram) Laddus by adding sugar-candy, almonds, white sugar, etc and partake of them. He was to eat wheat-bread, ghee and sugar as much as he wanted. Thickened milk with sugar was also prescribed. The couple was asked to observe continence for 21 days. Accordingly Allappa went through the whole course. His wife conceived. In the month of Shravana. Allappa started for Inchageri for the Saptaha. His mother said, "Your wife is pregnant. Now that you are going to Inchageri, ask Maharaj as to



what name should be given to the child." When in Inchageri, Allappa bowed to Maharaj and conveyed his mother's request. Maharaj then said, "You are a clever fellow. You want to know whether the baby would be a boy or a girl. Alright. Be there tomorrow morning when I come out of my room after meditation. You will then know". Next day Allappa took bath and waited at the door when Maharaj finished his meditation and came out. Allappa bowed his head. "Let the name be Gurusiddha," said Maharaj. This made it clear that the baby would be a boy.

(b) Another version of the incident narrated in article 99¹.

Whenever Shri Maharaj visited Jamkhandi, a 5-day Saptaha was usually celebrated. The Saptaha would be from Gurudvadashi (Ashwina Vadya Dvadashi) to Padava (Kartika Shuddha Pratipada). It was a practice to read the entire Dasabodha in 5 days. During day-time one Sadhaka would read for two hours and hand over the charge to another to continue reading for the next two hours. Other Sadhakas would continue their meditation. During night, however, only one Sadhaka would read and another would meditate to keep company. Once Mahadeva Bhataji and Laxman Bhataji had the night duty. At about 2 or 3 in the morning, Maharaj went out. Mahadeva Bhataji stopped reading and said, "Come on, Lakhu, do you know where Maharaj goes? Come along, I will show you,". They followed Maharaj right out of the town. Maharaj entered the cluster of Nivadunga (a thick thorny bush) trees and sat for meditation on a narrow path which ran through the cluster. With a thought in their minds that to meditate near these trees at odd



hours, was not a joke, the disciples came back and resumed reading. Next morning they came to Maharaj and asked, "Maharaj, how do you go out at the dead of night and sit near the Nivadunga trees, which is a habitation of serpents and scorpions? It is pitch dark and you take no lamp with you". "I do have a pilot who shows me the way वो एक सिपाही,"² said Maharaj. The disciples next query was as to what Maharaj did when wild animals like jackals or wolves came there. "They come and sit gazing for a while and then go their own way," was the reply.



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1. For a slight variation in the narration, see M.S. Deshpande's two books - जीवन गंगे (Kannada) p.16 and जीवन गंगा (Marathi), p.27.
 2. The origin of the remark is Jnaneshwari, 10.142.

About the Founder of ACPR Belagavi

Shri Gurudev Dr.R.D.Ranade, M.A., D.Litt, was one of the greatest mystic saints of the modern India. Dr. R. D.Ranade, proposed and profounded that the "Humanity" is the new religion and "Rational Mysticism" is the new secular language for managing "Diversities", for the conflictless unity of peaceful and joyous human co-existence. He was the world known Philosopher. His philosophic literary work from his books "THE CONSTRUCTIVE SURVEY OF UPANISHADIC PHILOSOPHY" to "BHAGVADGITA" as the philosophy of "God Realization" has left behind memorable glorious imprints . He has been Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University (U.P) and also Professor, Head and Dean of Philosophy therein.



The International Institution, ACADEMY OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION(ACPR), BELGAUM is founded by him. ACPR is the global call for "Awareness of Unity" given by the modern Prophet, Gurudev Dr.Ramachandra Dattatreya Ranade. Having conceived the ACPR in 1924 at Pune, he worked and processed on his mission to deliver the ACPR Belgaum, in 1952. ACPR Belgaum is his immortal heritage to the world at large. ACPR's Head Quarters is in Hindwadi, Belgaum, and its Branches are running all over the world spreading message of Dr.R.D.Ranade. As a fitting tribute to the great founder and his vision in the ACPR, Belgaum King-Philosopher-Spokesman of India, President Dr.S.Radhakrishnan took pride in volunteering to inaugurate the Head Quarters of ACPR building at Belgaum in 1965. ACPR is a global gallery where eternity will keep on whispering.

ACPR is a historical, philosophical and spiritual place. National and International personalities in the field of Philosophy, Spirituality and Politics have paid visit and sensed inspiration and peace and prosperity in their life. "Pathway to God" Quarterly Journal published by this esteem Institution in English language is reaching to every corner of the planet spreading the message of peace and harmony.