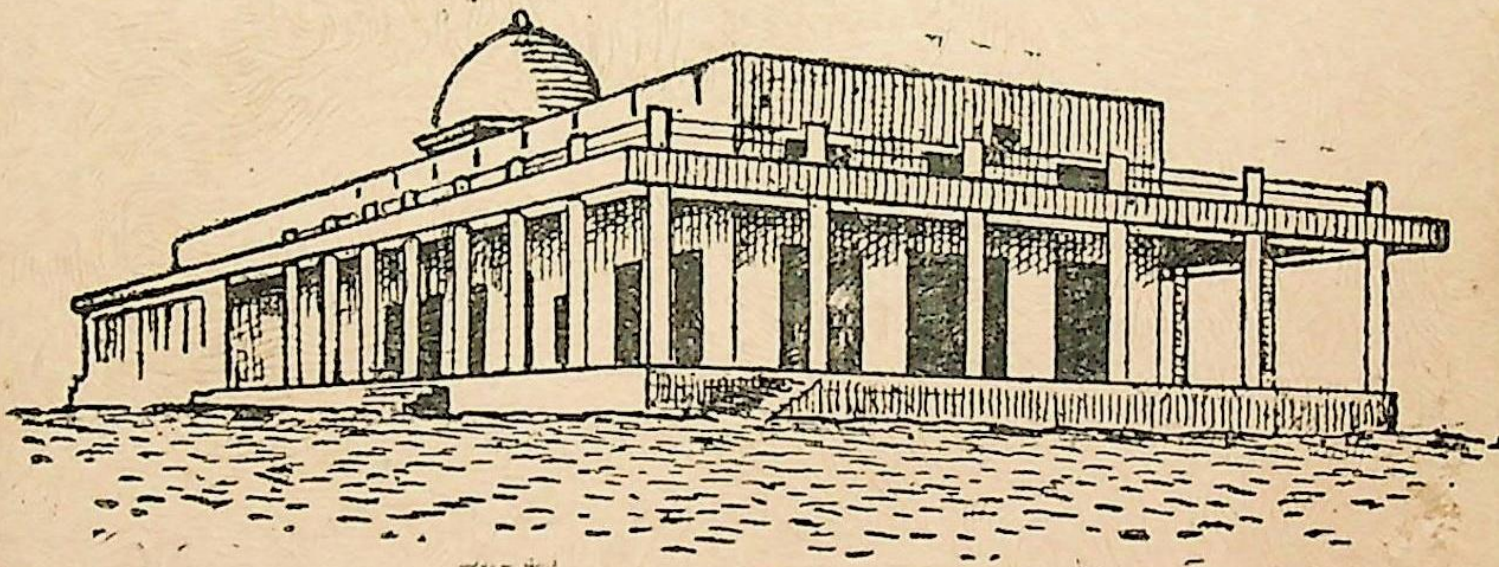


SRI GURUDEV RAMBHAU MAHARAJ.

(Glimpses of Ideal Life)

M. S. Deshpande



Gurudev Mandir, Belgaum.

Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion

BELGAUM.

1978

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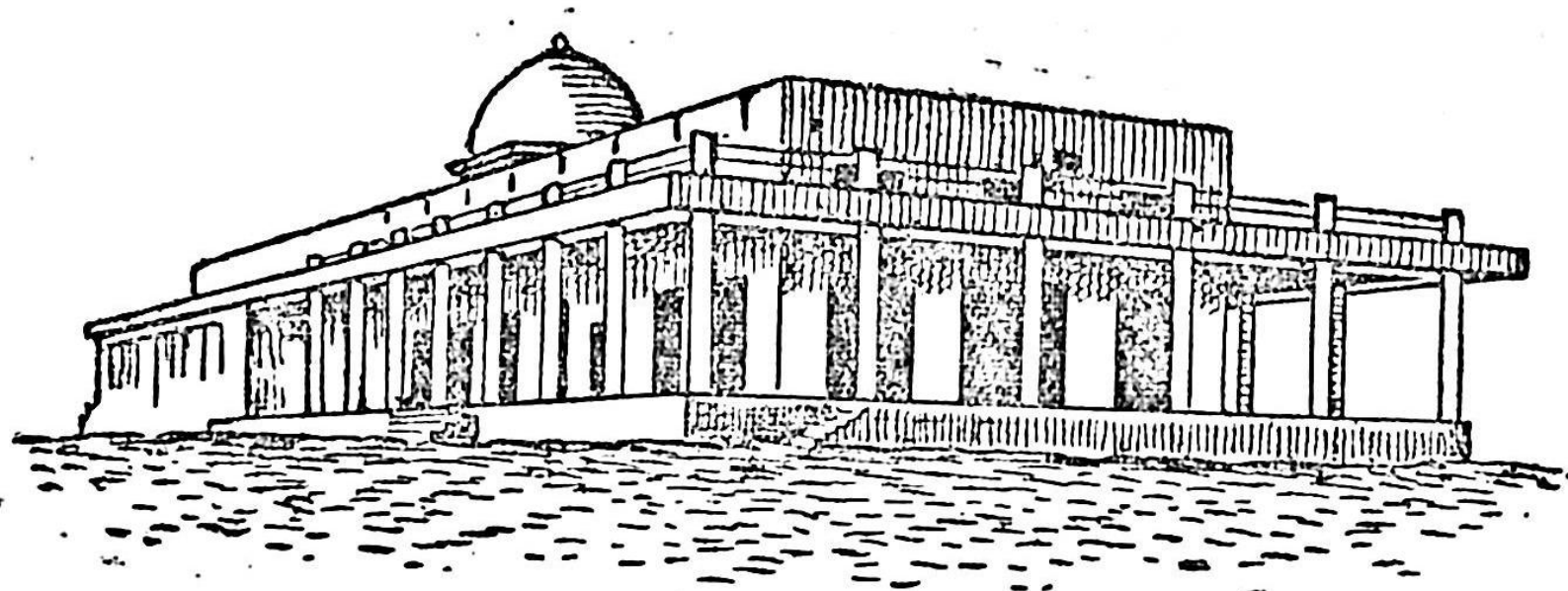
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(Public Trust : Founded by Sri Gurudev R. D. Ranade,
Saint of Nimbal).

Aims and objects

To work for the spiritual Unity of mankind
and consequent peace and good - will upon
earth, bringing together intellectual and
spiritually-minded persons through —

1. Spiritual Symposiums,
2. Study and Research,
3. Lectures,
4. Meeting and Conferences and
5. Religious and Philosophical
Publications.



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Shri Gurudeva Dr. R. D. Ranade



Born
JAMKHANDI
3-7-1886

Samadhi
NIMBAL
6-6-1957

Publisher's Note.

We have great pleasure in publishing this valuable book on the Life and Message of Sri Gurudev Dr. R. D. Ranade, the founder of this Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion. This has been brought out from Volume one - Part one, of the Silver Jubilee Souvenir of the Academy, which contains the inspiring lives and teachings of the Masters of the *Sampradāya* of which Sri Nimbargi Maharaj was the illustrious originator. There had been a longstanding demand for such a book in English language on the Life and Message of Sri Gurudev Ranade; and in response, we are publishing this book, which vividly presents the most salient aspects of his unique personality—intellectual, moral and spiritual.

It is hoped that all earnest seekers will utilise this book with great advantage and thereby receive inspiration, instruction and illumination.

Belgaum : 9th August 1978

Board of trustees

श्रावण शु॥ ५ : शके १९००



Paper used for printing of this book was made available by Government of India at concessional rate.

P R E F A C E.

This book is the fourth reprint from the "Silver Jubilee Souvenir" of our Academy. It contains five chapters presenting vividly Glimpses of Sri Gurudeva's Ideal Life and Message. The first chapter depicts him as an ideal student-aspirant; the second, as an ideal professor-Seeker; the third, as an ideal Philosopher-Saint; the fourth, as an ideal Master-Apostle, while the fifth chapter deals with his unique personality and universal spiritual message. These glimpses would raise a vivid picture of Sri Gurudev before the aspirant. They will clearly show how Sri Gurudev developed his intellectual and spiritual faculties to perfection through his untiring study and *Sādhana* as well as through the unbounded grace of his Sadguru, and how he could thereby attain a supreme intellectual and spiritual eminence. They will also show how he had to pass through fiery ordeals before he could reach the summit of Bliss, and how he bore the cross with equanimity and wore the crown with utmost humility. After attaining perfection - both intellectual and spiritual, he successfully played the role of a Master-Gurudev, by initiating several deserving disciples and guiding them on the Pathway to God. As an Apostle, he also spread the Gospel of God - realisation through lectures and publications. Thus his unique personality could deliver a "Message to Humanity" which is at once universal and eternal.

These vivid glimpses are expected to prove a valuable source of inspiration to all the earnest aspirants by providing constant stimulation in their *Sādhana* for the attainment of the Highest Blissful Ideal, reached and preached by Sri Gurudev.

We hope and trust that all the aspirants would try to reap full benefit from the light presented in this publication.

Athani,

5th August 1978

श्रवण शु॥ १, शके १९००

K. D. Sangoram

M. S. Deshpande.

Shri Gurudev Rambhau Maharaj

1886 - 1957

(I)

Glimpses of Ideal Life

(Sri M. S. Deshpande M.A)

Chapter One: An Ideal Student - Aspirant.

Prelude :

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

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

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

Pious Family and Birth :

Śri Gurudev appears to be a *Yogi* who had taken this birth to complete his Spiritual Pilgrimage, attain the Highest Ascent of God-realisation and plunge in the Bliss Divine. Naturally, as is pointed out by the *Gītā*, he was born in a pious and wealthy family-(*Sucinām gehe*).

Sri Bapurao, the great grandfather of Rambhau, who was once the banker of the *Peśwas*, had later on stayed with the Chief of Ramadurg, as his political adviser. Though he

1) Evolution of my thought.

had wealth in abundance, he had no issue. Bapurao was also a great devotee of *Sri Cidambar Swāmi*, the celebrated Saint of Murgod. Once when the Swami performed a great sacrifice, Bapurao put his whole soul in it and tried his level best to make it a grand success. Highly pleased by his devoted service, the *Swāmiji* asked him to choose a boon. Bapurao prayed for a good son which was granted by the exalted *Swāmiji*. This son had two sons. The younger of them, Dattopant, was the father of Rama. Owing to some differences, Sri Dattopant was required to leave Ramadurga and seek service in the then State of Jamakhandi.

Smt. Parvatibai, the second wife of Dattopant, was a very pious lady. She had no issue for twelve years, after the birth of her first daughter. That pained her a good deal. She got herself initiated by a local Saint-Sambhuling Swami, living in the neighbourhood, and as directed by him, she plunged herself in constant meditation on the Divine Name. No wonder, God was soon pleased with her intense penance and blessed her with the jewel of a son. However, at the time of delivery the mother could not bear the prolonged pangs of labour. All the family members were bewildered. But at the suggestion of an experienced servant of theirs, she was given the *Tirtha*-holy water-of *Sri Rāmeśvar*. When Smt. Parvatibai drank it her delivery became smooth and safe. In this way was born Rama at about 10 A. M. on 3rd July 1886. The advent of a son sent a thrill of joy in the family. Thereupon the child was named Ramachandra as his birth was the outcome of the Grace of Sri Ramesvar.

A Scion of Grace :

Rama was thus a Scion of Grace Divine. Another event that occurred a few years later, fully confirms this conception. When Rama was about four years old, his mother Smt. Parvatibai took him to her Guru, Saint Sambhuling Swami. She placed the child at his feet, prostrated herself before him

and implored him to bless the child. The Swami looked at the child with steadfast gaze, A genuine feeling of love and reverence glistened in his eyes. It seemed that he had a glimpse of the future greatness of the child. Suddenly he remarked :

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

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

Rama who was thus born of devotion. as it were, was nourished by devotion and was further brought up in the atmosphere of devotion by his devoted mother.

A Brilliant Student :

Rama's school and college career was marked by exceptional intellectual brilliance. After completing his Primary education Rama joined the P. B. High School. His keen intellect, retentive memory, humble behaviour and devotional temperament immediately won for him the love and affection of his friends and teachers. Rama's reading was both intensive and extensive. His vast reading outside the regular course of study had greatly developed his mastery over languages. Even when he was reading in Standard VI, Rama had begun to read the works of Swami Vivekanand. He had then the curiosity as well as the capacity to understand the lofty ideas of *Swāmiji*,

and acquire a profound knowledge of the English language. Rama's knowledge of *Sanskrit* literature was yet more profound even at such an early age. His *Sanskrit* teacher, by his skilful teaching, had instilled into Rama a genuine love and regard for *Sanskrit* literature and had made him study advanced *Sanskrit* classics.

Blessing of Sri Maharaj :

During this period, Rama had the good fortune of receiving initiation -the *Divine Nāma*-from Sri Bhausahab Maharaj-the celebrated Saint of Umadi. His flowering intellect thereby had the unique privilege of receiving the spiritual illumination of Divine Grace. Sri Maharaj used to come to Jamakhandi every year for blessing the devotees. In 1901, Kallu Bhokare, Rama's fast friend, had received initiation from Sri Maharaj and had a few spiritual experiences as well. When Rama learnt this from his friend, he also felt a keen desire to have such an experience. At the same time, Rama happened to attend the discourse of Sri Maharaj, in the course of which Sri Maharaj casually remarked: "If one meditated on the *Divine Nāma* regularly one might also pass the examination with credit." This remark intensified his desire for initiation still more. Thereupon he intimated his desire to Kallu who took him immediately to Sri Maharaj.

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

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

Splendid Success:

In this way, Rama's head and heart received the support of Divinity which helped to bring about his all-round growth. Next year Rama was to appear for the Matriculation Examination of the Bombay University. His preparation was excellent, He had chosen Bombay Centre. He answered all the question papers satisfactorily and returned to Jamakhandi. Then he remembered the words of his Master. A strong innate impulse to know, to experiment and experience, always played an important role in all his activities. The confluence of these three streams was the spring of his progress, So he decided to test the veracity of his Master's assurance by performing the experiment of meditation. He began to meditate on the Divine Name every day, from 10 P.M. to 11 P.M. He continued this practice till the result of the Examination was declared. Finally, when the result was out, Rama stood second among all the successful candidates. Not only that. He also stood first in *Sanskrit* and secured the much-coveted "*Jugannāth Śankarset Scholarship*" in *Sanskrit*. This unprecedented success filled all his relatives and teachers with delight. But the joy of Rama had one more important element in it, This success had intensified his faith and devotion for Sri Maharaj, Name and the Lord. This salutary change in his attitude was followed by a good spiritual experience as well. He had the vision of a Divine Star, the harbinger of further spiritual realisation.

His College Career:

The scholarship earned by Rambhau consisted of Rs.25/ per month, to be paid for four years. It enabled him to continue

his further study in the College. He soon joined the Deccan college Poona, as that was the only College in this part at that time.

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

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

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

Prof. Wodehouse taught English and Philosophy. Being a Theosophist he loved spirituality. So Rambhau used to relate his spiritual experiences to him and seek his guidance. He tried his utmost to persuade Rambhau to join the Theosophical Society. But he resisted the temptation of doing so, on account of his firm faith in his Master. Still, in spite of this refusal, Prof. Wodehouse continued to love Rambhau.

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

Prizes in the Examinations :

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

Maharaja's Prophecy:

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

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

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

These prophetic words made them all overjoyed.

Daxina Fellow :

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

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

Spiritual Experiences : their Verification :

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

He had once a vision of the Spiritual Sun. Golden and blue spiritual Stars shone before his eyes. The wonderful vision of the Spiritual *Śeṣa*-Serpant-sent a thrill of joy in his bosom. Once, when he was witnessing a cricket match, the vision of the whole firmament filled with golden Stars flung him in an ocean of astonishment and delight. This extraordinary experience immensely stirred his curiosity and impelled him to ascertain the veracity and value of this experience. He went through the *Rāja Yoga* of Swami Vivekanand within a couple of days. He even tried to ascertain the same from Prof. Wodehouse, who had the frankness to confess his ignorance about it. But he was greatly astonished to hear these wonderful experiences of his pupil. He took Rambhau, to Dr. Annie Besant-his spiritual teacher-at his own expense, and introduced him to her. She was also astonished to hear this account.

She asked Rambhau whether he had been initiated by a Master. When Rambhau showed the photograph of his Master Sri Maharaj, she cast a keen glance at it and remarked: "You are in safe hands". These words deepened his conviction regarding the greatness of his Master, the genuineness of his path and reality of his experience. He got the verification he was seeking which fully satisfied him.

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

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

Rolls of cotton move in the sky,
 Spread out is a network of pearls.
 A flight of eagles fly before the eye
 And seen are Śesa's circling coils.
 The brilliant diamond dust does glitter
 On them does *Vastu* ✽ shine,
 No limit to joy - says *Jnāneśvar*
 Everywhere see I great Master mine.

ॐ कापसाचे गोळे फिरती पोकळी । मोतियाची जाळी विखुरली ॥
 गन्धडाचे भरारे जाचे दृष्टीपुढे । सेपाचे वेढोळे गुंडाळली ॥
 वज्राचिये चुरा शुभ्रवत दिसे । तयामाजी वस्तु शोभतसे ॥
 ज्ञानदेव म्हणे मूर्खा काय उणे । निवृत्ति पाहिले जेथे डोळे ॥

✽ Spiritual ensign

Dangerous Disease :

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

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

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

*Maccitah sarva durgāni matprasādat tariṣyasi
Atha ceṭ tvamahankārāṅ na śroṣyasi vināṅksyasi*

"Place your mind in Me: you will be freed from all the dangers

through My grace. But if you do'nt do so, through egoism, mind, you will perish."

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

Soon after these experiences, Rambhau got slight relief. So he went to Jamakhandi and stayed there for a few months. There he got the *Prasād* of Sri Maharaj which brought him more relief. Just as he had received the *Prasād* before it was prayed for, he also got an assurance of protection from him. It gave him some confidence. Thrice did Rambhau receive the Prasad from his Master as well as the assurance. These brought about some more improvement. His friend, at this time, suggested that he should try to live in the company of his Master for complete cure. Accordingly he went to his Master along with his mother. When they arrived at Incagiri, the sorrow of his mother suddenly burst out in the form of tears. The all-knowing Master divined the feelings of the mother who was lying prostrate at his feet and assured her with these words : " Don't you worry, Mother ! Your son need fear no death for sixty years. He has to carry on a great mission of the Lord. " .

Those benedictory words transformed her tears of sorrow into tears of joy. Both the mother and the son were greatly overjoyed. They decided to stay with Sri Maharaj for a few days. During this stay, Rambhau had the pleasure of taking part in the *Śrāvana Saptāh* (1910). He performed intense meditation in the company of advanced disciples and received fresh inspiration from their blissful *Sādhana*. He thus spent

one month joyfully in the holy blissful company of his Master and spiritual brothers. As a result of this, he could then actually enjoy superb spiritual experiences as well. He had the vision of Spiritual Light full of various colours. "It was," according to him, "a preliminary stage of infinite lights and colours; it has coercive power in it." In the same way his sound experience also marked a great development. While describing it, Rambhau used to quote a few lines of an *Ārati* of Sri Jnanadeva, the substance of which is given below in his own words :

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

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

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

नेणपणे जाले ते जाले । जाले ते होऊन गेले ।
जाणपणे वर्तले । पाहिजे नेमस्त ॥

आतां चांगले दिवस पाहाल । सुगंध वार्ताही ऐकाल ।
आनंद आनंद होत जाईल । भगवंताच्या कृपावळे ॥

Things went wrong when light didn't dawn
Well ! done is done, don't worry.
Now at least with wisdom blessed
Improve yourself ! Don't tarry !
You'll see good days, hear fragrant news,
The Grace of the Lord will grant you Bliss.

Chapter II

An Ideal Professor.-Seeker.

Prelude :

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

“ I strongly wish, ” he writes, “ that I should not be required to adopt a profession that would increase egoism, lead to the neglect of devotion or hinder spiritual thought. I do not want it even though it is capable of granting me any amount of wealth. My heart hankers after adopting such a profession which would help the development of devotion and

enable me to spread the power and glory of the Saints everywhere." (20-9-1910). "I have decided a couple of years ago, that I should employ my mind and body in the service of spreading your glory as well as that of spirituality-God-realisation-throughout the world" (17-3-1912).

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

Lecturer :

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

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

principles useful for their future career, even when he was teaching a language.

Curator :

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

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

His Master Departs :

When his intellectual and spiritual progress was thus in

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

As soon as Sri Rambhau received a telegram in the Deccan College, he immediately left for Incagiri. All the disciples of Sri Maharaj were plunged in sorrow. The sorrow of his senior devoted disciples-Sri Amburao Baba Smt. Sivalingavva, & Sri Rambhau knew no bounds. Still it expressed itself in different ways. Sri Baba was of a serious nature. He could control his sorrow and begin to attend to his duties. The tender heart of Sivakka burst out in tears. Sri Rambhau had possessed reason and emotion in an equal measure. His emotion, which was under the control of reason by day, shook it off during night and expressed itself in the form of tears. This went on, we are told, continuously for full five years.

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

A Genuine Professor :

Sri Rambhau soon recovered from this shock, regained his balance, through discrimination, meditation and spiritual

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

In the beginning, Rambhau taught 'Hero and Hero worship-the renowned work of Carlyle, to the students of the B. A. class. The independent, profound and valuable thoughts of Carlyle had made Carlyle an object of great admiration and respect to him. He used to forget himself while teaching this book. He was completely saturated with Carlyle's thought on account of its close affinity with Indian thought.

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

M. A. Examination :

With such an excellent preparation he appeared for the M. A. degree in 1914 with Philosophy as his principal subject. His unparalleled scholarship and untiring study, together with the supreme grace of his Master, enabled him to secure a First Class First in this Examination. He also won the Chancellor's

Gold Medal of the Bombay University assigned to Philosophy that year. He also got the Telang Gold Medal. Nor is this all. The certificate given to him by the examiners excelled everything. In their report they remarked; "The examinee knows more than the examiners." Such was the extraordinary brilliance of this student. Sri Rambhau had a premonition of these awards. One day when he was absorbed in meditation, he had a vision of the following telegram: "First Class First, Chancellor's Medal." He also heard these words. A few days after this vision he learnt the actual result in those very words.

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

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

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

Lectures at Bangalore :

In this way Prof. Rambhau's fame spread through other provinces of Bharat. It brought to him invitations for lectures from various institutions. A *Sanskrit Academy* was then to be started at Bangalore, for the advancement of Culture. Prof. Rambhau received an invitation from Bangalore, to deliver three lectures on *Upaniṣadic* Philosophy, at the time of the inauguration of the Academy. He had just passed his M. A. and as such he was a novice. Still he accepted this responsible task. This was really an indication of his far reaching fame.

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

Chain of Calamities :

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

ultimately proved to be blessings in disguise and taught him lessons of Equanimity so very essential for his future spiritual progress.

Demise of Dear Ones :

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

Prof. Rambhau was trying to forget this sorrow through meditation, reading and occasional bliss of realisation. In the meanwhile he was required to bear two more shocks. The terrible influenza epidemic of 1918 carried away first his dear wife and then within a month, his revered mother as well. Still he could bear all that calmly by the grace of his Master and his spiritual experiences. About the demise of his wife he once told his friend : " Through the grace of my Master I had then performed my *Sādhana* quite well. Hence if I had prayed God to save my wife from the clutches of death, my prayer would not have gone in vain. But since God's wish alone is blessed, I did not think it proper to pray Him like that." Such was the attitude of resignation attained by him then.

His revered mother passed away on 19th Oct. 1918. She meditated on the Divine Name and merged in the Absolute.

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

Adhyatma Bhavan :

We have given so far an account of his sorrow due to bereavements from his kith and kin. Here is the account of his misery born of loss of money. In 1919 Prof. Rambhau purchased a plot of land near Bhandarkar Oriental Institute and got a bungalow built for him. When the construction of the building had been almost completed, he had a dream one day, in which Sri Maharaj told him that Sri Jñanesvara was angry with him. Hence he went to Alandi to have the Darsana of the *Samādhi* of Sri Jñanesvara. When he was paying his homage to him there, his bungalow toppled down at Poona due to torrential down-pour of rain. After his return from Alandi Rambhau observed this strange mishap. Without losing heart he got it reconstructed again by fresh payment to the contractor. He named it "*Adhyātma Bhavan*"-"Abode of Spirituality." This "Abode" has played an important part in the *Sādhana* of Rambhau, both before and after his second illness. On the 13th day of the dark half of *Kārtik* 1841 (20-11-1919) Rambhau arranged a three-days' *Saptāh*, received blessings from Sri Baba and began to stay there. Here he continued his meditation, with utmost intensity. At the same time, he also carried on vigorously his intellectual activities, such as higher research, study and writing books congenial to his spiritual development.

in addition to his teaching work in the College. He was then residing with his sister in the town. But at night he used to go to the *Adhyātma Bhavan* to sleep. At times he spent days in *Adhyātma Bhavan* and enjoyed the blessedness of solitude. In the evening he often went for a walk by the side of the river *Mulā*, and watch the horrible sight of the bloodred flames of the funeral pyres in the burning ground nearby. He tried to develop his dispassion by the sight. He also used to go to the hills nearby, for meditation. Thus did his *Sādhana* reach the acme of intensity and granted him spiritual experiences of a higher order.

During this period Prof. Rambhau used to spend at least seven hours in meditation. From 8 to 10-30 in the morning, from 12 to 1 at noon, from 8 to 10-30 in the evening and from 12 to 1 at night, he was performing rigorous meditation. He used to sit for meditation regularly at the fixed time, in the manner described in the *Gītā*, by sitting in a steady pose, and by fixing his gaze on the tip of the nose. At other times also he was remembering the Name Divine.

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

“ Your forehead shines with the light of million moons.
You have lotus eyes and a smiling face.
O Krishna ! move on ! nod on, my dear !
Speak on lovingly for hours and hours
Lo ! how he stands and swings his arms !
As if beckoning me to come to Him.
Is He not Vithal, my Holy Father ? ”

This beautiful experience had immensely endeared the Abhanga ❀ to him.

Flames of Jealousy :

Prof. Rambhau, during this period, was required to face the onslaughts of jealousy. His rapid progress, both intellectual and spiritual, lent him a grandeur which was too much for the petty persons to bear. It enkindled the embers of jealousy, in them, the flaming heat of which began to torment him. “ He is a *Pandit* drawing a fat salary. How can he attend to *Sādhana* properly ? ” These were the taunting remarks flung at him by the *Sādhukas*. “ Well, he is after all a seeker of the Spirit. Is it possible for him to teach in the College according to the time-table ? ” Such were the words of censure that were levelled against him, time and again, by his colleagues. Thus had Rambhau become a target of this double attack from his uncharitable critics. But he did not allow them to disturb his peace of mind. Both praise and blame were treated alike by him. He was neither delighted by the

❀ तुझिये निदळीं कोटिचंद्र प्रकाशे ।
कमलनयन हास्यवदन भासे ॥
कृष्णा हाल कारे ! कृष्णा डोल कारे
वडिये, घडिये, घडिये, गुज बोल कारे।
उभा राहोनिया कैसा हालवितो बाहो
वापरखुमादेवीवरू विठ्ठल ना हो :

praise nor dejected by the censure.

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

Deadly Disease :

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

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

desperate resolve, Rambhau relied entirely on the medicine of *Nama Divine* administered by his Master Physician. And he had very high regards for Sri Amburao Maharaj and Sri Amburao also had a very soft corner for him. His loving company proved very beneficial to him. This illness had practically reduced him to a skeleton. He was not able to digest any food. So he used to live on milk alone.

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

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

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

Thereafter the health of Rambhau improved sufficiently. He began to eat bread and rice. When he came to Incagiri he was not able to stand up for the *Bhajan*, but on the last day of the *Māgha Saptah* (1921) after the flowers were showered

❀ अनंतस्त्री आत्मा विवविला डोळा !

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

Second Marriage :

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

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

In accordance with the pre-intimation of the Master, Prof. Rambhau married Smt Manutai, the daughter of Sri Visnupant Vaidya of Islampur on 1st June 1922. After marriage, Sri Rambhau and Sau. Sitabai-the new name of his wife - went to *Incagiri*. There when Smt. Sitabai was meditating near the *Samādhi* of Sri Maharaj, she received the *Nāma, Divine* from him on 10th June 1922.

Thereafter Prof. Rambhau had a daughter born to him in January 1925. She was named Shakuntala. After marriage

she was called Smt. Vijayadevi Apte M. A.

Transfer and Resignation :

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

Very soon, the Sangli climate also did not suit his health. So he used to stay first at *Incagiri* and then at Nimbai and go to Sangli to deliver his quota of lectures in the College. This procedure was not liked by the majority of life-members. They expressed their disapproval as well as opposition to it. Gradually jealousy intervened and gave this difference of opinion an ugly turn. The difference of opinion centred round two issues : whether importance should be given to regular teaching or to research and whether prominence should be given to the letter or to the spirit of the Rules of the Society.

It would have been better if the Society had given some special facilities to Rambhau and retained his services. Students this side would have enjoyed the benefit of his unique intelligence and the prestige of the Society also would have increased thereby. But as the divine plan was altogether different, the elders of the Society did not do so and Prof. Rambhau was required to submit his resignation of life-membership of the Society on 20th June 1924. In any way, what happened was for the good. It enlarged the field of Prof. Rambhau's activity and made it national and even international.

Nimbal Asram :

That a scholar like Prof. Rambhau, fully endowed with modern learning, should like to live in a solitary place like Nimbal, away from enlightened human habitation, was an enigma to many. But those who were conversant with the goal and way of his life knew that it was a divine dispensation. As the climate of Sangli also did not suit his health Prof. Rambhau wanted to stay in a dry place, near Incagiri, having railway and postal facilities. He asked his friends to find such a place. When they were in search of it, he had a vision at Incagiri, in his morning meditation one day. He saw a tall person standing before him. He said : " Sri Nimbargi Maharaj has gone to Nimbal Station. " Thereupon Rambhau asked him: " Is he still spreading the Gospel of Devotion ? " To this the person gave a thundering reply : " Close your eyes, ears and lips and silently carry on your meditation " and disappeared. When Rambhau finished his meditation and came out of the room he received a letter from his friend, informing him that he had selected a plot near Nimbal Station and asking him whether he would go over there for final selection. Thereupon Rambhau accompanied his friend to the Station and selected the site. He could soon purchase 48 acres of land for Rs. 400/- only.

He thereafter got a house built there and when it was

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

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

Chapter III

An ideal Philosopher-Saint

Prelude :

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

Thus did he evolve, reach a higher stage of God-realisation and attain the power even to bless other seekers. About this spiritual evolution of his he once remarked : ‘ Through the grace of Sri Maharaj, I have attained the ideal. Now, let the Lord’s will be done ! ’ He reserved his future life exclusively for still higher attainments in spiritual life, as well as for the spread of spirituality in accordance with the wish and

direction of the Lord. Really the realisation of the Infinite, Almighty can have no end. So even though Rambhau attained the stage of a Master, he continued to evolve himself and to bring about the evolution of others.

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

Academy of Philosophy and Religion :-

Just as realisation of God and propagation of God-devotion was the supreme ideal of Prof. Rambhau, expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through original research in the field of philosophy in order to show how its problems are the same throughout the world, was his supreme intellectual ideal. However he pursued this intellectual ideal as we have seen by now firstly to justify the reality of the Spiritual ideal and secondly to explain the same to the rational mind of the modern times. He intended to achieve this ideal in the College. But as he could not do so there, he decided to start a fresh institute entitled *Academy of Philosophy and Religion*, a body exclusively devoted to research in all the Philosophies and Religions of the world. He opened the Academy in his *Adhyātma Bhavan Poona*, on 1st August 1924. Rambhau was its Director and Prof. P. K. Gode and Prof. N. G. Damle were its Secretaries.

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

The urgent need of such an *Academy* has been stated in

the Preamble of the Prospectus in these words :

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

“Knowledge has taken immense strides with the growth of time. Scientific inventions have enormously enriched the patrimony of man. The old order has changed and new one has taken its place. Nevertheless the goal of human life as well as the means of its attainment, have remained the same. Unquestionably, the search for God remains the highest problem even today and a philosophic justification for our spiritual life is as necessary today as it was hundreds of years ago.” (2)

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

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

Philosophy of the Upanisads :

The Academy proposed to bring out a series of publications on Indian Philosophy and Religion entitled " An Encyclopaedic History of Indian Philosophy" which had both a national and international significance; national, because it would enable India to vindicate her place in the philosophies of the world; international, because when completed, it was sure to influence the course of world's speculations. If interpreted in terms of Western Philosophy, the rich and variegated metaphysical and mystical heritage of India would surely leave the mark upon the course of the world's thought in times to come. This series consisted of 16 volumes, the present volume on the Philosophy of the *Upaniṣads* entitled " A Constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy " was the second in the series.

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

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

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

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

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

“ The ultimate purpose of this work, ” states Prof. Rambhau “ is spiritual purpose. The mystical motive has been the most prominent. It would be the problem for the Philosophy of the Immediate Future to place Mysticism on a truly philosophic basis. Rational Mysticism which has been hitherto regarded as a contradiction in terms must now become a truism. The author shall feel his labour amply rewarded if he finds that his exposition of *Upaniṣadic* Philosophy makes a contribution, however small, to the realisation of this ideal.”

(4)

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

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

Invitation From Allahabad University :

Soon after the publication of this monumental work in 1926, Prof. Rambhau was provided by his Master with a better and wider field for his activities. Among the Indian scholars who appreciated and admired its merit highly, Sri Ganganath Jha-the Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University

4) Constructive Survey. Preface. P. 15

was by far the foremost... He was not content merely to eulogise the work as well as the author, he intently desired to appoint Prof. Rambhau as Head of the Department of Philosophy in his University and give his students the benefit of his great scholarship. He intimated his wish to Rambhau. The following extract from one of his letters reveals full well the keenness of his desire and supreme appreciation :

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

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

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

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

Head of the Department of Philosophy :

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

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

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

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

“ Prof. Ranade’s bungalow at Allahabad was rendezvous for the meeting of all aspiring souls of all ranks in life. In these gatherings, sparks from the anvil of his luminous mind would often fly and enkindle spiritual fire in the hearts of the assembled. On one occasion he said in a very serious mood: ” We must fill our lives with God. ” On another occasion he said forcefully : “We must implant our feet firmly on the back of time,” meaning thereby that we must transcend the time-consciousness and rise in an awareness of the Eternal.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

His Daily Programme :

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

In the beginning Prof. Ranade lived in the 2 Beli Road bungalow up to 1940. Thereafter he shifted to his new bungalow on the *Draupadi Ghât*. In both these residences his daily programme, as described by one his students, was almost the same. He used to get up very early, often between 2 to 4 A.M., take tea and meditate. At times he used to call one of the students, offer him tea and ask him to read English or Sanskrit books or his typed notes. Occasionally, he had flashes, brilliant ideas which he used to discuss with the student with great enthusiasm. These were great moments for the student who got his training into the great truths from the master's mouth. Then he used to meditate till the newspapers came before dawn. A student would then be asked to read first the headings and underline those selected by him with red and blue pencil. Then the details were got read at leisure. In the morning he used either to meditate or get some books or notes read by one of the students.

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

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

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

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

Departure of his Spiritual Sister and Brother :

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

“ I was immensely grieved to learn about the merging of Sivakka in the Light Divine. The grief I felt cannot be described in words. My heart is sorely distressed to lose such a spiritual jewel like Sivakka. Still what can we, poor human beings do before Divine dispensation ? We must take refuge in His *Nāma* only. ” (26-11-1930).

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

“ Nearly twenty years after Sri Maharaja's passing away, Sri Baba helped all the disciples of Sri Maharaj by his constant guidance and inspiration. ... There was a great identity of interest and life between Maharaj and Baba and when Baba was left over to us, it was as if we were seeing and hearing Maharaj. ... The way in which he left his body is quite significant to show how a person like him

who had attained to such enormous heights, dies in the midst of God-realisation. From God he is taken and to God he goes. As with Maharaj, so with Baba, their life and death have been sublime illustrations of a perpetual God-communion." "Even when a *Guru* seems to have departed he still remains at the back of all the disciples, to protect them and further their spiritual endeavour." (27-12-1933)

Pathway to God of Marathi Saints :

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

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

"The book opens with a fine Preface from the author in which he describes the nature of Mystical Experience, its ineffable, intuitive and universal character. Mystical experience affects our whole being and is a source of fine knowledge, chastened feelings and subtle movements. Hence the seers, on account of the impress of the mystical experience on

one or the other aspects of their psychic being, exhibit different types. Some excel in knowledge, some in devotion, others, in service ”

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

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

Philosophy of the Spirit :

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

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

(5) P. E. P. 113.

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

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

New Building-New Son :

Almost all the events in the life of Prof. Rambhau, are the results of the directions of Sri Maharaj. This new building also is the outcome of a similar direction. At Allahabad, as we have seen before, Sri Rambhau daily used to go to a particular place near the *Draupadi Ghāt*, on the banks of the Ganges, for meditation. There he got various superb spiritual experiences. One day, when he was absorbed in meditation there, he saw the vision of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj. He thought that it was a holy place, where the devotion of Sri Maharaj would deepen and diffuse. So he purchased the plot and got a big beautiful bungalow built in 1940, for his own residence

(6) P.E. P P.119-120

(7) P.E. P. 120

and began to live in it from Jan. 1944. It was there that one of the main branches of the Adhyatma Vidya Mandir was opened and housed.

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

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

Spiritual Experiences :

We shall now deal with some of his superb spiritual experiences of this period. About his spiritual experiences Rambhau had once remarked, “ I have not mentioned in my books any experience of the Saints, which I have not enjoyed myself. ” Hence if we try to have a glimpse of the experiences described in his works, we will have an idea about the variety, richness and splendour of Sri Rambhau's experiences. Nor is this all. He had once informed us that he had the privilege of having experiences not yet recorded in any of the works published so far.

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

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

"How are the two different strata to be seen in the divine picture? ... Artists and poets might try to depict it in their own way. Would not the necessity of mystic experience however, require a pictorial representation of the changing fortunes on the heavenly canvas, in which God with an uplifted flaming thunderbolt might strike mercilessly at one side of the battle, during the first period and at the other side in the reverse direction, with the same uplifted thunderbolt, in the second? A divine thunderbolt is probably the best weapon to annihilate the contending armies. It would have been extremely fortunate if one had been privileged to see the changing fortunes of the war on the heavenly canvas and to interpret the will of God accordingly. (8)

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

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

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

iii) **Ecstatic Rapture** : All the higher spiritual experiences of Rambhau, always resulted in ecstasy-blissfulness. When he was in that ecstatic mood, he used to utter loudly, “ *Nārāyan, Nārāyan, Nārāyan.*” He was in a state of God-intoxication. He had no consciousness of time and space then. He used to tell us that the Bliss of Self-realisation was superior to *Samādhi* which is merely an ordinary mental attunement with God. There is complete assimilation in Bliss. Then you merge in God entirely. “ Spiritual joy hovered like an eagle this morning. When spiritual power descends and envelops, the whole universe appears to be full of peace, power and joy. ” This is how he described the glory of the experience of Bliss. (17-4-1944)

Vice-Chancellor and Retirement :

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

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

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

Prof. Rambhau retired in 1946. Thereafter the Executive Council of the University created a special honorary post entitled ‘ Emeritus Professor of Philosophy ’ in order that the University might maintain its contact with such an eminent scholar till the end. Later on in 1947, the University arranged a special Convocation Ceremony for honouring persons of world-wide fame in Bharat, when the University conferred the D Litt.degree on Prof. Rambhau, in recognition of his unparalleled intellectual eminence. Such was the consummation of his professorial career.

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

Chapter IV

An Ideal Master-Apostle.

Prelude :

Dr. Rambhau, after discharging his duty as Ideal Philosopher-Saint or Saint-Philosopher, assumed the role of a Master - (*Gurudev*)- Apostle- (*Prabodhaka*) as has been stated by Sri Gurudev elsewhere. "A mystic may be a Philosopher but is not necessarily so. His mystic experience is sufficient for his own elevation into Divinity; but if he philosophises, he may raise thinking humanity into a Divine Kingdom of Ends." (1) "He is of supreme service to humanity, by calling their attention from moment to moment, to the perfection and greatness of God. There have been mystics who have moved the world by their Divine Contemplation. Unmoved themselves, they have become men of world-shaking type." (2)

In this way our Mystic Philosopher-Sri Gurudev spent

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

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

Ideal Gurudev :

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

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

One day, *Sri Gurudev* was sitting alone in his room to prepare his tea as usual. His wife was bringing in, all the articles required by him. When she entered the room for the last time, holding the pots of milk in both her hands, she observed a wonderful phenomenon. Sri Gurudeva's face had

become intensely red and had assumed the face of *Sri Hanumān* with a crown on his head. Above his head was seen a gigantic, brilliant *Śeṣa* (Cobra) with all his hoods spread out. The colour of his body was yellow. His eyes were glittering like red jewels. This astounding vision greatly terrified her, and she began to tremble from head to feet. The milk-pots were on the verge of slipping down from her trembling hands, when Gurudev spoke in a serious tone: "Well! sit down, sit down, Don't be afraid! Sometimes it does happen like that." So she sat. After some time she was free from fear. Sri Gurudev then ascertained from her the details of the incident, smiled and remained silent.

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

Initiation :

In this *Sampradāya*, initiation consists in imparting the *Seed-Nāma*-Divine Name-by a realised *Sadguru*, to an aspirant. The disciple, then, is to water the seed with the constant shower of one-pointed meditation and reap the harvest of spiritual experience and bliss, through the grace of his Master. Sri Gurudev began to initiate those aspirants whom he found to be very earnest. But later on, when people from all walks of life began to flock to him for initiation he began to bless all of them. As he advanced further, blessing the aspirants became his very nature. He even especially invited some deserving aspirants and blessed them. Very often he used to tell us that the emotion of affection that arises in the heart of the Master at the time of imparting initiation is similar to the one that arises in the heart of the mother at the time

of feeding her child. The mother nourishes the body while the Master nourishes the soul by granting the ambrosia of Divine Name. Is it not in the fitness of things that the spiritual mother should feel the emotion of love more intensely than the physical mother ?

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

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

Common Meditation and Inspiring Talks :

To grant intellectual, emotional, moral, and intuitional training to the *Sādhakās*, the Masters of this *Sampradāya*, had arranged some festivals called *Saptāhas* at *Incagiri*, ranging from five days to one month. All the seekers were asked to attend them according to their convenience, take part in the common meditation, *Bhajan* etc. in the company of their Masters and listen to the inspiring discourses given by them. Thus during these festivals, the seekers used to get their spiritual batteries charged properly.

Sri Gurudev also made effective use of such festivals for training his disciples. However, he had introduced a few

changes in them to suit the needs of his modern disciples. During his time, there used to be four *Saptahās* - two of five days in *Caitra* and *Kartik*, and two, of one month in *Śrāvāṇa* and *Māgh*. Instead of giving discourses like his Masters, he used to give informal talks to the disciples.

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

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

Sri Gurudev never posed as a Master. He always sat in a corner, along with his disciples, on the same carpet. He never delivered a sermon. He thus demonstrated as it were, through his behaviour, the way in which an ideal spiritual Master should conduct himself.

“As these Sittings were informal, *Sri Gurudevā's* inner thoughts and feelings had a spontaneous expression in them. These sittings were not always serious; they were occasionally illumined by flashes of wit, humour and consequent laughter. Sri Gurudev also took a lively part in them without the least reservation. At times he himself would relate a humorous anecdote or story and begin to have a hearty laugh and plunge all in a hilarious laughter. Generally Gurudev did not take an active part in the discussion; still his silence itself was more eloquent than his words.... He always loved to make

others speak for him. However, his occasional fine remarks provided a feast of *Bodha-sudhâ* - ambrosia of advice - both about spiritual knowledge as well as about divine devotion served along with various dishes suited to the varied tastes of the devotees.

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

Public Lectures :

Just as *Sri Gurudev* used to give private talks for the edification of the aspirants and seekers, he had also delivered public lectures for the enlightenment of the public in general. The lectures were delivered in some of the cities of Bharat - from Bangalore in the south to New Delhi in the North. Whenever he was invited by the Universities and other Public Institutions, he used to go there and convey the message of the Saints and Sages to the elite of the place. He used to remove the misconceptions prevailing in the modern minds regarding the efficacy of moral and spiritual values in the practical life of the present day society, by his wide and deep learning and rational treatment of the subject. He thus used to bring to them the supreme value of spirituality and the urgent need of cultivating it in life, in the interest of peace and welfare of the individual, society, nation as well as the world at large.

All these lectures provided sufficient light and inspiration to the aspiring souls that were required to live and move in the all-enveloping dense darkness of aggressive materialism. Hence they were highly appreciated by such persons. Even though there was no flight of eloquence from his smiling lips,

there used to have a steady flight of spiritual illumination from his lustrous eyes. Choice words gushed out from the depth of conviction born of spiritual experience. They easily captivated the receptive hearts, and produced a deep impression upon them. Thus did *Gurudev* propagate the Gospel of God-devotion among the public.

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

Adhyatma Vidya Mandir :

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

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

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

The Pathway to God of Hindi Saints :

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

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

The following headings of the five chapters point out the five stages of *Sri Gurudevā's* Pathway to God in Hindi Literature; i) Incentives to Spiritual Life, ii) Necessity of Moral Preparation, iii) The Relation of God to Saints, iv) The Beginnings of the Pilgrimage and v) The Highest Ascent. The first

stage of the Pathway, reveals the causes that lead the seeker to spiritual life, brings about a change in his values and likes and thus contributes to his emotional preparation. The second requires the elimination of vices and the development of virtues and thus contributes to his moral preparation. The third stage describes the glory and bliss received by the Saints from the unlimited power and grace of the Lord and gives the seeker a full glimpse of the ideal he is to reach and thus contributes to his intellectual preparation. The fourth gives an idea of actual pilgrimage. It describes the Master, his method of initiation, the *Divine Name* and its constant meditation and the like and helps to bring about his intuitional preparation. The fifth and the last describes the nature of God-realisation and the Bliss arising from it as well as the effects produced by them on the lives of the seekers and the society.

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

Pathway to God of Kannada Saints :

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

This book has been designed almost on the lines of his book about *Hindi* Saints. This is also based upon a source book-entitled *Kannada Paramārtha Sopāna*, - a book of selections from the writings of *Kannada* Saints. "Novelty of thought

coupled with spiritual import “ was the criterion of selection in this case as well. The great mystics thus secured the services of an equally great modern mystic—who was also a great philosopher—to interpret them and spread their message in the modern world.

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

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

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

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

1) P. G. K. P. 6

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

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

Philosophy of the Bhagavad-gita

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

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

"The present work is divided into five parts. The first part deals with the ancient systems with which the *Bhagavadgīta* comes into relation. The second part deals with the thought

3) R. L. L. Foreword 1 X.

4) B P.G--P3

of the middle ages where we find the great Vedantic scholars and spiritual teachers throwing light on the meaning of the *Bhagavadgītā*. The third part deals with the veritable labyrinth that has been produced by the interpretations of the modern scholars. The fourth part deals with our solution of the problem in terms of contemporary thought and mode of procedure. The last deals in a general way, with conception of the Sublime ... which has assumed great importance with eminent European Philosophers, linking it up with the conception of the Divine.”

(5)

Part IV is the core of the work. Here we come across the independent, unique and valuable contribution of Gurudev to the interpretations of the *Gīta*. Here we have a glimpse of his integral vision, his synthetic outlook, born of God—realisation. The main aspects of Philosophy viz. metaphysics, ethics and mysticism have been properly dealt with in it, from the practical point of view. After dealing with the antinomies embedded in thought of God, World and Soul, together with their solution as pointed out in the *Gīta*, the Problem of God is being taken up for discussion. God has been described as wonder of wonders. However, we are told, that He can be realised though not in His entirety. Then the four aspects of ethics viz. Activism, Moralism, Super-moralism and Beatificism have been discussed. The Activism of the *Gīta* advocates duty not for the sake of duty but for the sake of the Divine. *Bhakti* or God-devotion is the central virtue in the *Gīta*. All other virtues are its emanations and vices, aberrations from it. The Super-moralism of the *Gīta* requires the seeker to rise above the *Guṇās* and the *Karmās* and become a *Sthita-prajna*-Equanimous Man, which is according to the *Gīta*, the highest ideal realisable by man. This is only possible if he takes resort in God, realises Him and enjoys His Bliss. Really Beatificism is the crown of Equanimity. The Saint is full of Bliss when he becomes one with *Brahman*. In fact Bliss itself is *Brahman*. So

5) B. P. G. P. 13

far as the mystic aspect of this Philosophy is concerned, after pointing out the criteria of God-realisation, the categories of God-seekers, the methods of meditation have been elaborately dealt with. Thereafter, the Beautiful Self-Vision and the Sublime Cosmic Vision have been described. It has been pointed out that Beauty attracts while Sublimity conquers. These Visions are associated with the feelings of Joy, Peace, Fear and Reverence. Peace, however, does not lead to joy, but joy leads to peace; and hence peace might be regarded as the apex of joy. Finally, it is shown that the Moral, the Sublime and the Divine - all merge in one consummate Philosophy of Spirit in the *Bhagavadgita*.

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

Philosophy of Vedanta (Brahma-Sutras)

This book which was given a fresh title - “ *Vedānta as the Culmination of Indian Thought* ” - has been based on a series of four lectures delivered by Sri Gurudev in 1929 under the auspices of the Calcutta University, on ‘ *Vedānta and Western Thought*. Later on he twice revised and changed the outline and finally decided to give the above-mentioned title. He divided it into the following ten chapters :

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

As we have seen before, this book was written by his disciples with the help of his copious notes and published by

the *Bhūratiya Vidyā-Bhavan* in 1976.

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

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

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

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

6) V.C.T. P. 77

7) Ibid P. 89

8) V. C. T. P. 112

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

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

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

The realised or released Soul - *Jivanmukta* - not only shares the Bliss of the Lord, but also all the powers of the Lord except His power of creation. (11) “He becomes an overlord. This Ideal Saint has omniscience, omnipotence and bliss. He is the one sovereign (*Ekarāt*), who has sway over all that exists and down to eternity. It is he who enjoys real *Swarājya* - the *Ātmanic* imperishable bliss- as the *Saint of*

9) Ibid. P. 128. 10 Ibid. P. 162. 11) V. C. T. P. 171.

Nimbargi used to say. Thus, the ideal visualised by the ancient *Ṛsis* at the dawn of human history is the Kingdom Immortal (*Amṛtām Purīm*) which transcends the limits of here and now. The modern frantic cries for a League of Nations or United Nations, all aiming at universal brotherhood, are but distant re-echoes of the encompassing oneness of all, tuned in the *Vedic* sing-song, praising the glories of *Theopolity* of the Philosopher-Saint-the very ectype of God." (12)

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

Pathway To God :

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

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

Amṛta Mahotsava-Nectar Jubilee :

Sri Gurudev completed his 70th year on 3rd July 1956 His disciples, friends and admirers of Jamkhandi, wished to

12) Ibid, P. 177.

invite Sri Gurudev on that auspicious occasion to Jamkhandi and pay him their respectful homage by celebrating his *Nectar Jubilee* on a grand scale. But they were diffident as to whether he would allow them to celebrate such a function. Fortunately however, he did not reject their invitation this time. He gladly accepted it and agreed to go to Jamkhandi for the celebration, in spite of his well-known aversion for such functions. His consent not only enabled them to pay their reverential homage to their Master but also gave a splendid opportunity to all other disciples from different parts of India to witness and enjoy this grand celebration, which was fittingly called *Amṛta Mahotsava - Immortal Jubilee*.—Nectar Jubilee. Actually the celebration proved itself to be immortal—a Jubilee never to be forgotten, in the memory of his disciples.

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

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

Fury of Prayag :

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

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

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

Mahasamadhi :

Thursday the 6th June 1957 was his last day on earth. On that day Sri Gurudev went in his car for meditation on the road to *Incagiri*. He spent about two hours in meditation. After his return from meditation he did not leave his bed. In the evening at about 4 P. M. he intimated his departure to those who were attending on him, by means of signs. And he was completely absorbed in his meditation, awaiting the call from the Lord. He received it at the time of *Bhajan* at night. He suggested to his disciples to perform the *Bhajan*, which was duly begun in the adjoining *Dhyāna Mandir*. After it was over,

camphor was lit for performing *Ārati*. At about 10-30 P. M. the *Ārati* was over; all the disciples loudly uttered ' *Vithal, Viithal.* ' The flame of camphor expired and just then the flame of Sri Gurudeva's soul left his body and got merged in the Lord.

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

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

The last letter written by Sri Gurudev to Srimant Rajasaheb of Sangli, contains his parting Message to all his disciples :

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

During the last 20 years since the departure of Sri Gurudev, the Ashram at Nimbai, which is named *Sri Gurudev Rānade Āshrām*, has developed a good deal. It is being ably managed by his fair-partner-Smt. Matosri-Kakusaheb with the help of some of his senior disciples. A stately, beautiful *Samādhi Mandir* has been erected in the area of his old house and his sacred relics have been deposited in it. A few new rooms have been constructed so as to form a spacious quadrangle in front of the *Mandir* which was later on covered with corrugated

iron sheets, A High School has been started within the precincts of the *Ashram*. Three *Saptāhīs* are celebrated every year: One in the month of *Śravana* for one month, the second, in *Māgha* for five days, and the third, in *Jyeṣṭha* for five days. It is the *Punyatithi Saptāh* of Sri Gurudev. Several disciples attend them according to their convenience. As none of the disciples of Sri Gurudev could attain his spiritual stature so far, to initiate prospective aspirants a fresh method of initiation through his *Samādhi* has been introduced, which is being taken advantage of, by many aspirants. A *Marāthi* Quarterly entitled “*Satsang*,” is edited and published on behalf of the *Āshram* by his daughter. Smt Vijayadevi Apte M. A.

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

Chapter V

Personality and Message.

Prelude :

Sri Gurudev was one of the greatest Saint-Philosophers of the modern times. There were Saints who were not Philosophers and there were Philosophers who were not Saints. In Sri Gurudev, there was a rare combination of supreme spiritual illumination as well as a profound philosophic insight. His intellectual and spiritual evolution took place simultaneously. We have seen by now, how he evolved both as an Ideal student and aspirant, as an ideal professor and seeker, as an ideal philosopher and saint, and finally as an ideal Master and Apostle. We have also observed how, as a Master - a *Śadguru*, he initiated the aspirants by granting them Divine Name, how he guided them through his illuminating talks, and trained them in spiritual *Sādhana*, through common meditation functions. We have also observed how he as an Apostle, spread the Gospel of God-devotion among the people, through his lectures, publications and institutions.

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

Ideal Personality :

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

Sri Gurudeva's life was God-centred, God-inspired, God-possessed and God-intoxicated. "Dr. Ranade has been touched with the Grace of God. We merely talk philosophy while he actually lives it. With Ranade philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom, not a mere intellectual exercise. It is for him meditation on the Spirit, a dedicated way of life." This tribute of Dr. Radhakrishnan is supremely significant. As pointed out already, "A Mystic may be a philosopher but is not necessarily so. His mystic experience is sufficient for his own elevation into divinity; but if he philosophises, he may raise thinking humanity into a Divine Kingdom of Ends." (2) Such was the splendid Mission which was entrusted to him by the Lord.

ii) **Denizen of Theopolis** : Sri Gurudev was a lover of humanity. His Universal Brotherhood was based on Divine Brotherhood. Spiritual brotherhood was the root of which universal brotherhood was the fruit. He was always loving the devotees. He always advised his disciples to love the devotees of the Lord, to establish and increase the communities of such

1) B. P. G. P. 269

2) M. M. P. 394

devotees, because that alone would bring about the Kingdom of Peace on earth. " You have to build and thatch the city of God-devotion, give shade and protection to all those who may come to stay in it and live in it yourself. It is a *Theopolis* where God is the Supreme Ruler and all humanity bound together by spiritual tie become equal and aspiring denizens whose only vocation is to fill the world with the praise and glory of the Lord. " (3)

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

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

" The Spirit of the Universe encased in a pale ivory frame, and a frail body, mostly skin and bones-he resembled a feathered bird, a pair of God-intoxicated eyes, glowing compassionately in their hollowed sockets, situated beneath elevated, eyebrows, the symbol of triumph in his life-long Yoga, an extremely affectionate heart, tirelessly pouring out its life-giving nectar, of spiritual wisdom, in warbling words of Divine melody; Gurudev Ranade was a self-sustained angel of the Lord-in brief, God in flesh and blood. " (4) .

b) Ranade's spirituality shone clearly through every look, word and act .. Much as I appreciate Ranade's spiritual and intellectual attainments, it is his loving personality which I remember best. Surely, for many, as for me, he was a friend never-to-be-forgotten. For his disciples he was much more. For India he was one of her great men. In India as also in other countries, there are many great scholars, engaged

3) P.G.H. P. 294

4) Dr. N. S. Christian.

in various researches, many great philosophers with deep insight into Reality, many great mystics with ineffable visions, many great teachers who inspire their pupils, many great souls whose integrity and personality are radiant. But we seldom see one person who is all of these at once. Such a one was Sri Ranade, one of those rare spirits who shows how fine human nature can be. " (5)

His Eternal Message :

Attainment of the Vision and Bliss Divine in the life of the individual and of Universal Harmony and Peace in the life of the Society, Nation and the World, has been the Message Eternal of Sri Gurudev. " To realise God for oneself and for others is and should be, " according to him, " the end of human life. " It is those blessed souls who enjoy the Bliss of God-realisation that will be able to bring about Harmony and Peace in the world. " Such God-realiser who enjoy divine bliss, consider it their sacred duty to impart the same to others because of the natural feeling of compassion, as well as of the direct command of the Lord. It thus becomes the mission of such a realiser to spread the gospel of God whenever and wherever it becomes possible for him to do so. One God, One World, One Humanity becomes his maxim, *Theopolity* his doctrine. " (6)

" The problem of the welfare of humanity, " says Sri Gurudev, " would be easily solved, if only a hundred or two genuine God-realiser arise in this world, because spiritual experience alone is the eternal foundation of equality. To the question as to why the mystics do not try to solve the worldly problems, here is my answer. Spiritual energy need not always be active. Because the silent stationary work of the Saints is itself of very great importance. Their spiritual activity is not only useful to them, but it is also useful to the society.

(5) Prof Burch (U.S.A.)

(6) B.P.G. P. 136

Moreover, the attainment of spiritual experience for spreading devotion for the Lord among the people, is itself a very valuable way of helping the world. From this point of view, Saints alone are the real benefactors of mankind. ” (7) “ These God-realisers constitute a blessed community and on account of their intense love for the afflicted humanity, they live only for its benefaction and betterment, proclaiming from Pole to Pole, like a rumbling cloud, the eternal Gospel of God from everlasting to everlasting. ” (8)

With this background, we can very well imagine the nature of Sri Gurudeva’s Message to the different sections of our Society :

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

To the *Philosophers* he would request : “ Brothers ! Yours is an intellectual search for Reality. To achieve even tolerable success in it, you should first rid yourself of all your prejudices and approach it with an open mind. Your Philosophy should not be merely speculative. It should be thoroughly practical. “ Its veracity and virility will entirely depend upon its capacity to make life noble and divine. What

7) Jalks 8) P. G. K. P. 314

you experience, what you feel and what you realise, that alone should be your Philosophy." It should never be divorced from life. For that you should take the help of Religion. For Philosophy without Religion would be lame as Religion without Philosophy would be blind. Hence both should receive help from each other and enrich life.

Secondly, you should bear in mind that the 'Philosopher's work is not done when he has realised within himself peace of mind. His supreme business is to bring about peace and harmony in the society, the state and the world at large. From this point of view, it may be said, that the future of the world rests with Philosophers."

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

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

alone will enable you to attain real Goodness.

Hence your Morality should be based on this rational spiritual knowledge and aspire to attain spiritual experience. Moral *Summum Bonum* should merge in Spiritual *Summum Bonum*. Then alone it will become both stable and perfect.

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

To the *Scientists* he would point out : “ Friends ! you are engaged in discovering the hidden powers of Nature and trying to harness them to enhance the ease and comfort of human life, for which you richly deserve the grateful good-wishes of humanity. But the infernal engines of destruction you have created, have brought humanity to the brink of total annihilation. In recent times you have exploded the material Atom, released the deadly energy pent up in it, showered a veritable rain of fire on the innocent people, burnt millions, maimed millions for life and brought a veritable Hell on fair Earth. Don't you repent for the infinite misery you have let loose.? Is it not time for you to mend your ways, turn your vision in-

wards, carry on your researches in the spiritual field. try to discover and explode the spiritual Atom- the Spiriton ? Then you will be able to release the blissful energy hidden in it and shower a rain of nectar on the famished people and infuse fresh life in them. You will thus be fortunate enough to bring down the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Blessed indeed would be the day when you would undertake this Divine Mission.

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

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

I have gathered so far, the multicoloured flowers of the

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

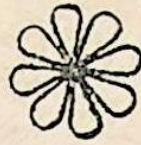
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