

SYNTHETIC MYSTICISM of
EKANATHA
Janardana Swami and others

by Dr. R.D. RANADE





Shankarappa Hiredesai & Bhagirathi Hiredesai

Shri. Ravindra Hiredesai (retired Executive Engineer, Belagavi) has extended his helping hand in publishing this book written by Dr. R. D. Ranade in fond memory of his parents Shri. Shankarappa Hiredesai and Smt. Bhagirathi Hiredesai.

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By Dr. R. D. RANADE

**Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion,
Belagavi, Karnataka.**



Synthetic Mysticism Of Ekanatha Janardana Swami and Others

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FOREWORD

Shri Gurudev Dr. R. D. Ranade, M.A., D. Litt. Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Allahabad University, was one of the greatest mystic saints and world renowned Philosopher from Modern India. His Literary work from the books 'The Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy' to 'Bhagavadgita - as the philosophy of God Realization', have left behind glorious imprints.

Gurudev served as the Vice-Chancellor, Professor, Head and Dean of Philosophy at the Allahabad University guiding and mentoring intellectual luminaries of Modern India. For the Global Family, he had a vision and concern to achieve holistic welfare of human kind through sustained awareness of spiritual unity in diversity.

The Diversities of spiritual faiths were envisioned to be contained by the unity of spiritual reason through the establishment of the Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belagavi, Karnataka. Having conceived the ACPR in 1924 at Pune, he proceeded on his mission to deliver the ACPR, Belagavi in 1952, as an immortal heritage to the world at large.

ACPR's Head Quarters is Hindwadi, Belagavi is registered as a Public Trust under Registration No.E-233(BGM)/1952. ACPR publishes an English Quarterly National Journal 'The Pathway to God' along with republication and reprint of original classic philosophical works.

As a fitting tribute to Gurudev and his vision, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the Philosopher-Statesman-President of India, took pride in volunteering to inaugurate the head quarters of ACPR in 1965.

ACPR is a global gallery where eternity keeps whispering and provides an all millennium venue for the meetings of 'Intellectually inclined' amongst God's Children. ACPR is an unusually divine mansion with its large and open ambience without conferring centrality of radiation to any specific religion, faith, cult or heritage with an open acceptance in the Universal belief of a divine humanity.

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a) To work for the spiritual unity of Mankind and consequent peace and goodwill upon earth, bringing together intellectual and spiritually minded persons through,

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- 6) To start research centers in all the faculties.

About two years ago when His Holiness Shri Shiddheshwar Swamiji who is (A Spiritual Ambassador to the humanity) of 'Dnyanayogashram' (Jnana Yoga ashram) of Vijayapur visited ACPR Belagavi, suggested the task of re-printing "Mystical Experience of Maharashtra Saints in philosophical contexts" authored by Gurudeo Ranade in five sections to bring it to the comprehension of the layman by incorporating pictures relating to spiritual experiences in the life of these saints.

Sant Ekanath's (16th Century) life and teachings were marked by a unique sense of moderation with a harmony between worldly and spiritual life which separates the philosophy from what precedes and succeeds the age. Ekanath's works which included teachings, treatise on Bhagavatha and the soulful Abhangs were simple and highly appreciated and is honored for reaching the essence of Vedanta to the common people. His exemplary sense of gratitude to his teacher, Janardhana Swamy and Tranquility within the self, is an inspirational lesson in synthetic mysticism.

Shri. Siddeshwar Swamiji has been a source of inspiration and guidance in this noble task. We appreciate the generous contribution of donors in meeting the cost of printing and a special mention of thanks to M/s. Motilal Banarsidass, the original publishers of the book.

I acknowledge sincere efforts of the artist, Shri. Chandrashekhar Ranganekar, for his impressive cover page & illustrations of pictures inserted in the book.

I thank, Shri Ashok Dhond, Proprietor of Impressions Printing Press, Belagavi for his support, concern and promptness in completing the five parts within a short period of time.

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Maruti B. Zirali,

Secretary,

On behalf of Board of Trustees,
ACPR Belagavi.

CONTENTS

Chapter I. Biographical Introduction: Bhanudasa, Janardana Swami, and Ekanatha.

1. Bhanudasa (p. 1);
2. Janardana Swami (p. 3);
3. Date of Ekanatha (p. 3);
4. Ekanatha's Life (p. 8);
5. Ekanatha's Works (p. 5).

Chapter II. The Abhangas of Bhanudasa, Janardana Swami and Ekanatha.

1. The Abhangas of Bhanudasa (p.10);
2. The Abhangas of Janardana Swami (p.11);
3. Ekanatha on his Spiritual Teacher (p. 13);
4. Ekanatha's moral and spiritual instruction (p. 14);
5. Bhakti and the Name of God (p. 17);
6. The Power of the Saints (p.19);
7. The Mystical Experience of Ekanatha (p. 22).

Chapter III. Introduction : The Bhagavata of Ekanatha.

1. The Place and Date of Composition (p. 25);
2. Family History (p. 26);
3. Spiritual Lineage (p. 27);
4. Ekanatha's Humility before Janardana (p. 28);
5. Ekanatha, an Enigma to his Neighbours (p. 29);
6. Bhagavata, a Great Field (p. 30).

(I) Metaphysics

7. Introductory (p. 31);
8. Brahman alone is Real: The World is Unreal (p. 32);
9. Four Proofs of the Unreality of the World (p. 33);
10. Avidya, Vidya and Maya (p. 34);
11. As Maya is not, any question about it is useless (p. 35);
12. There is no room for the World (p. 36);
13. The Individual Self and the Universal Self (p. 37);
14. The Figure of two Birds (p. 38);
15. The essential unity of Jiva And Siva (p. 39);
16. The Atman is present in all states of body and mind (p. 39);
17. The Atman remains unmodified (p. 40);
18. Freedom is an illusion, because bondage is so (p. 40).

(II) Ethics

19. Introductory (p. 40);
20. Purity (p. 41);
21. Penance (p. 42);
22. Retirement (p. 42);
23. Bearing with the defects of others (p. 43);
24. Bearing with the slander of others (p. 43);
25. One who is attached to Woman and Wealth is neglected by God (p. 44);

26. An aspirant must not touch even a wooden doll by his foot (p. 44) ;
27. A Sadhaka should keep himself away from the society of even sattvic women (p. 45) ;
28. Worse still is the company of the Uxorious (p. 46) ;
29. Repentance is the greatest atonement (p. 46) ;
30. Mind can be conquered by mind (p. 47) ;
31. For different virtues, different models (p. 47) ;
32. Vedic injunctions are calculated to wean a man from sense-objects : the cases of (1) marriage and (2) sacrifice (p. 48) ;
33. Limitations of vedic commands (p. 49) ;
34. Persons qualified for knowledge, action and devotion (p. 49) ;
35. The value of duly discharging one's duty (p. 50) ;
36. The meaning of Bhakti (p. 51) ;
37. The four kinds of Bhaktas (p. 52) ;
38. Saguna easier of approach than Nirguna (p. 53) ;
39. The path of knowledge (p. 53).
(iii) Mysticism
40. Four means of God-realisation (p. 54) ;
41. One must make haste to realise god (p. 55) ;

42. Esoteric Bhakti (p. 56);
43. The true Bhagavata Dharma (p.57) ;
44. Three grades of the Bhagavatas (p. 57);
45. The Bliss of the repetition of God's Name (p. 58);
46. Bhakti, a Royal Road (p. 59);
47. Intellect vs. Love (p. 59);
48. The help of the Guru is invaluable (p. 61);
49. If Divine Knowledge is communicated by the Guru, why worship God? (p. 61);
50. God's meditation is a Panacea for all evils (p. 62);
51. Pitfalls in the path of meditation (p.62);
52. Experience of God-realisation (p.63);
53. A true Samadhi (p. 63);
54. Description of a Soul that has realised God (p. 64);
55. Who can frighten a God's servant ? (p. 65);
56. Such men are rare (p. 65).

Chapter IV. General Review.

1. The Chief Characteristics of the Age of Ekanatha (p. 66).

CHAPTER I.

Biographical Introduction: Bhanudasa, Janardana Swami and Ekanatha.

1. Bhanudasa.

Bhānudāsa, the great-grandfather of Ekanātha, was born at Paithana in 1448 A.D. (Śake 1370). His son was Chakrapāni. Chakrapāni's son was Sūryanārāyana, and Sūryanārāyana's son was Ekanātha. Bhānudāsa was a Deśastha Brahmin, and was probably a contemporary of the saint Dāmājipant. This latter saint must have lived either about 1458 A.D. (Śake 1380), or about 1468 A.D. to 1475 A.D. (Śake 1390 to 1397), the two dates of the dire famine in the Deccan. Bhānudāsa himself must have experienced this famine. When he was about ten years of age, Bhānudāsa was rebuked by his father for mischievous conduct. He, therefore, went to a desolate temple outside Paithana, remained there for seven days, and worshipped the God Sun, for which he was called Bhānudāsa. Bhānudāsa is reported to have brought back the image of Vitthala from Hampi, where Krishnarāya had taken it. The Abhanga which Bhānudāsa composed at this critical moment of his life at Vijayanagar might well be taken as a motto of God-love by all Saints :-

जरी हें आकाश वर पडों पाहे। ब्रह्मगोळ भंगा जाय ।

वडवानळ त्रिभुवन खाय। तरी मी तुझीच वास पाहीन गा विठोबा।।

From the temple of Vijayavitthala at Hampi whose

remains could be seen even today, we do not know definitely whether Krishnarāya had actually taken the image of Vitthala to that place, or whether he had merely erected a building where he might later carry the image from Pandharapūr and establish it finally. At present the temple of Vijayavitthala presents a desolate, though an architectural, appearance. It is a good temple without any image inside it, though it is known by the name of "Vijayavitthala" temple. It is not unlikely, that, as Pandharapūra must have suffered from the ravages of the Mahomedans, the image of Vithoba of Pandharapūr was in danger of being illhandled by the invaders, and hence a Hindu king like Krishnarāya, the king of Vijayanagar, might have thought it fit to take away the image from a zone of danger to a place where it might be safely lodged ; and it is not unlikely, again, that he might have handed the image back to a Saint like Bhānudāsa, when there was no longer any danger of its being ill-handled by the Mahomedans. In any case, it seems that the bringing back of the idol, from Vijayanagar to Pandharapūr was the great achievement of the life of Bhānudāsa, With Bhānudāsa and his successors, the third epoch of the development of the Sāmpradāya of Pandharapūr began. The first was evidently that of Jñānadeva; the second of Nāmadeva and his contemporary saints; the third of Bhānudāsa and his successors, Janārdana Swāmī, and Ekanātha. Bhānudāsa is reported to have entered Samādhi in 1513 A. D. (Śake 1435).

2. Janardana Swami.

Janārdana Swāmī, the teacher of Ekanātha, was born in 1504 A.D. (Śake 1426) at Chalisgaon. He was a Deśastha Brahmin by birth. He tells us how he led an immoral life at the beginning, and how he was later converted from that life to a spiritual life by the grace of Nrisimha-sarasvatī whom he met under the Audumbara tree at Aukalakop on the river of Krishnā. This place could be met with even to day in the Satārā District. Nrisimhasarasvati was a very great saint. The three sacred places which are known after him are Narasobāvādī, Audumbara, and Ganagāpūr. When this Saint was at Ankalakop, Janārdanaswāmī went to see him, and was initiated by him into the spiritual life. He was later appointed Killedāra of Devagada by a Mahomedan king. He was a statesman also. He devoted himself to the service of God, while he was doing his worldly duties. He was a type for Ekanātha Swāmī for a combination of worldly and spiritual life. He was respected by the Mahomedans and the Hindus alike, and every Thursday which was sacred to the God of Janārdana Swāmī was proclaimed a holiday at Devagada by the order of the Mahomedan king. Janārdana Swāmī died in 1575 A.D. (Śake 1497) at Devagada or Daulatābad, where his Samādhi could be seen even today inside a cave on the hill.

3. Date of Ekanatha.

The dates of Ekanātha's birth varies. Messrs. Sahasra buddhe and Bhāve took the date of Ekanātha's birth to be

1548 A.D. (Śake 1470). Mr. Pāngārakar in his earlier edition of his Life of Ekanātha, took it to be 1528 A.D. (Śake 1450), while in the second edition, he modified this to 1533 A.D. (Śake 1455), which Mr. Bhāve later accepted. Similarly about the date of Ekanātha's passing away. It was long taken to be 1609 A.D. (Śake 1531), for example, by Mr. Sahasrabuddhe. But Mr. Pāngārakar has shown it to be 1599 A.D. (Śake 1521). It thus seems that there is yet some difference of opinion about the exact dates of the birth and death of Ekanātha. On the whole, we may say that the period from 1533 A.D. to 1599 A.D. (Śake 1455 to 1521) may be taken as the most probable period of the life of Ekanātha. Ekanātha thus seems to have passed away at the age of sixty-six.

4. Ekanatha's Life.

Ekanātha was born at Paithana of Sūryanārāyana and Rukminībāī, both of whom unfortunately died while Ekanātha was yet a baby. Hence Ekanātha was brought up by his grandfather and grandmother. He was of a very calm disposition, and was devoted to God from his very childhood. He had a very keen intellect, and was fond of reading stories and mythologies and the lives of the Saints. He was also given to meditate on the stories he had heard in a temple of Śiva outside Paithana. Once upon a time, while he was only twelve, he heard a voice saying that there lived a saint called Janārdanapant on Devagada, and that he should get himself initiated by him. Ekanātha thereupon

went to Devagada of his own accord, without taking the permission of his guardians. The date of the first meeting of Ekanātha and Janārdana Swāmī was formerly given by Mr. Pāngārakar to be 1540 A.D. (Śake 1462); but with a change in his date about Ekanātha's birth, he has also altered the date of Ekanātha's first meeting with his Guru to 1545 A.D. (Śake 1467). In any case, it seems that Ekanātha went to Janārdana Swāmī while he was yet only twelve. He devoted himself to an absolutely disinterested service of his Spiritual Teacher. He studied the Jñāneśvarī, and the Amritānubhava with Janārdana Swāmī. He was once asked by Janārdana Swāmī to examine certain accounts, when he was very glad to find that his disciple had after a long vigil detected the error which he was seeking. Ekanātha was instructed by Janārdana Swāmī to perform a like subtle meditation on God on a hill behind Devagada. Ekanātha lived with his spiritual teacher for six years, during which period Ekanātha attained to God-vision. While Janārdana Swāmī was once engaged in meditation, the enemy raided Devagada, but Ekanātha successfully warded off the attack by putting on the coat-of-mail of Janārdana Swāmī. Later, Ekanātha was ordered by Janārdana Swāmī to go on a pilgrimage, and after returning, to go to Paithana, meet his own grandfather and grandmother, marry, and live a householder's life while also leading a life of meditation. Ekanātha successfully did all these things. On his return from the pilgrimage, he was married to a girl from Bijapur called Girijābāī. Ekanātha's

married life never stood in the way of his devotion. It is true that he tells us in his Chirañjīvapada that one should not sit among women, one should not look at women, one should not get himself shampooed by women, one should not speak with women, one should not allow the company of women in solitude (30-31). But he also tells us that this rule applies to other women beside one's own wife. One should never give these a place in one's presence. One should never have anything to do with these, and even while one's own wife is concerned, one should call, and touch, and speak to her only as much as is necessary. But we should never allow our mind to be filled with the idea of even our own wife (33-34). The rule of Ekanātha's life was the rule of moderation. His daily spiritual routine was regularly and strictly practised. He rose up at the same hour, devoted himself to spiritual pursuits at the same hour, and went to rest at the same hour. After having got up before dawn and spent some time in spiritual meditation, he would go to the river to bathe in the waters, and after return devote himself to the reading of the Bhāgavata and the Bhagavadgītā ; then receive guests for his midday meals; then in the afternoon deliver a discourse on the Bhāgavata or the Jñāneśvarī; spend his time in meditation in the evening ; then perform a Kīrtana at night, and after that go to rest. This was the constant rule of his life, which he never allowed to break. His life was a manifestation as to how a man of real God-realisation should live in worldly life. His patience, his tranquillity, his angerlessness, his sense of equality all around were beyond description. His

behaviour with a Mahomedan who spat on his body successively as he was returning from his river bath, his feeding of the untouchables on a Śrāddha occasion, his giving the draught of the holy waters of the Godāvārī which he was bringing to an ass, his purification and spiritual upliftment of a concubine, the reception which he gave to thieves when they broke into his house, his raising of an untouchable boy and carrying him to his mother, his calm and silent behaviour with his son Haripandit who was intoxicated with knowledge and who scarcely knew at first the value of spiritual life, are all indications of the way in which a man of perfect realisation should live in the world. While he was thus pursuing his spiritual life; in the midst of worldly life, he once suffered from a throat-disease, as we have pointed out in our Jñānadeva chapter, and was told in his dream by Jñānadeva that the disease would disappear only when he had taken away the root of the Ajāna tree which had encircled his neck in the Samādhi at Ālandī; whereupon Ekanātha tells us that he went to Ālandī, took away the root as directed, and found an inspiration for the reform of the text of the Jñāneśvarī, which he successfully achieved in 1584 A.D. (Śake 1506). Ekanātha has benefited the world as much by his own independent works as by his editing of the text of the Jñāneśvarī. Ekanātha took Samādhi at Paithana in 1599 A.D. (Śake 1521) without allowing any break to occur in his daily spiritual routine, which was the greatest test of his constancy of purpose and the reality and value of spiritual life.

5. Ekanatha's Works.

Ekanātha's literary work was great and voluminous. He has left behind a vast amount of spiritual literature. His commentary on the 11th chapter of the Bhāgavata is his most classical production. Next in order of merit is his Bhāvārtha Rāmāyana which, Ekanātha tells us, he was inspired to write. Ekanātha left it at the 44th chapter of the Yuddhakānda, and Gāvabā, one of his disciples, later finished it. The Marriage of Rukminī is also another of Ekanātha's great works, showing the very pure love of Rukminī for Krishna, and vice versa. The Abhangas of Ekanātha are also of established value, inasmuch as they constitute a peculiarly original contribution to spiritual life. Other works and commentaries are expositions; but in his Abhangas Ekanātha pours out his heart. There are a number of other minor works of Ekanātha, for example, his commentary on Chatuślokī Bhāgavata, Svātmasukha, and such others. In our exposition of Ekanātha, we shall concern ourselves especially with two of his productions which are alone relevant for our purpose as giving us the philosophical and mystical teachings of Ekanātha, namely, the commentary on the Bhāgavata, and his Abhangas. Other works are mainly expository, and do not contain the requisite philosophical or mystical interest; so we concern ourselves with only those that are significant for our purpose. Ekanātha is a past master in depicting the emotional side of poetry. Prof. Patwardhan has given very acutely Ekanātha's descriptions of the various sentiments

in his Wilson Philosophical Lectures. For example, we can read in Patwardhan how Ekanātha describes the love sentiment, or the heroic spirit, or pathos, or yet terror, and such other cognate emotions. Ekanātha is not merely a saint, but also a poet of a very high order, which fact has contributed in no small measure to his popularity as a great teacher of religion.

CHAPTER II.

The Abhangas of Bhanudasa, Janardana Swami and Ekanatha.

1. The Abhangas of Bhanudasa.

Bhānudāsa, the great-grandfather of Ekanātha, tells us that he knows of no other code of conduct and no other mode of thought than that of uttering the Name of God (Abg. 1). He says that Pandharapur is a mine of rubies. Those, who come to this place may take howsoever much they like, yet the treasure remains the same as it was. God Vitthala himself is like a well-set ruby, says Bhanudasa (Abg. 2). When Bhanudasa was taken to the gallows, because he was reported to have stolen the necklace of God, he is said to have composed some very pathetic Abhangas. How long are you going to test my devotion, asks Bhanudasa ? My breath is choked in my throat. Torments of all kinds are befalling me, and my mind is submerged in grief. There seems to be no remedy to this situation, except to fall in submission before Thee. Fulfil my desires, says Bhanudasa, and endow me with real happiness (Abg. 5). Even if the sky were to fall over my head, if the world were to break into pieces, and if the universe were to be devoured by the sea-fire, I will still wait for Thee, says Bhanudasa. I believe in the efficacy of Thy name. Make me not dependent upon others. Even if the seven seas were to amalgamate, if the world was to submerge in the huge expanse, even if the live great elements

were to be destroyed, I shall not leave Thy company. Howsoever great the danger that may befall me, I shall never forsake Thy name, nor shall my determination move an inch. As a beloved is attached to her husband, so shall I be attached to Thee, says Bhanudasa (Abg. 6). When these Abhangas were composed, God is said to have showed himself to Bhanudasa in as miraculous a manner as a dry piece of wood were to put forth sprouts, and as God came to relieve Bhanudasa of his suffering, Bhanudasa tells us he fell at His feet in utter submission (Abg. 7).

2. The Abhangas of Janardana Swami.

Janārdana Swāmī, the spiritual teacher of Ekanātha, tells us that he was initiated into the spiritual line by a Saint who lived at Ankalakop on the banks of the Krishnā under an Audumbara tree. He does not mention Nrisimhasarasvati by name, but his description points to that Saint as being his Guru (Abg. 1, 2). He supplicates his Guru, because he had led a life of sin. He regarded his wife as the most beloved object of his love. He censured the Brahmins. He gave himself over to duties other than his own. He took pleasure in doing deeds of demerit. Being grieved in life, and being tormented by different kinds of calamities, he came to Audumbara. He describes himself, as verily a mine of sins, and he tells us that he went to his Guru, and sat at the threshold of his door, in order that he might relieve him of his sins (Abg. 2). If Thou wert not to relieve me from my misery, where else should I go ? or whom else shall I worship ? Dost Thou hide Thyself,

because my sins are too strong for Thee, or art Thou gone to sleep? Thy very silence increases my grief, says Janārdana (Abg. 3). Thou shouldst verily take pity on me. I did not know the way of spiritual illumination, and hence I wandered in various directions. I have suffered immense grief. Thou art known to afford succour to the fallen. I have come in submission to Thee, with the desire that Thou mightest relieve me (Abg. 4). These Abhangas indicate the stage in which Janārdana was yet journeying as a spiritual pilgrim. When he reached his destination and became a full-fledged saint, and when later Ekanātha betook himself to him in order to receive spiritual illumination from him, Janārdana tells him not to care for this unreal world, but to follow the easy path of Pandharī (Abg. 7). There is no other remedy for spiritual knowledge than the utterance of God's name. What Pundalīka achieved in his life-time, thou shouldst thyself achieve in thine (Abg. 8). Harbour no thought of otherness about other beings. Fall prostrate before the Saints, and give food to those who come to thee (Abg. 9). There is no greater merit than giving food to guests without consideration of caste or colour; for, food indeed the Vedānta regards as God (Abg. 10). There is no use going to places of pilgrimage. If the mind becomes pure, God lives in our very house, and can be seen by the devotee wherever he may be (Abg. 12). Then Janārdana proceeds to describe certain mystical experiences. Wheels within wheels appear to the vision, says Janārdana, each as large as the sky. Therein seem to be set bunches of pearls. Light of the rubies, and lamps without wicks, appear

before the vision, says Janārdana (Abg. 13). In the first stage of ecstasy, there is a dense form like that of a serpent, and pearls and jewels shine of themselves (Abg. 14). First, one sees white foam, and then the clear moon-light. Fireflies, stars, the moon, and the sun follow one another. The swan presents itself in a state of steady contemplation. One should see straight into its eye, and should never leave the ecstatic state. Then the lord of souls who is of an imperishable nature shines forth : one should indeed regard him as the Self (Abg. 16). This, in fact, seems to be the essence of the spiritual experience which was communicated by Janārdana Swāmī to Ekanātha.

3. Ekanatha on his Spiritual Teacher.

Ekantha's love for his Spiritual Teacher is as great as that of Jñāneśvara for Niviitti. Ekanātha has immortalised his teacher Janārdana Swāmī by coupling his name with his own in every Abhanga which he has composed. Ekanātha tells us that he first prepared a seat for his teacher in his purified mind. Then he burnt the incense of egoism at his feet, lighted the lamp of good emotions, and made over to him an offering of five Prānas (Abg. 2). Ekanātha felt greatly indebted to his teacher, because he had showed him a great miracle. He swallowed the egoism of his disciple, and showed him the light within himself, which had neither any rising nor any setting (Abg. 4). As the mind of a chaste woman is always fixed on the feet of her husband, similarly, the devotee has his mind always set on God. Janārdana, says Ekanātha, showed him the God

within himself (Abg. 5). Is it not a matter of great wonder that he showed me the God in my heart without my being obliged to undergo any exertions for His attainment ? The real secret of the grace of the Guru is that a man should thereby see the whole world as God. Whatever one sees with his eyes, or hears with his ears, or tastes with his tongue, should all be of the nature of God (Abg. 8). Finally, he extols the Spiritual Teacher by saying that God Himself serves him who regards his spiritual teacher as identical with God (Abg. 9).

4. Ekanatha's moral and spiritual instruction.

Ekanātha excels in composing Abhangas which have a didactic significance. Is it not wonderful, he asks, that the spiritual life, which is sweet in itself, appears sour to the man who has no belief in God (Abg. 10) ? Unless we repent, God's name shall not come to our lips. Repentance is the cause of ecstasy. If one sincerely repents, God is not far from him (Abg. 12). On the other hand, disbelief is the cause of many vices. It produces egoism, and destroys the spiritual life. One may say that disbelief is the crown of all sins (Abg. 14). People, who vainly seek their identity with God, forge new kinds of chains for themselves. They free themselves from the chains of iron to put on themselves the chains of gold (Abg. 15). Some people miss the spiritual life in the arrogance of their knowledge. Others abandon it because they cannot reach the goal. A few others always postpone their search, because they think they would give themselves over to the spiritual life some time later (Abg.

16). There are only two ways for the attainment of spiritual life : one is that we should not get ourselves contaminated with others' wealth ; the other is that we should not contaminate ourselves with others' women (Abg. 17). Seeking of wealth means losing of Paramārtha (Abg. 18). Even musk loses its odour if it is put alongside of asafœtida. Similarly, good men lose their virtue if they keep the company of the wicked. Even if we were to feed the roots of the Nimba tree with the manure of sugar, it would not fail to produce bitter fruits (Abg. 19). Ekanātha advises us not to leave away home and betake ourselves to a forest. Are there not many pigs who live in a forest, he asks us ? A man who betakes himself to a forest is like an owl that hides itself before sun-rise (Abg. 20). We should not have the dispassion of a goat, or the ecstasy of a cock. We should by all means avoid the pranks of a monkey (Abg. 22). Seeking of wealth is one sure road to ruin. If we were to add to it the seeking of women, we do not know what may come to pass (Abg. 24). Ekanātha is a great believer in the value of his Vernacular. Can we say that God created the Sanskrit language, and that the Vernaculars were created by thieves ? In whatever language we praise God, our praise is equally welcome to Him; for God is Himself the creator of all languages (Abg. 27). Ekanātha discourses upon the power of Fate. Camphor, which is placed in a treasure, is destroyed by wind. A ship sinks in a great sea. Rogues come and pass counterfeit coin into our hands. Armies of enemies fall upon us, and take away money from subterranean places. Granaries of corn are

destroyed by water. Sheep and cows and buffaloes are all destroyed by disease. A treasure placed underground is reduced to ashes. Such, says Ekanātha, is the power of Fate (Abg. 28). He also tells us that people are afraid at the very word "Death". They do not know that it is sure to overtake us some day or other. The flower is dried up and the fruit comes in its place, and some time after even the fruit disappears. One goes before, another comes behind, and yet all pass into the hands of Death. Those who run away on hearing the name of Death are themselves placed some day on a funeral pile. The coffin-bearers, who regard a dead body as heavy, are themselves carried in a coffin to the cemetery some day. It is only those, who go in submission before God, says Ekanātha, that do not come within the clutches of Death (Abg. 29). We should, therefore, live in life as mere pilgrims who come to a resort in the evening, and depart the next morning. As children build houses in sport and throw them away, similarly should we reckon this life (Abg. 30). As birds alight in a court-yard and then fly away, even so we should pass through this life (Abg. 31). Ekanātha tells us principally to observe one rule in life : we should never follow what our mind dictates to us. What the mind regards as happiness comes ultimately to be experienced as unhappiness (Abg. 32). We should thus always keep our mind imprisoned at God's feet (Abg. 33). Finally, sexual passion, says Ekanātha, has ruined many, and it is only those who conquer it that are able to consummate their spiritual life. The god of love, you may say, is like a powerful ram, or like a great lion. He jostled

with Śankara, sent fear into the heart of Indra, threw himself against Nārada, destroyed Rāvana, killed Duryodhana, caught into his meshes a great sage like Viśvāmitra. Only it was the sage Śuka, who by the power of his meditation, caught hold of this ram, brought him, and imprisoned him at the feet of Janārdana Swāmī, the spiritual teacher of Ekanātha (Abg. 35).

5. Bhakti and the Name of God.

Ekanātha defines Bhakti as the recognition of the divine nature of all beings. Remembrance of God is likeness of God, forgetfulness of God is illusion of life (Abg. 36). To utter the name of God is alone Bhakti (Abg. 37). Amongst all evanescent things, God's name is alone imperishable (Abg. 38). It fulfils all the desires of the mind (Abg. 39). He who has no devotion in his heart will regard the pursuit of God as a mere chimera. But he who gets spiritual experience will have the greatest value for it (Abg. 40). People vainly busy themselves in wrangling, without seeing that the name of God leads to the form of God (Abg. 41). If a man does not feel happy at heart at the utterance of God's name, we must take it that he is a sinful man. Even if we put the manure of musk at the basin of onion, its strong smell cannot be conquered. A man, who has high fever, does not find even fresh milk sweet. A man who is bitten by a serpent regards even sugar as bitter. Similarly, a man immersed in worldly life has no belief in the efficacy of the Name (Abg. 42). The Name of God gives us divine happiness. It puts an end to all diseases of body and mind. It

enables us to preserve equanimity (Abg. 44). God runs to the help of the devotee, if he devoutly remembers Him. He thus came to the succour of Draupadī when a host of Brahmins had come to ask for dinner. He succoured Arjuna and protected him from deadly arrows. He saved Prahlāda on land and in water and in fire (Abg. 46). A man, who has no real devotion, even though learned, looks merely like a courtesan, who puts on different kinds of ornaments (Abg. 48). Bhakti is the root, of which dispassion is the flower, and illumination the fruit (Abg. 49). In the devoted performance of a Kīrtana, every time a new charm appears. The hearer and the speaker both become God. The devotees of God sing lustily the name of God. Even the sky cannot contain the joy of these Saints (Abg. 51). When a man devoutly performs the Kīrtana of God, God shows Himself before him, Great is the happiness of a Kīrtana when God stands in front of His own accord. He wards off all our calamities by taking a disc and a mace in his hands (Abg. 52). He who is impossible to attain by a life of Yoga, says Ekanātha, dances in a Kīrtana (Abg. 53). Ekanātha's sole desire is that he should be spared long to perform the Kīrtana of God (Abg. 54). A man who performs a Kīrtana and begs for money will go to perdition (Abg. 55). We should sing and dance in joy, and ask nothing of anybody. We should eat, if we get a morsel of food. Otherwise, we should live on the leaves of trees. We should determine not to leave a Kīrtana, even though the life may be passing away (Abg. 56). With great reverence, we should sing the acts of good men, and should bow to them with all our

heart. In the company of the good, we should utter the name of God, and at the time of a Kīrtana we should nod in joy beside God. We should never waste our breath; and should talk only about devotion and knowledge. In great love, we should discuss the various kinds of dispassion. Saints perform a Kīrtana in such a manner that the form of God is thereby firmly set before the minds of men (Abg. 57). There have been various Saints who have performed various kinds of Bhakti. Parīkshit performed the devotion of the hearing of God's exploits. Śuka performed the devotion of Kīrtana. Prahlāda gave himself over to the uttering of the Name of God. Ramā did physical service of God. Akrūra performed the devotion of prostration. Māruti gave himself over to the service of God. Arjuna led a life of friendliness with God. And the great Bali performed the devotion of utter self-sacrifice for the sake of God (Abg. 58).

6. The Power of the Saints.

Ekanātha thinks that it is an extremely lucky event to meet with real saints. One may be able to know the past, the present and the future; one may be able to stop the Sun from setting; one may easily cross the ocean; but it is difficult to meet a real Saint (Abg. 59). He alone is a real Saint who does not allow his peace to be disturbed, even if his body is tormented by another ; or who does not shed tears of grief, even if his son is killed by enemies. He is not dejected, when all his wealth is taken away by thieves; and he does not become angry, even if his wife turns out unchaste (Abg. 61).

He looks equally upon praise and censure (Abg. 60). He always sings the praises of God in the midst of difficulties. In poverty also, he remains equanimous (Abg. 63). Those, on the other hand, are false Saints, who assume sainthood only in order to fill their belly. They besmear their body with ashes, and tell people that they are the source of happiness. They deceive and rob innocent people, ask others to make them their spiritual preceptors (Abg. 66), and have no objection to take all kinds of service from their disciples (Abg. 67). Real saints are not like these counterfeit ones. God is at their beck and call, and Ekanātha implores them to show him the vision of God but once (Abg. 68). He regards it a matter of great joy, when the Saints come to visit his house (Abg. 72). He feels he should not be separated from them even for a moment (Abg. 73). Tears of joy flow from his eyes when he comes in contact with these saints (Abg. 74). The Saints are really more generous than even a cloud. They fulfil all desires. They turn away the minds of men from empty and insignificant things, and make them worthy of themselves. They rescue them from the clutches of Death (Abg. 76). There is no saviour except Saints when a calamity befalls a man (Abg. 77); for the gods become weary of the evil-doers, but the Saints accept them also (Abg. 80). As the Sun's light cannot be hidden in the sky, similarly, the greatness of a Saint cannot be hidden in the world (Abg. 82). All the treasures of heaven reside with these saints (Abg. 83). How wonderful is it, asks Ekanātha, that by means of Bhakti a devotee can himself become God (Abg. 84) ? God forgets His divinity, and fulfils all the

desires of his devotees (Abg. 87). If we place our burden on God, God shall certainly support us in the midst of difficulties (Abg. 89). He serves His devotees, as Krishna served Arjuna by being his charioteer (Abg. 90). God released Draupadī from calamities, and relieved Sudāman of his poverty ; protected Parīkshit in the womb ; ate the morsels of cow-herds, and carried aloft the hill of Govardhana (Abg. 91); baked pots with Gorā ; drove cattle with Chokhā ; cut grass with Sāmvatā; wove garments with Kabīra ; coloured hide with Rohidāsa; sold meat with the butcher Sajana ; melted gold with Narahari; carried cowdung with Janābāī; and even became a Pariah messenger of Dāmājī (Abg. 92). Devotion indeed makes the devotee the elder, and God the younger. The devotee is even the father of God (Abg. 95). God is impersonal, but the devotee is personal (Abg. 96). God and devotees are like the ocean and waves, like gold and ornaments, like flower and scent (Abg. 98). God even harbours the kick of his devotee on his breast (Abg. 100). Kansa hated Krishna, but honoured Nārada, and so went to heaven (Abg. 101). God is indeed the body, of whom the Devotee is the soul (Abg. 105). It is a matter of shame to God that His devotee should look piteous in the eyes of men (Abg. 107). God regards His life as useless, if the words of the devotee come untrue (Abg. 108). The Saints indeed take on a body when the path of religion vanishes, and when irreligion reigns. By the power of God's name, the Saints come to the succour of the ignorant and the fallen. By the force of their devotion, they destroy heresy and all pseudo-religion (Abg. 111).

7. The Mystical Experience of Ekanatha.

Ekanātha's mystical experience is of the highest order. He gives us all the physical and psychical marks of God-realisation. There are eight such marks to be found in a state of God-realisation : the hair stand on end; the body begins to perspire ; a shiver passes through the system ; tears flow from the eyes ; the heart is filled with joy ; the throat becomes choked; there is a mystical epokhē; and there are long inspirations and expirations (Abg. 114). Through the ear, Ekanātha tells us in mystical language, he came to the eye, and ultimately became the eye of his eye. As he thus began to see the world, the world began to vanish from before him. His entire body, in fact, became endowed with vision (Abg 115). He rose beyond merit demerit. He left the three states of consciousness behind him. He dwelt in the light of the spiritual moon (Abg. 116). He was thus greatly indebted to his spiritual teacher, for he showed him the eye of his eye, which put an end to all doubt whatsoever (Abg. 117). Inside his heart, he saw Janārdana. The vision of self-illumination dispelled all his infatuation (Abg. 118). At the dawn of mystical experience, he saw that the whole world was clothed in radiance (Abg. 119). When the Spiritual Sun arose, he saw that there was neither noon, nor evening, nor morning. There was a constant rise of the Spiritual Sun before him. There was an eternal end to all setting whatsoever. The East and the West lost their difference. Action and non-action both became as the Moon by day (Abg. 120). As he stepped inside water for bathing, he saw the vision of God even in water. By that vision, even the Ganges became sacred. To whatever place of pilgrimage

Ekanātha went, it was rendered holy by his presence (Abg. 121). Ekanātha tells us that real Sandhyā consists merely in making obeisance to all beings with the feeling of non-difference (Abg. 122). As the cloud of Ekanātha began to rumble in the sky, the ocean of Janārdana began to overstep its limits (Abg. 124). Ekanātha tells us with warmth that he saw a four-handed vision of God, with a dark-blue complexion, with a conch and disc in his hands, a yellow garment over his body, and a beautiful necklace on his breast (Abg. 126). With one-pointed devotion, wherever the devotee may go, he sees the vision of God. He sees God in his meditation, in sleep, in the world, and in the forest (Abg. 128). Inside and outside, he sees God. Sleeping, and waking, and dreaming, he is always enjoying the vision of God (Abg. 129). Wherever such a one sees, he finds that God fills all directions and quarters (Abg. 130). God seems to be almost shameless, because there is no garment which he wears. God even becomes a white hog, says Ekanātha (Abg. 132). God becomes so happy in the house of the Saints, says Ekanātha, that He does not depart from their house, even though He is thrown out of the house. God enjoys the company of the Saints, and keeps returning to them even though He is driven away (Abg. 133). As one moves out to a foreign land, God moves with him. On mountains and precipices, wherever the eye is cast, God is seen. Ekanātha sat in the immaculate enjoyment of God, and so he did not move out into the world or into the forest (Abg. 134). His mind became engrossed in God. so much so, that it became God. As Ekanātha began to see God, the world began to vanish from him (Abg. 136). He did not care now whether

his body remained or departed. A rope-serpent neither dies nor comes to life. We really did die, says Ekanātha, while we were living, and having been dead, yet lived (Abg. 138). The whole world became to us now full of the joy of God. Our mind rested on His feet (Abg. 130). The result of such a unitive devotion was that God and devotee became one. God forever stood before Ekanātha, and the distinction between God and Devotee vanished (Abg. 140). Now, asks Ekanātha, how would it be possible for him to worship God ? All the materials of worship, such as scent, incense, light, and so on, were all the forms of God, with the result that there was no distinction between worshipper and worshipped (Abg. 143). So long as the world does not allow one to worship oneself, till then an ignorant man must appear better than a self-worshipper (Abg. 144). Now, says Ekanātha, I became one with Brahman. I became free from all the troubles of existence ; free from physical and mental torments ; I was left alone to myself with the result that all duality was at an end (Abg. 145). All that appeared to the vision was now to me the form of God (Abg. 147). All the directions became filled with God. There was thus no distinction between the East and the West. If God filled every nook and cranny of the universe, where was there any place left for Him to occupy (Abg. 149) ? I found out a suitable field for tilling, says Ekanātha. I sowed the seed of spiritual illumination. When the crop came out, the world was too small to contain the grain. Various Sciences have tried to take the measure of God, says Ekanātha, and yet God has remained immeasurable (Abg. 150).

CHAPTER III. The Bhagavata of Ekanātha

1. The Place and Date of Composition.

The Bhāgavata of Ekanātha is a Marāthī Commentary on the eleventh Skanda of Shrīmat Bhāgavata. Ekanātha got his inspiration to open to the Marāthī-speaking people this treasure of divine love, hidden in the Sanskrit language, from Jñāneśvara, who had done pioneering work in this line by writing the Jñāneśvarī. Though Jñāneśvara and Ekanātha are separated from each other by nearly three centuries, Jñāneśvara's influence upon Ekanātha is so great that his Bhāgavata appears to be merely an enlarged edition of the Jñāneśvarī. In the works of Ekanātha, we meet with the same thoughts, the same similes, even the very words and phrases, which we meet with in the Jñāneśvarī. Ekanātha's greatness consists in using the old material with an addition of fresh stock for building a structure which wears a new yet old and familiar appearance. Following Jñāneśvara, Ekanātha, at the close of his work, mentions the place and date of composition of his work. He tells us that he undertook this work of commentation at Paithana, his own native place, and a great centre of pilgrimage on the banks of the Godāvarī, the longest and holiest river in the Deccan. There, however, he could finish five Adhyāyas only. The rest were completed in the Pañchamudrā Matha at Benares on the banks of the holy Ganges. Ekanātha is silent about the reasons which led him to discontinue his work at Paithana, and to undertake a long journey to Benares to finish it. He simply proceeds to give the date of the composition according to the methods of calculation current in both parts of the

country the Deccan as well as the North. To state it according to Vikrama era current at Benares, it was the Vrisha Samvatsara 1630 (i.e., 1573 A.D.). In this year, it was in the auspicious month of Kārttika on the full-moon day on Monday that the work was completed. "Listen", he says, "to the year of composition according to the Śaka era established in my land. It was in the Śaka year 1495 that this wonderful commentary was completed through the grace of Janārdana" (E. B. XXXI. 527-28, 535, 552-56).

2. Family History.

Ekanātha is one of those few saint-poets who have obliged the future generations by tracing their family ancestries at the beginning or end of their works. Unlike Jñānadeva, who is satisfied with tracing only his spiritual lineage, Ekanātha, in the beginning of his work, after he has offered salutations to the God and Goddess of Learning, proceeds to give an account of his family. He says that the family in which he was born, through good fortune, was a Vaishnava family, that is, a family whose tutelary deity was God Vishnu. He was the fourth in descent from Bhānudāsa, the illustrious devotee of the Sun Deity, whose birth in the family so endeared it to God. Ekanātha tells us that even when quite young, this servant of the Sun-god endeared himself to the luminous God by his unflinching devotion, and thus, through his grace, himself became the Sun of spirituality. Conquering the sense of conceit and pride, he made such a tremendous advance in spirituality that he now and then saw divine visions. His devotion and spirituality were so great that God Vitthala once actually visited Paithana in order to have a look at his feet, and in the dead of night, Bhānudāsa saw before him his own Ishtam bedecked with precious ear-rings, and

illuminating the whole surrounding world. Chakrapāni was the son of this widely renowned Bhānudāsa. Bhānudāsa named his grandson Sūrya, and expired. "Conceiving from this luminous Sūrya, Rukmini his wife, gave birth to me". "Hence it is", he adds, " that Rakhumāi is my very mother " (E. B. I. 130- 34).

3. Spiritual Lineage.

As is common with these Mahārāshtra Saints, Ekanātha proceeds to trace his spiritual lineage. The originator of his line was God Dattātreyā. The first to receive initiation from him was Sahasrārjuna, and king Yadu was the second. In this Kaliyuga, Janārdana alone had the good fortune to be accepted as disciple by Dattātreyā. The divine discontent that Janārdana felt was so great, that in thinking of his Guru, he lost all outward sense. Seeing the divinely discontented state of Janārdana's heart, God Dattātreyā, who expects only sincere faith from his devotees, approached him and favoured him by placing his hand on his head. Miraculous was the effect of this touch! Janārdana became the master of all spiritual illumination. He clearly felt the emptiness of this transitory world, and realised within himself the true nature of Ātman. Dattātreyā taught him that faith which preaches inaction through action. Janārdana now understood the secret of living free, though embodied. The faith that was generated in Janārdana's heart through the grace of God Dattātreyā was so determinate and fearless, that he never thought himself polluted even when he accepted the householder's life, and continued to perform the duties of that station. When his soul was thus overflowing with the spiritual possession bestowed by

divine grace, it lost the very power of intelligence. Janārdana could not control the oncoming of this rapturous ecstasy, and lay on the ground motionless like a corpse. Dattātreya brought his mind down to the world of phenomena, and gently admonished him that even that kind of emotional surging was after all the work of the Sāttvic quality, and that the highest state consisted in suppressing the emotional swelling, and living a quiet life with the conviction of the realised Self. Having finished his worship, Janārdana wanted to prostrate himself before his Guru. But when he lifted his eyes, to his utter amazement he found that Dattātreya had vanished away. Ekanātha, at the end, offers an apology for going out of his way to give such a detailed account of his spiritual teacher. His apology consists in simply putting before his hearers his utter inability as compared with Janārdana. He says that even when he would like to be silent, his Guru would not allow him to do so. Thus, in spite of himself, he was forced to give an account of his spiritual lineage (E. B. IX. 430-439, 454).

4. Ekanatha's Humility before Janardana.

It was the sincere belief of Ekanātha that though, to all appearances it was his hand that was working to produce the Commentary, the real agency that worked was no other than that of Janārdana himself. It was his grace, he tells us, that enabled him to undertake and finish that gigantic commentary on the eleventh Skanda of Shṛīmat Bhāgavata. Just as a father holds in his hand the tiny armlet of his child, and by means of it writes all the letters himself, so here it was Janārdana, who through him opened to the world the secret of the eleventh Skanda. As to his ability to perform the task, he says he must frankly state that he was a perfect

ignoramus that he knew not even how to proceed with the task, much less how to be true to the original. He was a perfect stranger to that kind of literary art. He was simply the mouthpiece of Janārdana. Ekanātha is not wearied to state that in getting this huge work done through a blockhead like himself. Janārdana had veritably performed a great miracle. To explain the meaning of every sentence in the Bhāgavata is a task beyond the capacities of even the great founders of philosophical systems. And yet here in this Marāthī commentary, all this has been achieved by Ekanātha. This is indeed due to the mercy of the omnipotent Janārdana. Such indeed is the extraordinary grandeur of Janārdana's grace! (E.B. XXXI. 496-504).

5. Ekanatha, an Enigma to his Neighbours.

So wonderful was the working of this grace that in spite of the authorship of this work, Ekanātha tells us that he continued to be an enigma to his neighbours. In the following words, he gives a very graphic description of popular notions about him. "Attend to the tale of Ekā Janārdana", he says. "Those that will perchance read his work will pronounce him to be an erudite Pandit; but if, by chance, they happen to meet him personally, they will surely find him an ignoramus. Some persons look upon him as a great devotee, yet some others believe him to be a Jīvanmukta. Some, on the other hand, conclude that Ekā is assuredly a worldly-minded man, attached to sense-pleasures. They declare that Ekā Janārdana knows nothing of Yogic postures, nor has he ever counted beads or practised meditation. He is not even found to be regular in the observance of a single rule, nor does he wear on his body any rosary or such other sectarian mark. Thus there is nothing with him that would characterise him as one

walking on the path of devotion. To them, therefore, he is a great mystery. They therefore declare 'Who knows what sacred formula he possesses, and what he preaches to his disciples! He takes all possible care to keep his Mantra secret. He simply takes undue advantage of the blind faith of the poor innocent, and deludes them. He resounds the air with God's name, and hypnotises his hearers'. Such is the nature of the doubts that Janārdana himself kindles in their hearts. When Ekā tries to give an account of himself, Janārdana forces him aside, and begins to speak himself. Somehow, all trace of egotism in him is lost. The smallest movement of his tiniest finger is caused by Janārdana himself" (E. B. XXXI. 505-511).

6. Bhagavata, a Great Field.

We close this portion of the historical account by giving in the words of Ekanātha the history of the Bhāgavata itself. Ekanātha uses the simile of a field to trace the history of the Bhāgavata. "Sri Bhāgavata", he says, "is a great field. Brahmā was the first to obtain seed. Nārada was its chief proprietor. And it was he who did this wonderful work of sowing the seed. Vyāsa secured protection for the field by erecting ten bunds about it, and the result was the unusually excellent crop of divine bliss. Śuka worked as a watchman to guard the crops: with simply discharging the sling of God's name, he made the sin-birds flow away. Uddhava thrashed the ears, heaped them together in the form of the eleventh Skanda, and winnowing the corn, separated the grains in the form of the weighty words of Śri Krishna. From these were very skilfully prepared several dishes with an immortal flavour. Parīkshit succeeded Uddhava. He broke with the world to listen to the Bhāgavata from the lips of Śukadeva, and obtained divine

bliss. Following in his footsteps, Śrīdhara illuminated the hidden meaning of the Bhāgavata in his Bhāvārthadīpikā, and brought blissful peace for himself. The favourite fly of Janārdana, namely, Ekanātha, with the two wings of the Marāthī dialect, flew straight upon that dish, and enjoyed it to its heart's content, as it was left there unmolested by any one. Or, otherwise, it might be said that Janārdana's favourite cat happened to see the delicious preparations through the light of the Bhāvārthadīpikā. Smelling the dish to be pure and delicious, it ventured and approached the plates. When it mewed, the merciful Saints were pleased to offer to it a morsel of the remnants of their dish. The favourite cat of Janārdana was simply overjoyed to lick the unwashed vessels of these Saints, and it enjoyed the dish as a heavenly ambrosia" (E. B. XXXI. 443-454).

I. Metaphysics

7. Introductory.

In his metaphysical views, Ekanātha shows a distinct influence of Śankara, the eminent champion of Vedāntic Monism. It, however, appears that he appreciated and digested that great scholar's philosophy not only through his Sanskrit works, but also through the Marāthī works of Jñānadeva and Mukundarāja, especially through the works of the former. He expounds the spiritualistic monism of Śankara, using as is usual with him, the materials already prepared by Jñānadeva. For similes and ideas, it appears that he has laid under obligation not only the Jñāneśvarī but even the Amritānubhava. Ekanātha believes in Śankara's theory with all its deductions. It may therefore be truly said that his great contribution to philosophy consists in the popularisation of the Vedānta. Jñānadeva disappeared

from this mundane world quite prematurely. Nāmadeva lived long and did a great deal of propagandist work by travelling on foot from South to North, and resounding the air with God's name ; yet he shows little trace of any acquaintance with Sanskrit scholars. Tukārāma who flourished after Ekanātha, carried on, with great success, the work of Nāmadeva. But he too lacked the close acquaintance with Sanskrit in which the treasures of Vedāntic philosophy were hidden. By his temperament, by his external environments like that of a birth at Paithana, then a great centre of Sanskrit learning, by his long term of life, and not the least, by his fortunate acquisition of divine grace quite early in life, Ekanātha was of all the fittest person to popularise the Vedānta. We give below a brief statement of the salient features of his metaphysical views.

8. Brahman alone is Real; the World is Unreal.

Ekanātha, as has been said above, advocates the theory of spiritualistic monism. But it is a monism proved through nescience. Ekanātha says: "Before its manifestation the world was not. After its disappearance it will not leave even a trace of its existence behind it. What therefore manifests itself during the middle state of existence is unreal, and manifests itself through the power of Māyā. Parabrahman or the Highest Being is the beginning of this world. It is that peerless Brahman that survives the destruction of the world. Naturally, even in the state of existence, when the world appears to possess a concrete existence, what really exists is not the world but Brahman. Only to the undiscriminating this illusory show appears as real". To illustrate what he means : "A mirage has no existence prior to the rays of the sun. And it dies without a

trace when the sun sets. Naturally, during the middle state of existence what appears as flowing water is simply an illusion. Really, not a drop of real water can be found where such an amount of water appears to have flown". To take another illustration : "A rope is often confounded with a serpent. Prior to this confusion, a rope exists as a rope. When the misconception is removed, there is again the rope existing. Hence even when in the middle state, the illusion causes the confused perception of a serpent, the rope stands as a rope unchanged or unmodified". Ekanātha therefore concludes that if one were to think about the beginning and the end of the world, one will be convinced that Brahman alone is real, and the world is unreal (E. B. XIX. 87-91).

9. Four Proofs of the Unreality of the World.

The existence of this concrete world is the greatest stumbling block in the path of all the monists. Ekanātha therefore brings forth all possible arguments to prove the unreal character of this seemingly real world. "Brahman alone, without a second, exists. The world is only apparently real. It possesses an imaginary existence supported by the reality of Brahman". Ekanātha advances four arguments to prove the unreality of the world. First, the Scriptures can well stand witness to this. Secondly, we all of us perceive the transiency of body. Then, again, Mārkaṇḍeya and Bhuśundi have witnessed for millions of times the whole world reduced to ashes at the end of each cycle. This hear-say coming from the lips of the hoary venerable persons is the third proof, which may be called the historical proof. What is known as Inference in logic is the fourth proof to prove the unreality of the universe. It can be laid down in the following manner : "A rope is a rope at all times. But through misconception it is understood

variously as a log of wood, a serpent, a garland of pearls, or a line of a water flow. Similarly, Brahman is existence itself, knowledge itself. But various mysterious theories discuss it as a mere void, or as being qualified. They range from pure nihilism to pluralism of an extreme type. Thus the fact that a variety of theories exists clearly shows that this world-experience is false". Ekanātha therefore asserts that in this case the Vedāntic theory alone expresses the truth. "As the cloth cannot be supposed to have an independent existence apart from the thread that goes to form it, so the world cannot be supposed to possess an independent existence apart from Brahman. Beyond the thread, which, woven into warp and woof, gives existence to the cloth, cloth is only a name. So the world beyond the Brahman which supports this misconception has existence only in name" (E. B. XIX. 197-205).

10. Avidya, Vidya and Maya.

In order to explain the existence of plurality, a monist of the type we are considering is required to think of a principle which will partake of both unity and plurality, and which without tampering in any way the purity of the One, will yet be the parent of the Many. The Śaukarite Vedānta, with one important modification, accepts the Prakṛiti of the Sāmkhyas for such a principle. The Sāmkhyas believe in the eternity and independence of this principle. The Vedānta of Śankara just removes these two characteristics, makes it an existence dependent upon the Ātman, describes it as having its end with the rise of the knowledge of the Ātman, and steers clear of a rock upon which many monistic theories have suffered shipwreck. Ekanātha follows Śankara in the hypothesis of this explanatory principle. He first states the traditional

meaning of Vidyā, Avidyā and Māyā and then proceeds to the important question of their futility. Vidyā, he says, can be defined as the experience which one has at the time of real knowledge. It expresses itself in the consciousness "I am Brahman". It is this experience which destroys Avidyā, which is the parent of all misery. The belief that 'I am sinful and ever unfortunate' is the clear expression of Avidyā, the mother of all doubts and miseries. Avidyā enchains the individual self, Vidyā delivers him from bondage. But these two are the eternal powers of Māyā, a great enchantress who is a perpetual enigma to men as well as to angels. She is a riddle because she cannot be proved to be real or unreal. She cannot be proved to be real, because she vanishes with the first ray of spiritual knowledge. And she cannot be proved to be unreal inasmuch as everyone feels her presence and power day and night. She has therefore been called the 'Indescribable', neither real nor unreal. It is she who spreads a net of allurements for the world. It is she who breeds and brings up under her fostering care the two powers, namely, Vidyā and Avidyā. But if one were to come closer and look at her carefully, it will be seen that this Enchantress is no other than the finite Self's own idea (E. B. XI. 98-100, 102-106).

11. As Maya is not, any question about it is useless.

Janaka, king of the Videhas, asked Antariksha a question about the nature, of this Māyā. There upon, Antariksha said to the king, "Well, you have asked me a question about the nature of Māyā. But it is a question which is futile, as in this case the speaker has no support, or hold at all. All speech is at an end if a king demands from his servant the horoscope of a barren woman's son. Suppose some one was to build a shed for supplying water to the passers-by living in a town in

the clouds; suppose some one was to card the wind, roll it and light it at the flame of a fire-fly ; or suppose some one was to break the head of his shadow or take the skin off the body of the sky; or suppose a son was born to the daughter-in-law of a barren lady, who was so graceful of figure that his very sight brought milk in the breasts of Bhīshma's wife. Grind the wind minutely in a windmill; break open the heaven with the horns of a horse; or let lamps be lighted with the lustre of a red berry to celebrate the marriage-ceremony of Hanumān. The story of Māyā can be told by those wisecrackers who would make the above suppositions. Thus all discussions about Māyā would bring shame to the man who would venture to describe her" (E. B. III. 32-40).

12. There is no room for the world.

We have said in the beginning that Ekanātha's great work consists in the popularisation of the Vedāntic philosophy. If a further proof is necessary, it can be obtained from the various beautiful solutions which he offers of the problems he raises in his commentary. They show what a keen logical acumen this devotee of Pandharapūr possessed. Let us hear what he says about his proof of the non-existence of the world. "It must be granted, he says, that there are two existences, the soul and the body. The question is, which of them supports Samsāra? It is no use saying that the Samsāra does not exist at all, for everyone of us feels its existence day and night. So, that it exists is a fact, and the question of its support must be solved. But the Ātman, which is ever free, and which is the principle of intelligence, cannot be its support; nor can Samsāra be supported by body which is dull and insensate. The eternal Ātman transcends all definition and description. It is his self-effulgence that helps the Sun and

the Moon to send floods of light which alternately illumines the whole world. Such a self-effulgent Ātman could be fettered by the world-fetters, only if the Sun were to be drowned in a pool of mirage or to be burnt up by the fire of a fire-fly, or if the golden mountain Meru, which is considered to be the support of the three worlds, were to be drowned in a small pond, or finally if the heavens were to be blown up by the flutter of a fly's wings. We may go further and say that even if these impossibilities were to happen, the Ātman shall not be fettered by the world-fetter. As to body which is dull, stupid, and material, not even a fool will be prepared to regard it as the support of this world. If a stone were to suffer a stomach-ache, or if a mountain were to be affected with cholera, or if darkness were to be whitened by charcoal, then the body would support the Samsāra. Thus there is no room for the world either in the Ātman or in the Body (E. B. XXVIII. 122-133).

13. The Individual Self and the Universal Self.

Brahman has been declared by the Vedas to be indivisible. What then has divided it into two ? Possibly he divided himself into two, after the fashion of a man looking in a mirror. But what a great contrast do these two selves present ? When a man is before a mirror, his reflection stands before him, and appears to copy him exactly. But really it can be contrasted with the original in every way. For instance, if a man is looking in the eastern direction, his reflection in the mirror looks in the opposite, that is, the western direction. If so, how can it be regarded as the faithful copy of the original ? So, in the case of Ātman, Māyā produces a wonderful difference. The Universal Self has his vision directed towards himself; while his copy, the

individual self, directs his sight towards the world. Hence though it appears that they look at each other, they are entirely opposed to one another (E. B. XXIV. 90-93).

14. The Figure of two Birds.

Though opposed to each other, they are yet best friends. They can be very well compared to two birds who have nestled on the same tree, namely, the body. Both are equally intelligent, and in their eternal and undying love for each other excel the love of any other pair. At no time, whether by day or night, can they be seen separated from each other. On account of their close friendship and sincerity, they live together sportively. As the lamp never leaves the company of light, and vice versa, one cannot be separated from the other. Whatever the finite self desires, God never refuses but hastens to supply. God immeasurably satisfies all the desires which a man has in the last moments of his life. In return, the finite self also has surrendered himself to him completely. So great is the attachment between the two, that the finite self ungrudgingly obeys his friend, God, in the minutest detail, and even at the cost of life. When in great difficulty, the finite self prays to God for succour, and through mercy natural to Him, He runs to help him at the first call. Thus the finite self lives by God's grace, and in the end becomes one with Him. God also loves him to such an extent that He lives only for him. These reciprocal acts of love have but one exception. The finite self is greatly fond of tasting the sour, stringent fruits of the fig-tree. In spite of God's continuous warnings, he goes on tasting these fruits, and as a result suffers the miseries of birth and death. God Himself, never tastes these fruits, and thus enjoys eternal bliss (E. B. XI. 164-173, 199-205).

15. The essential unity of Jiva and Siva.

The two are the best friends because they are in essence one and the same. Here, there is no room for the smallest degree of difference. To continue the simile of a man looking into a mirror, when a man looks in this manner, he appears to double himself; but in reality he is one. The distinctness is only an appearance. The reflection of God in the dull mirror of Avidyā is Jīva or the finite self, in the mirror of Vidyā it is Śiva or the Universal Self. Thus the grandeur of unity remains undefiled, in spite of the appearance of duality (E. B. XXII. 111-113).

16. The Atman is present in all states of body and mind.

In this body, as their necessary background, the Ātman is an ever-present, changeless factor in all the varying states of body and mind. Living in a body, yet himself unsoiled by bodily changes, he is a continuously present witness to our changing states. This continuity of the Ātman can be very well inferred from the constant experience of every human being, that it is he who was once a young child, has become now a youth, and will, after a sufficient lapse of time, become a decrepit old man. In the state of wakefulness a man enjoys an infinite variety of objects. It is he who, in his dream, develops within himself the traces of the sense enjoyments of the waking life. Again, it is he, who, without any vivid consciousness attached to him, witnesses sound sleep, where the mind is absorbed in ignorance and where there is neither waking nor dream. With the change of states, however, he does not change. He remains conscious that it is he who witnesses the waking state, the dream and the sleep. These things,

says Ekanātha, are sufficient to prove the continuity of the Ātman (E. B. XIII. 481-483, 486, 490-491).

17. The Atman remains unmodified.

As the Ātman is a changeless witness to the varying states of mind and body, so he is an unmodified witness to the creation, existence, and destruction of the whole universe. What is true in the case of the microcosm needs only to be extended to the case of the macrocosm. Ātman is not born with the creation of the world, nor does he die with the destruction of the world. The world is born, grows, or is destroyed. Ātman is not born, nor does he grow, or die. He remains changeless all the while (E. B. XXVIII. 258-259).

18. Freedom is an illusion, because bondage is so.

If this is the true nature of the Self, where is there any room for the states of bondage and freedom? They have not the slightest room for existence in man's spiritual nature. It is all the working of the Qualities. The Self is in no way involved in them. Qualities are the creations of Māyā, and the true self transcends the influence of Māyā. If truth can be overcome by falsehood, or if a person living in *rerum natura* can be drowned in the flood of a mirage, then alone can the true Self be fettered by these Qualities and States. The all-pervading self effulgent Ātman, man's true Self, alone exists and is ever free (E. B. XI. 29-32).

II. Ethics.

19. Introductory.

Ekanātha is very elaborate in giving gentle admonitions useful for spiritual life. The Bhāgavata of Ekanātha can be well called the best guide to an aspirant who is

trying to explore the unknown region of Divine Bliss. But, as elsewhere, the chief merit of Ekanātha consists in his power of exposition rather than in absolute originality. We do not mean to say that there is nothing original in Ekanātha. It is impossible that there should be no originality. But it is a fact which even Ekanātha would have gladly admitted that he was so much influenced by Jñānadeva, that practically it was Jñānadeva who was explaining himself through Ekanātha. As for virtues, the cultivation of which forms a practical background for the development of spiritual experience, Ekanātha mentions the usual virtues, namely, purity, penance, endurance, celibacy, non-killing, equanimity, and such others. We quote here a few cases just to bear out what we have said.

20. Purity.

The sine quâ non of spiritual life is purity, internal as well as external. The mind becomes impure by contact with evil desires. So long as it is not purified, all talk of spiritual life is useless. As gold purified in a crucible shines bright, so the constant meditation on the teachings of the Guru makes the mind pure, and bright with spiritual lustre. Thus if inside the mind is purified by the words of the Guru, that purity is sure to reveal itself through external activities. Mere bodily purity, without, the purity of the heart, is absolutely useless. It would be a mere farce, like bathing a donkey. It is an empty show. It would be as ludicrous as a beautiful lady wearing on her head a garland of pearls, but all the while standing naked. What is absolutely necessary, therefore, is an internal purity of the heart coupled with the external purity of good actions (E. B. HI. 380-399).

21. Penance.

Penance Ekanātha has described in various ways. Here also he distinguishes between the external appendages and the internal ore of penance. To emaciate one's body by fasting, or some such processes, is not true Penance. So long as there are evil passions in man, all external appliances are useless. For instance, a man may retire in a forest, and to all external appearances may be said to have forsaken the world, but in mind, all the while, he may be thinking of his own beloved. And then his stay in a forest proves to be absolutely useless. The true meaning of penance, therefore, is constant meditation on God (E. B. XIX. 451-454).

22. Retirement.

To attain to God, it is necessary that a man must retire to solitude. He must lead a lonely life. Where there are two, Satan is always a third. This can be illustrated by the instance of a young girl to be married. Suppose, while alone in the house, her house was visited by the members of her would-be husband's family. Consistent with her modesty, she would offer hospitality through a window, thus showing that she was alone in the house. But she would now think that she must help her mother by pounding rice. When she would begin pounding, with the raising and lowering of her hand, her bangles would make noise. But that noise would carry an impression to the bridegroom's party that her family was poor. To avoid such an impression, she would take out one bangle after another. So long as there were more than one bangle in each hand, they would continue to make noise. She would therefore leave in each hand one bangle, so that all noise would come to an end. This illustration would show how an aspirant

must retire from the world, and lead a lonely life for God (E. B. IX. 113-115, 87-102).

23. Bearing with the defects of others.

According to Ekanātha, another very important virtue which an aspirant must cultivate is the virtue of bearing with the defects of others. In the description of the virtues, but especially in the description of this and the next, the very life of Ekanātha seems to be reflected. To attend to the faults or defects in others is the worst of all faults in men. Virtue consists in not observing either the vice or virtue in others. If Brahman truly transcends the duality of vice and virtue, he who is prone to notice the faults or merits in others can be safely declared not to have attained to a true realisation of Brahman. Divine experience will forsake a man who attends to the vices or virtues in others. In a total solar eclipse, the stars become visible to the human eye even by day. Similarly, when this duality is visible, it can be safely inferred that the divinity is absent in men. The perception of duality can, therefore, be regarded as the sure sign of the prevalence of ignorance (E. B. XIX. 574-579).

24. Bearing with the slander of others.

For the attainment of the non-perception of this duality of virtue and vice in others, man must cultivate another but closely allied virtue of enduring abuse from others. Why should a man ever think of retaliation or revenge, when a man who slanders is but his own reflex? Suppose a man's teeth were to press against his own tongue. With whom shall he be angry? In a fit of anger, will he root out the teeth, or cut off his tongue? Surely, nothing like this will be done, because a man understands that both the tongue and the teeth are after all a part of himself. He who

suffers a fall by a sudden collision with another may easily have reason to be provoked against the latter. But suppose a man walks carefully, and his foot slips and he falls down. In this case with whom will he be angry? A man in such a case simply looks down through shame, and resumes his course. A true Sādhu, similarly, suffers calmly the slanders of others, because he has realized his oneness with the universe. He will never allow himself to be over-ruled by the passion of anger or revenge (E. B. XXIII. 778-781).

25. One who is attached to woman and wealth is neglected by God.

So far, we have treated of positive virtues. We have said what virtues an aspirant must possess. We shall now discuss what vices he should avoid. The first thing, an aspirant must be free from, is attachment to wealth and woman. Let alone divine life ; even the ordinary and worldly life would become unhappy, if a man has a strong attachment to these. He is the seat of doubt, whose mind is maddened by attachment to wealth and woman. He becomes a stranger to worldly happiness ; what then of divine life ! He who loves money and is conquered by woman is shunned by God, who lives in the temple of the body (E. B. XXIII. 305-307).

26. An aspirant must not touch even a wooden doll by his foot.

A true aspirant, therefore, must be very careful in guarding himself against the evil influence of woman. So great and so many are the centres of influence in this case, that an aspirant will not know how and when the enemy has made entrance in his heart, and captured it. Ekanātha's

injunction to an aspirant in this case is : "Let not an aspirant, while hurrying through the street, touch even a female doll by his feet, lest she should generate in him the sexual consciousness". How the society of woman serves as a check or a hindrance, how it more often than not produces a destructive influence upon the aspirant has been illustrated by Ekanātha by the example of an intoxicated elephant. So strong is this animal, that it is almost impossible to catch him and tame him. But even this huge animal is caught and tamed through his attachment towards the female of his species. To bear out his point, Ekanātha quotes from the Purānas a very interesting story. Ushā, the daughter of the demon Bāna, saw in her dream Aniruddha, the grandson of Krishna. Seeing him but once, and that too in a dream, she fell in love with him, and she managed through her female attendant to secure his attachment to her. So magical is the influence of sex. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for an aspirant, who wants the divine presence in his heart to cleanse his mind of sexual attachment (E. B. VIII. 119- 121, 126, 130-131).

27. A Sadhaka should keep himself away from the society of even Sattvic women.

It might well be urged that there is no danger to an aspirant if the woman is herself Sāttvic, that is, endowed with noble qualities. But Ekanātha advises an aspirant not to take a chance in this case, as the cost would be disproportionately heavy. The human mind is proverbially fickle, and so long as it is not completely lost in God's meditation, who knows what it may not love ! It is very likely that an aspirant's mind may be softened by contact with a woman, as ghee melts in the vicinity of fire.

An earthen jar that once contained ghee, say sixty years before, if kept near fire, would be moistened on account of the old remnants. Similarly, lust may rise even in old age. An aspirant must, therefore, keep himself aloof from the influence of woman (E. B. XXVI. 241-244).

28. Worse still is the company of the uxorious.

Worse, however, is the company of the uxorious, or men excessively fond of the company of women. We have heard of people, he says, who have been helped by women in their journey towards God, like Madālasā or Chūdālā. But no one, who has kept company with those who are attached to women, has ever been saved. It is these who by their passionate glorification of the sexual life excite the passions that are slumbering in man. It is, therefore, highly essential that the company of these be avoided (E.B. XXVI. 302, 251).

29. Repentance is the greatest atonement.

The first step towards purification, the *sine qua non* of spiritual life, is a searching self-examination culminating in repentance. For, that alone has the power to wash off all dirt generated in the human mind by the evil contact with sense-objects. A few moments of true repentance have the power to burn all sin. Repentance is, therefore, the true act of atonement, which washes off all sin. All other acts of atonement are simply a farce. When once a man truly repents for his follies, he is sure to feel disgusted for past life, and thus to renounce the old ways of life. The story of Purūravas is a standing example of this potency of repentance to break the tie of attachment in a single moment (E. B. XXVI. 17 - 20).

30. Mind can be conquered by mind.

Ekanātha gives us a formula, as to how to bring the mind under control. Has not the mind already levelled to the ground many of the so-called great persons ? All sādhanas are useless against this. Ekanātha proposes an easy way of bringing it under control. As a diamond can be cut only by a diamond, so mind can be conquered only by mind. But even that is possible only when the grace of the Guru is secured. This unconquerable mind is, as it were, a maid-servant of the Guru, and is at his beck and call. If, therefore, it is handed over to the control of the Guru, it shall give the aspirant the contentment and bliss which it alone can give. It is proverbial that the human mind is naturally full of many vices. But it has one saving feature. If it chooses to secure Divine Grace for man, it can certainly do so. Mind is its own friend or foe, as the bamboo is the cause of both its growth and destruction. The striking and rubbing of one branch of a bamboo against another produces a spark of fire that burns a whole forest of bamboos. Mind may destroy itself similarly, if it so thinks. The best means for its control is thus to make it our friend through the grace of the Guru, who alone can control it (E. B. XXIII. 684-691).

31. For different virtues, different models.

If a man wants to improve himself, he can find models worth copying everywhere, and at any time. Ekanātha makes Avadhūta narrate a very interesting account of his Gurus. For different virtues. Avadhūta takes different objects as his models. Avadhūta enumerates twenty-four such models. But he says that because it is possible to learn positively or negatively from almost everything in the world, in a sense, the whole world may be said to be full of

Teachers. Only a man must have the will to learn (E. B. VII. 341-344).

32. Vedic injunctions are calculated to wean a man from sense-objects: the cases of (1) Marriage and (2) Sacrifice.

Ekanātha is definitely of opinion that the Vedas want to preach the gospel, not of enjoyment but of renunciation. His argument may be briefly stated as follows. Men have an instinctive tendency towards sense-gratification. Who is there that does not love the world with all its enticements? Who does not like woman, or wealth, or sweets? Men have in-born tendencies towards flesh-eating, drinking, and copulation. So strong is the attachment to these, that all the admonitions of the Saints prove absolutely futile in weaning a man from them. If this is so, what is the special feature of the Vedas, if they were to preach just this gratification of sense? They may as well not exist at all. Thus the existence of the Vedas can be justified only if it be supposed that they preach control or renunciation, rather than unrestrained enjoyment. That is the Vedic ideal can be inferred from the two institutions of marriage and sacrifice which they have introduced. The Vedic ideal of marriage means not a license to legal prostitution. It is established to restrain the sexual instinct, whose unlimited satisfaction may bring down the fall of man. The fact that it has introduced so many restrictions in the case of marriage is in itself a sufficient indication of the underlying motive, similar is the case of sacrifices like Sautrāmani or Aśvamedha. They are introduced to put a restraint upon the unbridled instincts of man. Ekanātha thus concludes that the Vedas try to wean a man gradually from sense-objects, and in this wise gradation consists the importance of the Vedic Religion. It

rightly understands human psychology, and therefore does not preach like some other religions a wholesale renunciation. The gradual detachment brought by the slow and sure path of control is the ideal which the Vedas place before the world (E. B. V. 208-210, 218-219, 236-239).

33. Limitation of Vedic commands.

But Ekanātha completely understands the limitations of these injunctions. So long as a mango- tree has fruits on it, it is not simply desirable but even essential that it must have a watchman to guard it. But once the fruits are ripe and are removed to the owner's house, the watchman may be safely dispensed with. Similarly, so long as a man is under the influence of Avidyā, it is binding upon him that he should obey the orders of the Vedas. But once a man has transcended body-consciousness, his soul being merged in Brahman, he may be said to have transcended also the limitations of Vedic orders (E. B. XIII. 474-75).

34. Persons qualified for knowledge, action and devotion.

He, who is completely unattached to the objects of enjoyment, either in this world or in the next, is the fittest man to betake himself to the path of knowledge. On the other hand, he who is attached to sense- objects and has never dreamt of non-attachment or renunciation, is the person qualified for the path of action (E. B. XX. 74-76). Ekanātha, however, treats at great length the qualifications of one fit for Bhakti. This Bhakta occupies a sort of a middle position. Having heard from the lips of the saints the greatness and mercy of God, a strong conviction is produced in him that the true goal of man's life is to secure God's grace. But unfortunately he has not the courage or

the strength to free himself from the worldly bonds, and thus betakes himself to a solitary place to meditate on God. He is intellectually convinced of the emptiness of the world. But his attachment towards the World will not allow him to break with it. And he has therefore to stay on in the midst of a life which practically bores him. Suppose a child is attempting to lift up a heavy stone. When it has just raised it from the ground, suppose the stone slips from its hand and the child finds its hand heavily pressed under the weight of that very stone. The child then finds itself unable to throw off the stone unaided. It is impatient to extract its hand, but the heavy weight of the stone will not allow it to do so. As the child in that state simply chafes and frets but is all the while unable to withdraw its hand, similarly, the Bhakta finds the Weight of the worldly affairs too heavy for him, and wants to get rid of them at once, but has no mental strength to throw them off, and be free at once. He lives a worldly life, but does not, and cannot enjoy it. In such a state, he prays to God day and night for succour. Such a man, who is neither completely free from desire, nor is completely attached to sense-objects, but is all the while praying to God, may be called a Bhakta. To him, God reveals Himself, pleased by his constant prayer (E. B. XX. 78-87).

35. The Value of duly discharging one's duty.

Upon one who is attached to worldly objects nothing can confer greater benefit than the discharge of the duty of the station in which he may be placed. The performance of duty alone has the power to purify the mind. Ekanātha compares duty to a kind of philosopher's stone, which, if it is selflessly made to touch, will transform the whole world into the gold of Brahman. Or, he says, it can be called the

Sun whose unselfish rise has the power to dispel the darkness of ignorance. A man who does not perform his duty is required to suffer the miseries of birth and death. The selfless discharge of one's duty pleases God. It can, therefore, be well called a boat which will help a man to cross the worldly ocean (E. B. XVIII. 380-387).

36. The meaning of Bhakti.

When a man's heart is thus purified by the discharge of duty, he becomes qualified for Bhakti. Bhakti has been defined and classified in several ways. The usual classification is the nine-fold one. But often it is classified under three, four, or even two heads. Following Nārada, the famous author of the Bhaktisūtras, Ekanātha defines Bhakti as the deep and sincere love for God. To be widely known in the world as a great devotee is an easy task. But to be a true and sincere devotee of God is a very difficult one. He, upon whom God chooses to shower His grace, can alone be a true devotee. Sincere love for God may be said to have arisen in him, whose heart is seen panting after Him day and night. A lady, who is for all external purposes engaged in doing service to her husband, but is in the heart of hearts thinking constantly of her paramour, cannot be called a chaste and devoted lady; similarly, he cannot be called a true devotee, who is externally engaged in doing worshipful acts to God, and yet is inwardly expecting a worldly return for it. He is not a true devotee whose eye is set on worldly honours and worldly objects, and who simply externally engages himself in doing service to God. A true Bhakta is lost in the thought of God, and day and night remembers Him alone. He, who has through God's grace found the fountain of infinite love towards Him, need not perform him daily ablutions; for he

has transcended the stage of action (E. B. XI. 1106-1109).

37. The four kinds of Bhaktas.

In the seventh Adhyāya of the Bhagavadgītā occurs the famous four-fold classification of the Bhaktas, the distressed, the seeker for knowledge, the lover of gain, and the knower of truth. Ekanātha tries to explain the classification further. He says that the distressed, in the discussion of spiritual knowledge does not mean one afflicted with the pains of a disease. Here the suffering or disease is the intense excitement of the mind for God-realisation. The divinely distressed is so keen, and grows so impatient, that being unable to suffer the pangs of separation from God, he runs to a mountain-precipice to throw himself down, or rushes forth to throw himself in a burning fire. This impatience for God-realisation is the true characteristic of the spiritually distressed. Finding him prepared to commit suicide, the other, the seeker for knowledge, asks him to note that this human life is given to him by God not for self-destruction, but for patient work towards His attainment. He must look at the way by which the devotees of bygone times have been able to obtain God's favour. He says to him "What is the use of throwing away this golden opportunity ? Suicide will not bring you nearer God". Such an advice some what cools down the impatience of the divinely distressed man and he tries to understand how his predecessors on the spiritual path persevered in their attempts. This is the second stage, or the desire to know. Love of gain in this case does not mean love of money, for money is a definite obstacle in the path of the aspirant. The true love of gain means the expectation to find God everywhere. He is a true lover of gain, who tries to see God even when he meets an infinite variety of

objects. The knower, of course, means not one who is well versed in the worldly affairs or scriptures, but he who has realised Brahman (E. B. XIX. 272-280).

38. Saguna easier of approach than Nirguna.

The religion of the Bhāgavata takes a special interest in the weak and the ignorant. Not that it neglects the strong and the wise, but it is true that it always puts before itself the many in number, namely, the weak and the ignorant. Looking to the frailty and instinctive tendency for ease in every man, the Bhāgavata always preaches an easy means to reach the Godhead. In several places, Ekanātha says that the Saguna or the Manifest is easier than the Nirguna or the Unmanifest. The apprehension of the Unmanifest is beyond the grasp of the intellect. Hence with discrimination and love, the aspirants concentrate their minds on the Manifest and save themselves easily. A mind can easily think of the visible rather than the invisible. Thus, idol-worship is meant for one who cannot realise His presence in all beings. Let a man begin some where, and by gradual steps he may be led to higher stages (E. B. XXVII. 251-352 ; 371).

39. The path of Knowledge.

He, whose mind is purified by the discharge of his duty and constant prayer to God, feels non-attachment to worldly objects. He then learns to discriminate truly the real from the unreal. This discrimination is knowledge. It is by this that the wise know that the true self is not the body, but the self-effulgent Ātman, who informs the physical and the subtle body. See through how many processes the sugar-cane has to pass before it can assume the pure form of a sugar-doll. First, the sugar-cane has to be squeezed in the

juice-mill, thus producing a liquid juice. Thereupon, the juice is purified by heat and is exposed to cold to be congealed into a thick cake of sugar. But it has to be again melted before it can be moulded into the form a sugar-doll. Similarly, the discriminating first realize the unreality of the seemingly solid physical body, then destroy the subtle body, while finally they annihilate egoism and become Brahman themselves (E. B. XXVIII. 221-224).

III. Mysticism.

40. Four Means of God-realisation.

From Ekanātha's metaphysics and ethics, we now pass to his mysticism, the coping stone of his philosophy. Ekanātha gives Bhakti, Knowledge, Renunciation and Meditation as the four means of God-realisation. Bhakti he defines as intense love, and Knowledge as the firm belief in the identity of the finite self and the infinite self. Renunciation is defined as a feeling of strong disgust which contemptuously treats a damsel like Urvashī or a heap of jewels, as if they were like a blade of grass (E. B. XIX. 347-352, 355). In addition to these, he lays stress in various places on the path of 'meditation'. Let concentration be actuated by love, hate, or fear. If a man concentrates his body, mind, and speech upon one object, he is sure, in course of time, to be so transformed as to be one with the object. In order to prove the wonderful power of 'meditation', he gives the illustration of an insect and a bee. A bee catches an insect, and keeps it in the fissure of a wall and goes out in search of food. Between the bee's departure and return, the poor insect is practically lost in the thought of the bee. The insect expects the bee to come and peck at it every moment. As a result of this expectant concentration generated through fear, a wonderful transformation takes

place in the insect. A day dawns when that crawling insect is itself transformed into a flying bee, and in its own turn leaves the wall, and flies in the high air above. Ekanātha cleverly remarks that in this illustration both the insect and the bee are dull, and live only on the instinctive plane. If even an insect living on the instinctive plane is transformed into a bee through the strength of contemplation, will not the meditation of God, who is Self-effulgent, by a man, who is sentient and lives on the intellectual plane, transform him into God? (E. B. IX. 236-244).

41. One must make haste to realise God.

Ekanātha exhorts men to understand how precious this human life is. It is easy to be born either in hell or in heaven; because the former is the effect of the excess of demerit, while the latter is the result of excess of merit. A human birth on the other hand is possible only when merit and demerit balance each other. Coupled with this accidental character of human birth, if one were to note the impossibility of God-vision in any other life, one need not be told that one must make haste to realise the divinity in himself. If a man were to reason that he would try for spiritual life after he had gratified his sense, let him remember, says Ekanātha, that Death is certain, and no one knoweth the day and the hour when Death will lay his icy hand on us. As the soldier who has entered into the thick of a fight cannot take a moment's rest so long as he has not conquered his foe; or as a widower is most anxious to get himself wedded to a new bride ; so let a man with all speed make ready to take up this new bride, more beautiful, and more chaste than can be imagined. As no moment is to be lost in the search of the lost child by a beloved monarch, so let no man waste a moment to start for the search after this

divine bliss. Slaying sloth, conquering sleep, let a man watch and pray day and night, for "ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (E. B. II. 22-30 ; IX. 334-344).

42. Esoteric Bhakti.

Ekanātha divides his discussion of Bhakti into two parts: Bhakti as end, and Bhakti as means. Ideal, or what we might call Esoteric Bhakti, is possible only on the highest plane of experience; and it is therefore possible only to a select few. In this highest form, the means and the end merge into each other. At this stage, with their minds purified by their faithful devotion. His devotees obtain the intuition of their true self through the grace of the Guru. From this view-point, they see that the hearts of all people are but temples for His residence. Thus they then see Him everywhere inside and outside. Then the devotee himself becomes God, who pervades the whole world. He now may be truly said to live, move, and have his being in Him. The perception of distinctions of kind, of names and forms, of conditions and actions, is now no bar to him for the true perception of divinity in all these. He is a true devotee whose conviction that God is everywhere is not in the least affected even when he sees before him an unmanageable variety of things and events. Ekanātha regards this as the acme of realisation, and is never wearied in describing the wonderful equality or even-mindedness in the experience of such a realised soul. The truest worship offered to God consists in realising divine presence everywhere. Realising His presence everywhere, such a Bhakta prostrates himself before men, women, and children, cows, asses, or horses. This kind of worship is possible only when God is pleased to illumine the heart of His

Bhakta with the ray of His divine knowledge (E. B. XXIX. 275-280 ; 282-284).

43. The True Bhagavata Dharma.

The highest duty according to the Bhāgavata Dharma therefore, consists in relinquishing one's affection for one's belongings and dedicating them all wife, children, home or even one's life to the service of God. Ekanātha here tells us how all the eleven senses can be directed towards God. The Mind should always meditate on Him. The Ear should listen to the discussions of His greatness and mercy. The Tongue should always be active in uttering His holy name. The Hands should worship His image and the Feet should walk towards the holy temple, in which His image is installed. The Nose should smell the flowers and the "tulasi" leaves with which He is worshipped, The cast-off flowers of His worship should be placed on one's Head, and the water consecrated by the touch of His feet should be put inside the Mouth. Thus to direct towards God one's instinctive and purposive, religious and social actions, is the true Bhāgavata Dharma. As the bubbles on the watery wave are all the while playing on the water, so the Bhakta is in all of his actions engaged in worshipping his Ideal (E. B. II. 298-303, 346-347).

44. Three grades of the Bhagavatas.

We have up till now placed before our readers the highest kind of Bhakti and the truest nature of the Bhāgavata Dharma. We now discuss the different grades of the devotees, according as they remain faithful or unfaithful to their ideal. The best of the Bhāgavatas perceives God in all beings, and all beings in God. He sees

one God pervading the whole universe. Not only this, he realises that he himself is this all-pervading God. He is the greatest of devotees, the greatest of the Bhaktas. The second type of Bhāgavata is he who makes a distinction between God, His saints, and the ignorant masses of men. As he regards God as the highest object of reverence, he loves Him. His devotees in His eyes are just inferior to Him; therefore he wants to make friendship with them. He pities the ignorant, as he considers them lowest in the scale ; and he neglects the God-haters because they are sinful. He is said to be of an inferior type of Bhakta, because he has not completely understood the Lord as He truly is. The last type is represented by him whose dogmatic conviction would restrict divinity only to a stone-image. He never even bows before saints : what then of common people ? He never even dreams of respecting them as divine: this is the lowest type (E. B. II. 643- 645 ; II. 649-650 ; II. 652-654).

45. The Bliss of the repetition of God's Name.

How the highest kind of Bhakta is merged in Divine joy has been well expressed by Ekanātha. When a man begins to repeat God's name, a Bhakta through divine grace, falls a victim to that divine madness, which, as it were, transfigures him completely. Tears flow from his eyes, the body trembles, and his breath becomes slow. When the mind is thus absorbed in its spiritual essence, his throat is choked with excess of joy, his hair stand on end, his eyelids become half-opened, and his look becomes stationary. The constant repetition of God's name results in his mind being overcome by divine love, and he begins to lament loudly almost in a frenzied manner. But somehow this

lamentation results in an equally frenzied laughter, and thus he alternately wails and laughs. He feels excessive joy at the thought that the grace of the Guru has removed from him the last taint of egoism and ignorance. He exultingly dances because his teacher has returned to him his Self, who had been practically lost to him through his folly. With the exultation resulting from these, he begins to sing songs of God's praise. But then, he even leaves that, and cries aloud : " I am the singer as well as the hearer. I am my song. I alone exist in this world. There is no trace of duality to be met with " (E. B. III. 589 -602).

46. Bhakti, a Royal Road.

Thus it is the utterance of God's name that gives the blessed contentment to a man's heart. Bhakti may, therefore, be well called the great royal road, for God personally stands there to guard the wayfarer from the attacks of highwaymen. With the disc in His hand, God asks His devotee if He can do anything for him. Himself without enemies, He destroys with His weapons those who are the enemies of His devotees. With His disc also, He destroys His devotee's egoism, and with His mace, his attachment and ignorance. With His conch, He illuminates his mind with the spark of His knowledge, and with the lotus in His hand He worships His devotee. What fear of danger can there exist for a Devotee, when God has given him such an assurance of protection ? (E. B. II. 542-545).

47. Intellect VS. Love

Not only is the way of Bhakti easier than the path of knowledge, but it is by itself sufficient. As the Sun requires no help to dispel darkness, Bhakti requires no external help

to destroy Avidyā. Intellectual knowledge is unnecessary. Ekanātha illustrates this by the example of the milk-maids of Vraja. Those ladies were manifestly ignorant of any scriptural knowledge. But by loving Him, and even acting against the injunctions of the Śāstras, they realised their spiritual goal. In his enthusiasm to show that the Gopīs could realise God simply through love, Ekanātha uses a phraseology which is likely to be misunderstood. He describes as if the Vraja milk-maids illegally associated themselves with their paramour, the young adolescent Krishna, while He was leading a pastoral life. Let it, however, be remembered that this is only imagery. Ekanātha expressly says in the 12th Adhyāya that the Gopīs loved him as a dutiful wife her husband. The above-mentioned immoral imagery is used just to put clearly two factors involved in the attempt towards the realisation of divine experience. The first is the extraordinary courage which will not be daunted to make a holocaust of everything, and the second is the forgetfulness of everything except God. As the paramour forgets everything beside the thought of the lover, so a devotee forgets all in thinking about God. That Ekanātha, though in word-painting he makes use of this loose language, did not mean any immorality, can be proved from two things. In the first place, he says that the Vraja ladies were not ordinary women: they were Śrutis or Vedic hymns incarnate. As hymns they were not able to obtain an intuitive, direct perception of God ; hence they assumed a human form, and realised God through love. Secondly, he expressly lays down that they followed the Lord because they believed that He alone had the power to gratify the innermost craving of their heart. Thus it was not flesh but spirit that attracted them (E. B. XII. 191-192, 163-166).

48. The help of the Guru is invaluable.

In matters worldly as well as spiritual, says Ekanātha, the help of the Guru is invaluable, nay, indispensable. If an aspirant were to proceed in these spiritual exercises with a complacent self-reliance, his progress is sure to be obstructed by many obstacles. Not even God can guide him truly. Ekanātha illustrates this by quoting the case of Vasudeva, the father of Lord Krishna. Once it so happened that Nārada visited the palatial residence of Vasudeva. Vasudeva duly worshipped him and asked him the way to God. Nārada was simply amazed. He asked Vasudeva why he should ask him this question when Shrī Krishna was already his child. Thereupon Vasudeva told him his sad story. He said that he had formerly prayed to God, who was pleased to offer him a boon. But befooled by Divine Māyā, he requested Him to be his son. Now He was his son, but He would not be his spiritual guide. He always pleaded ignorance before him, and then there was no help for it. The moral of the story is that even in matters of spiritual progress, one may please God ; but unless one has understood from the Guru what should be asked of God, one is likely to go wrong and lose the golden opportunity (E. B. III. 806-807 ; II. 85-87).

49. If Divine Knowledge is communicated by the Guru, why worship God?

Here a little difficulty may arise. It might be objected that if the Guru is able to give everything that the disciple wants, there is no necessity of praying to God at all. Let it be remembered once for all, that without God's grace a true Spiritual Teacher can never be found. In a sense, it might be said that the Guru and God are one. And secondly, God confers His grace only upon those that have been favoured

by Saints. This has been clearly expressed by Vasudeva to Nārada: "O Nārada, thou art the favourite of God. He saves those only that are favoured by you". Ekanātha has very finely described the anxious state of the disciple expecting every minute that some one, able to save, shall meet him. In his anxiety for such a one, he forgets all enjoyments, wanders from place to place to find him somewhere, worships him even before he has seen Him, and is lost day and night in the thought of a Guru. To such divinely discontented souls God reveals Himself in the form of a Guru (E. B. XXII. 97-100 ; X. 138).

50. God's meditation is a panacea for all evils.

Ekanātha tells us often that Gods meditation is a panacea for all disturbances physical as well as mental, material as well as spiritual. A single moment spent in meditating upon God can destroy tribulation, disease, obstacles, doubts, sin and egoism. All these things will vanish before the power of meditation. If it be not possible to find out a calm and quiet place, or to secure a good posture and meditate, even the constant repetition of His Name is able to ward off all calamities (E. B. XXVIII. 612-620).

51. Pitfalls in the path of meditation.

In the way of meditation, however, there are four pitfalls, against which an aspirant must guard himself. They are : dissipation, passion, fickleness and absorption. All these are the faults of an unsteady mind. To revolve in the mind the sweetness of sense-objects, when one is sitting in a meditative posture, is dissipation. To attend only to love-stories or descriptions of sexual unions, is

passion. To pass from one field of consciousness to another, and thus to be every moment unsteady like a madman, is fickleness. To be inattentive through sad indifference to the chief object of meditation, and thus to be ultimately lost in sleep, or in blue or yellow colours, is absorption (E. B. XI. 706-711).

52. Experience of God-realisation.

If once God reveals Himself to the devotee in his heart, then that vision cannot be confined to the devotee's heart only. He sees God everywhere. God reveals Himself to him as the all pervading Atman, assuming various forms. Once He is thus revealed in his true universal form, a devotee becomes dead to all world-vision. Once He is revealed, the subtle body, the cause of all bondage, perishes without a stroke. A gust of strong wind dispels an array of clouds, so His spiritual light dispels all desires. With the destruction of desires, vanish all doubts and duties. As darkness cannot stand before the light of the Sun, qualities with their effects, Avidya with ignorance, Jiva with Siva, egoism with its ties of spirit and matter, all vanish away. Even the constant repetition of the formula 'I am Brahman' is no more to be heard. All fear of birth and death disappears, and the stage is reached where the world is not, and God alone is. His devotees reach this stage by constantly praying to Him (E. B. XX. 374 381).

53. A True Samadhi.

This experience is true Samādhi. People have mistaken notions about this Brāhmic consciousness or Samādhi. Some believe that it is necessarily an action less stage, characterised by stiffness of body and absence of speech

and motion. But really it is not so. If stiffness of body is to be called Samādhi, any man who has an attack of apoplexy can well be said to have experienced Samādhi. Such a temporary loss of consciousness can be brought about by merely holding the breath for a few seconds, or even by hypnotism. That is, therefore, a mistaken notion of Samādhi. Yājñavalkya, Suka and Vāmadeva are illustrations of perfect saints whose Brāhmic consciousness was in no way tampered with, even when they walked and talked and did all manner of things. Nārada used to cut all sorts of humourous jokes, and yet he was all the while living in Brāhmic consciousness. Yājñavalkya had two wives, but his Samādhi was proved real by the Sages of the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad. Why not take the most Famous illustration of Arjuna ? Lord Krishna blessed Arjuna with Brāhmic consciousness, and made him fight against the Kauravas. In spite of his fight, Arjuna continued to occupy the level of Brāhmic consciousness. Thus a true Samādhi, resulting from the teaching of a true Spiritual Teacher, is entirely compatible with action. It is not a loss of consciousness, or motionlessness, but a constant divine experience (E. B. II. 423-432).

54. Description of a Soul that has realised God.

A devotee, who has been thus favoured has transcended the responsibilities of all the stages of life. Constant association with God is now his duty. Now neither good action, nor renunciation, nor discrimination can bring him any profit. He, who has surrendered himself to God, has paid all his debts to deities, sages, ancestors,

and men. He, who has clearly understood his distinctness from body and senses, can have now no gain from the controlling of his senses. To him, who has truly realised God, no higher gain can be obtained by constant meditation on Him. He is merged in Brāhmic consciousness, even when he is enjoying all sense-objects (E. B. XVII. 389-391; XXVIII. 323-329).

55. Who can frighten a God's Servant?

Who has the power to frighten this servant' of God? When, with His burning disc, God in person is ready to guard His devotee, who can attack him? No obstacle can present itself before him. He, who saved Prahlāda from the clutches of his demoniac father, will never allow a hair of His devotee's body to be touched. If God Himself obeys His devotee, what can bring difficulties in his path? All fear has left him for good. In him the very gods find a Tower of Strength (E. B. XXIII. 446-451).

56. Such men are rare.

Such perfect souls, however, are very rare. In this wide world, only by rare chance may it be possible for one to meet such a man. Equally rare is he who is gifted with the vision to recognise such a man, if chance but puts him in his way (E. B. XXII. 579-580).

CHAPTER IV.

General Review.

1. The Chief Characteristics of the Age of Ekanātha.

There are certain characteristics which mark off the saints of this period from those of the preceding and the forthcoming ages. In the first place, there is to be seen among the saints of this period a unique reconciliation of worldly and spiritual life, unattained either before or afterwards. For example, as we have already pointed out, Janārdana Swāmī and Ekanātha were types of saints who did not extricate them-selves from worldly life. Janārdana Swāmī was a fighter and a saint; Ekanātha was a householder and a saint. In this reconciliation of worldly and spiritual life, Ekanātha accomplished what had not been accomplished either by Jñānadeva or Nāmadeva before him, or by Tukārāma and Rāmadāsa after him. Jñānadeva and Rāmadāsa had no wives and children, and so we cannot say that they ever reconciled the worldly and the spiritual life. Nāmadeva and Tukārāma had wives and children, but, as in the case of Spinoza, God was to them a great lion's den to which all steps pointed, but from which none returned. They were so absorbed in God that nothing else was of any value to them. Not so with Ekanātha. He observed the Aristotelian mean in all things, was a man in whose life the principle of right judgment could be seen to have predominated at every moment. Ekanātha's life was

unique, and he derived this tact in no small measure from his teacher Janārdana Swāmī himself. In the second place, at this period, we see a popularisation of Vedānta accomplished to an extent which was never known before. Jñānadeva's philosophy, like his language, was somewhat abstruse. It had also clothed itself in an antique garb, which prevented people from adjudging it at its proper value. Not so with Ekanātha. Ekanātha's teachings, whether in his work on the Bhāgavata, or in his heart-felt Abhangas, were such as could be appreciated by the populace. It was principally Ekanātha who made the ideas of Vedānta familiar to the men in the street. With Jñānadeva, philosophy had reigned in the clouds; with Ekanātha, it came upon the earth and dwelt among men. As we may see from the account of the various philosophical principles which he enunciates so lucidly in his great commentary on the Bhāgavata, Ekanātha had attained to a stage of exposition so simple, so lucid, and so popular, that nobody before his time, or nobody after him, has ever been equally successful in presenting philosophy in such a popular manner. In the third place, the most distinguishing feature of Ekanātha as a Marāthi writer is his great love and respect for the language in which he wrote. It is the Saints of the Mahārāshtra school, and most particularly Jñānadeva, Ekanātha and Rāmadāsa, who laid especial stress upon conveying their ideas in the simple vernacular, instead of in Sanskrit in which latter it was customary for the Pandits to clothe their thoughts. Jñānadeva first, Ekanātha afterwards, and Rāmadāsa last, broke away from this

tradition of the erudite Pandits, took to the vernacular as a means of expounding their thoughts, and thus could appeal to the lowest rungs of the Marāthi society. Prof. Patwardhan has stated the service which Ekanātha did to the cause of Marāthi literature in the following way: "The partisans of Sanskrit were still very powerful, and the contempt for Marāthi was still rank and rampant. But it was not for name and fame among the Pandits that Ekanātha wrote. It was for the diffusion of Truth and Light among the illiterate, among women and Śūdras, that Ekanātha wrote. He scorned the scorn of the learned, and championed the voiceless millions, espousing the cause of the vernaculars. He too had to fight the battle of the vernacular, as we in these days of greater enlightenment and consequent deeper darkness have to wage. Marāthi was the language of the illiterate and the vulgar, and one versed in Sanskrit lore ought not to have anything to do with it. It was degradation. That was the view of the learned in those days, just as nearly as of the so-called educated in these days. Ekanātha, like his great predecessor, cared not a jot for these considerations. His heart went out to the spiritually blind and mute, and he knew that the way to reach them was to approach them through their own mother tongue. He faced all opposition: answered the summons of the learned in Kāśī, endured his trial before that tribunal for the crime of rendering the sacred words of the Bhāgavata into the language of the Śūdras: and with his courage and powers of persuasion, he came out unscathed. Jñānadeva was proud of Marāthi. Prouder still was Ekanātha".

संस्कृत वाणी देवें केली। प्राकृत तरी चोरापासुनी झाली।
 असोत या अभिमान भुली। वृथा बोली काय काज।।
 आतां संस्कृत अथवा प्राकृत। भाषा झाली जे हरिकथा।
 ते पावनचि तत्वतां। सत्य सर्वथा मानली ॥
 देवासि नाही वाचाभिमान । संस्कृत प्राकृत तया समान ।
 ज्या वाणी जाहलें ब्रह्मकथन । त्या भाषा श्रीकृष्ण संतोषें ॥
 माझी मराठी भाषा चोखडी। परब्रह्मों फळली गाढी ॥

Ekanātha asks very often "if Sanskrit was made by God, was Prākṛit born of thieves and knaves? Let these errings of vanity alone. Whether it is Sanskrit or Prākṛit, wherever the story of God is told, it is essentially holy and must be respected..... God is no partisan of tongues. To Him Prākṛit and Sanskrit are alike. My language, Marāthi is worthy of expressing the highest sentiments and is rich-laden with the fruits of divine knowledge". We can see thus how Ekanātha occupies not merely a high place among the saints of Mahārāshtra, but also among its great poets.

THE ABHANGAS OF EKANATHA.

(References are to our Source-books.)

Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page
2	10				

THE ABHANGAS OF EKANATH.

(References are to our Source-books.)

Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page
1	10	5	10	7	11
2	10	6	11		

THE ABHANGAS OF JANARDANA.

(References are to our Source-books.)

Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page
1,2	11	7	12	12	12
2	11	8	12	13	13
3	12	9	12	14	13
4	12	10	12	16	13

THE ABHANGAS OF EKANATHA.

(References are to our Source-books.)

Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page	Abhanga	Page
2	13	49	18	101	21
4	13	51	18	105	21
5	14	52	18	107	21
8	14	53	18	108	21
9	14	54	18	111	21
10	14	55	18	114	22
12	14	56	18	115	22
14	14	57	19	116	22
15	14	58	19	117	22
16	14	59	19	118	22
17	15	60	20	119	22
18	15	61	19	120	22
19	15	63	20	121	23
20	15	66	20	122	23
22	15	67	20	124	23
24	15	68	20	126	23
27	15	72	20	128	23
28	16	73	20	129	23
29	16	74	20	130	23
30	16	76	20	132	23
31	16	77	20	133	23
32	16	80	20	134	23
33	16	82	20	136	23
35	17	83	20	138	24
36	17	84	20	139	24
37	17	87	21	140	24
38	17	89	21	143	24
39	17	90	21	144	24
40	17	91	21	145	24
41	17	92	21	147	24
42	17	95	21	149	24
44	18	96	21	150	24
46	18	98	21		
48	18	100	21		

THE BHAGAVATA OF EKANATHA.

Adhyaya	Verses	Page	Adhyaya	Verses	Page
I	130-134	27			
II	22-30	56	XVIII	380-387	51
			XIX	87-91	33
II	85-87	61	XIX	197-205	34
II	298-303, } 346-347 }	57 57	XIX	272-280	53
II	423-432	64	XIX	347-352, 355	54
II	542-545	59	XIX	451-454	42
II	643-645	58	XIX	574-579	43
II	643-645	58	XX	74-76	49
II	649-650	58	XX	78-87	50
II	652-654	58	XX	374-381	63
III	32-40	36	XXII	97-100	62
III	380-399	41	XXII	111-113	39
III	589-602	59	XXII	579-580	65
III	806-807	61	XXIII	305-307	44
V	208-210, 218-219		XXIII	446-451	65
	236-239	49	XX III	684-691	47
VII	341-344	48	XXIII	778-781	44
VIII	119-121, 126,		XXIV	90-93	38
130-131	130-131	45	XXVI	17-20	46
IX	113-115, 87-102	43	XXVI	241-244	46
IX	236-244	55	XXVI	302, 251	46
IX	334-344	56	XXVII	251-352, 371	53
IX	430-439, 454	28	XXVIII	122-133	37
X	138	62	XXVIII	221-224	54
XI	29-32	40	XXVIII	258-259	40
XI	98-100, 102-106	35	XXVIII	323-329	65
XI	164-173, 199-205	38	XXVIII	612-620	62
XI	706-711	63	XXIX	275-280, 282-	57
XI	1106-1109	52		284	57
XII	191-192, 163-166	60	XXXI	443-454	31
XIII	474-475	49	XXXI	496-504	29
XIII	481-483, 486,	40	XXXI	505-511	30
	490-491	40	XXXI	527-528, 535	26
XVII	389-391	65		552-556	

EKANATHA

A

Aspirant : Virtues of an, according to Ekanatha (p.41).

Atman : Present in all states of body and mind, and changeless (p.40).

Avadhuta : Taking 24 models for his guru (p.56).

Avidya : Defined by Ekanatha (p.35); the mirror of Jiva, or individual self (p.39).

B

Bhagavata of Ekanatha : A Marathi commentary on 11th chapter of Shrimad Bhagavata (p.25); first five Adhyas of, written at Paithan; the remaining at Panchamudra Matha at Benares (p.25); the date of, 1573 A.D., 1495 Saka, 1630 Vikrama Era, Full-Moon day, Monday (p.25); the best guide to an aspirant (p.40).

Bhagavata Dharma : Dedication of one's affection for worldly things to the service of God (p.57); direction of one's instinctive and purposive; religious and social actions towards God (p.57).

Bhakta : Chafing under the too heavy weight of worldly affairs (p.50); lost in the thought of God (p.52); the desressed as impatient for God-realization (p.52).

Bhaktas : The four- fold classification of (p.52).

Bhakti : Having dispassion as its flower, and illumination as its fruit (p.18); various kinds of, Ekanatha on (p.18); qualifications for (p.50); nine-fold or four-fold, three-fold or two-fold (p.52); as intense love (p.54); Esoteric, possible only on the highest plane of experience (p.56); the royal road to God- realisation (p.59); sufficient by itself to destroy Avidya (p.60).

Bhanudasa : Abhanga of , composed at Vijayanagar, may be taken as a motto of God-love by all sents (p.1); said to

have brought back the image of Vitthala from Hampi (p.1); worshipping the God Sun (p.1); a Desastha Brahmin; a contemporary of saint Damajipant (p.1); the great grand - father of Ekanatha; born at Paithana in 1448 A.D.,(p.1); the bringing of the idol of Vitthala from Vijayanagara to Pandharpur as the great achievement of the life of (p.2); knowing no other code conduct than that of God's name (p.10); regarding Pandharpur as a mine of rubies (p.10); on God Vitthala as a well-set ruby (p.10); requesting God not to make him dependent on others (p.10).

Birth : human, possible only when merit and demerit balance each other (p.54).

C

Chakrapani : The son of Bhanudasa (p.1).

Chiranjivapada : Asking one to shun the company of women (p.6).

Concentration:The transforming power of illustrated in the case of the insect and the bee (p.54); as identifying the subject with the object (p.54).

D

Damajipant : As living about either 1458, or 1468 to 1475, the dates of the dire famine in the Deccan (p.1).

Devotee : The father of God (p.21); has not his eyes set on worldly honour (p.51); one on whom god chooses to shower His grace (p.51);

Devotion : Making the devotee the elder, and God the younger (p.21).

Doll : Female, not to be touched by an aspirant according to Ekanatha (p.45)

Duty : Performance of, as purifying the mind (p.50); compared by Ekanatha to a phylosopher's stone, which transforms the world into the gold of Brahman (p.50); as a boat to cross the worldly ocean(p.51)

E

Ekanatha : Born at Paithana; lost his parents in his childhood; a voice asking him to go to Janardhana for initiation; studied Jnanesvari and Amritanubhava ; lived for six years at Devagada and attained to God-realisation (p.4); warding off the attack of the enemy by putting on the coat-of-mail of Janardhana Swami; went on pilgrimage, returned, and married Girijabai of Bijapur (p.5); his behavior with a Mahomedan; feeding the untouchables on a Sraddha day; his giving holy water to an ass; his upliftment of a concubine; his reception of thieves (p.7); very regular in reading Bhagavadgita, Bhagavata, and Jnanesvari, and performing meditation and Kirtana at fixed times (p.6); moderation as the rule of the life of, (p.6); the throat disease of, (p.7); his Bhavatha Ramayana left at 44th chapter, and completed by Gavaba, his disciple (8); reforming the text of the Jnanesvari in 1584 A.D. (p.7); took Samadhi at Paithana in 1599 without any break of his spiritual routine (p.7); a poet of a very high order, and a great teacher of religion (p.9); his love for his Guru as great as that of Jnanesvara for Nivrittinatha (p.13); immortalizing the name of Janardana Swami by mentioning him at the end of every Abhanga (p.13); stating that Janardana showed him the only two ways for the attainment of spiritual life; freedom from contamination with others' wealth, and wife (p.15); regarding a man who betakes himself to a forest as an owl that hides itself before sun-rise (p.15); his discourse on the power of Fate (p.15); on death as sure and inevitable (p.16); advising us to live in life as pilgrims or birds (p.16); asking us not to follow the vagaries of mind (p.17); advising us to keep our minds imprisoned at God's feet (p.16); comparing the god of love to a powerfull ram, who troubled Sankara, Indra, Narada, and others, all except Suka (p.17); defining Bhakti as the recognition of divinity in all beings (p.17); regarding

remembrance of God as Brahman, and forgetfulness as illusion (p.17); on Bhakti as the uttering of God's Name (p.17); Name of God as leading to his Form(p.17); asking one to believe that one is sinful if he feels no joy in uttering God's Name (p.17); God as running to the help of His Devotees, Draupadi, Arjuna, Prahlada (p.18); on a learned man as no higher than a courtesan (p.18); regarding Kirtana as having every day a new charm (p.18); desiring solely to be spared for Kirtana (p.18); Kirtana should set the form of God firmly before a man's mind (p.19); on the various kinds of Bhakti performed by various saints like Parikshit, Suka, etc.(p.19); regarding meeting with Saints as extremely fortunate (p.19); contrasting real Saints with false (p.19); overjoyed to meet the Saints (p.19); his mystical experience of the highest order (p.22); vision of his Guru and the spiritual Sun (p.22); vision of god under water, the form of four-handed God as every-where (p.23); and non-difference in all things (p.23); fourth in descent from Bhanudasa (p.26); spiritual lineage of, from Dattatreya and Janardana (p.27); his gratitude to Janardana (p. 28); an enigma to his neighbours (p.29); ideas of people about him; an erudite Pandit, an ignoramus, a Jivanmukta, a worldly-minded man (p.29); influence of Sankara on (p.31); his debt to Mukundaraja, and Jnanesvara (p.31); his popularisation of Vedanta (p.31); proving the unreality of the world in various ways (p.33); reference to Markandeya and Bhusundi (p.33); logical acumen of (p.36); power of exposition (p.41); his injunction to the aspirant not to touch even a female doll by his feet (p.45); following Narada, defines Bhakti as deep and earnest love for God (p.50); his use of sexual phraseology to describe the relation of the Gopis to God(p. 60); a typical saint who did not extricate himself from worldly-life (p.66); a house-holder and a saint combined (p.66); accomplishing in the reconciliation of worldly and spiritual life what was

not accomplished by Jnanadeva, Namadeva, Tukarama and Ramadasa (p.66); his language and style contrasted with that of Jnanadeva (p.67); waging war against the Pandits (p.68); occupying a high place among the great poets of Maharashtra (p.69).

Epokhe : As the mark of realisation (p.22).

F

Freedom : As illusory as bondage is (p.40).

G

God : His name, enabling us to preserve equanimity (p.18); dancing in Kirtana (Ekanatha) (p.19); serving his devotees, like Arjuna, Draupadi, Gora, Choka and others (p.21); serving his devotees, Rohidas, Sajana, Narahari, Janabai and Damaji (p.21); and Devotee, like the ocean and wave, or flower and fragrance (p.21); worshipping His devotee with the lotus in His hand (p.59); revealing Himself as Guru to a divinely discontented soul (p.62). No partisan of tongues (p.69).

God-realisation : Eight psycho-physical marks in the state of (p.22); the four means of: Bhakti, Knowledge, Renunciation and Meditation (p.54); a stage in, when the world is not and God alone is (p.63).

God-vision : The impossibility of, an any other life (p.55).

Guru : The help of, as invaluable and indispensable both in worldly and spiritual matters (Ekanathi Bhagavata) (p.61); and God as one (p.61)

J

Janardana Swami : The teacher of Ekanatha born at Chalisgaon in 1504 A.D. Desastha Brahmin; converted by the grace of Nrisimha Sarasvati; meeting his Guru under the Audumbera tree at Ankalakop (p.3); Killedara of Devagada, and a statesman; a type for Ekanatha for the combination worldly and spiritual life; respected alike by

the Hindus and Mohomedans died at Daulatabad in 1575 (p.3); his samadhi inside a cave on the hill at Daulatabad (p.3); describing his Guru as living in Ankalkop under an Audumbara tree (P.11); describing himself as a mine of sins (p.11); going to his Guru with a desire that he may relieve him of his sins (p.11); asking Ekanatha to follow the easy path of Pandhari (p.12); relating that there is no other remedy for spiritual knowledge than the utterance of God's name (p.12); and no greater merit than giving food to guests without consideration of caste or colour (p.12); seeing wheels within wheels set with pearls (p.12); his vision of the light of rubies, and of lamps without wicks (p.12); the spiritual teacher of Ekanatha (p.13); his influence on Ekanatha (p.14); a typical saint who did not give up worldly life (p.66); a fighter and a saint (P.66).

Jiva and Siva : Best friends though opposed to each other (p.38); described metaphorically as two birds, on the same tree (p.38).

Jnanesvara : The source of inspiration to Ekanatha (p.25); not reconciling worldly and spiritual life, as he had no wife and children (p.66).

K

Kamsa : Went to heaven by honouring Narada, though he hated Krishna (p.21).

Knowledge : Is discrimination of the real from the unreal (p.53).

Krishna : Blessing Arjuna with Brahmanic consciousness and making him fight with the Kauvaras (p.64).

Krishnaraja : King of Vijayanagar, as taking the image of Vitthala to Hampi (p.1).

L

Lust : As rising even in old age in the vicinity of women (p.46).

M

Madalasa and Chudala : Helping people in their journey towards God (p.46).

Man : Should not waste a moment to start in search of God (p.55).

Marathi : As appealing to the lowest rung of the Maratha Society (p.68); richly laden with fruits of divine knowledge (p.69).

Marriage : The Institution of, an attempt of the Vedas to restrain the sexual instinct (p. 48);

Maya : The cause of the world according to Ekanatha (p.32); an enchantress, according to Ekanatha (p.35); the cause of the difference between the individual and the universal self (p.37).

Meditation : Transforming sentient man into self-effulgent God (p.55); four pitfalls: dissipation, passion, fickleness and absorption (p.63).

Meditation on God : As a panacea for all disturbances (p.62).

Mind : A maid-servant of the Guru (p.47).

N

Namadeva : Not reconciling worldly and spiritual life, a God was to him all-absorbing (p.66). Ekanatha on (p.18).

Name of God : As alone imperishable (Ekanatha) (p.17); warding off all calamities (p.62).

Narada : Living in Brahmanic consciousness even though he cut all sorts of jokes (p.64).

Nrisimhasarasvati : Sacred places known after: Nrisimhavadi (Narasobavadi), Audumbara and Gangapur (p.3).

P

Paithana : On the Godavari, the place of Ekanatha's life-work (p.25).

Pangarkar : Mr. on the birth-date of Ekanath (p.4).

Patwardhan : On Ekanatha's description of emotions (p.8); on Ekanatha's service to Marathi literature (p.68); on erudite Pandits, as contrasted with Maratha Saints (p.68).

Penance : True meaning of, as constant meditation on God (p.42).

Purity : Internal and external, (p.41).

Pururavas : The story of, (p.46).

R

Ramadasa : Not reconciling worldly and spiritual life, as he had no wife and children (P.66). Realiser of Brahman pays all his debts to deities, sages, ancestors, and men (P.64).

Renunciation : As disgust even for Urvasi, or a heap of jewels (P.54).

Repentance : The cause of ecstasy (Ekanatha) (p.14); the true act of atonement (p.46).

Retirement : The value of, described by Ekanatha, by the metaphor of a bride (p.44).

S

Sacrifices : Like Sautramani and Asvamedha as restraining the unbridled instincts, of man (p.48).

Sadhu : a true, as suffering calmly the slanders of others (p.44).

Saguna : As easier of attainment than Nirguna (p.53).

Sahasrabuddhe, and Bhave, Messra., on Ekanatha's birth-date (p.3).

Saints as more generous than clouds (Ekanatha) (p.20); the only saviours in calamity (p.20); taking on a body when the path of religion vanishes (p.21).

Samadhi, or Brahmic consciousness, some mistaken notions about, (p.63); of Yajnavalkya, Suka and Vamadeva, as untampered by every-day actions (p.64);

true, as entirely compatible with action (p.64); as constant divine experience (p.64).

Self-examination, culminating in repentance, as the sine qua non of spiritual life (p.46).

Self-reliance, of no use in spiritual progress (p.61).

Senses, the eleven, to be directed to God(p.57).

Servant of God, who has realized Him as a Tower of Strength (p.65).

Soul, the realized, experiencing wonderful equality and even - mindedness (p. 56); perfected, rare in this world (p. 65).

Spinoza on God, as a great Lion's Dean (p.66).

Suryanarayana, the father of Ekanatha (p. 1).

U

Usha, and Aniruddha, the daughter of Bana and the grandson of Krishna, as given in the Puranas (p.45).

Uxorious, the company of the, to be avoided (p.46).

V

Vedanta, popularised in Marathi by Ekanatha (p. 31).

Vidya, the mirror of Siva or Universal Self (p. 39).

Vijayavithhala, the temple of, at Hampi, as desolate and without any image at the present day (p. 2).

Vraja, the milkmaids of, as realising their spiritual goal by loving God (p. 60); ladies, as Srutis or Vedic hymns incarnate (p. 60).

W

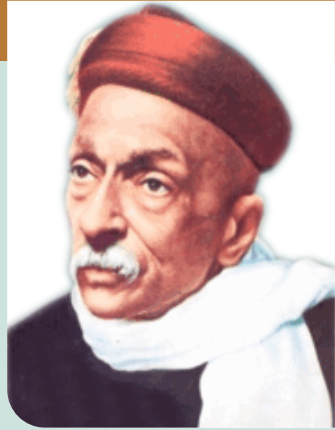
Women, the company of even a Sattvic, to be avoided (p. 45).

World, unreal, according to Ekanatha (p. 33).

Wordly and Spiritual life, reconciliation of, as the characteristic of the Age of Ekanatha (p. 66).

About the Author

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



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

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