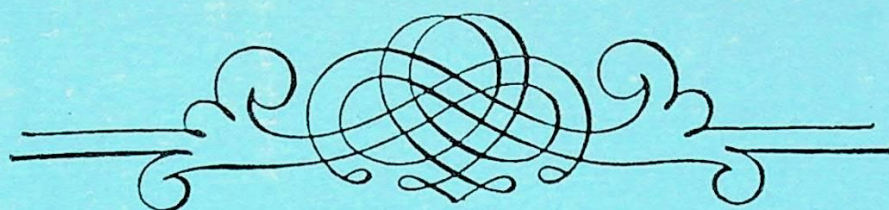
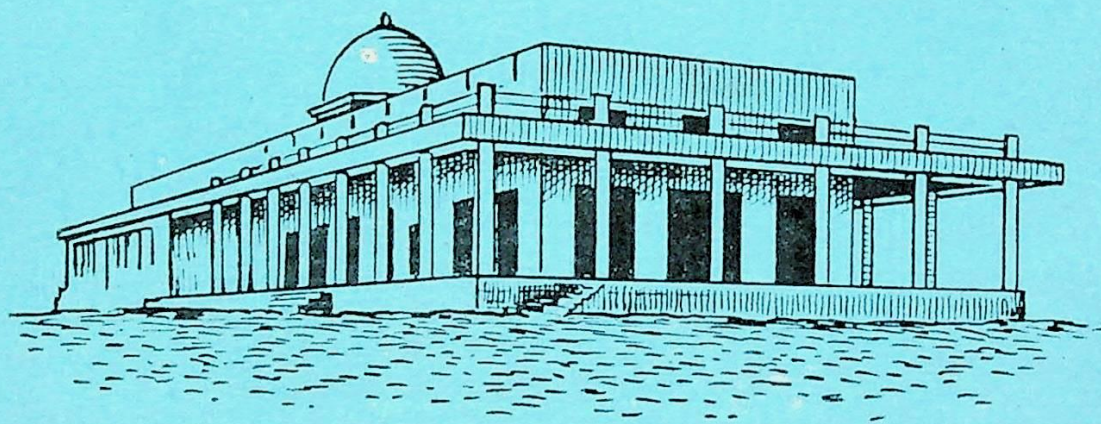


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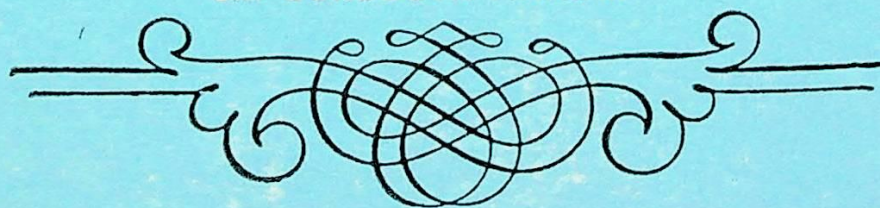
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Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion  
Belgaum

Vaikuntha Chaturdashi

Saka 1893

Vol. 6 No. 1

November 1971

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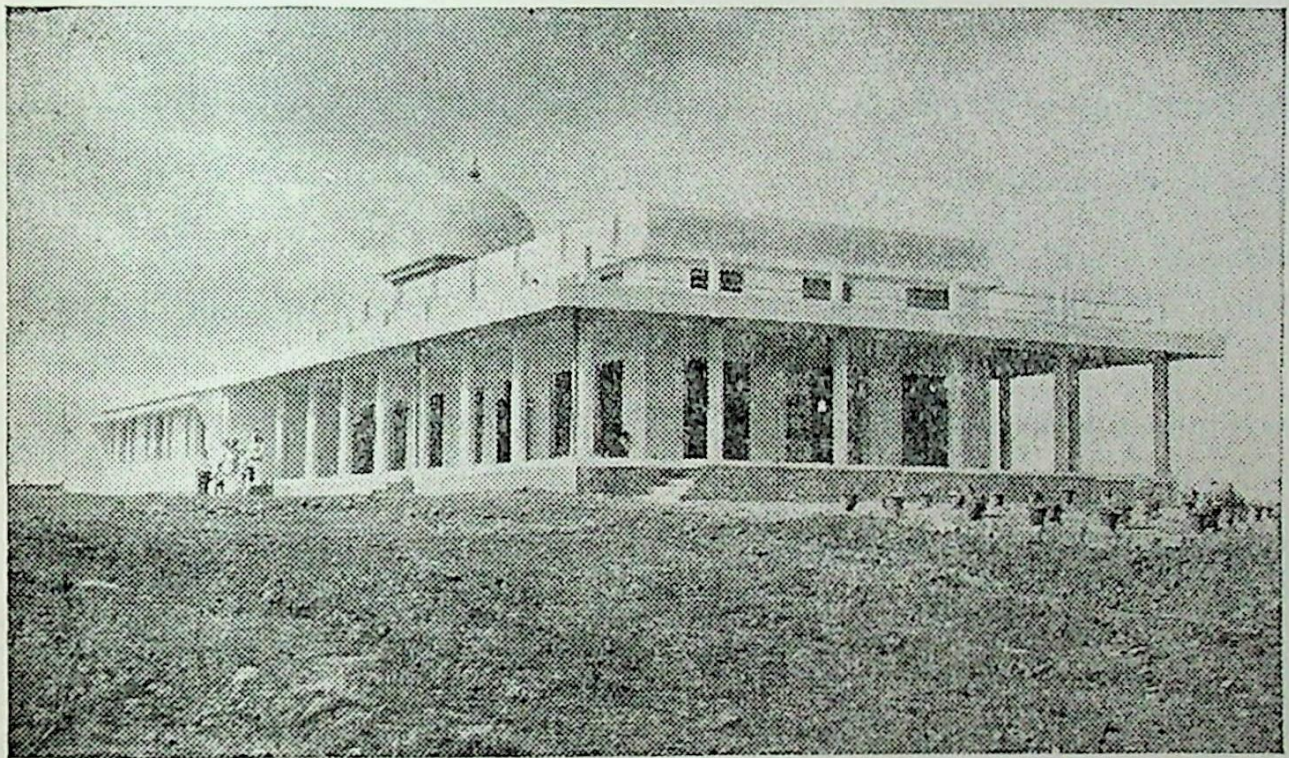
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( A Journal of Spiritual Life )



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Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion  
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# CONTENTS

	Page
Ego-centricity in Sadhana	... 1
Editorial Notes	... 2
Nāma Yoga	Shri M. S. Deshpande, M.A. ... 5
Elixir for Life	‘Bee’ ... 14
Gurudev Ranade’s Contribution to Early Greek Philosophical Thought	Dr. (Mrs) Chandrakalatai Hate, M.A.Ph.D.,J.P. ... 23
Saint Ramalinga of Tamilnad	Shri V. Rajagopal, M.A. ... 38
Thiru-Naavukku-Arasar	Shri G. Vanmikanathan M.A. ... 46
Lokamanya Tilak’s Gītā Rahasya—a “Paradise Lost !”	Shri G. D. Khare, Vāngmaya Vishārad ... 60
Revolution in Ideas in the Gita	Dr. N. L. Shrivastava, M.A.,D.Litt. ... 70
The Synthesis of Works, Knowledge and Devotion in the Gita	Shri B. R. Patwardhan, M.A.LL.B. ... 80
Faith-healing	Dr. V. N. Deshpande, M.A.,M.Sc.,Ph.D. ... 93
Vedanta and Modern Christian Theology	Mrs. Padma Sudhi, M.A. ... 98
Matthew Arnold’s Concept of Culture	Prof. B. K. Pattar, M. A. ... 109
Hinduism on Trial	Shri Ranjit Mal Mehta ... 114
Reviews of Books	... 116
A Short Report of the Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum.	... 129



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# Pathway to God

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Vol. VI

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## Ego-centricity in Sadhana\*

There is nothing to be troubled about. You ought rather to congratulate yourself that you have become conscious of your ego-centricity. Very few people in the Ashram are. They all are ego-centric and they do not realise their ego-centricity. Even in their sadhana the I is always there, - *my sadhana, my progress, my everything.* The remedy is to think constantly of the Divine, not of oneself, to work, to act, do sadhana for the Divine; not to consider how this or that affects *me* personally, not to claim anything, but to refer all to the Divine. It will take time to do that sincerely and thoroughly, but it is the proper way.

- Sri Aurobindo

---

\* A letter of Shri Aurobindo to a Sadhaka 31-3-1936.

## Editorial Notes

With great pleasure we are placing this number of 'Pathway to God' in the hands of our esteemed readers on the auspicious day of Vaikuntha Chaturdashi, the day on which Gurudev Ranade was initiated to spiritual life by his Sadguru, Bhausahab Maharaj of Umadi. We hope that this will meet the intellectual and spiritual needs of our readers.

### **Problems of today's India :**

We are extremely sorry that the hardships of the people of Bangla Desh are not yet over even after a long struggle. The large scale genocide which has already taken place, has stirred the hearts of peoples of the world. The problem has no longer remained confined to Pakistan. It has attracted the sympathetic attention of leading nations. This has resulted in recent Indo-Soviet treaty and the timely decision of U.S.A. to stop the supply of arms to Pakistan. It is feared that the struggle between East and West Pakistan may lead to war between Pakistan and India as the latter has given moral support to Bangla Desh and provided shelter for the refugees out of human compassion. Efforts are going on at the level of U. N. O. to solve the problem by peaceful methods so that normalcy may be restored in Bangla Desh. We hope these efforts will soon fructify.

Recent developments in Bangla Desh have added to the existing problems of India. She is worried about defending her territory. At a time when she was on the point of attaining self-sufficiency in food, over ninety lacs of refugees have entered her territory. This has aggravated her food problem. The aid coming from other sympathetic nations of the world is hardly sufficient to feed them for a week. With her spiritual background India has shown kindness to the refugees and taken immediate steps to feed them and save their lives. But this help cannot continue for long. A political solution has to be found out through the mediation of U.N O. to make it possible for the refugees to go back to their homes safely.

Floods and famines in India have been recurring phenomena. This year some areas are famine-stricken owing to lack of rains while some others are swept away due to floods. Permanent solutions to these problems are being thought of. Problems of varied kinds and magnitude facing India since independence make



us think that normal human efforts are not enough, nay, totally inadequate to remedy the situation on all fronts. The awakening of the divine element in man and transformation of heart of man is called for. To achieve this, it is utmost necessary for us to pray God and seek His grace. The sooner we realise this and set ourselves to this task, the better for us and the whole of mankind. Our efforts as politicians and rulers will meet with success only by divine grace. Such calamities that befall on mankind may be characterised as forms of divine punishment. To free ourselves from such punishment attempt both individually and collectively should be made to propitiate God who will shower His grace on us only when we prove ourselves worthy of the same by our noble deeds. May God enkindle in us that brotherly feeling which could prevent us from indulging in evil deeds that cause harm to humanity.

### **Sri Aurobindo's Centenary:**

This year the nation is celebrating Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo's centenary. He was a great patriot, profound scholar, a mystic - saint of world repute. Though born in an anglicised Bengali family and was brought up in Western culture he turned out an able exponent of Indian culture. His failure at the horse-riding part of the I.C.S. examination proved a blessing in disguise and prevented him from being an obedient servant of the Britishers. This happened perhaps because he was destined to be a spiritual guide to the whole world. He was a master mind who combined in himself the western science and eastern philosophical wisdom. The prophecy made by Chittaranjan Das about him at the end of the memorable Alipore trial has come true. The whole world is remembering him today for the service he rendered to his motherland, and for the contribution he made to world culture. The Ashram which he set up at Pondicherry is a monument to his ideal for the realisation of which he struggled very hard during his life time. Pondicherry has now become a spiritual centre for those who want to pursue the discipline of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.

On the eve of the seers's centenary it is in the fitness of things that we remind ourselves of his unique message to the world. Sri Aurobindo has given to posterity a profound philosophy rich in content and comprehensive in approach, and a particular technique of Sadhana followed and tested by himself. He evolved a philosophy based on his own intuitive experiences and it was not meant merely to satisfy his intellect but to be practised so as to make the life divine. He believed like the scientists in the cosmic evolution from matter to life, mind and consciousness. But unlike them he declared that the evolution had not stopped at man and would proceed to Supermind.

As Sri Aurobindo understands the Supermind is the link between Sat-Chit-Anand on the one hand and mind and those things that follow on the

other. Both involution and evolution take place through its instrumentality. He discovered the exact function of the Supermind and showed how in the Sadhana its full power could be utilized for human evolution. The ascent of man to the level of Supermind makes it possible for the Spirit or Sat-Chit-Anand to descend to the world to divinise the entire humanity. But for this Supermind and its help, the full divinization of mind, life and matter would not be possible. The process of descent of the Absolute to assume the form of the world for sport or *lila* was termed as involution, which is followed by evolution, the ascending process ending where it started. Thus he presented mankind with a new hope and a new mission for the future of humanity.

Sri Aurobindo chalked out a path leading to the highest ideal, which, according to him was not individual salvation but a Divinization of mind, life and matter here and now in this terrestrial existence. It can be done if the Supermind is realised and its powers invoked for the purpose. It is promised through a particular path which he named as Integral Yoga or Purna Yoga. This is a synthesis of all the existing yogas such as Jnana, Karma and Bhakti. Unlike in other yogas where surrender or *atmanivedana* comes at the end of sadhana, in Aurobindo's integral yoga complete surrender of oneself comes at the very beginning of the spiritual pilgrimage. It is therefore appropriately called the Yoga of Surrender. Not only he outlined this path but himself trod it to attain the ideal of divinizing humanity. "Yoga Siddhi", says Aurobindo, "is best attained by the combined working of four instruments"—Shastra, Utsaha, Guru and Kala or time.

Aurobindo has demolished the idea of any essential duality or contradiction between spirit and matter. He declares that what exists is the Spirit; mind, life matter are all spirit in different form. There is nothing like Maya or illusion in connection with matter or the material world.

We will do well to draw inspiration from the Mahayogi and strive for realising the highest and the noblest goal which he has placed before us. This is the only way by which we can overcome all the sufferings to which we are subject. May he guide us from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth and from death to immortality.

K. D. T.



Om  
**NĀMA — YOGA\***  
(Yoga of Divine Name)

( Extracts from Letters by Shri Bhausahab Maharaj )  
Selected, Classified and Translated,

By M. S. Deshpande, M.A. Athani

## I. Introductory

### Significance :

“*Nāma-Yoga*” is a word specially coined by us to designate the Spiritual Philosophy and Discipline of Śri Maharaj. He himself called it *Jñāna-Marga*-or Path of Self-realisation. We have however, used “*Nāma Yoga*” in a double sense. In fact, both the words-*Nāma* and *Yoga*-carry double meaning. *Nāma* means i) Meditation on Divine Name and ii) Divinity in posse. Like many other saints, to Sri Maharaj also, *Nāma* (name) and *Rupa* (Form) of God were identical. The Name itself was God. *Yoga* means i) Spiritual discipline and ii) Spiritual union or realisation of God. In the first sense, *Nāma-Yoga* represents the Path, while in the second sense, it represents the Goal, as meditation on Divine Name, if properly practised will lead to the realisation of the vision and bliss of the Lord:

Now the Lord has thousands of Names. Which of them should be meditated upon? Are all Names equally effective? Śri Maharaj maintained that the Name that reveals itself to the intuition of a realised saint and imparted by him to his disciple, is alone capable of leading him to God. It alone will enable him to have the vision and bliss of God. Such a Divine Name is called *Amara Nāma*-Immortal Name or *Sabija Nāma*-Seed Name by the saints, because, this immortal

---

\* Based on the writer's biography of Shri Bhausahab Maharaj – the Saint of Umadi, entitled “*Jivana-Gange*” (K) or “*Jivana-Ganga*” (M) Part II.

Seed alone, when watered by devotional meditation, sprouts and bears flowers and fruits of spiritual experiences and grants bliss to the seekers. Such a meditation is the Means and the bliss, the End of this *Nāma-Yoga* of Sri Maharaj. The extracts that follow will throw a flood of light both on the Means as well as the End-Path as well as the Goal.

#### The Plan :

We have first selected a few extracts from the Letters of Śri Maharaj, formed them into 44 groups. We have, then classified the groups into two Parts: the first dealing with the Path and the second with Goal. Part I is further divided into two Sections entitled i) *Abhyasa* - (Practice) and ii) *Vairagya* - (Dispassion) respectively. Repeated performance is *Abhāysa* - Practice (*Paunah puṇyena karaṇam abhyāsaḥ*). Constant meditation on the Divine Nama is the Practice or Spiritual Discipline, advocated by Sri Maharaj. It resembles the *Abhyāsa Yoga* of the *Gītā*. "To denounce and renounce worthless things" is his *Vairagya*. To attain the essential we must eschew the non-essential. Still like Sri Ramadas, the renunciation advocated by Sri Maharaj was internal and not external. Like Sage Vasiṣṭha, Sri Maharaj preferred "*Āntastyāga*" mental renunciation. He advised his disciples to perform worldly duties with perfect diligence. But he warned them that they should consider spiritual discipline to be the be-all and end-all of life and that it should claim their highest loyalty. Hence while they are engaged in the daily work they should not fail to meditate on the Divine Name.

The second Part also contains two Sections: The title of the first section is *Abhyudaya* - worldly weal and that of the second is *Niśreyas* - spiritual Bliss. *Abhyudaya* connects worldly grandeur while *Niśreyas* signifies spiritual welfare and beatitude... Both worldly as well as spiritual life require the support of Divine Power and Grace. Worldly life is necessary for the well-being of the body and spiritual life, for the evolution of the soul. And as human being is a complex of the body and soul, he should be adept and careful in the performance of both his worldly as well as spiritual duties. The Path of *Abhyāsa* and *Vairāgya* mentioned above, would enable an aspirant to attain both the aspects of the Goal simultaneously. Such is the outline of Sri Maharaja's *Nāma-Yoga*, the details of which can be ascertained from the following extracts.

#### Basic Philosophy :

Śri Maharaj formulated the Spiritual Philosophy of Life, not through mere intellectual speculation but through actual experience. He lived spiritual life and had gained direct experience of all its aspects. He was not a scholar. His meagre reading was confined to some important writings and songs of Kannada



and Marathi saints. He did not write any book about his spiritual life and teachings. Sri Maharaj picked up some important ideas and expressions from the saints that accorded with his personal experiences and used them in his discourses and letters to his disciples, to elucidate them. Ultimately it was his direct experience that was his primary authority.

The Philosophy underlying Sri Maharaja's *Nāma-Yoga* is to be found in a seed form in the following Five Aphorisms, selected by him from the writings of some Marathi Saints. As they are cryptic, pithy and meaningful, we have tried to elucidate them to a certain extent, so that their real significance might be clearly brought home to the aspirants. The first two Aphorisms are .

- i) *Āthava to brahma* - Remembrance ( of Divine Name ) is Spiritual Reality.
- ii) *Nāṭhava to bhavabhrama* : Non-remembrance ( of the Name ) is worldly illusion.

The words ' *Āthava* ' and ' *Nāṭhava* ' also mean knowledge and ignorance of *Brahman*. When they mean knowledge and ignorance they indicate the nature of *Brahman* and *Maya* ( Illusion ). And when they mean remembrance and forgetfulness, they suggest the means of attunement with them. When we remember *Brahman*, we actually reside in *Brahman*, merge in *Brahman*. But how to remember *Brahman* ? We could imagine the forms of *Brāhmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Maheśa* and others. But Śri Maharaj never approved this play of imagination. According to him, meditation on the Divine Name is alone the real remembrance of *Brahman*. This Divine Name imparted by a *Sadguru* enshrines the Spiritual Energy in a seed form. With the help of meditation on such a *Nama* - by merging the mind in it, a seeker can realise the supersensuous Divine Light, Sound etc. as well as the Bliss and Peace of the Lord. Such is the teaching of Sri Maharaj in this respect.

Now, how to intensify our meditation in order to enable it to attain this spiritual realisation ? The next three Aphorisms of Sri Maharaj point out the method required for it :

- iii) *Jñānāsa mūla agni* : Fire is the source of Illumination - Knowledge.
- iv) *Bhaktīsa mūla virakti* : - Dispassion is the source of Devotion.
- v) *Antahkaraṇāsa mūla mana* :— Mind is the source of Ego or Heart.

Here 'fire' means burning desire, passion or longing and 'Knowledge' means illumination. It is the earnest desire for the Lord that will eventually attract His illumination. This desire is an outcome of deep love or devotion. for

God. But we cannot love God and mammon at the same time. We cannot feel and develop devotion for the Lord unless we feel dispassion for material objects. This is pointed out by the second Aphorism. Devotion and dispassion are interdependent. They help each other in their development. When our devotion is enhanced with the aid of dispassion, our meditation gains in intensity. And if such meditation is continued for a long time, the Divine Name sinks and soaks in our Ego-in our inner being and is assimilated with it. Meditation would, then become our very nature, this is the suggestion of the third Aphorism.

#### Bird's Eye View of Nāma-Yoga :

Let us now try to have a bird's-eye-view of this *Nāma-Yoga*, of all its four aspects viz. Practice, Dispassion, Worldly Weal and Spiritual Bliss. as pointed out by Sri. Maharaj.

i) Practice : As stated already, meditation on *Nāma* is the nucleus of this practice. All other factors revolve round it or are contributory to its development. The philosophic basis of this *Nāma-Yoga* has been intimated already (IS). God is all-powerful. It is His grace that makes both the worldly as well as spiritual life full of bliss. Soulful meditation on his Name is the only means of attaining His grace. Hence during his worldly life, a seeker should develop devotion for the Lord through dispassion and attain the vision of God with aid of one-pointed meditation on His Name. Such is the spiritual Philosophy of Sri Maharaj, in a nut-shell.(2).

Regarding the method of meditation, Sri Maharaj used to mention the following four factors : *Niyama* - Regularity, *Nischaya* - Resolve, and Firmness, *Katṭa* - Restriction and *Niṣṭhā* - Zealous Faith. The first factor refers to the time and period of meditation; the second, to the tenacity of the seeker; the third, to the proper process of meditation and the fourth, to the feeling of the seeker at that time. Meditation should be performed, according to Sri Maharaj, at least for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. Our resolve should be steadfast - unwavering. The proper process to be adopted, should consist of a steady posture, fixed gaze either on the tip or on the top of the nose, mental repetition of Name along with the breath. Lastly, meditation should be carried on with earnest love and joy. Such a meditation, according to him, would remove the difficulties and mental vagaries, would increase our devotion and through the grace of the Lord, would enable us to attain His realisation and bliss. ( 3-4 ).

Such a devotion is of two kinds: *Sakāma* - with desire and *Niškāma* - without desire. The first type of devotion would grant non-eternal liberation such as *Salokatā* - Residence in Heaven and *Samīpatā* - Residence in the vicinity of God, while that of the second type would grant Self-realisation and eternal liberation viz *Sayujyatā* - Unison with God. (5). Hence a seeker should prefer desireless devotion. Meditation should be performed merely for the sake of glorifying the Lord. There should be no other ulterior motive (6). Unless we give up our desire for sense-objects, we won't be able to attain God (7).

But how to control the wanderings of the mind, remove its innate urge for sense-objects? There is only one remedy for it. We should not allow our body to pursue the mind. Then it would, after some time, turn back of its own accord. Thereafter we should forcibly engage it in meditation. Then the discrimination resulting therefrom, would dispel the darkness of illusion born of ignorance and enkindle the light of faith (8-9).

Man is very often assailed by adverse events in life. He should utilise them as well, to develop his devotion. So long as he is free from their onslaughts, he should joyfully perform intense meditation so that he should not be greatly affected and disturbed when actually assailed by them. And when he is actually in the midst of trouble, he should regard the calamity to be the outcome of God's Will and should remain serene and undisturbed and carry on his meditation joyfully. (10).

Meditation should be full of devotion and concentration. It should be prolonged and intense. The Name should then, sink deep in the heart and produce thrills of devotional joy in it. Such an ardent devotion would enlighten the devotee about his intimate relation with God (11-12). This would enable the seeker to have the experience of '*Bīndu-Tīrtha*' i. e. the vision of '*Bīndu*' or Spiritual Atom and the taste of '*Tīrtha*' or Spiritual Nectar. His spiritual experiences would gradually develop and culminate in converting his body-consciousness into God-consciousness. (13).

If meditation on Name is the internal aspect of this *Yoga, Pothi* - Reading of and discourses on sacred Books, *Bhajan* and *Ārati* - Singing of devotional songs and waving of lights before God - are its external features. If they are practised with proper faith and devotion, they would enhance the intensity of concentration in meditation. They would also help to spread devotion among the people. (14-15) The occasional discourses, about the lives and teachings of saints, would also develop love and enthusiasm for spiritual life and grant spiritual experiences which in their turn would fill the devotee with intense fervour. (16)

A seeker should also live in the company of Saints and learn to realise

and appreciate their spiritual greatness. He should constantly think about their words of wisdom and intensify his longing for the Lord. When his heart begins to pine for the vision of God, he would not fail to have His vision (17-18).

We should perform our occasional duties calmly and diligently. We should, however, consider that God is the real doer and we should willingly allow His will to prevail. We should surrender everything to Him. That God does everything for our good, should ever be our feeling-our attitude. Therein lies the real spirit of self-surrender (19-20).

ii) **Dispassion** : Devotion or passion for the Lord, necessarily requires dispassion for sense-objects. We cannot have both sense-pleasure and Divine Bliss at the same time. For attaining Bliss we must be prepared to give up sense-pleasure (21-22). By developing dispassion, we should be free from the attraction of sense-objects and learn to lead a moral life. That alone will enable us to make some progress in spiritual life (23).

Moral discipline has two aspects—one negative and the other positive. The first asks us to eliminate our vices, while the other wants us to cultivate virtues. Ego born of our identification with the body, is the father of all the vices such as lust, anger, etc. It hampers both the material and spiritual welfare. Hence it should be first eliminated. (24). Those that become aware of their vices and earnestly repent for their past misdeeds, are purified through their sincere repentance. And they would, then, gradually acquire good feelings, thoughts and actions. (25).

In our worldly life, forgiveness plays an important part. It is our sacred duty to forgive the faults of others and make them happy. This will eliminate our selfishness and develop our charity, which is very helpful in spiritual life for its progress. Even a little practice of this virtue would lend happiness to all (26-27.)

A seeker should live in this world like lotus-leaf in the lake, untouched by its mud. He should perform meditation while engaged in his worldly affairs. He should, however, be very cautious here and should never fall a prey to the attractions of woman and gold belonging to others. He should be satisfied with what God has granted to him, and steadily continue his spiritual *Sādhana*, (29). Moreover, he should perform his worldly duties, with utmost care and diligence. He should not shun them through idleness. He should constantly observe and examine his conduct at every step, and should always behave prudently. Imprudence is the source of misery. Still, with all our prudence we must not fail to



realise that God's will alone ultimately prevails. Hence we should be ever ready to abide by His will. When we are overwhelmed with dangers, we should not fail to remember Him and perform our duty (30)

iii) **Worldly Weal** : The moral and spiritual discipline enjoined by 'Practice' and 'Dispassion' described so far, enable an aspirant to attain both 'Worldly Weal' and 'spiritual Bliss'. Both these are really the gifts of God, or the *Ātman*. If we discharge properly the only duty of meditating on the Name of God in the company of saints, our *Ātman* will not fail to grant us Bliss.(31.)

But people have been all along engaged in enjoying sense-pleasure day and night, for a number of lives in the past, as a result of which they are required to suffer from misery. A seeker can avoid this suffering, if he followed the advice of his master and performed his meditation properly. Then he would be blessed with happiness both material and spiritual. (32)

Whenever we are required to face difficulties in our worldly life, we should carry on one-pointed meditation. God would then ward off the dangers. They can never be removed only by our personal diligence. Our diligence should be confined to our meditation only. That is all that we can and should do (33). Instead of performing this spiritual discipline, people simply complain about their Fate. What can be said about this folly? (34) "Meditation on the Name of *Hari* (Lord) would drive the obstacles in all directions." Hence without being anxious about anything we should mind our meditation. Everything would be set right immediately. (35). We would, thereby, also have more and more spiritual experiences and we would realise the secret of spiritual life. (36.)

iv) **Spiritual Bliss** : Spiritual Bliss is the final End of spiritual discipline. It is also called Self-realisation, about the exact nature of which there are good many mis-conceptions. Miracle-mongers easily delude the common folk by the exhibition of their miracles. By offering material gifts which though quite ephemeral, are regarded by them to be very valuable, these miracle-mongers command respect from them like real saints. But those who love the eternal *Ātman*, would never revere such fellows as they would revere realised saints (37). Some others try to imitate the external conduct of saints and pose as real saints. How can such hypocrites realise the Self and become genuine saints?(38).

Like miracle-mongering and hypocrisy, mere intellectual learning also cannot be a sure sign of a genuine saint. Self-realisation should not be contaminated by the ego born of learning, just as it should not be touched by miracles. So instead of wasting our time in the acquisition of such worthless things, we should earnestly be absorbed in meditation, realise the Self and enjoy His Bliss. (39-40). This spiritual discipline alone is real religion (41-42).

When a soul (*Jiva*) first takes birth in this world by departing from God (*Śiva*) it is endowed with the consciousness of its original Divinity. And when it departs from life ultimately for merging in God it is also conscious of its former Divinity. But during human life, the embodied soul, is deluded by sense-objects. And being forgetful of its Divinity it is engaged in the worldly affairs considering them to be real and valuable. Really the soul (*Jiva*) has no independent existence. God alone has independent existence. Hence the only duty of the soul is to meditate on God and enjoy His Bliss (43). When the devotee attains this Bliss, he loses his soul-consciousness. He ever lives in God-consciousness. He thus regains his former Divinity. This is the Liberation of Unison. This is the supreme Goal of human life. (44).

## Extracts from Letters

### Part One-The Path

#### (A) *Abhyāsa* - Practice :

##### (I) Philosophic Basis

“Remembrance is *Brahman*-Spiritual Reality; Non-remembrance is *Māyā*-Worldly Illusion.” Remembrance (of Divine Name) or Knowledge (of Brahman) produces God-consciousness, while non-remembrance (of Divine Name) or Ignorance (of Brahman) produces consciousness of Illusion. To be better still, God-consciousness itself is Knowledge and consciousness of Illusion (*Māyā*) is Ignorance. To stabilise such knowledge, earnest desire or passionate longing (for God) is needed. The fire of burning desire would enkindle the light of knowledge. That is why a saint says: “Fire is the source of Knowledge.” This burning desire is the outcome of intense devotion for the Lord. But this devotion cannot sprout or grow without dispassion for sense-objects. That is why saints have told us: “Dispassion is the source of Devotion.” Really devotion and dispassion are interdependent. They reciprocate. Dispassion develops devotion; and devotion develops dispassion. If we thus snap the snare of *Māyā* and

increase our devotion, the passionate longing for the Lord produced thereby, would grant us Self-knowledge and merge us in the *Brahman*. This is the state of Liberation in which body-consciousness is completely eliminated. Such a liberated person absorbed in *Brahman* transcends all duties. *Tasya kāryam na vidyate*—He has no obligatory duty. He transcends duty. This higher state can only be attained by meditation on Name Divine. We must ever remember the Name imparted to us by our Spiritual Master. Our gaze should ever be fixed on the tip of our nose. The Divine Name should sink deep in the heart. As “mind is the source of Ego-heart”, when the Name is constantly associated with the mind, it enters deep down in the heart and is stabilised there. In this way, if we meditate on the Name of *Vithal* (Lord), who is the personal aspect of *Brahman*, along with 21600 breaths created by *Nārāyan*-the Lord, it “would transform our intellect, eliminate our evil passions, create righteous tendencies in us, and develop our devotion for the Lord.” And the *Sādhak* would, then easily attain the vision of the Lord and become one with Him.”

This is the advice of the Master.

(PP. 63-64)\$

\$ These pages are from “Letters and Notes by Shri Bhausahab Maharaj Umadikar”  
—a book published in Marathi.

# Elixir for Life

(Spritual Talks of Sri Gurudev Dr. Ranade)

( By : Bee )

## (46) Kannada Mystics

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

## (47) About the History of Indian Philosophy.

Then Sri H. asked Śri Gurudeva about the publication of his History of Indian Philosophy. Śri Gurudeva gave him all the details about the proposed publication and said: "You see, want of money and energy is the primary cause of not publishing the volumes. Moreover, as there are few well-qualified writers, it is best to publish monographs after the German method. Only a few persons should not take the entire responsibility of publishing all volumes. Let them be published in any order."

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

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

#### (48) About Bodha Sudhe

Thereafter, ŚRI GURUDEVA related to Sri H. how his first Kannada book viz. "*Bodha Sudhe*" took shape. It contains the *Vacanas* of Śri *Nimbargi Mahārāj*, the eminent Master of his Master - Śri *Bhausahab Maharaj*. He said: "Originally, they were disjointed stray utterances of *Nimbargi Mahārāj*, collected by his *Vaisnava* disciple - *Raghunathācārya*. It was a bi-lingual narration of philosophic discussion of the great Saint. We have merely arranged them in the Aristotelean fashion. It is an ethico - religious argument.

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

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

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

Thereafter the disciple was asked to read the entire section viz. **Fundamentals of Conduct**. When the reading was over, Sri Gurudeva asked



“What is the ultimate principle of conduct?” and offered this reply himself. “It is the realisation of oneness, of atonement, of *Sāmarasya*, with God. Whatever helps us to develop our insight into God’s nature, and enables us to realise Him, is moral. Everything else is immoral.”

At this Sri H remarked: “This principle appears to be akin to the principle of ‘*Kāyakave kail s’* – ‘Work is worship’ of the *Vīraśaiva* saints.” “Yes! to a certain extent,” replied Sri Gurudeva.” But there is a good deal of difference. Any work cannot be worship. It is only the work that is meant for the realisation of God, that is inspired by God, or done under the canopy of His illumination that would deserve to be called ‘Worship’.

Sri Gurudeva then asked his disciple to sing his ‘Prayer to the Great Master’-Sri Nimbargi Maharaj. He liked the Prayer very much and intended to publish it at the beginning of his “*Bodha-Sudha*.” In the course of singing, when he came across the line: “*Kṛtiyu beḷagali ninna beḷakinalli*”- “Let my activity shine under the canopy of Thy illumination” Sri Gurudeva remarked: “Then alone the action will be worship,” And when the next line, “*Ninna karuṇave anna, ninna karuṇave nīru ninna karuṇave usiru enoḡāgāli*” – “Let Thy grace be my food, drink and breath to me,” was recited, Sri Gurudeva pointed out to Sri H. “Look! how poetry is inspired by religion!” “*Ninna karuṇave usiru*” is specially important. Because even a single breath is highly valuable in spiritual life. Who knows? Even during that short span of time, God’s grace might descend upon the aspirant. King Parīkṣit was liberated during seven days and Khaṭv ṅga, during 2 hours and a half. If a man could live even for a moment and takes one more breath, he must thank God, for he can meditate on Him during that tiny interval and realise God. Keeping this aspect in view poet Kalidās has remarksd :

“*Kṣaṇom pyavatiṣṭhote śvasaṇ ṇanu jaṅtuḥ khalu bhāgyavānasau*” “The person who is able to breathe even for a single minute is really very fortunate.”

#### (49) On the Gita (Chapter XII)

Dr. B. of Athani had been to Nimbarg a second time. When Sri Gurudeva was informed about his arrival. he was at once called to his room. As he entered the room, Sri Gurudeva greeted him with a smile and said: “Well, doctor! you have come again. You must have many serious cases to attend. How could you find time to come here?” At this Dr. B. replied: “Sir! my case also is still more serious. It has brought me here.” After a hearty laugh, the sitting began. A disciple was, then asked to read his selections for the ‘*Dhy na Gītā*’ which was under preparation. Before the reading began, Sri Gurudeva said: “I have worked very hard on the *Gītā*. Very few might have put in so much labour over it. We are, after all, free

stances! Our own experience alone is of supreme importance to us. Nothing else is of any consequence. Since you are all open-minded, I feel like telling you frankly about my personal views about the *Gītā*! In the company of such people one is tempted and inspired to speak freely and frankly."

"Just take for instance the Chapter XII of the *Gītā*! In it a comparison is instituted between "*Avyakta-Akṣara*" on the one hand and "*Vyakta-Ahām*" on the other. Really speaking there is no difference between "*Saguṇa*" and "*Nirguṇa*". God is not merely *Saguṇa* or merely *Nirguṇa*. He is both *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa* combined. What should be worshipped? Is it His four-handed Form? or Cosmic form? Mere *Saguṇa* is after all perishable. What can we gain by worshipping it? Moreover, *Sri Kṛṣṇa* was a realised Saint of that period. Why should he be invested with four hands; or with thousand hands? In the same manner, mere *Nirguṇa* cannot be worshipped. No worship is possible in that case. The so-called worship of the *Avyakta* is simply meditation upon vacuity. This is only intellectual worship. That won't lead to God-head. Hence the worship of one who is neither merely *Saguṇa* nor merely *Nirguṇa*, who is both *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa*, is the best.

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

Then *Sri Gurudeva* asked his disciple to read his selections from the 12th Chapter of the *Gītā*. When the third and the fourth verses were read, he pointed out that adjectives, "*Kūṭastha*, *Acala*, *Dhruva* etc.?" are applicable, not only to the worshipper of *Avyakta* - (the Unmanifest) but they are also applicable to a *Bhakta* - a devotee of the Lord. For no great work will be achieved without the control of the senses. The epithet - *Sarvabhūtahiterat* - contains the idea of equal opportunity to all.

When the verse "*Ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sanyasya...mām dhyāyint upāsate*" (Those who dedicate all their actions to Me and meditate on Me) was read, a disciple asked. "Which of the two viz. dedication and meditation, precedes the other?" *Sri Gurudeva* replied: "It is only after God-realisation through intense

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

meditation that genuine dedication of actions to God is possible. Still, in the beginning we should try to practise dedication by way of preliminary preparation. This appears to be the suggestion here.”

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

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

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

#### (50) Company of Saints.

Referring to his remark regarding the ‘Service of Saints’ Sri Gurudeva



further observed : “ A saint himself is God· God Himself is saint. Hence service of a Saint is service of God. Our daily meditation should be coupled with the holy company of saints. Then alone will it bear proper fruit. It is in the company of saints that we would realise the real value of meditation. If we try to live in their company for good many days and observe their behaviour minutely we would understand how they have realised their indentity with God and possess His glory.

Take for instance, my own case. It was the year 1909 or 1910. I was then meditating daily for 7 hours : 2 hours in the morning, 1 hour in the afternoon. 2 hours in the evening and 2 hours at night ( from 11 P.M. to 1 A.M. ). I carried on my meditation vigorously minute to minute. If I resolved to get up at 2-11 A.M., I used to wake up exactly at 2-11 A. M. without the aid of an alarm clock. Once Sri N. S. Lokur asked me to wake him up at 3-43 A.M. The wonder of it was, I awoke exactly at 3-43 and woke him up. Such psychological miracles used to take place at that time. Of course it was not an important occurrence.

Once during that period, I happened to pay a visit to Incagiri. Śri Bhausahab Maharaja knew the method of my meditation. Still, one day he addressed me in this manner : “ What is the use of mere meditation? We should seek the company of saints. Then we would realise its real worth.” I was greatly non-plussed and surprised to hear this remark of Sri Maharaj. I wanted to know its significance. But I dared not ask Shri Maharaj directly. He was very strict and stern. Hence I asked his close bodyguard Sri Nandyappa the meaning of Shri Maharaja’s remark. He told me that I should accompany Sri Maharaj when he was on spiritual tour. Hence soon after I went to Poona, I came to Jamakhandi as Shri Maharaj was on tour in villages nearby. I took the chance of accompanying him during this tour. I could then closely observe his divine life and was greatly benefitted thereby.

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

## (51) On the Gītā (Chapter XIII)

After this, there was a break when Śrī Gurudeva went out of the room for a few minutes. Soon after his return, he asked his disciple to read his selections from the 13th chapter of the *Gītā*. He had classified the selected verses in five groups. When the verses in the first group were read, Śrī Gurudeva said: "Here virtues like *Amānitva* etc. have been characterised as *Jñāna* or knowledge by the *Gītā*. The author of the *Gītā* regards knowledge as virtue. To him knowledge means virtue. It does not mean differential Calculus, radio or bacteriology. Knowledge is wisdom, is a Socratic dictum. This is veritably a bold statement. The climax of all these virtues is exclusive devotion to the Lord. When you imbibe these virtues, you will become a *Jñānī* - a wise man. This is the definition of *Jñāna* given here. But in the line "*Na hi jñānena sadṛśam* - *Jñāna* means illumination or realisation of God. '*Kṛtiyu beḷagali ninna beḷakinalli*' - 'Let my act shine in Your illumination' prays a modern poet. We must first experience spiritual illumination and then perform our actions in it. That is real offering of our actions to the Lord.

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

Then the verses in the third group were read when Śrī Gurudeva said: "This group deals with the four *Sādhana*s mentioned by the *Gītā*. They are: i) *Dhyāna* - meditation ii) *Sāṅkhya* - knowledge, iii) *Karma* - Action and iv) *Bhakti* - devotion. We should meditate daily for nine hours on God. We should try to think and gain knowledge of God. We should perform disinterested action for God or if that were not possible, we should have firm faith on some saint worthy of our adoration. "*Ananya prokte gairatra nāsti*" says the *Upaniṣad*. The Saint should ever be absorbed in God, become one with Him. Till then he won't deserve to be called a saint. We should listen to the words of wisdom of such a saint, and carry out his instructions faithfully. Then alone we will attain Liberation."

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



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

When the verses in the fourth group were read, Sri Gurudeva observed: “Just mark the words ‘*Samadarśana*’ – equality of vision, here. ‘*Samam paśyan hi sarvatra*,’ says the *Gītā*. What is meant by *Samam paśyan* in this verse? *Sama* means equal and straight. It also means symmetrical and full (*Sampūrṇa*). When we have the direct vision of the full *Swarūpa* – one’s own form – in all beings and on all beings, that is *Samadarśana* or equality of vision. Once Sri Baba was asked to explain the nature of *Samadhi* He replied: “*Sama samāna vastu kāṅkṣitu andāre samādhi āgītada*” – “When the spiritual Form is directly visualised, it is *samādhi*.” This experience of *samādhi* is enjoyed without any external demonstration. Sri Tukaram mentions, *Samacchāna dṛṣṭi* – symmetrical vision fixed on the ‘Pair of Feet of the Lord’. Mystics tell us that such a vision of the Lord’s Feet comes last in the series of spiritual visions.”

Thereafter the following verse in the fifth group evoked a few comments from Sri Gurudeva:

*Yadā bhūtapṛthagbhāvaṁ ekasthaṁ anupaśyati,  
Tata eva ca vi tāraṁ brahma sampadyate tadā*

“When the aspirant realises the various beings as resting in one, and evolve from the One alone, then he attains *Brahmaṇ*.” Sri Gurudeva remarked: The whole universe is centred in one place and this extension has proceeded from the same place. That is the One Supreme Being. A person who has directly experienced this – realised this, he alone can be called a *Jñāni* – a realised Saint. He realises that God alone does everything. Sri Maharaj used to say: “We must realise this Doer.” God is the greatest totalitarian of all. Follow God and there will be no room for any conflict”.

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

## (52) Seat of the Soul.

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

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

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

It is true that there are a few passages in the *Upaniṣads* expressing that the heart is the seat of the soul. "*Aṅguṣṭha mātraḥ puruṣaḥ madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati*" - "The soul of the size of a thumb resides in the heart," says the *Kathopaniṣad*. "*Sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ.*" - "I reside in the hearts of all", declares the *Gīrā*. But modern physiologists have conclusively proved that the brain is the seat of the soul. The soul resides in the Pituitary Body. The heart has been granted Provincial Autonomy. It can enjoy limited freedom given to it by the brain. It cannot transcend it, §

Then Dr. B. gave the following information: "In the seventh month the first organ working is the heart whose function is circulation of blood. Hence the heart might have been regarded as the seat of the soul. At that time there is no respiration. Blood is then the carrier of oxygen. Separate existence comes when respiratory centre begins to function. Till then the baby is the parasite of the mother."

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

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



Sri Gurudev Dr. R. D. Ranade



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# Gurudeo Ranade's contribution to Early Greek Philosophical Thought.

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(At the outset let me seek the apology of readers of this article. The writer is not a student of philosophy, much less an intuitive critic to do full justice to the contribution of such a genius as Prof. R. D. Ranade. It is only the desire to extol him – that has emboldened this writer to venture on this task. The writer is open to correction for any misstatement.)

A brief historical background of Greece will be illuminating before we start with the subject proper.

Greece being situated in the Mediteranean, has been much influenced by sea. The country is not a very rich country, but perhaps because of this fact, it is a land of strong and active race. These people are simple in their needs, thrifty and self-reliant. They had strong sense of family and filial devotion as the Aryans had. This family sense led to the stabilization of Greek social life. They are aware of their cultural and spiritual heritage. And to this day they consider themselves as a particular people and a nation.

In ninth century B. C., Greek alphabet was adopted. Nearly after two centuries, i.e. in early seventh century B. C. coinage was introduced. Proper recorded history of Greece begins with first Olympic games in 776 B. C.

It is a well-known fact that Greece was comprised of small independent city-states. Athens was a model state of free citizens. Next was Sparta. They had their colonies e. g. in Ionia, to which a reference will be made further in this article. it was a colony of Athenians. It was here that two worlds and two ways of life, the east and the west, the Oriental and the Greek, were fused together.

The Persians wanted to conquer Athens and Sparta. Xerxes-the Persian emperor - invaded them but was totally defeated. Thus the whole of the western world was saved.



After the invasion, Pericles the leader of Athenians, worked hard to make Athens the most splendid city in Greece. The development in various arts and sculpture was during Pericles' times. This was in the fifth century B. C. This development of Athens, made the Spartans jealous which ultimately led to civil war among these two city-states. The war continued for twenty-five years ending in the defeat of Athens. That was the beginning of the death of classic Greece. Gurudev Ranade was attracted to this seat of civilization.

Gurudev was a mystic first and philosopher afterwards. The combination of mystico-philosopher in one person is a rare phenomenon. Gurudev simultaneously advanced in mystic experiences and higher learning. It is a well-known fact to those who had come in contact with him, directly or indirectly, that he was initiated into spiritual life by his Guru Bhausaheb Maharaj, when he was only fifteen years old. By continuous and intensive penance, and more so by the grace of his Sadguru, he met with the acme of spiritual experience, about twenty years after the initiation. While traversing the pathway to God, he tried to test his transcendental perceptions on the intellectual plane. He selected philosophy as his special subject for Master's degree. Not only he studied eastern and western philosophy but made a critical and synthetical analysis of both. In all his works he has shown parallelism of metaphysical ideas. His study of all the available literature on Mysticism and Philosophy, led Gurudev to conclude that not only the Supreme Being - the Creator, the Supporter and the Destroyer - is the only one सौख्यमात्मा but His experiences are more or less the same for all ages and places, nay, they must be so because He is the same for all times and for all purposes. "It is thus that the Mystics of all ages and countries form an eternal Divine Society. There are no racial, no communal, no national prejudices among them. Time and space have nothing to do with the eternal and infinite character of their mystical experience."

Gurudev's study of western philosophy prompted him to learn the source language. As Sanskrit is to most of Indian languages, so is Greek the source to modern European languages. There have been controversies as to the priority and superiority of either Greek or Sanskrit, among the scholars. In order to set at rest these and similar controversies Gurudev made an independent study of both these languages which he calls the noblest languages of the world. In his essay 'Greek and Sanskrit: A Comparative Study' he has in a very scholarly manner, shown that there are many resemblances in both the languages and has concluded at the end of the essay, that "it is to the credit of comparative philology that it first showed beyond dispute, that the great similarities of many of the Indo-European languages, cannot be explained except on the hypothesis of a prolonged and continued common stay together of the nations, such as Greek and Indian, which seem to have now parted for ever." 2

To arrive at this conclusion of resemblances of two languages, Gurudev started right from the very alphabet. He says that "Greek alphabet is to the Sanskrit, much nearer than it is for example to the Latin, German and French alphabet."3 Similarly both the vowel and consonantal combinations-Sandhi-are identical in Greek and Sanskrit. An interesting similarity he has shown, is with regard to number. He says "it may be noticed that Greek and Sanskrit are at one in having a Dual, and in this respect they differ from all other languages."4 In brief, he points out in this essay most of the grammatical resemblances at the same time mentioning also a few differences that exist between these two languages. For example "a difference presents itself in the case of the Article."5

Reviewing thus all the peculiarities of these two ancient modes of speeches, he remarks, "that Greek and Sanskrit are by no means less similar than Greek and Latin."6 Such comparative study has been for the first time undertaken by Gurudev which he himself acknowledges. According to him there must be "common origin of nations and languages so far removed in these days as Greek and Indian."7 What has been Gurudev's objective in taking great pains for such a kind of study? It is no less a lofty objective than to create a new perspective with regard to the study of different languages and "to win a new soul,"8 for the path of God I believe.

Gurudev's statement of common origin of these two nations is further corroborated if we study their respective cultures. The cow is sacred to Hindus similarly "the most cherished animal of Greeks is cow."9 Further, "the bull was sacred and occupied a place of honour in the life and customs of ancient Cretans."10 Is not one reminded of the worship of bull even at present in India and especially in the Deccan?

Let us now turn to Greek philosophy. In order to appreciate fully the original contribution of Gurudev to this subject, we should trace the evolution of Greek philosophical thought in brief. Usually when Greek philosophers are mentioned, three prominent names of Greek thinkers namely, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, come to one's mind. But there have been previous thinkers and Thales of Ionic school is considered the father of Greek philosophy, nay, to all ancient philosophy of the west. But it is significant to note that the origin of western philosophy was in the east viz. in Ionia in Asia Minor where Greek colonists had settled as mentioned above. The very word philosophy is derived from a Greek compound philo (I love) and sophia (wisdom).

Thales (About 640-550 B. C.) was the first to raise the question as to the nature of the original and ultimate substance of the universe. To his self-raised

question Thales replied that it is water. How he arrived at this conclusion, it is difficult to say. Aristotle, however, says that Thales probably arrived his opinion by observation. His significance is acknowledged in that ‘this was the first recorded attempt to explain the universe on naturalistic and scientific principles without the aid of myths and anthropomorphic gods.’<sup>11</sup>

Gurudev has done a wonderful service to Indian philosophical thought and for that matter to the knowledge of philosophical ideas of the world by mystically interpreting the evolution of metaphysical ideas. It is due to him that our attention is drawn to the old philosophers of Greece. About Thales he says that he was an incorrigible star gazer. Through his contact with the knowledge of the Egyptians and Babylonians, he was able to predict the year of the solar eclipse in 585 B. C. though not the exact date, and time of the event. Besides due credit is given to Thales as a scientific geometrician. His was not merely theoretical knowledge but he made a practical application of the same, e. g. Gurudev cites, “he diverted the course of the river in a semi-circular ‘moon-like’ canal and the army could safely cross over it.”<sup>12</sup>

But how far Thales can be credited with philosophical originality when he mentions water is the original substance of the universe? After all water is matter! Aristotle does not recognise Thales for having discovered “the cause efficient.” But Gurudev points out the contradiction in Aristotle’s statements and credits Thales of “having discovered the cause efficient and having introduced the conception of the soul, and endowed the soul with the power of initiating movement.”<sup>13</sup> After sieving the different interpretations on Thales, Gurudev says, “Thales regarded not merely the world of plants as living beings, that is, as endowed with souls, but he also regarded even inorganic objects as already endowed with life. In fact Thales saw soul everywhere.”<sup>14</sup>

Plato included Thales as one of the seven sages of Greece. These sages were known for their practical wisdom. Their cryptic sayings were inscribed on Apollo’s temple at Delphi. The maxims “know thyself” and “love our neighbour as well as ourselves,” go to the credit of Thales.

In general, Gurudev points out that the “early Greek cosmologists among whom Thales was the first” had recognised the substance “that from which all things *spring*, ..... that of which all things *consist*, and from which they first *came to be*, and into which they are finally *resolved*”<sup>15</sup> on the testimony of Aristotle. Is not one reminded of a line from the Bhagwadgita, प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्यम् । – ( Bhagwadgita - IX - 18 )

The next thinker from the same Ionic school was Anaximander ( About 611 - 547 B. C. ). He had astronomical and geographical knowledge and it

was he who first constructed a map. Anaximander did not agree with Thales in considering water as the ultimate principle because it has conflicting qualities. "The primeval matter of Anaximander is just matter not yet sundered into the different kinds of matter. It is therefore formless and characterless." 16 "The generative element was the boundless atmosphere itself, from which everything was formed by gradual separation and into which everything was finally resolved." 17 This process was the Anaximander's answer. Apart from this for one conjecture of his, he must be duly credited and that is viewing though dimly, the present theory of evolution. The earth according to him, was fluid and by its gradual cooling, different species from fish onwards evolved. It must be acknowledged that this was an advance over the thoughts of Thales. Another point in favour of Anaximander is that he considered the earth to be spherical and not a flat disc as Thales had thought.

Taking a survey of Upanishadic Philosophy Gurudev has referred to the transition in philosophical thought. He says, "... we find the same transition here as we find in the History of Greek Philosophy from Homer and Hesiod to Thales and Anaximander. Natural forces cease to be personified, and a definite attitude comes to be taken which is worthy only of speculative thinkers." 18 Both the Upanishadic and Greek thinkers were after the search of the Real according to Gurudev. These impulses of the thinkers from two different countries however, differed in timings. "The hey - day of Upanishadic philosophy was that great millenium before ever the earliest Greek philosophers, Thales and Anaximander began to speculate, and as in Greek philosophy, so in Upanishadic philosophy, the primary impulse to thought came from cosmologic, and more particularly from cosmogonic, speculation" 19 Being awe stricken by the wonders of this universe, the great Upanishadic and Greek seers had started thinking as to the origin and for that matter the originator of this whole cosmos. Though there is parallelism in their ideas, they had arrived independently at the same aspect of sublimity from cosmogonic speculation.

Gurudev has devoted one whole part - Part V - of his wonderful and original book on the Bagavadgita, to the study of "The Sublime and the Divine: A study in Comparative Thought" which he renames as a "Critique of Spiritual Experience, Intuition or Self-Realisation." He has more or less exhaustively discussed the spiritual experiences of the sublime of the Western and Eastern mystics and has pointed out that through these experiences one nearly touches the Divinity. He says "The experience of the sublime seems to be almost transcendent and baffling even for the imagination to reach. Anaximander was not wrong when he regarded the Apeiron as his most fundamental category. The Pemas is a small conception, but the Apeiron brings us quite near to Divinity. In other works of mine I have already stressed this aspect of the element of



Divinity in all cases of Infinitude as, for example, in the बेहद of Kabir and निर्वैलु of Kannada saints. I was very glad to find that when Professor Burch of America came to Nimbal, he stressed exactly in the same manner the divine aspect of Anaximander's Infinitude in one of his recent contributions to the American Review of Metaphysics."20

Appreciating this Anaximander's recognition of the Divinity through Infinitude and comparing it with similar experiences of Indian saints is Gurudev's amazing contribution to philosophical thought in general and Greek in particular.

Anaximenes (About 590-525 B. C.) occupies third and last worth naming thinker from Ionian school. He did not agree with Thales in considering water as the first principle. He deduced that primeval matter is air. He was the first to attempt at explaining the process by which it gives rise to variety of things. Those processes are condensation and rarefaction. Great compression of air, a great amount of it in a small space, might account for example, their heaviness, hardness, etc.

In his chapter on Cosmology in Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy Gurudev has compared Anaximenes' theory of air as the origin of this universe with that of sage Raikva from Chhandogya Upanishad. He says, "In fact, Raikva's philosophy is like that of Anaximenes, the Greek philosopher, who taught that air was both the beginning and the end of all things."21

The Persians conquered Ionia and the Ionian school could not any more contribute much to advance knowledge in philosophical ideas. Instead there was a revival of Orphic and similar mystery religions. This led to Pythagorean school.

Pythagoras (About 570-500 B. C.) was the founder of the above school at Kroton. In the beginning this school was not exactly a school of philosophy but one of religious reformers. Unlike the Ionian school it laid stress on 'form' to be found in nature rather than 'matter' like water or air, as the ultimate principle of things. Besides, Pythagoreans considered mathematics as the 'key' to the nature of reality.

The Oracle at Delphi was a very famous centre in Greece. People in difficulties approached this Oracle alike for individual or social decisions. This Orphic sect believed in the doctrine of "wheel of things" and transmigration of souls. Transmigration is nothing new to Indian thought. The Pythagoreans being influenced by Orphic sect, also believed in these two doctrines. But they



added to these doctrines, "... and in general, the intellectual contemplation of the ultimate things of the universe would be of great help towards the 'release' of the soul. From this arose the tendency to develop science and philosophy."22

The Puritanic ideas of this school resulted in their persecution. So the school lost its hold on the people. This occurred near about 435 B.C.

Gurudev, after giving an exhaustive list of parallel doctrines from Greek and Upanishadic philosophies, has unerringly deduced the theory of Independent Parallelism of thought, since borrowing or common origin of these philosophies cannot be historically proved. He has also pointed out as in philology so in philosophy, certain peculiarities of these thoughts, "...the Pythagorean theory of Numbers and the Platonic theory of Ideas being peculiar to Greek thought, as the Upanishadic doctrine of Turiya and the Mimamsaka doctrine of the Spota are peculiar to Indian thought."23

The doctrine of Transmigration of soul, Gurudev has thrashed out thoroughly, and at the end he has given his own opinion on the same. He begins in these words: "The question of Transmigration may fitly be regarded as the crux of Early Indian Philosophy.. we have come to see that the real source of a belief in transmigration among any people, under certain circumstances, lies in their own ethico-psychological development, and not in an unproven or unprovable inter-influence from one country to another. It is upon this fruitful hypothesis that we can see the upspringing and the continuance of the idea of transmigration among the Greeks from Homer downwards through Orpheus to Pythagoras in their own native land. It is upon the same hypothesis that we can see the development of the same idea among the Indian Aryans from the Rigveda through the Brahmanas to the Upanishads....." 24

After tracing the evolution of the doctrine of transmigration in both the philosophical thoughts, Gurudev calls it an "insoluble problem" and explains further how it is so: "What becomes of the soul after death it is not given to man to understand, ... philosophically speaking, we are not much concerned with the actual stages of the ascent or descent of the soul but only with the idea of ascent and descent. And looking at the problem in this way, one is filled with a great deal of surprise and admiration, when one sees that the ideas of ascent or descent were placed on no less than a moral foundation. 'According as a man's works are, so does he become.' It is this moral backbone of the Upanishadic eschatology that gives it a great philosophical value."25

No treader on the path of God can afford to neglect the moral aspect of an aspirant's life. With this shield in hand, he has to proceed towards his

goal. In the words of Tukaram 'it is the Satvaguna that gives power to pace the path of Paramarth.' While discussing Moralism in his work on the Bhagavadgita, Gurudev has referred to Pythagoras. To the latter, harmony was the highest moral principle. To Gurudev, 'the central thread of virtues is God-devotion.'

With intense God-devotion as explained by Gurudev and pure mind the aspirant can attain "impersonal immortality " here and now and need not worry about life after death.

Next we try to understand Herakleitos ( 535-475 B. C. ). Historically he is a contemporary of Permenides of Eleatic school to which we shall refer further in this article. Being an aristocrat, he looked down upon common people. He is known for his practical wisdom through his epitomes like "Man's character is his fate."

Herakleitos was thoroughly impressed by the changing aspect of this world. To him, " All is flux." For instance every day, he says, a new sun rises in the sky. Life exists in the struggle and antagonism between hostile principles. "Strife" he says, "is the father of all things." That is why Gurudev has called Herakleitos as a 'philosopher of war.' Both the opposite principles like good and evil, pleasure and pain, are necessary to create harmony in this world. So he blamed Homer for praying to God to end the misery from this world.

Along with this metaphysical theory of Becoming - " The at-oneness of 'is' and 'is not' being the meaning of Becoming,"<sup>26</sup> Herakleitos propounded a theory in physics, the eternally living fire as creator of this world. It is easy to see why fire appealed to him as the eternal principle because it is akin to the theory of Becoming i. e. perpetual change. To him the soul is fire. But there is no individual soul but one universal soul-fire.

Gurudev has written a special essay on Herakleitos which was first published in 1916 and later included in the collection of his essays. This volume was presented to him in 1956 on his seventieth birth-day. Describing Herakleitos as philosopher, who made other people weep, Gurudev ranks him as a scientist and not as a mystic, rather anti-mystic because he solely depended upon dry light of reason. About his doctrine of incessant change, Gurudev credits him in the following words: "Anyhow... we may say that Herakleitos broached for the first time an important scientific truth that nothing in this world is absolutely stationery, but that all things are perpetually changing, and that it is not the static aspect of things but the dynamic aspect that matters for science."<sup>26</sup>

Mentioning Fire as Herakleitos' base for change and reviewing the different interpretations on the same, Gurudev says: "Herakleitos understands by Fire a kind of world-forming force.....and he identified it in succession with Zeus and with eternity. It was the supreme principle of the world, from which various forms of the matter went forth, and to which they returned. Herakleitos has given us a very pregnant aphorism, which tells us the Way Up and the Way Down are one and the same. ....that from fire proceed air, and water, and earth in that order, which is the Way Down, and to fire they return in the reverse order, which is the Way Up." 27

Mentioning that Kathopanishad and Chhandogyopanishad refer to fire, Gurudev points out their difference in the following words: "The difference however between the Chhandogyopanishad and Herakleitos is that while Herakleitos regards Fire as the very origin of all things, the Chhandogyopanishad makes Fire the first evolute from the primeval Being; while the Chhandogyopanishad does not insist upon the idea of change, of which Fire seems to be the very type to the change-loving mind of the Ephesian philosopher (Herakleitos.)" 28

Herakleitos thus arrives at the conclusion that all things are one, through his theory of Way Up and Way Down. Improving upon Anaximander and Anaximenes, Herakleitos "gives us the process by which the one becomes many, and the many one, in his important idea of Exchange, which is a clever anticipation of the modern idea of conservation of Energy...If we understand thus, the two catchwords in the philosophy of Herakleitos, change and exchange, we may understand the whole of Herakleitos' philosophy." 29

According to Gurudev, it was Herakleitos, who for the first time formulated the Law of Relativism. This Law does away with differences of kind among things and substitutes instead differences of degree. It is not applicable to God, but only to man. Therefore, the Reality is Many and One at the same time to Herakleitos as interpreted by Plato to which Gurudev agrees. Further Gurudev has pointed out that there is no contradiction between Herakleitos' theory of periodic conflagration and theory of change. In fact the former is the necessary condition for change.

The credit of introducing the doctrine of the Word in a philosophical sense goes to Herakleitos. To him it meant the immanent Reason of the world. The Stoics - the school founded by Zeno in later years about 300 B. C.-made an improvement that the immanent Reason in the world produces a number of lesser immanent reasons in men. Philo, the Jew (30 B. C. to 50 A. D.) called this doctrine of Word as Logos which meant to him, "the divine dynamic, the energy

and the self revelation of God. This was borrowed by St. John and improved in the sense that Christ was the Divine Word sent out by the Father as an expression of His spirit.

Another expression of Herakleitos which Gurudev has mentioned is: "the kingdom belongs to the child." This was "one of the central teachings of Christianity namely, in the doctrine of humility. 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, (St. Mathew XVIII 3)."

Taking a general survey of Herakleitos' philosophical contributions Gurudev says: "Herakleitos shines on the horizon of Greek philosophy like a solitary star of the first magnitude, suffering no peer near his throne, forming no school of thought, and yet, in his self-isolation, exercising a potent influence on the whole course of Ancient and Modern Philosophy."<sup>30</sup>

Next we shall turn to Eleatic school. The sect of this school was at Elea, a town in South Italy. They say that Eleaticism is the first true philosophy, since it is a search after truth. Four thinkers were responsible for the development of philosophy of this school. They were 'Xenophanes' the Theologian, Parmenides the Ontologist, Zeno the Dialectician, and Melissus the philosophical Mystic.

Xenophanes (576-480 B. C.) attacked popular Greek religious beliefs. He opposed the old conception of gods as having human forms. To him God was divine, the only one, and he identified Him with the world. His proposition "All is one," was further developed by Parmenides.

About the controversy whether Xenophanes can be called the founder of Eleatic school, Gurudev puts it at rest, in the following words: since "God must be regarded as always abiding in the same place, and as not moving it at all, a way of speaking about the primary reality which is so characteristic of the whole Eleatic school. It is evident from these considerations that Xenophanes might be credited with having had the honour of being the Founder of Eleatic doctrine."<sup>31</sup>

Aristotle has criticised Xenophanes in more ways than one. Gurudev contradicts and appreciates Xenophanes on the following grounds: (1) "To us Aristotle seems to be too much obsessed by his theory of fourfold causation" because "He finds in Xenophanes and the early Greek Philosophers generally a sad neglect of the problem of causation... (2) Xenophanes was a pioneer of moral education, and might fitly be regarded as having given lessons to Plato and



Aristotle themselves ... Aristotle is entirely blind to Xenophanes' importance for the humanities... As a great satirist of his age, as the moral instructor of his nation, as an apostle of shrewd common sense, Xenophanes stands unequalled. (3) Indeed it appears to us that the strain of Xenophanes' philosophy is even more monotheistic than that of Aristotle. Aristotle believed that the stars were divinities, Xenophanes, on the other hand, believed that there were no gods but God." His God is the one and the All. (Fairbanks, First Philosophers of Greece P. 67 fr. 1)... Aristotle entirely misrepresents the whole situation when he calls Xenophanes merely a listless observer of the Heavens, who one day looked to the skies and said that it was all God... The fact is ... 'contemplating the universe as a whole,' who would not say in the spirit of that first physico-theologian, Xenophanes that 'the One is, namely God?' (Aris. Meta. i 5, 986 b. 25 )" 32

Parmenides of Elea (540 – 480 B. C.) is considered to be the most important thinker of the Eleatic school. He has given his philosophy in a didactic poem which is divided into two parts. The transitoriness of the world appealed to him most. His search for the eternal through this transitoriness, led him to deduce that "only Being is" "birthless and deathless... continuous One," "all is full of Being." As opposed to being, there is not-being. It is *not* at all. This he called becoming. The nature of Being he has described in negative terms. Ex nihilo nihil fit.

Thus arises the distinction of great philosophical importance in Parmenides, between Sense and Reason. The world we know is through senses. The senses therefore lead us to illusion and error. "The truth lies in reason and not in the world of sense."

On this system of thought there was a lot of controversy whether Parmenides can be called an idealist or materialist. Prof. Burnet styled Parmenides as materialist for his views such as the Being being finite and spherical.} Plato did not agree with this view and termed Parmenides as an idealist on the ground that to the latter it was a concept. To put this concept into some form Parmenides described it in the above terms, global etc. But it is now an accepted fact that Parmenides is entitled to be called the Father of Idealism.

Gurudev points out that unlike the attitude of Aristotle towards Xenophanes, the former is more sympathetic towards Parmenides. Though Aristotle appreciates his concept of Being, he says that there are loop-holes in his method. Gurudev has disproved the second statement of Aristotle and says that when Parmenides asserts "Being is to be spoken of absolutely," he is not wrong.



About the materialistic interpretation of Parmenides, Gurudev has exhaustively dealt with it after quoting an excerpt from the original Greek poem of Parmenides. He says: "The materialistic interpretation of Parmenides, based upon understanding the expression 'like a sphere' to mean 'spherical' is no less ridiculous..... If Parmenides regarded Being as *finite*, it was partly because he had not yet risen to the sublimer conception of Melissus (follower of Parmenides) who regarded Being as infinite, and partly because he was yet under the thralldom of the Pythagorean identification of infinitude and goodness, for which reason even Aristotle praises Parmenides as an acute thinker (Arist. Phys. iii6; 207 a 15). Then again, we have seen that Being was *like a sphere* in point of its perfection all round, as well as its substance in quality and we have *no reason to dub it corporal*. Being was evidently *motionless*, for whereunto could Being move? It was a plenum, not in the materialistic sense, but in the idealistic sense of *perfect*; it was in fact "the whole, ..... so *pervading* that it left no gaps unfilled, for which reason also it was continuous."33 Further Gurudev gives another excerpt from his poem to prove the idealistic interpretation of Parmenides: "Being is without beginning, and is indestructible. It is universal, existing alone, immovable and without end. Nor was it, nor will it be, since it now is ..."

In support of the idealistic interpretation of Parmenides, Gurudev offers the views of Aristotle and Plato. "Aristotle gives a fair objective presentation of Parmenides, even though he himself would not subscribe to the unity of being and thought . . . . According to Plato, Parmenides is the father of Ontologism (Science treating principles of pure being). "34

Gurudev has also compared Parmenides with Shankaracharya. "Shankaracharya's philosophy of the one Absolute Existence which is Being and Thought, sat and chit, at the same time, his recognition of Not-Being which is even a verbal equivalent of the word Maya, as being conceptually antithetical to the idea of Being, and as essentially non-existent, his explanation of the plurality of the world which is only apparent, his distinction of the phenomenal and the noumenal, the Vyavaharika and the Paramarthika, which recalls to our mind the Parmenidean distinction of opinion and truth, . . . would go a long way in enabling us to call Shankara the Indian Parmenides . . . . We have mentioned the extreme similarity of the arguments in this place only in order to strengthen Gomperz's assertion that ' . . . the last traces of hesitation would be removed by the parallelism to Parmenides which we find in the Vedant Philosophers of India,' for then we could interpret the one philosophy in an idealistic sense as the other "35

In his constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, Gurudev has dealt at length on Sanskara's doctrine of Maya, Not-Being of Parmenides Very few

people are able to grasp the real meaning of the word Maya. Gurudev says that Sankara is not an idealist-nihilist and gives his own doctrine of Degrees of Reality. "Greater reality than the reality of the world of illusion belongs to the world of dream; greater reality than the reality of the world of dream belongs to the world of life; greater reality than the reality of the world of life belongs to the world of Self, or God, or the Absolute, which are all ultimately identical with one another. Every system of philosophy must needs take account of some sort of appearance. From the days of Parmenides, Plato and Plotinus to the days of Berkeley, Hegel, and Bradley, there has been the same cry. There is an extraordinary "moral" meaning in the doctrine of Appearance (Maya) which critics of that doctrine systematically ignore." Gurudev explains this doctrine through the words of Carlyle. It teaches us that in the drama of this world we are nowhere. The ego we carry is utterly meaningless. We have to play our part. But we do not see or rather realise the Director of this whole drama of the Universe. "We have come from God and to Him we return".

Next we study Zeno (490-420 B. C.) whom Gurudev has called an intellectual acrobat. Zeno argued that multiplicity and motion of this world are not real. There is contradiction between these two. In Being there is neither multiplicity nor motion. Thus he supported Parmenides. From these arguments of Zeno, Kant deduced the idea that space and time are mere appearances. Further he added that the real and infinity are beyond the comprehension of human faculties.

Gurudev credits Zeno as a first dialectic who with his clever arguments defended his master's - Parmenides' - idealistic monism. "The whole world has stood agape at the skilful performances of Zeno." Plato himself is indebted to Zeno for his method which "consisted in provisionally assuming the truth of an opponent's conclusion, and then deducing from it, either one absurd or two contradictory conclusions."

"Aristotle tells us that Zeno was the first inventor of Logic". "The interest however," says Gurudev, "which Aristotle takes in Zeno is not primarily of the metaphysical kind ... the merciless logic and the profound insight into science with which Aristotle meets the arguments of Zeno are not equally known."<sup>38</sup>

Gurudev has given in brief the arguments of Zeno against Motion, Multiplicity, etc. and Aristotle's refutation of the same. The latter "has not been noticed, though it is well worthy of our admiration. In his criticism of Zeno's arguments Aristotle contributes three important ideas to the history of thought. They are concerned with the distinction between Relative and Absolute Motion, the Philosophy of the Infinite and the Philosophy of the Continuum."<sup>40</sup> The first of these three ideas relates to the field of mathematics. About the second

Gurudev remarks, " ... it may be seen that even though 'Aristotle is shrewd enough to make a distinction between two meanings of the word Infinite, namely the infinite proper and the infinitesimal, ... he did not see that the infinitesimals have to do with the finites no more and no less than the very infinities themselves; the two stand absolutely on a par so far as their relation with the finites is concerned.'" Here is an original contribution of Gurudev both on Zeno and Aristotle.

About the Philosophy of the Continuum, Gurudev says, "Zeno wanted to uphold the continuity of Parmenides' Being, and was therefore obliged to prove the absurdity of Pythagorean notion of discontinuity before he could successfully defend his Master's position ... Aristotle goes beyond Zeno in supplying us with a positive definition of continuity ... the first and the most complete definition of the continuous."<sup>41</sup>

Gurudev points out how Zeno anticipated Euclid in his definition of a point. Further this Zeno's definition of a point is consistent with his other doctrine of continuity of space. But Aristotle is both wrong and inconsistent in accepting the second doctrine of Zeno and not doing so about the first. Gurudev shows the importance of Infinitesimal Calculus in supporting the notions of infinity and continuity and answering Zeno's sophism.

Melissus (-440 B. C.) is the last thinker from the Eleatic school that we are going to consider, in this article. He has modified the doctrine of Being which Parmenides put forward. To Parmenides Being is finite while Melissus contended that it is infinite.

After disproving the criticism of Melissus by Aristotle and Prof. Burnet, Gurudev in a nut-shell gives the metaphysical truth of Melissus in the following way: "The One is thus an eternal, infinite, homogeneous, incorporeal, painless, unchangeable, complete, immovable Whole. It would be harder to conceive of a more irrefragable chain of philosophical truths, which follow by necessity on the assumption of single premise."

Summing up his essay on "Aristotle's Criticism of the Eleatics Gurudev concludes, "It must be said to Aristotle's credit that he thoroughly understood the idealistic character of the Eleatic philosophy, though it must also be said that he failed to extend to it his sympathetic appreciation."<sup>43</sup>

Herewith we conclude this presentation of Gurudev's contribution to early Greek philosophical thought. Plato and Aristotle have not been included in this article because they require separate presentation. Gurudev, like a true scholar,

studied the Greek language itself and that enabled him to appreciate and evaluate all Greek thinkers by studying their works in original. In a studious manner he has shown how they were searching for the ultimate Reality which is the One and the Eternal. He is beyond Space and Time. Gurudev has also unmistakably proved that there is a parallelism of ideas in Greek and Indian philosophical doctrines. There is neither any inter-influence nor borrowing. Whether any of these Greek thinkers were mystics or only philosophers, it is not for the writer to say. It is a mystic alone who can understand another mystic or mystical inclinations in others. However, when a modern mystic of Himalayan height like Gurudev Ranade, traces the evolution of Greek thought and shows the parallelism between Greek and Indian thinkers, it is evident that the above mentioned Greek thinkers were groping for the ultimate truth and had glimpses of the Reality.

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# Saint Ramalinga of Tamilnad

(By V. Rajagopal M. A.)

Ramalinga is a recent saint. He was born on 5th October 1823. It was Sunday, Suklapatcha Thuthiya, Chitra, 4th Pada, Thula Hora. Astrologers can cast the horoscope and state its divine prowess. He was the fifth child. Birth place was Marudur about ten miles from Sacred Chidambaram. He was born in the greatest line of saint-Philosopher-poets. To mention the most prominent, he was of the spiritual lineage of Gnana Sambandha, Manicka Vasaga and Thayumanavar. Gnana Sambanda, while young in his marriage robes, was taken aloft with his bride and all his relations in a blaze of light that came down and took them away. Manickavasagar disappeared in Chidambaram; the lady saint Andal disappeared in Sacred Srirangam. Being taken up in light and like advanced Tibetan Lamas, passing into the Sacred Vighraha are instances that invite reflection. Bhaskararaya, the famous commentator of Lalitha Sahasranama, a Marathi Saint, settled down in Baskararayapura (called after him) in Tanjore district. His Guru who was an adept in kundelini yoga got into air without leaving a trace of his physical body like lighted camphor. Lullah, the Kashmiri lady saint, disappeared from mortal vision in like manner. Jnaneswara too. Ramalinga did likewise too. In his 51st year, he locked himself in a room and born in 1823, he disappeared on 30-1-1874. He said he would go out in a Pranava body which divine body he got as gift from God for his one pointed love and compassion for God's creatures. Celestial love is love for God. Spiritual love is love for the neighbour, a sidhanta of the great God messenger. Swedenberg lived a little earlier to Ramalinga and he wrote books in Latin (the Daiva Bhasa of Europe) which no man has hitherto written on God, His divine sakthi, the spiritual Sun, angels and men and other creatures and the Universe and the plants and minerals. Like Savithri, he saw Heaven and Hell and the world of spirits in the Intermediate World and gave their maps.

In the spiritual Sun, God is Sriman Narayana and by influx in the material Sun. Ramalinga realised in full the spiritual Sun which is Divine Love. He calls it, 'ARUT PERUM JYOTI'.

Ramalinga came into the modern world with a message. He preached and sang with fervour divine equality, purity of life; and social shackles like caste, creed, race he did not permit. To him whole humanity was one, engaged in the realisation of God who is Love. Like Buddha, he spoke and wrote strongly against animal slaughter and eating of flesh. His face would express very tired feelings when he saw plants droop in the hot sun.

As in the case of Shridhi Sai Baba, Ramalinga's birth was predicted by a Siva Yogi. In his fifth month, the child was taken by his parents to sacred Chidambaram. When the Screen was lifted, in the holy of holies, the five month old child smiled sweetly when the installed God was shown. Ayyappa Dikshitar, who was the greatest integral philosopher and saint after Sankara, marked it and hastening to the child, said to the parents, this is a child of God come to do good to the world.

In the 6th month of the child, the father died as happens in the life of great saints who are practically brought up by God. Sabapathi, the eldest son of the family, took charge of the mother and the children and went to live with his maternal grandmother who was at Ponneri, near Madras. He later shifted to Madras. Sabapathi was under tuition to famous scholar, Sabapathi Mudaliar and became proficient as an expositor of the Puranas and made his living thereby. He lovingly brought up his younger brother, Ramalinga and when he was five years old, he taught him the Tamil letters and put him under the tuition of his own master, Sabapathi Mudaliar. Even after 4 or 5 days, after tuition Ramalinga used to repair to the famous temple of God Subramanya and begin composing spontaneously verses on God Subramanya. Sabapathi mudaliar, the tutor came to know of this and felt he was not competent to teach a divine child like Ramalinga. He became indifferent to teach and Ramalinga became indifferent to learn. Sabapathi, the brother came to know of this and was angry with his child brother. He forbade food with his wife. She fed him secretly. One day, Sabapathi, the elder brother invited guests and fed them sumptuously on the occasion of his father's annual ceremony. As usual, Ramalinga came late in the night stealthily to take his food and found his brother's wife in tears. He enquired of her distress. She said, "on account of you, today a feast was prepared for the guests. You could have dined with them while the food was hot and tasty. Why don't you listen to your brother's advice and attend to studies?" The grief of the sister-in-law who was like a mother, went into his heart and he vowed he would obey his brother. He asked to arrange with his brother to allot a separate room for his study, a lamp and a mirror. At this change of the mind of the younger brother, Sabapathi felt glad and provided him with a room upstairs, a lamp and a mirror. The house was

near Seven Wells in Madras in No. 39, Veerasami Pillai street. That night in his 9th year Ramalingam went into his room and lit the lamp and gazed at the mirror long and unremittingly and Lo! in the mirror, appeared God Subramanya with his six divine faces and twelve arms, the Karthikeya. Manickavasagar, the great immortal saint and poet sings, "I have seen God with my eyes." From onwards, Ramalinga was taught in all sciences and shastra, the Veda, Agama, the great siddha scripts and he himself became a mighty siddha. The one parallel in recent times is Sri Sathya Sai Baba of Prasanthi Nilaya who is self taught, who studied only upto the fifth standard and is proficient to converse in Sanskrit and intimate with all our sastras, the Puranas etc written and unwritten. They say, knowing the Atman, all else is known.

This was demonstrated one day when elder brother Sabapathi fell ill and could not deliver his lectures on Peria Purana, the book containing in verse the lives of the 63 Saiva saints and asked Ramlinga to recite the verses at the meeting after the usual worship. Ramlinga did so and the audience so appreciated it and requested him to offer a few comments. That day's subject was Thiru Gnana Sambanda who while four years old cried for milk at the well side while his father was bathing and divine Parvathi brought milk and fed the child. Ramlinga himself was given food while hungry by Tripura Sundari, Goddess presiding at Thirivottiyur Temple. Swami Vivekananda while on his itenary in the beginning in India, God commanded a local sweetmeat vendor to give food to hungry Vivekananda, so had Saint Ramdas of Kanjangod while on his travels and there are other innumerable instances in the lives of saints; they corroborate statements in the Gita and the Bible that God Himself comes to feed His Bhaktas.

Ramalinga yielded to the entreaty of the audience and started his discourse. It was so sweet, so comprehensive that the audience was spell-bound: a friend of the elder brother, Sabapathi, hastened to his house and brought him to witness the younger brother's unique performance. Sabapathi listened and was transported. His heart was full of sorrow that he so ill-treated his young brother, and can went home and told his wife that his young brother was not brother but God Muruga Himself. (Subramanya.)

Tamil Language is the oldest regional language on record. Its grammar was given by God Arumugha, (Subramanya) to Agastya Rishi and he gave it to Tholkappiar and so it came through generations. The grammar is as rich as Panini's.

His earnings through discourses he threw into the wells and tanks and on the roadside bushes. The aversion to money was like that of Sri Rama Krishna Paramahansa Christ abhorred money and money lenders. Ramalinga's

attachment for home was getting less and less. From 1832 to 1849, we do not know much of Ramalinga's life. It was like that of Christ who disappeared for some years and came back as Jesus Christ, the Prophet in his 32nd year. Ramalinga says during this period, his life was extremely harrowing and distressing and says even mountain rocks and iron will melt at their recital. It was perhaps the dark night of the soul which Evelyn Underhill, the author of the classic on Mysticism narrates in her book.

During this period, he had immense distaste for the world and the doings of the worldly people. His whole and sole activity was the praise of God expressed in melting songs. Anger and lust had disappeared. Mighty compassion seized him like that of Buddha and Christ. Thiru Moolar, the greatest Saint-Poet, philosopher, mystic, master of the eight systems of Yoga, tantra, mantra, Yantra sastras. In his Thirumanthiram; he sings in a verse his verse; is like that of Ae the Irish Mystic, put in words extremely frugal but brilliant and scintillating and full of rhythm like Mantras in the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras and Thirukkural in Tamil-or Vindhy as Para Vindhu and Aparā Vindhu. (Vindhu is consciousness-energy, divine love and wisdom like heat and light in the Sun and Aparā Vindhu is spent in acts for the father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife and children and others where Moha alone is evident and leads to misery and sorrow in the end. Para Vindhu is consciousness-energy dedicated solely and exclusively to God in passionate adoration to the exclusion of all other loves and lifts men to very Heaven and Bliss.) Such was the love of our many mystics like Tukaram, Allama Prabhu and others and we get plentiful accounts of them from our modern superb mystic, Gurudev Ranade. Saint Ramlingam was in this state now. He was extremely self-effacing. He walked most unnoticed in the streets. He had one white cloth covering his head and body upto the knees. He never entered into any conversation or disputation with any one. He used to take a little food once in two or three days. He used to fast for two or three months. The greatest and cruellest Samsara, Adi-Sankara said, is food. Recent papers like the Madras 'Hindu' have Published reports of experts who say Europe and America, are overeating and gormandizing, sure sign of degeneration. Papers have published account of a Doctor in India and his wife and children living on water for sixty days and say they could do so longer. They were fine. If we depend less on food and turn God-ward and love for neighbour, we can build Heaven and break the back of filthy politics that looms so large, in India and other countries today and can show the foul-mouthed politicians their place. They are taking the country to physical and moral ruin and social chaos.

Gurudev Ranade was living for the most part on thin tea and lived up to a pretty ripe age with inherited complaints and gave monumental sastras,



works of intellectual acumen and perspecuity. The above is my revolutionary suggestion for the thinking public. Can't we try? Have we not got accustomed every one of us, to tea and coffee which some years ago, were alien. Ramalinga caused gruel to be given to the poor and hungry at all times at his temple at Vadalore, in South Arcot district. People in Kerala and Tamilnad and all over India, what are called the agricultural classes take mainly gruel and subsist on it and live healthily without cancer, stomach troubles, diabetes etc. Let the middle class and the Industrial workers follow their example and put down political agitators who make food and more food their forum and luxuries.

Ramalinga during those days when he fasted for months would take boiling hot water mixed with jaggery. He never showed fatigue. He was always alert and active.

In his 26th year, Thozhur Velayudha Mudaliar, a great Tamil scholar and poet became his first disciple. From him we get many intimate accounts of Sri Ramalinga. Velayudha was a Theosophist and was professor of Tamil at the well-known Christian College at Madras. He has many good books to his credit. He edited Swami Ramalinga's works and brought them in book form with an Introduction. There are several good editions now. The poems of Ramalinga are divinely sung all over Tamilnad and wherever Tamilians live. Ramalinga was now frequenting Thrivottiyur, near Madras where you have the Jiva Samadhi of Pattanathu Pillai, one of the greatest saints who lived a few centuries back and sang fervid songs of love for God and intense vairagya for worldly life and a famous Siva temple, and the female deity Vadivudaya Amman, the supernally beautiful deity who has brought salvation to many. One day when Ramalinga did not tap the door and ask for food, he simply lay with hunger. The Deity, Vadivudaya Amman in the form of his sister brought pongal food and gave it to him and departed. His sister woke up and opened the door and invited Ramalinga for food. Swami said he had just taken pongal food from her and showed the leaf on which the food was brought. His sister expressed astonishment. Ramalinga was deeply moved at the love of the World-Mother and celebrated the incident in a poem.

Ramalinga's mother, brothers and sister desired to get Ramalinga married. He opposed it vehemently. They brought a Siva Yogi to put pressure upon him. In 1850, Ramalinga was married to his sister's daughter. The marriage was a failure. Ramalinga would not consummate the marriage. Night after night, in the nuptial chamber, he lit the lamp and was engrossed in the divine work, Thruvasagam by Saint Manickavasagar.

From 1851, Ramalinga became a Tamil writer. Great scholars in Tamil came to him as disciples and learnt from him the sastras. At the instance of

Arumuga Pandara, a tantric Yogi, he expounded Vinayaga Purana. He wrote commentaries on the Sacred Tamil Scriptures with grammatical perfection. Ramalinga who never attended school was taught by Muruga (God Subramanya), the originator of the superb Tamil language with its many excellences.

In his 32nd year in 1855, Ramalinga left for Chidambaram, the holy of holies in Tamil Nad, regarded as the pivot of the world, where Nataraja (Siva) dances the cosmic dance and Rishis adore, a place celebrated from time immemorial. He saw Nataraja and became beatific. Here at this place, he composed songs on Nataraja and the Divine Mother and out of six parts of Adulation to God by Ramalinga, known as 'THIRU ARUT PA', compiled and edited by his disciple, Velayudha Mudaliar, four parts have been finished by now.

Ramalinga in those days after 1856 had an itinerary of the famous and historic temples of Tamil Na. , namely, Shirgazhi, Vydeeswaran Koil, Madura. In 1858, after itinerary, Ramalingaswami settled in a village known as Karunghuzhi, three miles from Vadalore. Venkata Reddiar and his pious wife Muthialamma of the village attended upon the Swami. In the nights, the Swami composed his sacred songs and a lamp was lit for him. One night, the pious Muthialamma who went to a neighbouring village on a visit forgot to provide the lamp with oil. It was a new earthen lamp and water was poured into it to make it usable. Ramalinga as usual sat for his compositions and lit the new lamp which contained water and it lit and burned all the night. In dismay the next day, Muthialamma discovered her mistake. Sri Ramalinga Swami celebrates this miraculous incident in a poem. It is said Shirdhi Sai Baba did the same.

Swami was spending his days in the village and writing his soul-moving poems. He had run the whole gamut of mystical experience such as was realised by the Kannada, Maharashtra, Hindi and the European mystics like St. Francis of Assisi, Juliana, Catherine of Siena, Boehma, Swedenborg and several others. He describes in his poems, tiara after tiara, of spiritual experience. The whole Siddha philosophy was his. As the Isa Vasya emphasises, he went into the profundities of Spirit and Matter, the Sankhya-Purusha and Prakriti. He integrated the six darsanas as the six faces or facets of the single Veda just as Dayananda did with his knowledge of archaic sanskrit in which language the Veda was recorded. Chidambaram and Vadalore area have Akasa-'atwa'. There are other regions with other tatwas. God is clothed in ether, 'Chit-Ambaram'. The Kesari Vidya from Yoga Upanishads says, "Brahman lives in ether". Swami after his full realisation now conceived to establish the work he has come for. God is Divine Love and Divine Wisdom. --They emanate from Him as heat and light emanate from the Sun. Without heat and light, there can be no

life on planet. Men cannot live without love and wisdom. To achieve their ends, realising God as Love and Wisdom, exercising that love among the creatures unceasingly takes one to God and fills him with His presence. Ramalinga established Sama-Rasa- – Sanmarga-Satya Dharma Sala in Vadalore on 23rd May 1867 which was Thursday. The Vadalore public gifted eighty *Kanis* of open space land. A unique octogonal temple was built; 'Jnana sabha' was established. The seven veils in the temple after which the jyothi is shown represent the seven veils that cover that soul. In the Dharma Sala, all the day poor feeding is done. Gruel is given.

In the construction of temple, for the Dhawaja Stambha, the pole, the Swami sent an engineer in advance by conveyance to Madras and without telling him, he himself was mysteriously there in advance and fixed the quality of the pole and asking the engineer to take the pole to Vadalore, he himself arrived in Vadalore before him.

Even before his disappearance from mortal ken, Ramalinga attained the 'Pranava body' which he himself recites in a poem. T. V. G. Chetty in his excellent life of Chidambaram Ramalingam as Ramalingam used to describe himself, writes about the 'Pranava body'. 'The Swamiji having been photographed on many an occasion and despite the skill and the ingenuity known to the art, not the slightest trace of his body, face, hands or feet could be made to appear on the negative plate save his loin cloth and the veil, he never cast his shadow behind nor did he ever leave the faintest mark of his lotus prints while walking. He would tread upon prickly pear and pass through hard tangles of shrubs and bushes with quite as much ease and unconcern as he could on level ground. It was quite a common place occurrence with him to pick up live charcoal without least dread and melt away iron pieces by simply keeping them in his hand for sometime; times without number, he demonstrated by actual experience the stern truth of the science of alchemy and instances are not wanting in which base metals were transmuted into precious gold by his merely looking at them for a few seconds. These uncommon incidents affording as they do an illustration of the saying, 'that Truth is stronger than fiction' connotes all the same the true characteristics of the Pranava Body of a great Siddha Purusha.' The greatest thought that Sri. Ramalinga gave humanity which he put in memorable writing is the book, 'Jeeva Karunya Ozhukam', practice of compassion for Jiva. Satyagraha is tremendous fury for Truth which is of God. This the great Gandhiji advocated. It is not non-violence negatively stated. Swami Rama Thirth was Atman. He breathed love and he lived with cobras. This is the test of Gandhiji's Ahimsa. This testament of Ramalinga, 'Jeeva Karunya Ozhukam' must be translated in all the languages of the world for a better humanity to arise, the supramental man which was a concept of Aurobindo's

Yoga, Kumara Deva, the Kannada prince and saint who settled in holy Vridhacaalam in his chiselled hundred and odd verses, Sudha Sadakkam, celebrates Love as in which the SOUL SUSTAINS ITSELF even as the body subsists in the air, a theme elaborately worked out by the great scientists-mathematicians and man of God, Swedenborg in his book, 'Divine Love and Divine Wisdom.' Let us summarise and say, the mystics have shown us the path. Let us make gorgious eating less and less and animal and bird and fish food - -let us grow more trees and fruits, let grass grow and cow and buffalo thrive and we will have milk and honey. Let us eliminate water pollution and air pollution, let us plan out river water like veins in the body carrying blood; let us have water power for our vehicles and contrivances. We shall take active steps to start associations, let there be less clothing and let winds play about the body, in the Himalayas and other mountains, our Yogis in pink of health, have bare cloth. By extremely less dependence on food and clothing and mansions, we shall live simple like millions of our fellowmen all over the world. Politics is ditch water; we will put down vulture-like politicians who spot out carrion and live on the fat of the land and create ugly unrest. I am completing 73 in this August. I, will be a worker. May Readers and Contributors to *Pa hway to God* who are scholars and have a bias for sainthood start in earnest movements which will usher in a better world for tormented humanity.



*The end of all religions is the realisation of God.*

*Vivekanand*



# Thiru--Naavukku--Arasar

by G. Vanmikanathan,  
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Shree Gurudev Ranade discussing the difference between the mysticism of the Upanishads and that of the Middle Age says:

The Upanishadic mysticism was the mysticism of men who lived in cloisters far away from the bustle of humanity, and who, if they permitted any company at all, permitted only the company of their disciples. The mysticism of the Middle Age was a mysticism which engrossed itself in the practical upliftment of the human kind, based on the sure foundation of one's own perfect spiritual development. The Upanishadic mysticism did not come forward with deliberate purpose of mixing with men in order to ameliorate their spiritual condition. The business of the mystic of the Middle Age consisted in mixing with the ordinary run of mankind, with the sinners, with Pariahs, with women, with people who cared not for the spiritual life, with people who even had mistaken notions about it, with, in fact, everybody who wanted, be it ever so little, to appropriate the Real.

"We may say," Gurudev goes on to say, "that as we pass from the Upanishadic mysticism to the mysticism of the Middle Age, we see the spiritual life brought from the hidden cloisters to the market place."

"Thus arose" Shree Gurudev concludes, "a Democratic Mysticism which laid stress upon the vernaculars as the medium of mystical teaching as opposed to the classical mysticism of ancient times which had Sanskrit as its language of communication. It was democratisation not merely in language but also in the spirit of teaching, and we see how mysticism became the property of all."

Four saints of Tamil-naadu stand out prominently as the best exemplars of the type of the mystic of the Middle Age who brought spiritual life from the cloisters to the market place, who made mysticism the property of all. They are Maanikkavaachakar of the 3rd century, Thirugnasambandar and Thirunavukkuarasar of the 7th century and Sundarar who lived in the beginning of the 9th century. These four are always spoken of in the same breath and are lovingly

referred to by the collective word 'Naalvar' viz., 'The Four.' The short span of this article will not permit me to speak of all the four of them. I must restrict myself to Saint Thirunaavukkuarasar who lived to a long life of eighty one years. His date is placed between 574 and 655 A. D. Thirunaavukkuararsar is not the name which his parents gave him. This is a name which was conferred on him by Lord Civan Himself on the very first occasion our saint broke into song in praise of Lord Civan. It means 'king of ( the art of ) the tongue'. In all probability Civan meant it as a term of praise, commendation; that is how all TAMILIAN posterity has taken it to be. A vein of irreverance in me makes me speculate that Lord Civan gave the name in an ironical sense, meaning to say, 'I can see that you have the gift of the gab'. For Thirunaavukkuarasar's first song was quite a masterly piece of impudence as we shall see later on. My speculation is strengthened by the name Lord Civan conferred on Saint Sundarar. He called him 'Van-thondan,' the obstreperous devotee. Saint Thirunaavukkuarasar goes by another name also, a name which is more in currency than the god-given name. He is called 'Appar'. The 'r' at the end of the name is a honorific suffix and can be replaced by the letter 'n'. It means 'father,' 'daddy.' This is the name by which the child-saint Thirugnanasambandar hailed Thirunaavukkuarasar on meeting him for the first time. Thirugnanasambandar lived for the all too short span of only sixteen years. He must have been a lad of six or seven years and Thirunaavukkuarasar was probably in his forties when they met. They met on two more occasions. I shall speak of these later.

Appar, as I shall call him in future in this sketch, was born in a well-to-do family of agriculturists—the Velaalar community. The term has been corrupted into 'vellaalar' to designate a snobbish caste of Tamilians. As is common, the caste has proliferated into several sub-castes chief among which are the 'kaar-kaatha-vellaalar' and the 'thondai-mandala-vellaalar'. They are however entitled to their snobbery as the term 'vellaalar' means 'the providers of the world'. Even today, if one asks even the smallest land-holder what his profession is, he will say that it is 'vellaamai', a corrupt form of 'velaanmai' i.e. production of food crops. A student of *The Thirukkural* can alone appreciate the nobility of this profession. Thiruvalluvar, the author of the *Thirukkural*, devotes a separate chapter to 'Tilling', and says, *inter alia*,

They alone live who by tilling and by feeding on the produce;

All the rest are people who trail after them, beseeching them for their food.

It was probably this pride of independence which gave Appar the courage to send word to the Pallava King that he is not the subject of anyone. Thiruvalluvar lifts the word 'velaanmai' from the grubby earth to the very vaults of heaven when he uses the term in the 212th verse of *The Thirukkural* where he

gives it the meaning of service to humanity. He says :

“All the wealth acquired by the worthy by great toil  
Is for nothing but doing service to humanity.”

Appar was born in such a family.

He lost his parents very early in his childhood, and he was brought up by his sister who but for her sense of duty to her little brother would have immolated herself on hearing the news of the death of her betrothed on the battle-field. In those days marriageable age for girls was ‘just short of twelve’ and for boys it was sixteen. Our Saint’s sister took great care of her little brother and brought him to man’s estate when he assumed charge of the affairs of his family estate. His biographer records that Appar provided funds for many charities, built dharamsaalaas, established water-booths to serve thirsty wayfarers on the roads, planted trees and dug wells for common use by villages and wayfarers. All these are the duties of householders i.e., those who lead a married life according to the conduct laid down in *The Thirukkural*. Was Appar married? The biographer is silent on this point. A great savant of this century who wrote an unparalleled commentary to the biography dismisses this matter as irrelevant to the biography of a saint. But the saint himself in one of his songs sings thus :

“Engrossed with the problem of looking after wife and children, the children’s children, and children born to my children’s children, I did not turn to God and paid no thought to contemplation of God”.

He may not have turned to God or to contemplation of Him, but he turned to enquire into religions, and, in the words of the biographer, as God did not bestow on him His grace to go the right way to learn about religions, he approached the Jains. With his earnestness and keen intellect he soon became a leading figure among the exponents of Jainism and was given the cognomen of Dharma-senar. His sister was sore distressed at her brother becoming a Jain and she went before the only court she knew, the court of Lord Civan in the temple at Athikai, a village near her own hamlet Aamoor. These places are in the present South Arcot District. Lord Civan lent a sympathetic ear to her grievance and said “I shall rescue him through the affliction of a colic pain in his intestines.” So it came to pass and Appar writhed with the pain of an unaccountable colic. All ministrations, medications, magic incantations, everything failed, and Appar in sheer desperation thought of sending word to his sister. She refused to go to him but bade him to go to her, which he did. He fell down at his sister’s feet and she took him to the *sanctum sanctorum* of the temple in Athikai and left him there in the presence of the Deity enshrined therein. Suddenly the poetic muse descended on Appar and he burst into song. Naturally the theme of his first song was the

colic pain which was tormenting him. One would have expected him to plead for forgiveness, to be repentant for his heretical desertion of the true faith; in fact, with the amount of suffering which he had been undergoing for, perhaps, months on end, one would have expected him to literally grovel at the feet of the Deity with inarticulate pleas for relief. No, our saint did nothing of that sort. On the contrary he sang :

This killer ( of a colic ) You are not relieving me of;  
 Manifold wicked deeds wrought by me I am not aware of ;  
 To Your feet resplendent on the bull  
 I have been saying obeisance day and night,  
 Unintermittingly, ever and ever;  
 Baffling all diagnosis, in my abdomen's core  
 This rises and doubles me up;  
 Endure it I, Your slave, cannot,  
 Oh my Father Who ables in Veerattaanam  
 In Athikai on the river Kedlam!

**Note :** *Veerattaanam is the name of the shrine.*

In this decad—a poem of ten stanzas—we find him stressing on his unswerving loyalty and on the injustice of the affliction visited on him. In the 2nd stanza he says:

My heart I have exclusively set apart for You! In the 6th stanza he declares :

With water, flower and incense I have never forgotten to worship You,  
 Singing songs in Tamil (in your praise) set to music  
 I am not aware of ever forgetting,  
 I am not aware of ever forgetting you in prosperity or adversity,  
 Your name on my lips I am not aware of ever missing.

A renegade to his religion, a traitor to his God, he has the audacity to declare before God that he had never forgotten him in thought, word or deed. How can these declarations be reconciled with his dalliance with the Jain religion? Shri C. K. Subrahmania Mudaliar, the unparalleled commentator I referred to above, justifies this by the law stated in Civa-gnana-siddhiyaar, an authoritative work on Saiva Siddhaantaa, namely, that whatever gods one may worship, that worship ultimately reaches Civan. Such a facile explanation would however be a god-send to every renegade to his religion. We have to look elsewhere for an explanation. Contemplatives who have apprehended the Godhead are beyond the credos, creeds, dogma and disputations of an institutional religion.



Lesser mortals see several gods, but the contemplative sees only the Godhead. No matter whatever denominational religion a contemplative may subscribe to for the moment, he is conscious only of the Godhead whom he has apprehended. Appar's biographer makes a very significant pronouncement in another biography. Speaking of Saakiyanaar, a former Buddhist monk but now a devotee of Civan, he says :

No matter in which camp a man stands,  
no matter what garb he dons,  
what matters is never forget the feet  
of Sankaran of eternal glory.

Appar underscores this eternal truth with reference to contemplatives who have apprehended the Godhead when he makes the claims which on the surface seem to be pert and impudent. No wonder Lord Civan instantly acclaimed him as the ' King of the art of the tongue '. A question arises as to why Civan afflicted Appar with the deadly colic while he was not guilty. Appar's sister, Thilakavathiyaar was no less a great devotee of Civan than Appar. Her prayer had to be heard, her grievance had to be redressed. Furthermore there was a weightier reason for afflicting Appar with the killer of a colic. Civan had a mission for Appar to perform, and for this purpose it was necessary that Appar should not only be covertly an unswerving devotee of Civan - the Godhead, but he should also be seen overtly as a devotee by the people of Tamilnaadu. The people of Tamilnaadu had become ungodly and had begun to be attracted by new gods or, to be more precise, by Jainism whose attitude to God is best expressed by the credo, *a-ti naasti* perhaps God is, perhaps He is not. More than at least two decades before Thirugnanaśambandar, the crusader against Jainism came on the scene, Appar had the flag of revolt against Jainism and its patron, the Pallavaa king who ruled over the part of Tamilnaadu in which Appar was born. So Appar's colic was miraculously cured the moment he appeared before the *sanctum sanctorum* of Lord Civan in the temple called Veerattaanam in Athikai. To believe on the other hand that Appar returned to the fold of the faith of his ancestors just to merely get well of a colic reflects no credit on him and goes contrary to the strain of his very first song addressed to the deity at Veerattaanam which is not that of a repentent renegade but that of an innocent man angry at having been misjudged and maltreated.

The Jains could not let this defection go unchallenged and unpunished. So they persuaded the Pallavaa King to arrest Appar and inflict on him many tortures to make him come back to Jainism. But Appar by the grace of Civan miraculously survived all the tortures till the Pallavan king saw the error of his ways and turned into a devotee of Civan and turned against the Jains.

Now Appar immediately left on a tour of the length and breadth of Tamilnaadu and to even places far beyond its boundaries to fulfil his mission, the mission of carrying mysticism - the science of apprehension of the Godhead - to the market place in each village and hamlet. Three saints out of the four I had referred to in an earlier paragraph, i. e., Appar, Thirugnanasambandar and Sundarar were the most important of all the saints of Tamilnaadu who carried mysticism to the market places of villages and hamlets in Tamilnaadu. Between them they have left records in their songs of their visit to no less than 274 shrines, 190 of these are in what was called Cholanadu, the present districts of Tiruchirappalli and Thanjaavoor. Appar had travelled to no less than 125 of these 274, Thirugnanasambandar to 219, all on foot. These numbers include only those places where the saints tarried for a few days and sang songs on the deity enshrined in those places. The number of the places they passed through, the number of the places they rested in for a few hours must have been five times as many if not more, all on foot at least in the case of Appar. For Thirugnanasambandar had the use of a palanquin bestowed on him by Lord Civan who also provided for all the running expenses. This accounts for the fact that in the short span of 16 years he covered as many as 219 places. We are able to proudly claim that all these records have been put in the shade in this century and in our own times by Sri Kaanchi Kaamakoti Sri Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati Sri Sankaraachaarya Swamigal. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he has visited ten to fifteen times as many places as all the three saints put together, and almost most of them on foot! In the places Appar visited he sang songs in glory of Civan and weaned away the people of Tamilnaadu from the baneful influence of other creeds. We have available today as many as 3064 stanzas. Tradition has it that he sang many times as many as these and that by far the major part of what he sang has been lost. Thirugnanasambandar who visited nearly twice as many places as Appar sang only 4103 songs and in his case too tradition has the same story to tell of thousands of songs lost to us.

It was not enough that Appar should return to the true faith, but it must be patent to everyone who saw him. Bad news travel fast and wide, but good news never. Therefore Tamilnaadu which would have known in its nook and corner that Appar had been a renegade to the faith of his forefathers could not have known equally well the story of the colic and the repentent return to the true faith in a remote village in Nadunaadu, the present South Arcot. Therefore, in the very early stage of his peripatetic ministry, in fact, even before he had proceeded less than fifty kilometers from Athikai, before he had visited no more than three shrines, he seems to have felt the need of physical proof of his renunciation of Jainism, his repentance and reception back into the folds of the true faith. So we find him praying in Thoonganaai Maadam, the temple in Pennagadam that he

may be branded with the insignia of a devotee— a slave— of Lord Civan, the emblem of the bull and the trident. Lord Civan deigned to heed the prayer and lo, there appeared on the arms of Appar the stigmata of the bull and the trident even as the marks of Christ's wounds appeared on the body of St Francis of Assisi in 1224. Travelling bare-bodied, as Appar should have been, the insignia was there for everyone to see quite plainly and to shed all doubts about the genuineness of his return to the true faith. He travelled back and forth in Tamilnaadu and far beyond its boundaries, ever as far Kokarnam, a place near Goa, rousing the people to a true appreciation of their own faith. We cannot follow him through all these scores of places and thousands of miles. We shall just touch upon the high-lights of his itinerary and pass on to a consideration of his songs and their message.

From Pennagadam, he went to Thillai, the modern Chidambaram in South Arcot District, the seat of the modern Annamalai University. After a sojourn of a few days there he went to Puhali, the modern Seerkaazhi, the birth-place of Thirugnanasambandar. It has twelve names, one of which is Puhali. It is said to have survived a cataclysm, the pralayam (flood) which occurs at the end of each aeon. The image of the deity was placed on a boat and the boat floated on the waters of the flood and when it subsided, it settled down again in the same place where the original temple had been. Lord Civan in Puhali goes by the name of Thiru- th-thoni-appar-the Holy Father on a boat. Appar went to Puhali with the specific object of having a darsan of the child-saint whom he had heard praised by all the people in the vicinity of Puhali. Thirugnanasambandar too had heard of the advent of Appar and he went forward with his band of devotees to receive Appar. This meeting is a unique one in many respects. The child saint, on seeing Appar rushed forward in loving adoration to receive the aged servant of the Lord. A child of seven or less and an elderly man of not less than forty years met, and it was the elderly man who fell at the feet of the child and lay clasping his feet, for was he not a child who had the unique privilege of being fed by Paarvathi herself with milk drawn in a golden cup from her godly breast. She is called Unnamulaiyaal—The Lady of the unsuckled breast—for no child had ever suckled at her breast. The Mother of all creation is conceived in Tamil devotional literature as a vestigial vergin. The child, a lad of seven lifted the aged man with his flower like tender hands and hailed him - "Apparay!", Oh my Father! "The Perennial Philosophy," says Aldous Huxley, "is primarily concerned with the one, divine Reality substantial to the manifold world of things and lives and minds. But the nature of this one Reality is such that it cannot be directly and immediately apprehended except by those who have chosen to fulfil certain conditions, making themselves loving, pure in heart, and poor in spirit." Pure in heart—this we have already seen in Appar's very first song to Civan. Here we see his poorness in spirit, his humility. An elderly man of forty or

thereabouts falls at the feet of a child of seven or thereabouts. Not content with falling at the feet of the child, in response to the child's greeting of 'Apparay!' he answered 'Adiyen'-your humble servant! This is not the only instance of his humility. Thirugnanasambandar and Appar met three times in all in their life-time. On this first occasion, they stayed together several days but not very many days. On the second occasion, Thirugnanasambandar, who had arrived at Thiruppuhaloor heard that Appar after visiting Lord Civan's shrine at Thiruvaroor was approaching Thiruppuhaloor went forward with his retinue to meet him. On this occasion too, even before the child could spot him in the huge concourse of devotees, Appar saw Thirugnanasambandar and hurried forward and was the first to fall at his feet. On this occasion they stayed together for many months, perhaps a year, and they visited many shrines till Thirugnanasambandar had to leave for Madurai to quell the power of the Jains and to reconvert the Paandiyan King. They met for the last time after Appar had returned from his pilgrimage to Kailash. When we read the account of their meeting on this occasion, the hair of our body stand on end with surprise, awe, and reverence. We see in the setting of this meeting the acme, or should I say, the nadir of Appar's humility. Let me quote the biographer.

“ While he (Appar) was camping at Thiruppoondthuruththi  
To the right of which flow the Cauvery,  
The Vedist of Shanbai town of eternal glory  
Came along after routing the stony-hearted Jains in disputation  
and after graciously straightening the hump of Paandiyan.

“ Setting out from the land of sweet Tamil, Paandinaadu,  
He arrived in the land made fertile by the bounteous Cauvery;  
And hearing that the King of Speech was there,  
He arrived in the environs of flourishing Poondthuruththi.

“ The Lord of the Faculty of speech rejoiced in his heart  
On hearing of the coming of the Shanbai born Lover of Tamil,  
And on a welling desire rising in his mind due to the longing  
To see him and worship him to the great delight of his eyes,  
He set out to meet him.

“ Arrive at the fringe of the place where the King of Kaazhi was then  
approaching,  
He mixed in the surging crowd of the loving devotees round him  
And unseen by anyone, he worshipped him.  
And he cherished in his mind a resolve;  
'With this humble body I shall bear the palanquin decked with pearls  
which bears his blessed body'.



And disguising himself that no one may recognise him,  
 He mingled with the band of those carrying the palanquin  
 Decked with pearls and sweet-sounding bells  
 On which rode the saintly child  
 and carried it along with the rest; and no one recognised him.

Saint Thirugnanasambandar on arriving near Poondhthuruththi  
 Where Arasu was said to be, asked "Where is Appar?"  
 With melting heart, Appar answered,  
 "Your slave having gained the great privilege of carrying your sacred  
 feet Is here."

"Hearing which Thirugnanasambandar, sorely distressed in his heart,  
 Slid down in great haste from the palanquin,  
 And even as he fell at Arasu's feet,  
 The magnanimous-hearted Lord of Speech anticipated him  
 And fell at the feet of the child-saint.  
 All the devotees of Lord Civan adored and cheered them.  
 Appar was humility personified. He had wiped out his ego.

In this short sketch it is not possible to follow in the footsteps of Appar  
 and trace his itinerary through all the villages and hamlets of Tamilnaadu and  
 beyond. At long last he came to Thiruppuhaloor, the same place where he had  
 met Thirugnanasambandar on the second occasion, and it was here that Appar  
 merged in the Effulgence Which is Civan, the Godhead. The last song he sang  
 begins thus:

I, a thinking being, of what shall I think of  
 Unless it be the sacred feet of my noble Lord;  
 No other support have I; Eyes I cannot be said to have  
 Unless I see nothing but the anklet-girt feet of the Lord  
 And worship it with folded hands.

For one single dwelling (this body) You provided nine exits;  
 When all of them are closed at the same time,  
 I may not be able to experience You;  
 Therefore, Oh meritorious One, I come up to Your feet rightnow,  
 Oh meritorious One abiding in beauteous Puhaloor!

Finishing this last poem of 10 stanzas Appar merged in the Effulgence  
 Which is Civan, the Godhead.

Appar is always depicted in pictures as carrying a gardening tool, a broad, flat thin sheet of iron fitted with a wooden handle of about 2 feet length. It is called *uzhavaaram*, and is used for weeding out growths of vegetation between the joints and interstices of stones paved in the temple yards. Appar's intense love of God exhibited itself in service, the most menial service of keeping the precincts of his Lord's temple neat and clean. He declares his credo thus in song :

The Partner of Her Who bore our Kadamban (Lord Subramanian),  
He Who abides in Thirukkarakkoil, the temple in Thirukkadamdoor,  
His duty is to protect even me, this slave;  
MY duty is to rest content with serving Him.

Love reflected in service, purity of heart capable of challenging God Himself, and humility surpassing all our concept of the quality, these were the outstanding characteristics of our saint. He was a mystic par excellence.

He welcomed birth as a human being; He sings thus:

If one can but behold the arched brow,  
The budding smile on the *kovvai* red lips,  
The matted moist locks,  
The milk-white ash on the coral-hue body,  
And the sweetness-endowed  
Raised golden foot ( of Civan ),  
Even human birth  
Is desirable in this vast world.

In another place he sings:

Oh ye who belong to the group of devotees  
Of Him Who graciously bestowed the *Paasupathaastram*  
On Parthan!  
We have been fortunate enough to get this birth on earth;  
Cherish it:  
Is it not our duty to remain subservient slaves  
To the Dancer in Thillai ?

In Appar's view, every organ of the human body is given to us for no other purpose than to adore Civan. He sings:

Oh my head! Bow down to Him  
Who wears on His head a garland of skulls  
And begs for food with a skull for begging bowl in his hand,

Oh my head! Bow down to Him.

Oh my eyes! Do see Him with the throat  
Which ate the poison from the sea,  
The Lord Who dances swinging His eight arms,  
Oh my eyes do see Him!

Oh my ears! Do listen to the glory of Civan, our King,  
The Lord with body like red coral on fire;  
For ever, Oh my ears do listen!

Oh my nose! Do smell Him—the Lord with three eyes  
Who resides in the cremation ground,  
The Bridegroom of the Dame Whose eyes are ever set  
On Him Who is the Word (Namacivaaya);  
Oh my nose do smell Him !

Oh my mouth, do you praise Him,  
He Who, donning the skin of the rutting elephant,  
Dances in the cremation ground where the ghosts dwell;  
Oh my mouth, do you praise Him!

Oh my heart! Do you contemplate Him,  
The Ninmalan (Immaculate One) of upstanding golden locks,  
The Bridegroom of the Dame of the cloud-capped mountain;  
Oh my heart, do you contemplate Him!

Oh my hands! Join your palms and worship Him,  
Strewing plenty of fragrant flowers at His feet,  
Worship the transcendent One Who wears at His waist the poison-fanged  
snake,

Oh my hands, join your palms and worship Him!

Of what use is this body,  
This body which does not go clockwise  
Round Haran's temple,  
And, showering flowers with the hands,  
Does not cry "Obeisance to You"?  
Of what use is this body?

Of what use are these legs,  
Of what use are these legs,  
Which do not go round the spire  
Of Gokarnam,

The temple in which abides  
The Lord with the stained throat!

To Appar even the act of lighting a lamp was an act of contemplation of the Godhead. He sings:

Inside the house called the body,  
With the heart as lamp's oil bowl,  
if one pours the oil called experiencing,  
Twists the wick called life's breath,  
And lights the lamp with the flame of vast gnosis,  
One can behold the anklet-girt feet  
Of the Father of the young Blade (Lord Subrahmanian)  
Of the Kadamba woods.

To Appar the feet of God was not an anthropological, anatomical organ of flesh and bones, sinews and nerves, blood and brawn. They were,

The knowledge gained by learning,  
The content of that knowledge,  
The resonant Vedaas of the Brahmins,  
And the sacrifices.

They represent moreover the heavens and the earth,  
The effulgent fire, the red-rayed sun along with the moon.  
Such are the feet of the Lord Who abides in Aiyaaru;  
They constitute the beginning and end of everything.

In all but a few of Appar's poems, the eighth stanza is always a reference to Raavanan trying to uproot the Kailash mountain on which were seated Lord Civan and Paarvathi. Thirugnanasamabandar too makes a constant reference to the same incident in all but a few of his songs. These constant references have a significance. Before we go into it let me complete the story of Raavanan and his attempt to dislodge the Kailash mountain. Raavanan was a very great Civa-baktaa. Perhaps he wanted to have Civan all to himself, to instal the mountain in his own realm so that he could have darsan of Civan every day. So, depending on the might of his twenty arms, he slid a hand under the Kailash mountain and tried to lift it on his palm. The mountain shook and trembled as Raavanan tried to lift it. Paarvathi in alarm clung to Civan in a tight embrace. Lord Civan knew what was happening, and with an enigmatic smile on his face, He looked reassuringly at Paarvathi, and pressed down the shaking mountain with the big toe of his left foot. Lo, there was a tremendous uproar, a wild cry of pain and distress, and Raavanan the invincible was sobbing and weeping and, in between the intonations of the Saama-Vedaa dear to the ear



of Civan, he pleaded for mercy. His pride was humbled and enlightenment dawned on him. And Civan released the pressure on the mountain, and, looking down on Raavanan, He conferred grace on him and a new name too. He called him Raavanan, -the weeper. We said that these references, repeated references to this incident in the life of Raavanan, has a significance. It is this. According to Caiva Siddhaantaa, the soul has to be freed of *aanava malam*, the taint of ignorance, the folly of identifying the body as the 'I'. When it is so released, it merges in the Godhead, never to be born again in a human or other body. Thirugnanasambandar and Appar, whose mission was to prepare the souls of the people of Tamilnaadu to be fit to merge in the Godhead, repeat in decad after decad the great message, the secret of how to gain this end. Alongside of this message, Appar tells us the modus operandi even as Saint Maanikkavaachakar long before him and Sri Raamakrishna Paramahamsaa long after him told us. It is this. Weep and you shall gain the Godhead. Thus sings Appar :

I have wasted plentiful days without approaching  
 Him Who abides in Thalaiyaalangkaadu,  
 The Reality Who graciously gave the name of Raavanan  
 To the Raakshasas' King of twenty palms  
 On hearing him sing with his ten gaping mouths  
 When the Lord placed on him a single holy toe  
 When he thoughtlessly ran up to the Kailash mountain,  
 And, with his pearl-set crowns tossing about  
 And his shoulder-bangles bursting with the strain of his effort,  
 He tried to lift the mountain.

Appar had his beatific vision in Thiruvaiyaarru. Appar was filled with an unquenchable desire to have a darsan of Lord Civan and Paarvathi in their abode on Kailash mountain. So he set out on his arduous journey. His strength gave way but his mind did not. When he could not walk he progressed on all fours and when he could not do this even, he crawled on his chest and stomach, and when he could not do this he clawed his way up the Himaalayan range till his hands wore to a stump right up to his wrists. Lord Civan, Who had other plans for him, now appeared in the form of a rishi before him and persuaded him to go back, promising him that he will be vouchsafed the vision he sought for at Thiruvaiyaarru. To save him the long and arduous return journey, Lord Civan in His abounding mercy made a deep tank appear just near to where Appar stood and bade him dive in it. He did, and Lo, behold he found himself in a well in Thiruvaiyaarru, thousands of miles in the south. He got out of the well and had his vision, the beatific vision in which he saw all creation, as nothing else than Civan and Paarvathi; He sang:

with its loving mate I saw the tusker come,  
 I beheld His sacred feet,  
 I beheld what I had never before perceived with my eyes.  
 The cock with its harem I saw coming sedately,  
 I beheld His sacred feet,  
 I beheld what I had never before perceived with my eyes.  
 The striped Kuyil with its female tripping down towards me, I saw,  
 I beheld His sacred feet,  
 I beheld what I had never before perceived with my eyes.

In every creature Appar beheld none else than Sakti and Civan He beheld only Eesan, the immanent Godhead in everything.

After this vision Appar's soujourn on earth was quite short. For the third time, he met, as we have related elsewhere, Thirugnanasambandar who had just returned from Paandinaadu, and, inspired by his account of the shrine at Madurai, he went on a pilgrimage to Madurai and further down to Rameswaram and came back to Puhaloor where he cast away his human frame and merged in the Codhead.

This short sketch which has already exceeded the number of pages kindly allotted for me by the editor has no room for many details of miracles performed *by* him and performed *for* him by Lord Civan. All this must wait for another occasion, another place.



“ The last element necessary for the success of our spiritual  
 meditation is the Grace of God.”

— Gurudev Ranade

Lokmanya Tilak's

## Gītā - Rahasya —a “Paradise Lost!”

(By - G. D. Khare, Vāngmaya Visārad, Gadag)

In our article “Reclamation of the Bhagavadgita” published in the November 1969 issue of the ‘Pathway to God’, it was expounded in detail, how the inspiringly dynamic nature of Sri Veda-Vyasa’s Bhagavadgita was side-tracked by Sri Sankaracarya in his commentary, and was given such a pro-renunciation twist, that, the Bhagavadgita was thenceforward generally regarded as a ‘Gospel of Retirement’. As circumstances would have it, Sri Sankaracarya’s Gita-Commentary broadly synchronised with the conquest of Bharat by the foreigners and the consequent feeling of frustration in the minds of the Indian Commonality—rendering it willingly receptive to a ‘Gospel of Passivity’ towards wordly affairs.

This served as a welcome tool in the hands of foreign politicians and missionaries, who made a capital out of it, and nailed a strong belief in the brains of the Westernized young generation of the Bharat, that the root-cause of the all-round fall of the Indians lay in the defeatist mentality fostered by the “Fly-away!” -attitude of the Hindu Philosophy, the representative scripture of which was the Bhagavadgita! Dazzled by the glamour of the World-conquering Western Civilization, the English-Educated intelligentsia of the nineteenth-century Bharat was completely misled by this strategic propaganda, and it gradually developed such a deep inferiority-complex, that, it was considered an essential feature of one’s progressiveness, to refer to the Hindu-Philosophy as “Defeatist”, “Run-away”, or “Pessimistic”, whenever an opportunity offered itself.

It was the memorable victory of Swāmi Vivekānanda in Chicago-Convention of World Religions, that disillusioned the World-intelligentsia as regards the real nature of the Hindu-Philosophy. In his historic address there, Swāmi

Vivekānanda brought the inspiring dynamism of the Vedānta-Philosophy to the fore-front in such a convincing and torrential oration, that, the representatives of the World-Religions stood dumb-founded, and instinctively rose up to hail that Harbinger of Dynamic Hinduism!

On his return to his Motherland, he made an extensive tour of Bharat, preaching the ‘Gospel of Dynamic Hinduism’, and stressing the rousing exhortation of the Bhagavadgītā as summed up in “Work alone is thy lot!”<sup>1</sup> He proclaimed, that, “Away with this pussilanimity of yours! It does not behove you Cast off your feeble-mindedness, and stand valiently up for fight!”<sup>2</sup> was the arch stone of the Bhagavadgītā Architecture. Following fast in his footsteps, Swāmi Ramatirtha also visited America, and kept the American audience spell-bound by his enlightening elucidations of the dynamic Vedānt-Philosophy including the Bhagavadgita.

The reaction of Indian public to the rousing exhortations of these two veterans of the Vedānta-Philosophy was a mixed one. The younger generation hailed it with great enthusiasm, while the older one was strongly sceptic, due to the gripping hold the Acārya Trio’s<sup>3</sup> commentaries had on their minds. A different interpretation of a few verses here and there, or a novel exposition of some portions of the Gītā text, were not enough to dislodge the faith they had enshrined in their hearts for those personalities. A full-fledged new commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, logically treating every syllable, every word and every sentence in the Gītā, was essential for the purpose — nay, even that too was not sufficient. It was even still more essential, that, the person trying his hand at such a Herculean task ought to have enthroned himself in the hearts of the common people by his selfless service of the society and the Humanity, in general. For, *the allegiance of the Public-at-Large to any ideology is never governed so much by the logic of its exposition as by the magic of the personality of its exponent.*

Such a rare combination of qualities was witnessed when Lok. Tilak published, in 1915, his famous commentary on the Bhagavadgita under the title ‘Shrimad-Bhagavadgītā-Rahasya’ commonly known ‘Gītā-Rahasya’ only. He had earned, by this time, international reputation as a scholar, by his fundamental researches in Vedic antiquities (Comprised in his ‘Orian’ and the ‘Arctic Home in the Vedas’), and had at the same time won the hearts of the Indian commonalty by his selfless service in the fearless struggle for India’s freedom, over

1 कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते । गो. अ. २-श्लो. ४७)

2 क्लैव्यं मास्म गमःपार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते । क्षुद्रं हृदयदीर्घं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परंतप ॥ (गो.अ.२-श्लो३)

3 श्रीशंकराचार्य, श्रीरामानुजाचार्य and श्रीमध्वाचार्य



a prolonged period of 40 years, against the mighty Bureaucratic Rule of the British. His study of the Bhagavadgita and the Upanisadic Philosophy was both vast and deep, scrutinising capacity very keen, his power of persuasion marvellous and command over the Marathi Language, simply unique! And to crown all this, he had a wonderful knack of marshalling his arguments so as to hem in his opponent, without giving him a clue as to where he is being led! He had thus, all the qualities in an ample measure, that go to make a successful commentator.

Similarly, all the factors necessary to secure a favourable pre-publication publicity, were conspicuously present in the case of the Gītā-Rahasya. Though the British Bureaucracy had maintained an iron curtain about Lok. Tilak's activities in the Mandalay jail, the news had, somehow, leaked out, that, he was deeply engrossed in writing a full-fledged commentary on the Bhagavadgītā, a few glimpses of which had previously been permitted to some of his bosom friends like Shri Dadasaheb Khaparde, or Shri Dajisaheb Khare. As it was a matter of grave uncertainty whether, or not, he would survive the long sentence of six years, it was commonly expected that the anticipated book would convey his last message to his countrymen, in some form or the other. The high expectancy of the public about the contents of the book reached its climax, when it was rumoured, that, it was sure to revolutionize the current concept about the objective of the Bhagavadgītā. The public imagination enjoyed a thrill of sublimation when it was pointed out, that, the birth of the preacher of the Bhagavadgītā (viz. Śrikriṣṇa) had taken place in the Jail of Kounsa, and Lok. Tilak's commentary on it was also taking shape in the jail of the British!

It was, therefore, no wonder, that, Lok. Tilak's Gītā-Rahasya was hailed by the Indian public with unparalleled enthusiasm, when it was published in Poona, following his release from the Mandalay Jail in 1914. The number of copies of the book sold on the very day of publication broke all previous records of the sale of philosophical publications. The first edition of 10,000 copies was sold out within three months; and Lok. Tilak had the satisfaction of seeing 20,000 copies of his Gītā-Rahasya being sold in his life-time. This number would have reached a far higher target, had the second edition not been delayed, owing to his pre-occupation in the Home-Rule Movement from 1916 to 1920—the year of his death. Gītā-Rahasya was translated into seven other languages—viz. Hindi, Gujarathi, Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and English. Thus, the aggregate number of copies sold rose to the tune of 1,00,000 within a very short period of less than five years. This is, perhaps, a World-record of the sales of a modern philosophical book.

The contents of the book amply justified the high hopes entertained about

it by the public. Its attractive alignment, forceful phraseology, enlightening elucidations, copious quotations, convincing criticism, decisive deductions, minute comparative study of the Western and the Oriental philosophies, and lastly the carrying fluency that made the reader rush ahead with it—all these rare qualities literally rendered Gita-Rahasya a favourite gem with the layman and the learned alike ! It easily attracted the orthodoxy by its unmistakable advocacy of the Sanatan Vaidic Dharma, while the English-educated Intelligentsia was deeply impressed by its novel interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā, as a treatise on the Hindu-Ethics that probed the problem to depths that immensely surpassed those that were reached by any other Western or Eastern Ethicists.

The main proposition of Gita-Rahasya was as novel, as it was revolutionary. It vehemently attacked the theory of Sri Sankarāchārya, that the ultimate Realization of the Reality was possible through Renunciation only; and fearlessly advocated the theory that the Bhagavadgītā was preached, not as a prelude to bid good-bye to the worldly life, but, on the contrary, to serve as a means to sublimate the worldly life itself, so as to raise it gradually to the highest rung of the ladder, viz., the final Emancipation. It was significantly pointed out therein, that, the Bhagavadgītā-guidance was to be availed of, not at the fag end of one's declining years, but on the very threshold of one's prime of youth. Lok Tilak summarily dismissed Sri Śankarācharya's dogma, that self-knowledge and work (worldly activities) were diametrically opposed to each other as light and darkness; and established in its place, with apt illustrations, the obverse dictum that work, without emotional attachment, was not only not opposed to spiritual progress, but was positively helpful for it. He went a step further and demonstrated, that, of the two possible alternatives of behaviour after self-knowledge, the one favouring the continuance of worldly duties as before, was considered by Śri Kriśna to be superior to the other that entailed total abstention from all worldly ties. For, the active type of a saint serves as a safe guide for the commonality in the performance of their day-to-day household duties, without degrading himself (the active saint), in the slightest degree, from the high eminence already reached by him; while the passive saint, heedless of what happens to the rest of the world, is as good as lost to the society in which he lives, and betrays a sort of deficiency in the thoroughness of his own unison with the all-pervading Almighty inasmuch as he treats his own entity as being separate from the rest of the society.

Lok. Tilak makes a very good case by pointing out here, that, the Almighty Narayan thinks it incumbent, even on himself, to condescend to take birth in this mortal world and to resort to worldly activities in order to uphold the

cause of Justice and Righteousness, and to save the worlds from decadence.<sup>1</sup> He would, therefore, naturally expect His beloved – the liberated souls to emulate Him, and guide the commonality by their own scrupulous discharge of their wordly duties. He (The Almighty) has unmistakably expressed this wish of His in the famous couplet<sup>2</sup> ( Gita chapter III–Verse 25th ) which enjoins that, the enlightened soul who wishes to guide the masses on to the proper path, should observe his temporal duties as zealously – but with detachment – as the unenlightened masses observe theirs with absorbing attachment. Nay – the Lord goes even to the extent of denouncing the defaulters in this respect, as totally misconceived, perverse, and doomed to destruction !<sup>3</sup>

Finally, Lok. Tilak deals a decisive blow at the Renunciation cult, by denying the very possibility of anybody remaining inactive, while alive ! For, he says, remaining alive is in itself an activity; and further remarks, playfully, that the Renunciation cult was a cult of living persons, to be sure! They cannot, therefore, be called ‘ Renunciators’ in the fitness of things. How can one reconcile the Herculean activity of Śrī Śankar cārya in establishing the supremacy of the Vedant Philosophy and in promulgating the comprehensive worship of the five principal dieties<sup>4</sup> to ameliorate the then conflicting sections of the Hindu religion, with the ‘Total Renunciation’ theory which he (Śrī Śankarācārya) advocated? In the face of such an amazing activity throughout his life, who can dare to call him a ‘ Renunciator ’? asks Lokmanya Tilak - and emphatically maintains, that, Śrī Śankarācārya was a thorough ‘Activist’ by conduct, though apparently a ‘Recluse’ by his rouse apparel!<sup>5</sup>. “ Thus it will be crystal clear,” says Lok Tilak, “that, *action being unavoidable to one and all alike, to do one’s duty with attached diligence,*<sup>6</sup> is the only way open to mankind.”

When one takes a bird’s-eye-view of Lok. Tilak’s line of argument one is aptly reminded of the old parable of ‘The Arab and the Camel.’ A certain camel, finding it unbearable to remain outside the tent in the biting cold, requested the indwelling Arab just to allow it to put its head inside his tent. The

- 1 परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् । धर्मसंस्थानार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥  
(गी. ४-८)
- उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्वां कर्मवेदहम् । संकरस्य च कर्तास्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥  
(गी. ३-२४)
- 2 सक्ताःकर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत । कुर्याद्विवांस्तथासक्तःचिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥  
(गी. ३-२५)
- 3 ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् । सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥  
(गी. ३-३२)
- 4-पंचायतन-पूजा. 5-काषायवस्त्रपरिधान. 6 अनासक्त-(कर्म)दक्षता.

Arab, moved with pity at the creature's plight, readily agreed. After a while the camel entreats the Arab to let it put its fore-legs inside, to serve as a support to its drooping head. This, too, the Arab concedes. Some time later, the camel appeals to the Arab's philanthropic instinct and pleads for the co-existence of them both, in the tent. The Arab finds it unbecoming to reject the equitable proposal, and admits the camel inside. As the night progresses, the camel gradually stretches out its legs and its long neck, so that, by the dawn the Arab finds himself pushed entirely outside the tent!

Lok. Tilak has followed exactly the same strategy in his argument against Sri Sankarācārya. He commences his argument by pleading equal status for 'Activism' with Passivism so far as salvation was concerned. When he feels sure of having thoroughly gained that point, he artfully raises the issue of the additional advantage of the guidance of the commonality by self-example secured by Activism and claims superiority for it on that account. Then, he gradually takes a different turn and asserts, on the authority of Sri Krishna himself, that the 'guidance by self-example' is not a mere by-product of Activism, but is an essential attribute of every spiritual path that deserves to reach salvation. Subsequently he affirms that the cult of Passivism disables itself in this respect by its own element of inaction, and thus precludes its chance of even a parity with Activism. And lastly, by disputing the very possibility of anybody remaining inactive while alive, he (Lok. Tilak) refuses to admit the very existence of a separate cult of Passivism at all— thus driving it out of the arena of contest, and reserving the monopoly of the Emancipation - Route for his Activist-cult alone!

Having thus satisfactorily accomplished the main objective of his commentary, Lok. Tilak could conveniently turn his attention to embodying therein additional aspects of academic interest that would lend his book a comprehensive outlook, and render it more harmonious with the modern taste for comparative treatment of subjects ethical. With this intention, he added therein chapters discussing the place of Bhagavadgītā in the Vedantic triad,<sup>1</sup> the relation of the Bhagavadgītā to the Buddhistic Scriptures and the Bible, and a critical comparative study of the views of all prominent Western philosophers. This addenda gave the book an air of all-round sufficiency, and left nothing to be desired. It was, so to say, almost a final word in Gītā - commentary !

The author of the present article was in his early teens when Gītā-Rahasya was first published in 1915. He had always entertained high reverence for Lok. Tilak since his (present author's) childhood, and had a deep admiration for

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1-प्रस्थानत्रयी i. e. The upaniṣds. the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavadgita



his (Lok. Tilak's) signal service to the Motherland. In his (present author's) college-days, he had an opportunity to read the Gītā-Rahasya as an additional text. That gave him an intensive insight in the achievements of Lok. Tilak in revolutionising the out-look of his countrymen and the foreigners, alike, regarding the central message of the Bhagavadgītā. He (present author) was so jubilant over his (Lok. Tilak's) fearless onslaughts on the bigoted beliefs of the bygone commentators—the luring logic of his argumentation, and the rare skill of putting the opponent on the wrong side,—that he (present author) voluntarily undertook to recommend Gita-Rahasya to everyone of his college - colleagues saying that such a beautiful commentary on the Bhagavad-gita had never been written by anybody before, and was not likely to be written in the future too! Gita-Rahasya was to him (present author) a veritable Paradise in Gita-commentary!!

The present author enjoyed this Paradise of his imagination for over a decade, and would feign have continued to reside therein, for ever. But as the Time-Serpent<sup>1</sup> wellknown for its crooked course, would have it, he (present author) accidentally happened to taste the fruit of the prohibited tree of (contradictory) knowledge! One day, after a long lapse of about twelve years, a Mysorean friend of his, named Parthasarathi, presented him a copy of Marathi Gītā-Rahasya, which was purchased by his (the friend's) father in 1915, through sheer veneration he felt for Lok Tilak, as an acknowledged leader of India's fight for freedom. It had remained unread, or even unopened, for nearly 18 years, and had started decaying through disuse. So, wishing a better luck to the book, the friend made a gift of it to the present author, seeing that he was Marathi man and sensing some philosophical symptoms in him. The gift encouraged the present author to make a fresh attempt to evaluate the Gita-Rahasya.

In the mean time, a marked change had come over in the mental set-up of the present author. The former easy credulity of the early youth had given place to a more critical scrutinizing attitude, and a tendency to go to the root of every problem had also considerably increased. Now he was not prone to take for granted every assertion of Lok. Tilak, unless it stood the fire-ordeal of stern logic. Much new light had, moreover, been shed on the subject by the reviews and new publications of renown, both for and against Gītā-Rahasya. As a result, some doubts had begun to crop up regarding the soundness of some of Lok. Tilak's views, and the illustrations quoted by him in their support.

The first impact of variance came, when Lok. Tilak declared, that, to give up work (Duty) is an idea that can not fit in well with the fundamental tenets of

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1-कालसर्प— resembling the Satanic Serpent of the "Paradise Lost"

Gītā, at all. If that were true, how could Gītā, then, admit in chapter V, verse 2,<sup>1</sup> that there are two ways of achieving realization—one by performance of duty, and the other by resorting to non-action? Gītā ought to have really ruled out the non-action-cult as ultra virous. Lok. Tilak goes even a step further, and cites the examples of persons who attained their salvation by the path of non-action. This is as good as giving photographs of persons, whom one has already declared to be unborn!

The next shock of contradiction came, when the present author happened to read the dialogue between Śuka and Janaka<sup>2</sup> in the Śantiparva of Mahābhārat Lok. Tilak counts Janaka as the foremost among those who had attained the final realization by the path of incessant performance of duty till the end of life, and who regarded guidance of commoners by self-example<sup>3</sup> as an essential obligation of a realized person. But, in the dialogue mentioned above, Śuka pointedly asks Janaka if it were incumbent on an aspirant, who is well-equipped for the further stages of his spiritual progress, to go through the intervening stages viz, householdership<sup>4</sup> and forest-dwelling,<sup>5</sup> at all. Here one naturally expects Janaka to say, that it is definitely so incumbent, because of his obligation to guide the Commoners by self-example. But strangely enough, Janaka disowns the incumbency of those intervening stages point blank, and asks, on the contrary, as to what use they could be to such a superior aspirant! Here, the present author could not help feeling that, Lok. Tilak's most dependable witness, Janaka had grievously betrayed him (Lok. Tilak), and had proved to be a 'turn coat' to the cult of Unending Activism!<sup>6</sup>

Nor is the above example of Janaka's betrayal of Lok. Tilak the only one of its kind. He repeats it in the Śantiparva, after his discourse with Yajñavalkya. Lok. Tilak has emphatically asserted in the Gita-Rahasya, that, at the end of that discourse Janaka experienced complete unison with Brahman without being required to cast off his kingship and take to asceticism (Gītā-Rahasya—pages 318, 325, 327, 331, 337). But, the Mahābhārata declares in unambiguous terms, that, after that discourse Janaka bestowed the responsibility of the kingdom on his son, and having given all his personal property in charity, took to asceticism and to the study of the science of Yoga (Meditation). Here

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2 शुकजनकसंवाद (शां. प. अ. 326, श्लो. 20-21 and 25 to 27 )

3 लोकसंग्रह.

4 गार्हस्थ्य.

5 वानप्रस्थाश्रम.      6 आमरणान्त कर्मयोग.

his (Lok. Tilak's) signal service to the Motherland. In his (present author's) college-days, he had an opportunity to read the Gītā-Rahasya as an additional text. That gave him an intensive insight in the achievements of Lok. Tilak in revolutionising the out-look of his countrymen and the foreigners, alike, regarding the central message of the Bhagavadgītā. He (present author) was so jubilant over his (Lok. Tilak's) fearless onslaughts on the bigoted beliefs of the bygone commentators—the luring logic of his argumentation, and the rare skill of putting the opponent on the wrong side,—that he (present author) voluntarily undertook to recommend Gita-Rahasya to everyone of his college - colleagues saying that such a beautiful commentary on the Bhagavad-gita had never been written by anybody before, and was not likely to be written in the future too! Gita-Rahasya was to him (present author) a veritable Paradise in Gita-commentary!!

The present author enjoyed this Paradise of his imagination for over a decade, and would feign have continued to reside therein, for ever. But as the Time-Serpent<sup>1</sup> wellknown for its crooked course, would have it, he (present author) accidentally happened to taste the fruit of the prohibited tree of (contradictory) knowledge! One day, after a long lapse of about twelve years, a Mysorean friend of his, named Parthasarathi, presented him a copy of Marathi Gītā-Rahasya, which was purchased by his (the friend's) father in 1915, through sheer veneration he felt for Lok Tilak, as an acknowledged leader of India's fight for freedom. It had remained unread, or even unopened, for nearly 18 years, and had started decaying through disuse. So, wishing a better luck to the book, the friend made a gift of it to the present author, seeing that he was Marathi man and sensing some philosophical symptoms in him. The gift encouraged the present author to make a fresh attempt to evaluate the Gita-Rahasya.

In the mean time, a marked change had come over in the mental set-up of the present author. The former easy credulity of the early youth had given place to a more critical scrutinizing attitude, and a tendency to go to the root of every problem had also considerably increased. Now he was not prone to take for granted every assertion of Lok. Tilak, unless it stood the fire-ordeal of stern logic. Much new light had, moreover, been shed on the subject by the reviews and new publications of renown, both for and against Gītā-Rahasya. As a result, some doubts had begun to crop up regarding the soundness of some of Lok. Tilak's views, and the illustrations quoted by him in their support.

The first impact of variance came, when Lok. Tilak declared, that, to give up work (Duty) is an idea that can not fit in well with the fundamental tenets of

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1-कालसर्प—resembling the Satanic Serpent of the "Paradise Lost"

Gītā, at all. If that were true, how could Gītā, then, admit in chapter V, verse 2,<sup>1</sup> that there are two ways of achieving realization—one by performance of duty, and the other by resorting to non-action? Gītā ought to have really ruled out the non-action-cult as ultra virous. Lok. Tilak goes even a step further, and cites the examples of persons who attained their salvation by the path of non-action. This is as good as giving photographs of persons, whom one has already declared to be unborn!

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Janaka doubly betrays Lok. Tilak : first by giving up his responsibility of guiding the commoners by self-example, and secondly, *by commencing the study of Yoga*, which was, in itself, an undeniable proof of his unachieved salvation while attending to his duties as a king.

The last stroke that broke the back of the present author's belief in the invincibility of Lok. Tilak's theory of Unending-Activism till salvation, was the behaviour of Lord Śrīkr̥ṣṇa himself, while bidding adieu to this world. In the Mousala Parva of the Mahabharata, Lord Śrīkr̥ṣṇa is described to have retired to the forest to practise penance, shelving his own sacred duty of protecting the womenfolk of the Yādavās (after the fratricide at Prabhāsapattana) and of escorting them safely to their homes, on the shoulders of Arjuna and Vasudeo who were both away from the scene. The Lord did not have even the patience to wait till Arjuna arrived. He forthwith left Prabhāsapattana, leaving the helpless womenfolk at the mercy of the devilish dacoits, who abducted a major portion of them before Arjuna actually arrived on the scene! What a painful contrast between the precept and the practice of the much applauded preacher of the path of disinterested devotion to duty till death!<sup>1</sup>

Even stranger still, is the reaction of the witnesses to the scene. Nobody—not even Arjuna himself, to whom the doctrine of life-long devotion to duty is alleged to have been preached—is reported to have expressed his astonishment at the strange disparity between the Lord's precept and His actual practice on this occasion. On the contrary, they are reported to have shown high respect for the Lord's such demeanour!<sup>2</sup> This clearly means, that, they did not see any disparity between the Lord's present demeanour and his preaching in the Bhagavadgītā. That, in its turn, proves retrospectively, that, the Lord must not have preached Unending Activism till death,<sup>1</sup> in the Bhagavadgītā at all!

There is, moreover, an aspect of the process of self-realization, as described in the Bhagavadgītā, that goes against Lok. Tilak's dictum of Unending-Activism till realization.<sup>3</sup> In chapter IV of the Bhagavadgītā it is enjoined, that even for the first glimpses of the soul (self), the aspirant has to make his mind entirely dormant at the centre of his heart, and has also to banish all thoughts from his head<sup>4</sup> Then only he can get rid of his fickle mood,<sup>5</sup> and

1 आमरणान्त कर्मयोग.

2 मौसलपर्व (महाभारत)

3 आमरणान्त कर्मयोग till self-realization.

4 आत्मसंस्थं मनःकृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ (गी. -6-25).

5 शान्तरजसम् । (गी. 6-27)

being spotless,<sup>1</sup> can enjoy the bliss of spiritual Beatitude.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, while summarising events in the final stage of self-realization,<sup>3</sup> the Lord entails a total restraint over the entire movements of the aspirant – bodily, verbal, as well as mental<sup>4</sup>—and advises him to give himself up to incessant meditation.<sup>5</sup> This stage, therefore, clearly precludes the aspirant from getting himself involved in engagements of any kind – selfish, sublimatory, or even humanitarian. If such a perfect inactivity is essential for even the first glimpses of the soul, how much more essential would it be for achieving the final Realization? It is therefore impossible to conceive an aspirant in that stage, engaging himself in any kind of worldly activity – individualistic, exemplary, or even philanthropic.

When one examines the theory of ‘Unending Activity till Realization’ in the light of the three moods,<sup>6</sup> one is convinced of its untenability at a glance. Activity spells the effective existence of the Restive<sup>7</sup> – mood, and it is this very mood, according to the theory of ‘Beatitude through moods-transcendence,<sup>8</sup> that has to be reduced to complete dormancy before the aspirant can get even the first glimpse of the Reality. But, the unending activity of the Activist must necessarily mean unending presence of the Restive-mood in him, and that, in turn, must imply an impossibility of the aspirant transcending the three moods—which, in other words, means his evident inability to achieve Salvation, so long as he is active. Activity and Beatitude are, thus, poles apart!

These findings shook the very foundations of the present author’s implicit faith in Gitā – Rahasya. His Paradise in Gitā – commentary was thus completely lost!!

Neither the Total Renunciation theory of Śri Śankarācārya, nor the Unending-Activity theory of Lok. Tilak, could thus stand the test of critical scrutiny. What next, then? Impenetrable void? Or, an endless ambiguity? That fairly deserves to be the subject for the next article.



1 अकल्मषम् । (गी. 6-27)

2 प्रशान्तमनसं हृद्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् । उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥ (गी. 6-27)

3 निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ (गी. 18-50)

4 यतवाक्कायमानसः । (गी. 18-52)

5 ध्यानयोगवरो नित्यम् । (गी. 18-52)

6 गुणत्रय—सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस्.

7 रज-गुण.

8 त्रिगुणातीतत्व

# Revolution in Ideas in the Gita.

By Dr. S. N. L. Shrivastava, M. A., D. Litt.

One of the salient features of the *Bagawad Gītā* is its transformation or transmutation of current contemporary ideas into ideas with larger meaning and higher significance. Imperceptably and without seeming to be striking a jarring note, the *Gītā* lifts up its readers from the planes of conventional understanding to those of higher understanding and broader perspectives. Of such transformation and enlargement of conventional ideas, I shall give some illustrations here.

## I Conventional Morality.

Those who have had the opportunity of reading Bergson's last great work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, know it well how the great philosopher draws a telling distinction between the closed or conventional morality and the open or absolute morality, the former comprised of moral precepts and maxims indoctrinated by a particular society into the minds of its members in the interest of its safety and self-preservation and the latter consisting of moral truths which break the shells of customary and conventional morality and are gained through the intuitive leaps of moral geniuses endowed with extraordinary intuitive receptivity. "In all times there have arisen exceptional men," says Bergson, "incarnating this morality. Before the saints of Christianity, mankind has known the sages of Greece, the prophets of Israel, the Arhats of Buddhism, and others besides. It is to them that men have always turned for that complete morality which we had best called absolute morality." Conventional morality is the society-given morality, the morality of social pressure. What is usually understood as "the verdict of conscience" is nothing more than "the verdict which would be given by the social self".

Every individual, born and brought up as he necessarily is into some social group or other, assimilates into himself the moral, religious and social ideas of the group in which he is born. He assimilates the moral ideas of his social environment. That is the conventional morality into which he is born and brought up. Arjun was no exception to the general rule. He was born and brought up in the best ideals of the traditional morality of his day - love and

kindness for one's own kinsfolk, relations and friends, respect for elders and preceptors, respect for the rules of caste and clan (the *jātidharmas* and the *kuladharmas*) etc. All these had such a firm grip on his mind-his fighting in the battle against his elders and preceptors meant to him a murdering of all these cherished ideals and he found himself plunged in the abysmal depths of grief and despondency. At this juncture Shri Krishna intervenes to point out to Arjun the greatest moral "ought" which devours all lesser ones - the fulfilment of *svadharma* in the interest of *lokasamgraha*. When wider interests are at stake, the narrower ones relating to friends and relations, elders and preceptors, *jāti* and *kula*, howsoever cherished by conventional morality and valid though they be in all normal circumstances, pale into insignificance. The interests of the collectivity wider than family and friends, caste and clan, have stronger claims than those of the latter. When the hour comes, friends and relations, *jātidharmas* and *kuladharmas*, have all to be sacrificed in the wider interests of *lokasamgraha*.

The need of the hour for warriors like Arjun was to fight for victory in a war which was a righteous war, a *dharma - yudhha*, a war for the victory of *dharma* over *adharma*. If Arjun had recoiled from the battle-field out of compassion and reverence for his friends and relations, elders and preceptors - the cherished ideals of conventional morality, he would have ensured an easy success for the unrighteous and unjust and a reign of tyranny and terror for people in general. That eventuality had to be avoided at all costs. It was no time for being swayed by family affections and the considerations of castes and clans. On such occasions, it is a sheer waste of time and energy and a sure source of confusion to debate about the rightness or wrongness of killing as such.

Not that the conventional ideas of morality are wrong. They are all right as far as they go. But there arise occasions when the moral situation has to be viewed from unwonted angles of vision and broader perspectives. That is what the Lord asked Arjun to do.

## 2. Vaidika Ritualism.

A careful reader of the *Bhagwad-Gītā* will not fail to discover that the *Gītā* has an attitude of its own towards *Vaidika* ritualism. From times immemorial the followers of the *Veda* have been divided into two camps. The one consisted of those for whom the ritualistic portion of the *Veda* constituted its essential core and the performance of various sacrifices and rituals for the fulfilment of worldly desires and the attainment of enjoyments in heaven the main purport of its teaching. These were known as the *karma-kāṇḍins*. The other camp consisted of those who thought precious little of rituals and



their temporary gains in this world and in the pursuit of knowledge which gives immortality a far more worthier ideal to be pursued. These were known as the *jnāna-kāndins*. For them the cream of the *Vedic* wisdom, finale of its teachings, the *Vedānta*, was contained in the *Upanishads*. To which camp does the Teacher of the *Gita* belong? As in all matters, so here too, the *Gita* exhibits its conciliatory and catholic attitude. The *Gita* is not in favour of disturbing the faith of those who are attached to ritualism - - *na buddhibhed m janayedajnanam karmasāginam* - 'One should not disturb the minds of the ignorant who are attached to ritualistic performance' (G. III - 26). But the hint is there that one attached to ritualism is *ajna*, a Not-knower (of the Higher Path of Knowledge).

The catholic Teacher of the *Bhagwad-Gītā* advises those who seek the favour of the gods for obtaining the good things of life to propitiate them by the sacrificial offerings (G. III, 10-12). But no *karma* (ritual) need be performed by the man who has turned his back against all pleasure obtainable here and hereafter and has made the Ātman alone the Supreme End of his life :

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेवस्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥-G-III-17.

One of the most valuable lessons which our *Sanātana dharma* teaches us and one by which the whole world would be profited in paying attention to is this that a man in the course of his spiritual evolution must be allowed to take up whatever is suited to his nature and temperament and his mental growth at that particular stage of evolution. In keeping with this spirit the *Gita* permits ritualism to the less developed, to the seekers of enjoyment. But to those who are for some thing higher, the *Gita* like the *Upanishads*, points out the limitations thereof.

The *Gita* echoes the voice of the *Upanishads* that the gains of performing sacrifices are but temporary. The performers of sacrifices who go to heaven, enjoy there for sometime and then return to the world of mortals. (G. IX, 20-21). That is the inevitable fate the pleasure-seekers who follow the way of *Vaidika* ritualism (*trāidharmān anuprapānā, Kāmak mā.*)

#### The Brahma-Sutras on the dispensibility and indispensibility of Vaidic Ritualism.

It may be noted here that the *Gita* is in complete agreement with the *Brahma-Sutras* in so far as the dispensibility of *Vaidika* Ritualism for the

knowers of the *Ātman* is concerned. The Sutras 25 and 26 of the fourth *Pāda* of the third chapter of the *Brahma Sutrās* clarify the issue concerning the indispensibility and otherwise of *Vaidika* Ritualism.

The 25th *Sutra* clearly says: *ata eva chāgnindhanādyanapeksā*, 'For this very reason there is no need of the lighting of the fire and so on.' This *Sutra* is a reaffirmation of what is stated in the very first *Sutra* of the *Pāda Purusārtho'tah shabdāditi: Bādarāyanah*, "Bādarāyana is of opinion that the Supreme End of man is realizable (by Knowledge alone regardless of *Vaidika* ritualism)".

Commenting on the 25th *Sutra* Shankara has pertinently written:

अत एव च विद्यायाः पुरुषार्थहेतुत्वाद्गनीन्धनादीन्याश्रमकर्माणि विद्याया  
स्वार्थसिद्धौ नापेक्षितव्यानीत्याद्यस्यैवाधिकरणस्य फलमुपसंहरत्यधिकविवक्षया ।

That is, "For this very reason, Knowledge being the means to the realization of the Supreme End and the purpose being served by Knowledge alone, the rituals enjoined on the various *āshramas* are rendered dispensable. Thus the *Sutrakāra* brought to a conclusion the topic of the first *adhikarana*, intending to make some further remarks."

Lest the people may run away with the idea that the *Vaidika* rituals, the performance of *yajnas* etc., are altogether dispensable, that is, dispensable in all cases and at all stages, the *Sutrakāra* adds the following *Sutra* (Su. 26th). *sarvāpeksh . cha yajnādishruterashvavat*, "And all (*Āshram-karmas*) are intended to be performed as there is the *shruti* injunction about the performance of *yajnās* etc; it is like (the use of) a horse".

Well, is this *Sutra* about the indispensibility of *Vaidika* ritualism a contradiction of the former *Sutra* declaring its dispensibility? No, it is not and it could not be, unless we are prone to discredit the author of the *Brahma Sutrās* as a person capable of making contradictory statements. The word, *Ashvavat*, 'like a horse' clarifies the whole situation. Just as a horse is indispensable for being yoked to a chariot, till we reach the gate of a house, which is our destination and can be dispensed with or unyoked after the destination has been reached; or, as *Shankara* explains it, a horse is indispensable for drawing a chariot but dispensable for drawing a plough, so also, the performance of rituals enjoined on the *āshramas* is indispensable as means to the origination (*upapatti*) of the Supreme Knowledge (*yajñādīnām vidyāsāadhanabhāvam darshayati*); but once the Supreme knowledge has dawned, all rituals become dispensable. *Shankara* admirably brings the discussion to a close in the last line of his commentary on the *Sutra* :

evamāshramkarmāni vidyayā phalasiddhau nāpekshyante, utpattau chāpekshyanta iti.

Thus the *Gita* view is not in disagreement with that of the *Brahma Sutras*. To resume the topic in the *Gita*, in the 45th verse of the second chapter quoted above, Shri Krishna asks Arjun to go beyond the *three gunas* and yet advises him to be *nityasattvastha*, 'ever poised in *sattva*'. The contradiction is only seeming. The actuating *rajas* sways the mind to and fro, this way and that way; the obstructive *tamas* ever brings obstacles in the path of progress towards the goal. So *rajas* and *tamas* have to be put down first and subordinated to *sattva*. Then from the *sāttvic* plane the passage to the complete transcendence of all the three *gunas* (*nistraigunya*) becomes easy.

Not only has *Shri Krishna* pointed out the superiority of the Path of Knowledge over that of *Vaidika* Ritualism, he gave a new and enlarged meaning to the concept of *yajna* itself. *Yajna* understood in its gross material form is the pouring of the material oblation (*havi*) into the material fire. That is the image of *yajna* which ordinarily comes to the mind. *Shri Krishna* extends this monolithic meaning of *yajna* and brings within the pale of the extended meaning a number of *yajnas*, with changing entities in place of the oblation and the fire. There is a wide scale of *yajnas*, the Material *Yajna* (*dravyamaya yajna*) or the *yajna* of pouring oblation into the fire; the *yajna* in the form of *tapas* (*tapoyajna*); *yoga-yajna* in the form of varieties of *prānāyāma* and other yogic disciplines; *yajna* in the form of elevating study (*svādhyāya-yajna*); and climaxing all, *jnāna-yajna* or *yajna* in the form of the Supreme Knowledge. The highest form of *yajna* is *jnāna-yajna*, the knowledge that all is *Brahman*, the entire paraphernalia of *yajna* is *Brahman*—the act of offering is *Brahman*, the oblation offered is *Brahman*, the receiving fire is *Brahman* and the sacrificer too is *Brahman*. The Goal which the man of knowledge reaches is *Brahman* Itself; the process of *samādhi* whereby he reaches the goal is itself an activity of *Brahman*.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नी ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ -G. IV-24.

In all other forms of *yajna* there is a 'god' to be propitiated but in this highest form of it, the *jnāna-yajna*, *Brahman* Itself is the fire and *yajna* itself the oblation poured into It .

देवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।

ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञैर्देवोपजुह्वति ॥ G. IV-25.

The Highest Summit of knowledge is above all ideas of *yajna*.

**Sacrifice of senses and sense-objects in the  
Fire of Self-control.**

A necessary propaedeutic to the highest form of *yajna*, the Knowledge of Brahman as everything, is that form of *yajna* in which senses and sense-objects are poured as oblations into the fire of self-control.

“Some,” the *Gita* says, “offer the organ of hearing and other sense-organs as oblations into the fire of self-control (*samyamāgnisu*); while still others the sense-objects into the fire of the senses.” (G. IV-26)

What is the difference between the two forms of *yajna* stated above? The former is the earlier stage of practising restraint; the sense-allurements have to be restrained and burnt away in the fires of sense-control (*samyamāgnisu*). The latter is the subsequent stage when the sense-organs can retain their full play in apprehending the sense objects but with immunity from sense-allurements. The senses in themselves have become those blazing fires wherein are burnt away the alluring effects of the sense-objects. The senses perceive their objects, as they must in the normal course, but are not entrapped by them.

There are other yogins still who pour as oblations all the functionings of the sense-organs as well as those of the vital energies into the fire of the *Yoga* of self-control (*atma-samyama-yoga*) ignited by knowledge (G IV-27).

Thus there are varied forms of *yajna* performed by sages with solemn vows. The most exalted meaning which Shri Krishna has given to *yajna* is that according to which the entire course of life with all its activities is viewed as one stupendous sacrifice, an uninterrupted sacramental offering to the Divine. He who performs all activities in the spirit of *yajna* will have nullified the binding effects of all his *karmas* (*yajūyācharatah karma samagram praviliyate*, G. IV-23).

3. *Tyāga, Sanyāsa, Tapas and Dānam.*

The concepts of *tyaga*, *sanyasa*, *tapas* and *danam* are the most cherished and valued jewels in the treasure chest of the ethico-religious consciousness of India. The facile meanings of these terms have long fascinated the people of our country and continue to do so even today. In the name of *tyaga* and *sanyasa* more than fifty millions of the populace of India have become wandering monks decked in the ochre garb, most of them simply do-nothing idlers and parasites on society. One would certainly bow his head low at the feet of *sanyāsins* like the *Ādi Shankaracharya* or *Shri Ramanuj*, or *Swami Vivekananda* of immortal glory, but one would look in vain for a like of these in the



teeming millions that are moving in the ochre garb today and exploiting the credulous people in all manner of ways.

*Tapas* has been understood to mean self-mortification, often carried to extreme and fanciful lengths. The people's sense of *dānam* or charity is abominably exploited by the priest-craft and what is usually called "indiscriminate charity" is much in vogue.

Never before was the need greater than it is today of understanding the deeper and revolutionary meanings which *Shri Krishna* gave to these terms—*tyāga*, *sanyāsa*, *tapas* and *dānam*.

#### Tyāga and Sanyāsa.

The *locus classicus* of the *Gita* text in which the meanings of the words *tyāga*, and *sanyāsa* are summed up is the second verse of the eighteenth chapter :

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।  
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥

"The seers understand by *sanyāsa* the destruction of desire-propelled activities and the wise have defined *tyāga* as the renunciation of the fruits of all actions."

The *Gita*, at any rate, never attaches any significance to formal, external renunciation; it is the inner attitude of detachment which is of real importance. *Tyāga* has to be viewed from that stand-point and *sanyāsa* too. Who is the *sanyāsin* according to the *Gita* ?

"He is to be known as ever a *sanyāsin* who neither hates nor desires. Having gone beyond all dualities, O Mahabaho ! he is easily released from bondage," ( G. V-3 )

"He is a *sanyāsin* and a *yogin* too who does not desire the fruits of actions and yet does what is a duty unto him, not he who has ceased tending the sacrificial fire nor the inactive." ( G. VI-1 ).

The inner attitude of detachment is as much the essence of *sanyāsa* as of *yoga* and therefore it is not possible to draw a line of demarcation between the two. Who could ever be a *yogin* without the uprooting of the raving desires in the mind ?

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्वि पाण्डव ।  
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ -G. VI-2.

The man consummate in yoga, the *yogarūdhah* in the language of the Gita, is precisely the man who is a yogin inwardly and a man of action in his outer life.

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।

सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ G.VI-4

“ He is said to be Consummate in yoga when he craves not after the sense-objects or ( the fruits of ) actions and has renounced all desire-fufilling volitions. ” -G. VI-4

*Na karmasvanusajjate*, ‘ is not attached to actions ’ can only mean ‘ is not attached to the fruits or consequences of actions ’. It could never mean renunciation of activity which is the last thing the Gita would commend.

The seed of all desire is *saṁkalpa*. Therefore the axe must fall at the roots, the *saṁkalpas*.

### The Gita idea of Tapas.

Tapas is a glorious word rich in connotation. Literally the word means ‘heat’, the heat of creative energy which is the condition of all productivity. By his *tapas*, the scholar produces his great intellectual works, the artist his works of beauty, the scientist his discoveries and inventions, and so on. In the Vedic literature the word is used to signify that primordial heat or energy of the Creator by means of which he brought forth the entire creation, *sa tapas taptvā idam sarvam asrijat*. In an extended sense of its primary meaning, the word *tapas*, in course of time, came to mean that assiduous austerity which is the parent of finest spiritual efflorescence in man, the austerity by which man scales the great spiritual heights. It is this sense of austerity which has long since become current and it is with this meaning of the word that we are concerned with here. That austerity or *tapas* is the condition *sine qua non* of spiritual growth cannot be denied. But what the Gita objects to, and rightly so, is taking as the essence of *tapas*, an extreme and painful mortification of the flesh :

“ Those who practice excruciating austerities, not laid down in the *Shastras*, with arrogance and egotism and impelled by the force of their passions and desires, tormenting the aggregate of elements forming the body and Me also resident in the interior body, know them to be of devilish resolve,” G. XVII-5-6.

By this kind of austerity the *Buddha* once reduced himself to skin and bones and saw the futility of it and he too preached against its harmfulness.

The nature of *tapas* is described in the *Bhagvad-Gita* under a two-fold scheme of classification; first, as bodily, pertaining to speech and mental, and secondly, as *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*.

“The worship of god, the Brahmin, the preceptor and the wise, calmness and straightforwardness, *brahmacharya* and non-injury are said to constitute the *tapas* of the body.

Speech not hurtful to others, truthful, pleasant and beneficial as well as the habitual study of uplifting literature, constitute the *tapas* of speech.

Cheerfulness of mind, sobriety, silence, self-restraint and purification of dispositions constitute the *tapas* of the mind.

This three-fold *tapas*, when done with great reverential faith and without desire for fruits is said to be *sāttvika*.

When *tapas* is done for the sake of receiving honour, respect and worship and in a spirit of egoistic pride, it is said to be *rājasika*, unstable and fleeting.

That *tapas* is said to be *tāmasika* which is done in pursuance of misguided preconceptions and with the idea of inflicting pain on oneself and ruining others.

-G. XVII-14-19

### *Dānam,*

*Dānam* or charity (lit., giving alms) has ever been extolled in our country as a great virtue. In the popular mind charity is an investment for benefits in the other world. Much of the indiscriminate charity that we see in this country originates from this idea. Priests and *pund's* exploit credulous people to any length. Confident of *dānam* by the ‘pious’ and the merit-seekers, millions of able-bodied persons take to begging in our country. The number of rogues in the garb of *sādhus* is legion. In simple and clear words the *Gita* instructs us about *dānam*, right and wrong. Like *tapas*, *dānam* also is said to be of three kinds; *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika* :

“ That charity is said to be of the *sāttvika* kind which is done for its own sake and to a person from whom no benefit is to come in return. Besides the appropriateness of time, place and the deservingness of the recipient are also to be taken into consideration.

That charity is *rājasika* which is done with reluctance, with the idea of a benefit in return or with a view to some gain as its consequence.

That charity is said to be of the *tāmasika* kind which is done without considerations of appropriateness of time and place and of the deservingness of recipient and in a manner which evinces lack of respect for the recipient and humiliation to him.”

•G. XVII-20-22.



“ Sit silent, compose thy mind and make it pure and then happiness will know no bounds. God will certainly come and dwell in thy heart. This will be the result of thy long effort. Meditate time after time on God's name — Rama, Krishna, Hari I declare that this will surely come to pass if thou hast one pointed devotion. The uttering of the name of God, is indeed, an easy way of reaching him. One need not go to a distant forest. God will himself come to the house of a saint, ”

Shri Gurudev



# The Synthesis of Works, Knowledge and Devotion in the Gita.

B. R., Patwardhan,  
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## **1. Introductory :**

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of this subject, we have to take into account the situation from which the teaching has arisen. The teaching of the Gita must, therefore, be regarded not merely in the light of a general spiritual philosophy or ethical doctrine, but as bearing upon a practical crisis in the application of ethics and spirituality to human life. The philosophical teaching of the Gita is not, therefore, its most vital part, but the principal ideas woven into its complex harmony, are eternally valuable and valid.

## **2. Gita is no weapon for dialectical warfare :**

Whatever the system may be, it is not, as the commentator strives to make it, intended to support any exclusive school of philosophical thought or any one particular form of yoga. It is the manifestation of a vast synthetic mind and a rich synthetic experience. Like the earlier spiritual synthesis of the Upanishads, the Gita, for its own synthesis, avoids such rigid determination as would injure its universal comprehensiveness. Its aim is precisely opposite to that of the polemic commentators. The Gita is not a weapon for dialectical warfare; it is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience. Our object, then, in studying the Gita, should be to approach it for help and light and our aim must be to distinguish, its living message for the humanity.

## **3. The three significant things of the Gita :**

There are indeed three things in the Gita which are typical of the problems of the spiritual life; they are the divine personality of the teacher, his characteristic relations with his disciple and the occasion of his teaching. The teacher

is God himself Avatar, the disciple is the representative man of his age, close friend and chosen instrument of the Avatar; the occasion is the violent crisis of the war, in which Arjuna is called upon to act, when anguish and moral difficulty shock him and raise the whole question of the meaning of God in the world and the goal of human life and conduct.

#### **4. In the Gita it is the action which leads to knowledge :**

The figure of Lord Krishna may be taken as the symbol of the divine dealings with humanity; and the action in which his divine figure moves, is the whole wide action of man in life. The distinguishing feature of the Gita is that it is the culmination of such an action which gives rise to its teaching and assigns the high prominence to its gospel of works, not found in other Indian Scriptures. It is in the Gita that the Teacher reveals the secret of the necessity of action and the divinity behind the works. In the Gita it is the action which leads to the knowledge and in which the divine Knower is the secret Master of works and sacrifice and the Friend of the human peoples.

The Gita starts from the action and Arjuna is the man of action and not of knowledge, the fighter, never the seer or the thinker. So it is to be noted that Arjuna awakes through his senses to the meaning of his action. It is the sensational, emotional and moral revolt of the man, hitherto satisfied with action and its current standards (Dharmas). He therefore, takes refuge as a disciple with Krishna to have from him a clear rule of action by which he can confidently proceed. He does not ask for the secret of life or of the world, but for a Dharma. But the Teacher intends to lead him to this secret, so that he may act in a higher plane of life. The Teacher also wants to give him a new law of life and action high above the insufficient rule of ordinary human existence, by which the soul shall be free from the bondage of works and yet powerful to act and conquer. For the action must be performed, and the soul of the human being must not turn back in ignorance from the work it is here to do.

#### **5. The Gita preserves a perfectly equal balance between onesided interpretations :**

The next thing remains to form a clear conception of the central heart of the teaching of the Gita. The Gita with its rich and many-sided thought, its synthetical motive lends itself to one-sided misrepresentations born of a partisan intellectuality. Thus there are those who make the Gita teach not works at all, but a discipline of preparation for renouncing life and works, relying upon some citations from the Gita. But we cannot support this view on an impartial

reading in face of the continual assertion to the very end that action should be preferred to inaction and that superiority lies with the true, the inner renunciation of desire by equality and the giving up of works to the Supreme Purusha.

Others again assert that the doctrine of devotion is its whole teaching, putting in the background its monistic elements. No doubt, there are the most striking and vital elements of devotion enunciated in the Gita. Still the divine Purushottama is the Self in whom all knowledge culminates and the Master of sacrifice to whom all works lead as well as the Lord of Love into whose being the heart of devotion enters. And the Gita preserves a perfectly equal balance, emphasizing now knowledge, now works, now devotion, but for the purposes of the immediate trend of thought, not with any absolute separate preference over the others. He in whom all three meet and become one is the Supreme Being, the Purushottama.

#### **6. The Gita teaches not a human, but a divine action :**

But at present, the modern tendency is to subordinate the elements of knowledge and devotion, to take advantage of its continual insistence on action and find in it a scripture of the Karma-Yoga, a Gospel of works. Undoubtedly the Gita is the Gospel of works, but of works which culminate in knowledge, and of works motivated by devotion and not at all of works as understood by the modern mind, not at all an action dictated by humanitarian motives or ideals. The Gita teaches, not a human, but a divine action, a selfless performance of the divine will, working through our nature. Gita is not a book of practical ethics, but of the spiritual life.

The whole point of teaching is an inextricable clash of the various related conceptions of duty. The Gita, therefore, teaches the following of the divine life, the abandonment of all dharmas and to take refuge in the Supreme alone. Although the Gita prefers action to inaction, it does not rule out the renunciation of works but accepts it as one of the ways to the Divine, if the call is strong and imperative within us.

There are two different laws of conduct, (1) the rule principally dependent on external status and (2) the rule independent of status and entirely dependent on the thought and conscience. The Gita bids us to ascend to a supreme poise above the mainly practical, above the purely ethical, to the Brahmic consciousness. *It replaces the conception of social duty by divine obligation.* The Brahmic consciousness, the soul's freedom from works and the determination of works in the nature by the Lord within and above us, is the kernel of the Gita's teaching with regard to action.

**7) The equality in the Gita is a state of inner poise and not disinterestedness. :**

The modern interpreters have laid an almost exclusive stress on the idea of equality, on the expression 'work to be done as duty' and on the phrase 'Thou hast a right to action, but none to the fruits of action' and quote it as a great word ( MAHĀVĀKYA ) of the Gita, ignoring the high philosophy enunciated later on. The equality preached by the Gita is not disinterestedness, but it is a state of inner poise and wideness, the foundation of the spiritual freedom. With such a poise we have to do the 'work that is to be done'. It relates to all works exceeding social duties or ethical obligations. It is only a preliminary word governing the first state of the disciple ascending the hill of yoga. It is practically superseded at a subsequent stage. For the Gita asserts that it is the Prakriti that works through man and he must learn to see that it is not he who does the work. All pragmatic egoism, whether of the claim to fruits or of the right to action is then at an end. But the Prakriti is only the executive Force of the Purushottama. The disciple has to rise beyond this Force and he has to become trigunātita (त्रिगुणातीत). Reposing his mind and understanding, heart and will in Him ( मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धि ), with self-knowledge and absolute self-giving, he has to do works as an offering to the Master of all self-energising and all sacrifice. The Master shall decide and initiate action. This is the solution which the Divine Teacher offers to the disciple:

**8) The teacher discourages the tamasic recoil of Arjuna but points him towards the inner renunciation :**

The Gita is addressed to a fighter ( Kshatriya ), one whose duty in life is that of war and protection of the weak and oppressed and the maintenance of right and justice. He advances to the (Kurukshetra) gigantic struggle with a proud confidence in the righteousness of his cause, but when it is shattered at the sight of his relations and elders assembled on the other side, it is the uprush of the tamasic quality into the rajasic man that induces a recoil of horror, grief and bewilderment of mind. As a result he turns towards renunciation ( Sannyasa ). Sannyasa is the renunciation of life and action and the three-fold modes of nature, but it has to be approached through one or other of the three qualities (Gunas). The teacher discourages this tamasic recoil and enjoins the continuance of the fierce and terrible action, but he points the disciple towards another and inner renunciation which is the real issue from his crisis and the way towards the soul's superiority to the world-Nature ( Prakriti ) and yet its calm and self-possessed action in the world. Not a physical asceticism but an inner askesis is the teaching of the Gita.



### 9) Distinction of Sankhya and Yoga :

The Teacher, at the very outset of his spiritual solution, makes the distinction of Sankhya and Yoga, very important to understand the Gita. He assures Arjuna that he would cast away the bondage of works by the practice of Yoga with intelligence ( Buddhi ). The Gita is in fact primarily a practical system of Yoga that it teaches and it brings in metaphysical ideas only as explanatory of its practical system; nor does it merely declare Vedantic knowledge, but *it founds knowledge and devotion upon works*, even as it uplifts works to knowledge, their culmination and informs them with devotion as their very heart and kernel of their spirit. The Gita insists that Sankhya and Yoga are not two different, incompatible and discordant systems, but one in their principle and aim; they differ only in their method and starting-point (G. V-4).

The Sankhya also is Yoga, but it proceeds by knowledge; it starts, that is to say, by intellectual discrimination and analysis of the principles of our being and attains its aim through the vision and possession of the truth. Yoga, on the other hand, proceeds by works ; *it is in its first principle Karma Yoga*. The Gita has used the word Karma in a very wide sense and that by Yoga is meant the selfless devotion of all the inner as well as the outer activities as a sacrifice to the Lord of all works. (स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य). 'Yoga is the practice of the Truth, of which knowledge gives the vision, and its practice has for its motor-power a spirit of illumined devotion, of calm or fervent consecration to that which knowledge sees to be the Highest.

### 10) Desireless action unites Sankhya and Yoga :

The Teacher, in the Third Chapter of the Gita, begins by showing that the renunciation is neither the only way, nor at all better way (G. III-4). Besides man embodied in the natural world cannot cease from action, not for a moment; his very existence here is an action; the whole universe is an act of God, mere living even is His movement (G. I I I - 5). Since the mind is the instrumental cause, since inaction is impossible, the right way is a controlled action of the subjective and objective organism. The essence of the self-control is non-attachment and not complete inaction. The Teacher has said that knowledge is greater than works (G. I I-49); but he did not mean that inaction is greater than action. For knowledge means equality and non-attachment to desire and to the objects of sense and it means the poise of the intelligent will (buddhi) in the soul free from Prakriti and controlling the works in the power of the self-knowledge. *Buddhiyoga is fulfilled by Karma-Yoga*. Thus the Gita founds its teaching of the necessity of nishkama-Karma and unites the subjective practice of the

Sankhyas rejecting their merely physical rule — with the practice of Yoga. The Teacher, therefore, says 'Do all works with sacrifice as the only object' (G.III-9). Egoism is the knot of the bondage. By acting God-wards, without any thought of ego, we loosen this knot and finally arrive at freedom. All works in their totality find their culmination and completeness in the knowledge of the Divine (सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ जाने परिममाप्स्यते—G. IV-33). Works are not an obstacle but the way to the supreme knowledge.

### 11. The two-fold theory of sacrifice is reconciled by the Gita :

The Gita's theory of sacrifices is two-fold; the one speaks only of the ceremonial sacrifices, the other in the sense of a large philosophical symbolism. Here are the two ideals, the Vedist and the Vedantist, on the one side the active ideal of enjoyment and on the other, the austerer ideal of the liberated man, having nothing to do with enjoyment or works, existing only in the calm joy of the Brahman. The Teacher, to reconcile the two, states that the secret is not inaction as soon as one turns towards the higher truth, but desireless action both before and after it is reached. ( G. III-19 ).

The knowledge in which all the action culminates is that knowledge by which 'Thou shalt see all existences (Bhootāni) without exception in the Self, then in *Me*' (G. IV-35). This *Me* is Purushottam. To Him we offer everything as a sacrifice; into His hands we give up our actions. By works done for sacrifice, eliminating desire, we arrive at knowledge, and at the soul's possession of itself; by works done in self-knowledge and God-knowledge, we are liberated into the unity, peace and joy of the divine existence.

### 12) Yogas of works and knowledge, the two wings of the soul's ascent:

Yoga and Knowledge are the two wings of the soul's ascent. By Yoga is meant union through divine works done without desire, with equality, as a sacrifice to the Supreme; while knowledge is that on which the desirelessness, this equality, this power of sacrifice is founded. They assist each other's flight and acting together like the two eyes, they increase one another mutually by interchange of substance. As the works grow more and more desireless, equal-minded, sacrificial in spirit, the knowledge increases. With the increase of knowledge, the soul becomes firmer in the desireless, sacrificial equality of its works. The sacrifice of knowledge, says the Gita, is greater than any material sacrifice. By knowledge, desire and sin are destroyed. The Gita, therefore, says that he who has destroyed all doubt by knowledge and has by Yoga given up all works and is in possession of the Self, is not bound by his works. ( G.IV-41 ).

Therefore, it says, the Yoga of the works is better than the physical renunciation, because it is entirely sufficient and it rapidly and easily brings the soul to Brahman. The Yoga of works is the offering of all action to the Lord ( ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि G.V-10 ). When works are thus reposed on the Brahman, the personality of the instrumental doer ceases. The Divine then takes the burden of works from him, the Supreme becomes the doer and the act and the result. When we are freed by knowledge, the Lord takes up our works and uses us as faultless instruments (Nimittamātra) for the helping of the world.

**13) The Gita turns the knowledge into a practical philosophy of divine living and brings Bhakti as its climax :**

The Gita turns persistently this knowledge into a great practical philosophy of divine living. It, therefore, always insists on the relation between the knowledge of oneness and Karmayoga, as the basis of a liberated action in the world. To be made one self with God above and God in man and God in the world is the sense of liberation and the secret of perfection "The Yogin who has taken his stand upon oneness and loves me in all beings, however, and in all ways he lives and acts, lives and acts in Me"(G.VI-31). But even among the Yogins the greatest is the Bhakta (G.VI-47). The Gita brings in here Bhakti as the climax of the Yoga and it is the summing up of the whole final result of the Gita's teaching.

**14. The upward transcendence of the whole-being is the solution for the problem of Arjuna :**

The problem of Arjuna might have been dealt with on a pragmatism basis; but the Gita recognises that it would not be the solution which would satisfy Arjuna. The Gita's solution is, therefore, to rise above our natural being and normal mind, into another consciousness with another law of being, and therefore another standpoint for our action; where the action is no longer our own, where the divine spirit works out through us its purpose in the world. This upward transference of our whole being makes the gist of the Gita's Karma-Yoga. The heart of the Gita's message is : " Make the work you have to do here your means of inner spiritual rebirth, the divine birth, and, having become divine, do still divine works as an instrument of the Divine for the leading of the peoples."

**15. After unity of works with knowledge, the supreme bhakti becomes the whole and sole law of being :**

The Gita seeks the highest truth for the highest practical utility and opens to us the passage from our present mortal imperfection to an immortal perfection.

Therefore, the Teacher wants to give more completely the knowledge, on which the divine works are to be founded. This knowledge must ground the supremacy of Bhakti over all other motives and powers of spiritual consciousness and action. This is what is done by the Teacher in the opening verse of the Seventh Chapter when he says, "Hear how by practising Yoga with a mind attached to me and with me as (āshraya) the whole basis, thou shalt know me without any reminder of doubt integrally ( Samagram mām ) by knowing which there shall be no other things here left to be known."

We have first of all to become ethical and then transcend it. For this end, self-knowledge, equality and impersonality are the first necessities for the reconciliation between knowledge and works, between spirituality and activity in the world. But the Gita now lays down another and greater necessity for the Karmayogin who has unified his Yoga of works with the Yoga of knowledge. Not knowledge and works alone are demanded of him now, but bhakti also, devotion to the Divine, love and adoration of the Highest.

When we are unaffected by the dualities and when we escape from the sin of the vital ego, our growth in the sattwic nature brings an increasing capacity for a high quietude, equality and transcendence. This process of growing into the spirit completes our purification. But during this process, while the soul is enlarging into self-knowledge, it has also to increase in devotion. The soul will be able to know integrally, when it has firmly the vision of the one self everywhere and in all existences. Equality and vision of unity once perfectly gained, a supreme bhakti, an all-embracing devotion to the Divine becomes the whole and sole law of the being. The soul then becomes firm in this bhakti and in the vow of self-consecration of all its being, knowledge, works; for it has now for its sure base, the perfect, the integral, the unifying knowledge of the all-originating Godhead.

#### **16. It is the Bhakti with knowledge that the Gita demands :**

The bhakti of an integral knowledge and integral self giving is now to be attained. The Teacher, therefore says, 'He who has knowledge of me as the Purushottama, adores me (has bhakti for me), with all knowledge and in every way of his natural being' (G. XV-19). It is this specific bhakti which the Teacher wants to develop. It is the Bhakti with knowledge that the Gita demands from the disciple and it regards all other means as inferior. The God-lover who has knowledge is ever in constant union with Him (Nityayukta) and on Him is concentrated all his bhakti (Eka-Bhakti) (G. VII-17). This union is accomplished at one and the same time 1) by an integral self finding through works



founded in his and our spiritual nature, 2) an integral self-becoming through knowledge of the Divine Being and 3) an integral self-giving through love and devotion of our whole being to this All and this Supreme, attracted to the Master of our works. *To Him who is the source of all that we are, we give all that we are.* The Supreme Purusha is the Seer, Creator and Ruler of the worlds and it is by knowing and loving Him as the One and the All, that we ought to seek the supreme consummation.

**17) All knowledge and all works too  
become an adoration and aspiration :**

Arjuna is to become aware of himself as existing only in God and as acting only by the power within him, as an instrument of the divine action. He has been shown the two opposite ways of working and living, one in ignorance of the ego and one in the clear self-knowledge of a divine being. He may act, in the crisis, as the higher thinker). But for this purpose, he has to keep his will and intelligence fixed on the knowledge and self-vision, in order to escape from the bewilderment and find the way out of the human riddle. He has, therefore, to become spirit, no longer merely a mind and ego, as ego is the main obstacle. Nature is the worker and not ego, but Nature is only a power of Being who is the sole Master of all works. Therefore, Arjuna has to do works as a sacrifice, because that is the truth of his works and of all works.

Thus only we can aspire through the offering of all our nature and being to a living union with the One who has become in Time and Space all that is. Here is the place of bhakti in the scheme of the Yoga of an integral self-liberation. It is an adoration towards that which is greater than imperishable self or changing nature. All knowledge then becomes an adoration and aspiration, but all works too become an adoration and aspiration. But to have the right and just knowledge, the very law of being, faith is necessary.

**18) The synthesis of mind and heart and will  
in the one self and spirit :**

The Divine is the supra-cosmic, the eternal Parabrahman who supports all the cosmic manifestation in Space and Time. He is the Supreme Spirit who ensouls the forms and the movements of the universe, Parmaatman. He is the supernal Person of whom all self and nature, is the self-conception and the self-energising, Purushottama. He is the ineffable Lord of all existence, who unrolls the cycles of the world, Parameshwara. From him the Jiva, individual spirit, soul in Nature, has come here into the cosmic rounds. This is the integral truth, the highest and widest knowledge. Since man is a spirit, a soul with a

nature of mind and reason, of will and dynamic action, of emotion and sensation and life's seeking for the delight of existence, it is by turning all these power Godwards that the return to the highest truth of himself can be made entirely possible. He must know with the knowledge of the Supreme Self and Brahman; he must turn his love and adoration to the Supreme Person, he must subject his will and works to the supreme Lord of the Cosmos.

This integral turning of the soul Godwards bases royally the Gita's synthesis of knowledge and works and devotion. The vision of God brings infallibly the adoration and the passionate seeking of the Divine in all that is. An all-seizing delight in him and a deep love and adoration of him must be the inevitable result and is the very soul of this knowledge. And this adoration is no isolated seeking of the heart, but an offering of the whole existence. Therefore, it must take also the form of a sacrifice; there is a giving of all our works to the Ishwara, there is a surrender of all our active inward and outward nature to the Godhead. So comes a synthesis of mind and heart and will in the one self and spirit and with it the synthesis of knowledge, love and works in this integral union, this embracing God-realisation, this divine Yoga ( Rājaguhya-Yoga ).

**19) All life becomes a constant Yoga and unification of that Divine and this human spirit :**

When this vision, this knowledge seizes on the soul, its whole life aspiration becomes a surpassing love and fathomless adoration of the Divine and Infinite. All life becomes a constant Yoga and unification of that Divine and this human spirit. This is the manner of integral devotion. God to the soul that sees is the path and God is the goal of his journey. This absolute self-giving, this one-minded surrender is the devotion which the Gita makes the crown of its synthesis. All action and effort are by this devotion turned into an offering to Supreme and universal Godhead. Love of the Highest and the total surrender are the straight and swift way to this divine oneness. Love of the world, the mask, must change into the love of God, the Truth. Once this secret and inner Godhead is known and is embraced, the whole being and the whole life will undergo a sovereign uplifting and a marvellous transmutation. This is the Gita's teaching of divine love and devotion of God everywhere, in which knowledge, works and the heart's longing become one in a supreme unification, a high fusion, a wide identifying movement.

( मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।  
मामेक्ष्यसि युक्तर्वैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ G. IX-34)

The greatness of the central thought of the Gita in which all its threads are gathered up and united, consists in the synthetic value of a conception which

recognises the whole nature of the soul of man in the universe and validates by a wide unification its many-sided need of the supreme and infinite truth, to which our humanity turns in its search for perfection and immortality. There is a strong and wide endeavour towards a comprehensive spiritual view of God and man and universal existence.

## 20) Growing Union of soul and Oversoul :

In Gita Sankhya has been admitted for the separation of the soul from the lower nature, and Vedant for the self-effacement of the separative personality, and Yoga for the self-surrender of all the psychological being to the Ishwara, the divine Lord of the nature. There results an integral vision of the Divine Existent at once as the transcendent Reality, as the impersonal Self of all things and as the immanent Divinity in all beings. The Yoga of knowledge has been fulfilled sovereignly in this integral seeing and knowing of the One. The Yoga of the work has been crowned by the surrender of all works to their Master. The Yoga of love and adoration has been declared in its amplest forms. The intense consummation of knowledge and works, love, conducts to a crowning union of soul and Oversoul in a highest amplitude. In that union the revelations of knowledge are made real to the heart as well as to the intelligence. In that union the difficult sacrifice of self in an instrumental action becomes the easy, free and blissful expression of a living oneness. The whole means of the spiritual liberation has been given; the whole foundation of the divine action has been constructed.

## 21) The vision of the World-spirit in all aspects :

The vision revealed to Arjuna as described in the XI Chapter of the Gita is the vision of the One in the many, the many in the One – all are the One. It has given all the aspects of the Divinity, in which at one and the same time, all is manifested, all is exceeded and all is consummated. It is the vision that reconciles and unifies. This vision can be reached only by the absolute adoration, the love, the intimate unity that crowns at their summit the fulness of works and knowledge. To know, to see, to enter into it, to be one with this supreme form of the Supreme becomes then possible and it is that end which the Gita proposes for its Yoga ( G.XI-54 ). This is difficult indeed for limited man imprisoned in his mind and body, but, says the Godhead. “be a doer of my works; accept me as the supreme being and object, become my bhakta. be free from attachment and without enmity to all existences; for such a man comes to Me” ( G.XI-55 ).

## 22) The culmination of the supreme bhakti is at the core of the supreme knowledge :

When the soul has lost its separative personality, when it has become the

Brahman, it is then that it can live in the true Person and can attain to the supreme revealing bhakti for the Purushottama and can come to know him utterly by the power of its profound bhakti, its heart's knowledge (भक्त्या मामभिजा नति G.XVIII-55). That is the integral knowledge, when the heart's fathomless vision completes the mind's absolute experience,— समग्रं माम् ज्ञात्वा. “ He comes to know Me ”, says the Gita, “ Who and how much I am and in all the reality and principles of my being,” (यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः । G.XIII-55 ). The soul of the liberated man thus enters by a reconciling knowledge, penetrates by a perfect simultaneous delight of the transcendent Divine, of the Divine in the individual and of the Divine in the universe into Purushottam (मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनंतरम् G.XVIII-55 ). He becomes one with him in his self-knowledge and self-experience, one with him in the Universe and one with him beyond world and individual in the transcendence of the eternal Infinite, शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम्(G.XVIII-56). This is the culmination of the supreme bhakti that is at the core of the supreme knowledge.

**23) Action a forceful means of reaching the highest spiritual condition as bhakti or knowledge by its three steps :**

It becomes evident how action continual and unceasing and of all kinds without the abandonment of any part of the activities of life can be not only quite consistent with a supreme spiritual experience but as forceful a means of reaching this highest spiritual condition as bhakti or knowledge. Nothing can be more positive that the Gita's statment in this matter : “And by doing also all actions always lodged in Me he attains by my grace the eternal and imperishible status” (G.XVIII-56.). This liberating action is of the character of works done in a profound union of will and all the dynamic parts of our nature with the Divine in our self and the cosmos. There are three great steps by which action rises out of the human into the divine plane, leaving the bondage of the lower for the liberty of a higher law.

It is done first as a sacrifice with the idea still of our self as the doer. It is done next without that idea and with a perception of the Prakriti as the sole doer. It is done last with the knowledge of that Prakriti as the supreme power of the Divine and a renunciation, a surrender of all our actions to him, with the individual as a channel only and an instrument. All that we do is done for the sake of the Purushottoma and done really by him through his universal Shakti. In the Gita the action is the permanent foundation.

The first step is Karmayoga; the selfless sacrifice of works and here the Gita insists on action. The second is jnanayoga, the self-realisation and the



knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world and here the Gita insists on knowledge, but the sacrifice of works continues and the Karmayoga becomes one with, but does not disappear in the path of knowledge. The last step is Bhakti Yoga and here the Gita insists on devotion; but knowledge is not subordinated, only raised, vitalised and fulfilled and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes triune way of knowledge, works, and devotion. And the fruit of the sacrifice is attained, union with the divine Being and oneness with the supreme divine nature.

#### 24) Preparation for the supreme word of the Gita :

The essence of the teaching and the Yoga has thus been given to the disciple on the field of his work and battle and the Divine Teacher now proceeds to apply it to his action, but in a way that makes it applicable to all action. In order to prepare Arjuna for the final supreme word of the Gita, the Teacher has again summarised it with his say, "Devoting all Thyself to Me, giving up in thy conscious mind all the actions into Me, resorting to Yoga of the will and intelligence, be always one in heart and consciousness with Me" (G.XVIII-57). "If thou art that at all time, then by my grace thou shalt pass safe through all difficult and perilous passages; but if from egoism thou hear not, thou shalt fall into perdition" ( G.XVIII-58 )

#### 25) The supreme word of the Gita :

The last, the closing supreme word of the Gita expressing the highest-mystery is spoken in two brief, direct and simple slokas and they reveal their own fulness of meaning in the soul's experience. Thus runs the secret of secrets, the highest, most direct message of the Ishwara, "Become my-minded, my lover and adorer, a sacrificer to Me, bow thyself to Me, to Me thou shalt come, this is My pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou. Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve" (G.XVIII-65, 66). The baffling problems of our human existence of which Arjuna's difficulty stands as an acute example, are created by our separative personality in the ignorance. This Yoga because it puts the soul of man into its right relation with God and world-existence and makes our action God's, the knowledge and will shaping and moving it his and our life the harmony of a divine self-expression, is the way to their total disappearance

The whole Yoga is revealed, the great word of the teaching is given and Arjuna the chosen human soul is once more turned, no longer in his egoistic mind but in this greatest selfknowledge, to the divine action (G.XVIII-73) \*

(\* This article is based upon "Essays on the Gita" by Shri Aurobindo )

# Faith - healing.

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Faith-healing is, at least, as old as the Atharvaveda. What is of relevance is its persistence as a significant religio-therapeutic phenomena - both at the level of belief and practice, to this day, in India; its adherents constitute not only the masses but a very sizable intelligentsia of this country.

1. But, what is faith-healing?
2. What kinds of diseases are supposed to be cured by it?
3. Who are the faith-healers?

Let us begin with the second question.

The range of diseases or ailments covered by faith-healing include both organic as well as mental diseases.

Physiological diseases supposed to be cured by faith-healing for instance, include: blindness, lameness, heart - attack, barrenness of women, easy child-birth, miscarriage, jaundice, hernia, snake-bite, paralysis, dropsy, headache, gout, leprosy etc. Mental diseases range from simple anxiety, melancholia, different kinds of neuroses including what is popularly termed, 'madness'.

Who are the faith-healers? In India, they are drawn from the class of sadhus, the swamis, the munis and Rsis. Perhaps the Sanskrit equivalent of the term faith-healer, appears to me, is "bhisag" and "vaidya". The earliest mention of the faith-healer in our recorded literature is the veritable Rudra. He is described as : देव्यो प्रथमो भिषग्ः the first physician among the gods; and as जलापमेपज : one who cures by means of medicinal (or sacral )waters. The other faith-healers are: the twin Asvins, Saraswati, Aditi, Nārāyaṇa etc.

The contemporary counterparts are the swamis or Sadhus such as Shiradi Sai- bābā, Sathya Sai bābā, Ānandamayi etc:

It may not be out of place here to mention the belief in faith-healing of Shri. Aurobindo and the mother, and of Gandhi.

(i) For instance, consider the following dialogue between a disciple and Shri Aurobindo.

Disciple : “ A missionary it seems has cured a blind man; and St. Xavier at Goa still cures many people of their diseases. ”

Shri.Aurobindo : That is a very common thing. In France at Notre Dame, several lame people were immediately cured. Some people get cured absolutely, while others are not effected. A friend of the Mother, a lady, was lame and got cured at Notre Dame. ”

(ii) It is interesting to recall Gandhi's mention in his Autobiography of one Latha Maharaja of Bilweswara who, cured himself of his leprosy not by any medicine, but by applying to the affected parts, *bilva* leaves and by regular repetition of Rāmanāma. Gandhiji says : “ This may or may not be true. We at any rate believed this story. And it is a fact that when Ladhā Maharāj began his reading of Rāmāyana his body was entirely free from leprosy. ” I am inclined to believe, that in spite of Gandhiji's apparent skepticism, he did believe in this story. Somewhere else, he speaks of the “ incomparable power ” of Rāmanāma : “ The atom bomb is nothing compared with it. This power is capable of removing all pain ... it is the biggest thing man can possess. ”

### What is faith-healing?

The answer to this, has two aspects: One, in terms of the nature of the belief or the theories that underlie this belief; and, second, the practice or the means by which the cure is effected.

As to the belief or theory, Atharvaveda, the original source of Ayurveda, holds, that “ diseases are caused by the anger of the gods or malevolent spirits; medicinal plants are charged with spiritual powers. The means used for cure include substances such as sacral waters, barley plants and sacrifice - all charmed with the faith healer's spiritual powers, and expressed through his words and eyes. An interesting technique of cure is by the touch of the healer's hands :

अयं मे हस्तो भगवानयं मे भगवत्तरः ।

अयं मे विश्वभेष जोडयं शिवाभिमर्शनः (Av 4, 13, 6)

This is my fortunate hand, this my fortunate one, this my all-healing one, this is of propitious touch).

In recent period, bhasma, relics or talisman of all sorts are used as a means of faith-healing.

What is the characteristic feature of the belief in faith healing? The belief is that in curing of the disease, the faith of patient is an indispensable factor; and "this faith puts its trust in the immediate action of a supernormal being, acting with or without means". Thus, for instance, Aurobindo says: "I have used the *force* alone, without any human instrument or outer means, but here all depends upon the recipient and his receptivity — unless as in the case of healers, there are unseen powers or beings or powers that assist. "

Now, what can we say about this phenomena in the teeth of massive evidence of putatively cured cases of faith-healing, both in the past and today? Can we say, that all of it is make-believe, a hoax, and a vast superstition? What is the rational attitude to take?

Let me make a few general remarks:

1) Whatever reasons there may be, there is a surprising decline in the number of Swāmis and Sādhus who can heal the sick. This would require a historical and a sociological analysis.

2) For a rational assessment of the validity about the claims of faith-healing, the patients or the subjects who are supposed to be cured need to be carefully studied. This is important in as much as, it is held by some scientists, that faith-healing depends considerably on "suggestion".

3) Though through the progress of medical science and psycho-therapy, faith-healing has now somewhat fallen into disrepute, faith in faith-healing has found many defenders, even to this day. How can this be explained?

4) If all that is claimed on behalf of faith-healing is true, then, why on earth, do we need scientific medicine and surgery at all ?

Following Prof. Raymond Firth, I wish to make the following points in this connection :

a) Some of the results aimed at by faith-healing do actually occur, though for other reasons, or because there may be real virtue in what is done in the medicines used.



b) Secondly, in some cases trickery may be practised by the faith-healer to deceive his fellows, though on the whole the faith healers believe as firmly in their art of healing as do others.

c) Thirdly, positive cases count far more than negative cases – even in our own experience we often ignore things which run counter to theories in which we believe.

d) Fourthly, there is the question of the *faith* of the patient. If the patient fails to be cured it can *always* be said, that the faith of the patient was deficient.

That, amongst so many who go to the faith-healers, some are cured is undeniable. What implications are entailed by this?

This does not strictly imply, that the cure is necessarily due to spiritual powers or divine interposition. The possibility cannot be ruled out, that the cure may be brought about just by nature (nature-cure), though, the cure may have followed perceptibly after the patient has been treated by the healer. Even in the case of scientific medicine, the possibility cannot be ruled out, that the patient just recovers, his recovery being due to nature, and the medicine administered has nothing to do with it. But, sometimes, the medicine acts rapidly, once the patient's psychic condition is rendered cheerful and his hope (or faith) to live or for recovery is strengthened. Thirdly, in faith-healing, it is now held by some, that hypnosis, suggestion (or auto-suggestion) is the critical factor contributing to healing.

It can be held, that naturalistic interpretations can take care of the phenomena of faith-healing in case of psychic ailments; in fact, some tend to narrow down faith-healing to mental diseases only : faith-healing is mind-cure. But what about organic diseases like paralysis, heart attack etc ?

I am not sure, whether the distinction between bodily (organic) diseases and mental diseases is too sharp to be valid in view of development of the field of psychosomatic medicine. The presupposition here is that "there is no duality of mind and body, but only a unity of being. Psychic and somatic phenomena take place in the same biological system and are aspects of the same process."

Further, psychoanalysis has traced many organic dysfunctions to psychic roots. Thus, "Freud discovered that strongly charged but expressed fantasies, conflicts, and memories forced distorted expressions in somatic functions....." He explained hysterical paralysis, hysterical amnesia, and hysterical vomiting as

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arising out of psychic disorders. Ferenczi describes nervous asthma, intestinal difficulties, cardiac disorders, fainting etc. as organ neuroses. Jelliffe, in The United States, investigated “psychological aspects of tuberculosis; multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, bone disease, postencephalic disorders, and eye diseases”.

I am inclined to believe that in faith healing, psycho-therapy of some sort conducted in a religious atmosphere and mediated through religious symbolism is in some way involved.

The recent interest of the Christian priests in psychoanalysis and the psychoanalyst's interest in religio-therapy strengthens the view that faith-healing has some affinity with the techniques of psychoanalysis.

But, this may not be the whole explanation.

The content of the believer's faith, and the potency of this faith to effect cure, are factors that need to be reckoned with, independently.

It may be, that if these are understood in purely psychoanalytical terms (as obsessions, pathological condition etc.) one is likely to be misled.

Faith-healing is part of a religious form of life and its significance and hence must be understood in religious terms. For the religious form of life, the faith of the believer and the content of the belief (belief in god etc.) are essential. A deeper probe into this form of life may yet reveal a true understanding of the phenomena of faith-healing and thus reveal latent spiritual powers of man to accelerate psychic and organic repair.



# Vedanta and Modern Christian Theology:\*

By Mrs. Padma Sudhi, M. A.

In 1924 E. M. Forster's *A passage to India* rolled off the press. In its setting of early twentieth century colonial India East met West in a world where life was a great struggle, demanding the utmost of the ways of life of both worlds. Life was, among other things, a muddle, as impossible to understand and discriminate as the sound, "boum", that echoed in the Marabar Caves of Chandrapore. Whatever sound was uttered in the caves, "boum" was the reply

Colonial England demonstrated the pragmatism and action needed to cope with this unfathomable, confused "boum" which is life. But the West, even the best and most open, loving aspects of it, as seen in the Christian Mrs. Moore, was incapable of accepting the "boum" as it was. The west had to pretend that every thing was more ordered and rational than it really was. This weakness proved fatal for it meant that India—or life anywhere—could not be really understood by the English, and they would make grave mistakes.

Only the Hindus had the strength to accept the "boum" for what it was; they even seemed to enjoy visits to these strange Marabar Caves. Only Dr. Godbole, the leading Hindu character in the novel, could accept all of the uncomfot in life, and he accepted it with the humility of the reverend sage and the innocence of a child. Forster concluded that the best hope for us all was for the Godboles and the Moores to learn from one another.

His prophetic work is proven by recent developments in Christian theology. By glancing at Vedanta, the predominant religion in India, and at some currents in Christian thought today we can see how only through an understanding of the Eastern power of acceptance and immanence of the divine has the West achieved new depths of understanding. The different elements of East and West that were

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\* Lecture delivered in United States—Colorado University

only to be accepted as common elements in the twentieth century were always present, as can be seen from glancing at two ancient texts. One is the "Hymn of Creation" from the Rig-Veda, the earliest extant Indo-Aryan literary monument. The second is "Psalm 138" from the *old Testament of the Holy Bible*.

### Hymn of Creation

Non-being then existed not nor being :  
There was no air, nor sky that is beyond it.  
What was concealed? Wherein? In whose protection?  
And was there deep unfathomable water?

Death then existed not nor life immortal ;  
Of neither night nor day was any token.  
By its inherent force the One breathed breathless :  
No other thing than that beyond existed.

Darkness there was at first by darkness hidden ;  
Without distinctive marks, this all was water.  
That which, becoming, by the void was covered,  
That one by force of heat came into being.

Desire entered the One in the beginning ;  
It was the earliest seed, of thought the product.  
The sages searching in their hearts with wisdom,  
Found out the bond of being in non-being.

Their ray extended light across the darkness :  
But was the One above or was it under?  
Creative force was there, and fertile power  
Below was energy, above was impulse.

Who knows for certain? Who shall here declare it?  
Whence was it born, and whence came this creation?  
The gods were born after this world's creation:  
Then who can know from whence it has arisen?

None knoweth whence creation has arisen :  
And whether he has or has not produced it:  
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,  
He only knows, or haply he may know not.



## Psalm 138

Lord, thou searchest me and knowest me, thou knowest me when I sit down and when I rise up.

Thou discernest my thoughts from afar; when I walk and when I lie down thou dost behold, and thou givest heed to all my ways.

When a word is not yet on my tongue: behold, O Lord, thou knowest all.

From behind and from before thou dost understand me, and thou layest thy hand upon me.

This knowledge is too wonderful and sublime for me: I cannot grasp it.

Whither may I go from thy spirit, or whither may I flee from thy face?

If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I lie down with the dead, thou art present.

If I lay hold of the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the farthest part of the sea: even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say: "At least darkness shall cover me, and night like the light shall surround me:" darkness itself shall not be dark to thee, and night shall be light as the day: to thee the darkness is like light.

For thou didst fashion my reins, thou hast made me in my mother's womb.

I praise thee, because I am so wonderfully made, because thy works are wonderful.

And thou knowest my soul perfectly, and my substance was not hidden from thee, when I was being formed in secret, when I was being made in the depths of the earth.

Thine eyes saw my acts, and all were written in thy book; days were fixed before there was even one of them.

But to me how difficult are thy thoughts, O God, how great is the sum of them.

If I count them, they outnumber the sand; if I should reach the end, I am still with thee.

Would that thou wouldst slay the wicked man, O God, and that men of blood would depart from me.

For they rebel against thee deceitfully, in treachery thy foes exalt themselves.

Do I not hate, O Lord, them that have hated thee, am I not weary of them that assail thee?

I hate them with a perfect hatred; they are become enemies to me.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts.

And see whether I follow an evil way, and lead me by the ancient way.

It is easy to read the psalmist as one crying to a God "out there" somewhere removed and far away, somewhere towering above. It is easy to read the psalmist as one believing that God is entirely separated from evil. The psalmist might be prone to ignore evil, to pretend it away, instead of accepting it as part of his world and part of himself that cannot be wisked away in a moment by a mere dedication to "good" God. Such was the interpretation of the Church of the west, and such was its practiced faith throughout most of its history.

It is precisely this interpretation that the West has followed far too much and far too long. A revolutionary reinterpretation of this tradition characterizes modern Christian Theology: a return to the God "within us", not "out there"; and a return to the acceptance of the evil within ourselves, the ability to see and love ourselves in spite of the evil within us. No one can measure the influence the East has had upon this return, but however great the influence may have been, we should not be surprised, for both the "God within" and the "courage of acceptance" stand at the heart of the East, as we shall see in Vedanta.

Is God "out there"? Is God "within us"? Sankara, founder of advaita (non-dual) Vedanta, based his reasoning on the formula, *tat tvam asi*, 'That art thou'. In reality each one of us is the same as all of reality, Brahman. It is only our ignorance that makes us think otherwise.

"The great theme of all Vedantic teaching", we read in the Vedantasara, "is the identity of the individual life-monad with Brahman, which is of the nature of pure consciousness or spirituality". A state of homogeneity wherein all qualifying attributes are transcended, a state of intelligence beyond the pairs-of-opposites, wherein all ideas of separation and variety are effaced, is what is represented by this realization. The loving union of the heart with its

highest personal divinity is not enough. The sublime experience of the devotee beholding the inner vision of his God in concentrated absorption is only a prelude to the final ineffable crisis of complete illumination.....  
 "He who realizes Brahman through knowing becomes Brahman."3

The "Hymn of Creation" tells us that God is not a distant observer. The tone of the entire chant does not give the impression of some God king, some one superhuman being. God is "creative force", "fertile power", "energy", "impulse". These things are we; we are Brahman; Brahman lives within us. Brahman cannot be located "up there". The jiva (conditioned self) of each one of us is in truth maya (illusion), as is ahankara (ego). They are the production of avidya(nescience). The real self is Atman, outside of which there is nothing, for Atman, is Brahman.

What this means is that the divine life-force that pervades the universe and inhabits every creature, the anonymous faceless essence behind the numberless masks, is our sole interior reality...the divine life-force in the form of the life-monads dwells within and vivifies them all simultaneously.4

Thus God is within us. It remains for each of us, through life-long dedication and disciplined effort, to strip ourselves of maya, and bring our identity with Brahman into pure consciousness.

Christianity had become accustomed to the thinking of God as someone removed from us. For the medieval church God was "up there" in heaven. He created us, gave us Christ, judges us, and preserves our souls in heaven, but he is not part of us here on earth. Eventually, God became the "watchwinder" of the Deists. He created the world and set it running, but has since been no part of it. Today Western man has discovered that indeed he doesn't need this God "out there" at all. Everything works fine without him. Thus the church is experiencing a continuing decline of importance in the West. But what Vedanta teaches us, and what modern theology now understands is that the God "out there" is not God at all. John A. T. Robinson, in *Honest to God*, summarizes this new understanding of God in commenting on a passage of Paul Tillich's :

"What Tillich is meaning by God is the exact opposite of any deus ex-machine, a supernatural Being to whom one can turn away from the world and who can be relied upon to intervene from without. God is not "out there". He is in Bonhoeffer's words 'the "beyond" in the midst of our life', a depth of reality reached 'not on the borders of life but at its centre', not by any flight of the alone to the alone, but, in Kierkegaard's fine phrase, by

'a deeper immersion in existence'. For the word 'God' denotes the ultimate depth of all our being, the creative ground and meaning of all our existence'.<sup>5</sup>

The East has helped illumine the nature of reality for the West just in the nick of time. That this radical revision of religious thought is sorely needed throughout the churches, not just in the thoughts of a few liberal reformers, is reflected in Robinson's concern :

'We shall eventually be no more able to convince men of the existence of a God "out there" whom they must call in to order their lives than persuade them to take seriously the gods of Olympus. If Christianity is to survive, let alone to recapture "secular" man, there is no time to lose in detaching from this scheme of thought...'<sup>6</sup>

To return to "Psalm 138" and hopefully correct centuries of misinterpretation, we see the psalmist aware of the inescapability of God's immanence. God is totally aware of all that man is, and what is more, God forces man to be aware from within man himself. "Whither may I go from thy spirit or whither may I flee from thy face". Paul Tillich comments upon this Psalm, "The God whom he cannot flee is the Ground of his being. And this being, his nature, soul, and body, is a work of infinite wisdom awful and wonderful."<sup>7</sup>

The courage of acceptance is more difficult to deal with than the conception of the God that exists within us as the ground of our very being. And a new understanding of it is by no means as resolved as is the case with the latter concept. The problem is stated clearly in *A Passage to India*. Mrs. Moore, the Christian who represents the best that the West has to offer, still falls short because she cannot escape the positivist way of thinking that is her heritage.

Everything fits in a rational order. If westerners are sensible, there is nothing they cannot understand at least well enough to avoid chaos. They know what is good and what is bad, and so, if they all had the genuine and deep love of Mrs. Moore, they should have no trouble in doing the right thing. Everything must have its niche in their rational superstructure of meaning. Their entire mode of life is built on this premise. The church has always had a ready answer for anything they might do; this is right and that is wrong -- the church is always ready to tell them. It's as simple as that. God is good and evil is bad and there is no connection between the two. They just concentrate on what is good and the bad will go away in time. This is Mrs. Moore, totally unequipped to handle India, and in the novel India is life. Adela, her companion reflects her thinking in a dialogue.



"I do so hate mysteries", Adela announced.

"We English do" --

"I like mysteries, but I rather dislike muddles," said Mrs. Moore.

"A mystery is a muddle."

"Oh, do you think so, Mr. Fielding?"

"A mystery is only a high-sounding term for a muddle. No advantage in stirring it up, in either case. Aziz and I know well that India's a muddle."

"India's -- Oh, what an alarming idea" (P.59)8. India (and life, and England) is in truth a confusion, full of contradictions, incapable of complete rational analysis, full of things that don't fit, rotten in many ways, a muddle. When Mrs. Moore finally cannot escape this realization, she is doomed, her inflexible pattern of thinking offers her no possibility of readjustment. Life has no meaning for her and she dies.

'She had come to that state where the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time -- the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people are involved. If this world is not to our taste, well, at all events there is Heaven, Hell, Annihilation -- one or other of those large things -- All heroic endeavour, and all that is known as art, assumes that there is such a background, just as all practical endeavour, when the world is to our taste, assumes that the world is all. But in the twilight of the double vision, a spiritual muddledom is set up for which no high sounding words can be found; we can neither act nor refrain from action, we can neither ignore or respect Infinity'.9

Mrs. Moore had thought that God "out there" was going to take care of it all in the end. The fact that we must work it out ourselves in the end, since God works through us, seemed to her to be a realization that God wasn't interested in us that the universe was totally indifferent; and with this realization all value was destroyed. Mrs. Moore, did not have enough courage of acceptance to face the world in its entirety. She--and the West--had made God only a part of reality. Professor Godbole, the Hindu character has a much deeper courage of acceptance.

“---Good and evil are different, as their names imply. But, in my own humble opinion, they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the difference between presence and absence is great, as great as my feeble mind can grasp. Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence, and we are therefore entitled to repeat, ‘Come’ come, come, come.....”<sup>10</sup>

In “Psalm 138” the psalmist could be interpreted, and has been for centuries, as accepting only the good in life: God, and simply rejecting the evil. “Would that thou wouldst slay the wicked man, Oh God, and that men of blood would depart from me.” But in the “Hymn of Creation” what a profound acceptance of all of creation, which is Brahman. Even the possibility that Brahman may not be omniscient is acceptable.

‘None knoweth whence creation has arisen;

And whether he has or has not produced it:

He who surveys it in the highest heaven,

He only knows, or haply he may know not.’

The key to the courage of acceptance is the courage to accept non-being as a part of oneself and one’s world.

‘The sages searching in their hearts with wisdom,

Found out the bond of being in non-being.’

The psalmist could easily be interpreted as believing in a God who is always and all powerful, the picture of invincibility. Christ has not been worshipped as the man he claimed himself to be --“ I am the son of Man”--but as God himself. The Christians have failed as Mrs. Moore failed, to accept God in his weakness, in the suffering he shares with men, in his finitude. They have only accepted half of him--the infinite half. They think rationally in greatest complexity, but they arbitrate value, the most difficult and complex aspect of all thought, with the absurd assumption that this operation is profoundly simple. They have not begun to accept their inability to choose right from wrong, to accept their weakness and finitude.

In Vedanta, maya, the entire phenomenal world is illusion; avidya, the nescience, the ignorance which it produces, makes a joke of our perceiving, intuiting, and cogitating faculties. Maya would seem to be the devil, pure and

simple. But maya, the concealer of Atman, the eternal deceiver, the only roadblock to achieving pure consciousness as Brahman, is not merely a negative force, not merely non-being. This maya is the very life-force itself. It is the power of Brahman that brings the world into existence. Here is the courage to accept the fact that, not only is Brahman responsible for maya, but moreover that Brahman is maya.

‘He is supreme consciousness, Brahman, brought under the spell of a personal role, and as such is a manifestation of the finest, highest, most subtle and sublime aspect or level of ignorance and self-delusion.’<sup>11</sup>

Brahman imagines himself to be the Universal Lord and creator. He produces maya, the phenomenal world. The spirit is even part of this gigantic hoax. Rajas (uncontrolled passionate activity), tamas (inertia, dullness), and sattva (purest clarity or spirit), the three gunas, are all part of maya, and Brahman is an infinite cosmic fool. This is all easily acceptable to Vedanta; it is indeed essential to Vedanta. But it must be remembered that maya is illusion, and that the fundamental reality of Brahman, as the ultimate Divine Ground, stands behind it. Although it takes at least a lifetime to strip away maya and discover Atman as the true reality of each of our natures, maya is illusory in the end. It is neither real nor unreal.

‘Impersonal, anonymous, inactive--Brahman remains untouched, beyond these popular veiling clouds, this supreme eclipse. Only apparently is the universal substance implicated in this highest personal figure, which has been born, as a magnificent superego, out of a sublime state of godly consciousness-ignorance’.<sup>12</sup>

This courage of acceptance was grasped by Schopenhauer in his ‘Studies of Indian philosophy’, and passed on to Nietzsche. It was because the popular Christian God was only strength and not weakness, only infinity and not finitude, that Nietzsche proclaimed him dead. This incredible courage is what Nietzsche speaks of in *Jarathustra*:

‘Have ye courage, O my brethren? .....Not the courage before witnesses, but anchorite and eagle courage, which not even a God any longer beholdeth? . He hath heart who knoweth fear but vanquisheth it; who seeth the abyss, but with pride. He who seeth the abyss but with eagle’s eyes,—he who with eagle’s talons graspeth the abyss: he hath courage’.<sup>13</sup>

Paul Tillich in *The Courage To Be* has returned Christianity to the original meaning of Christ, the infinite man, who, with no more than a human heart

and understanding, had enough power of love to accept all of God's grace. This is the courage of Job, who, against everything reasonable, with no defences remaining, wronged by God in every imaginable way, still had the courage to accept all of this evil done by God as part of God himself.

This is the courage Tillich speaks of at the end of *The Courage To Be*: "The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt."<sup>14</sup>

It is the simple and profound courage of Dr. Godbole that must spread throughout the West, if both the west and its church are to begin to avoid the continued disasters of an arrogance devoid of wisdom. We do not have the courage to accept ourselves as the ignorant fools we are. We prefer to believe we know the answers to the world's problems. We must first learn how unacceptable we really are, and then discover the courage to accept ourselves, in spite of our unacceptableness.

'You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted. If that happens to us, we experience grace.'<sup>15</sup>

The psalmist is alright if he understands the courage of acceptance. We need have no fear then when he says,

'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see, whether I follow on evil way, and lead me by the ancient way'.

We need have no fear, for to God "the darkness is like the light". As Professor Godbole would say, "They are both of them aspects of my Lord."

To return to our point of departure, and to hope for the future, we wait for the day when a new Mrs. Moore meets a new Dr. Godbole. The new Dr. Godbole will be able to assimilate the pragmatic, active Christian love of the West immeasurably more than Forster's Dr. Godbole -- but that is another paper. The point of this one is that Mrs. Moore will love God "in this world," not "out there", and will have the radical courage of acceptance that will enable her to face the full truth of her God, and her world, and herself. As I am confident they are, may Mrs. Moore and Dr. Godbole continue to discover the depths of one another as they encounter one another again and again.



### Footnotes

1. The Upanishads, p. 19.
2. The Holy Bible, p. 578.
3. Philosophies of India, p. 415-16.
4. Ibid., p. 410.
5. Honest to God, p. 47.
6. Ibid., p. 43.
7. Ibid., p. 58.
8. A Passage to India, p. 59.
9. Ibid., p. 207.
10. Ibid., p. 178.
11. Philosophies of India, p. 424.
12. Ibid., p. 425.
13. The Courage to Be, P. 30.
14. Ibid., P. 190.
15. Honest to God, P. 81.

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1. E. M. Forster, A Passage to India, 1952 Harcourt, Brace & World, N. Y. edition, c. 1924.
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5. Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be, 1965 Colonial Press, Mass. edition, c. 1952.
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Mistakes are always possible so long as any part of the mental (even the sub-conscious part of it) is not thoroughly transformed. There is no need to be disturbed by that.

— Sri Aurobindo

# Matthew Arnold's Concept of Culture

By Prof. B. K. Pattar, M. A.

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The Victorian age in England faced a dilemma almost similar to that of Hamlet when the Shattering bombardments of Scientific discoveries broke down the gates of religion dislocating the faith of people in the divine Providence. The religion was no more capable of taking arms against the swarm of scientific discoveries and bear the outrageous slings and arrows of science. The Victorian world was out of joint bearing the whips and scorns of time. In this disjointed world of Victorian age, there arose six predominant thinkers who gave their own solutions for the elimination of the evils of their age. Ruskin approached the problem from an aesthetic point of view and asked the people to cultivate the sense of beauty. Dickens championed the cause of humanitarian outlook founded on the principle of active charity. The realisation of spiritual significance of life was Carlyle's answer to the burning problems of his day. Lord Tennyson found satisfaction in the reconciliation and communion with the natural currents of time. Robert Browning's response to the situation can be summed up in his own words,

“ God is in the Heaven

All is right with the world ”.

Matthew Arnold stood apart from these people to give his own solution rooted in his intellectual passion for the truth and moral passion for the good. But one thing common in all these thinkers is an emphasis on the cultivation of the total perfection of man.

Matthew Arnold with his dispassionate and disinterested view of life recommends “Culture” as the eliminator of the evils of the Victorian world as the “Culture” of his conception is the healer and restorer of happiness and peace to mankind. He firmly believed in “Culture” which is the “pursuit of total

perfection by means of getting to know on all matters that concern us, the best that has been thought and said in the world", and through this knowledge "turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits of our life which we staunchly believe and follow". This culture aims not at an act of having and possessing something but becoming something.

Arnold laments that it is unfortunate that the religion which is one of the major tools in the pursuit of perfection aims only at moral perfection mutilating the human spirit from the total perfection. In its emphasis upon one-sided perfection, religion becomes an end in itself instead of being a means to an end, the end being the total perfection of man. This moral perfection is firmly rooted in the philosophy of Hebraism which overemphasises the act of doing good to others. But in the absence of right knowledge of what we are doing there is every possibility of our good intentions turning into bad results. It is, therefore, necessary to have the right view of thinking and the right view of what we are doing which according to Matthew Arnold is real "Culture".

It is not in the desertion, but in the communion with the main stream of life, lies the key to the pursuit of total perfection. And we should endeavour for the total perfection of our being by committing all our gifts awarded to us by Nature and God. We should be truthful and devoted to this singular cause of our total perfection.

Matthew Arnold mentions "Light and Sweetness" as the marks of culture. He takes these two key words from Jonathan Swift's *The Battle of the Books*, where Swift mentions "Light and Sweetness" as the characteristics of ancient writers. Comparing the moderns with Spiders who weave the web to trap others, Swift states that ancients are just like bees who produce honey and wax which give us sweetness and light. The "Light" symbolises the power of knowledge while sweetness symbolises politeness, delicacy and pursuit of beauty of things. Culture, because of its radiance of knowledge, has the astounding power of distinguishing the partial from the complete, transitory from the permanent. In doing so, it does a great service to mankind liberating the soul of man from the mechanical and material view of life.

This kind of culture differentiates the means from the ends and makes us intelligent enough to know things as they really are. The human beings can seek and achieve total perfection even in the absence of mechanical and material prosperity. It is not the loss of "machine" that is fatal to the total perfection of man, but the loss of inward spirit of man, that is really fatal to the total perfection of man. When Arnold mentions that culture is compound of light and sweetness, then what are the motive forces of which light and sweetness are

offsprings. The scientific passion rooted in curiosity to know the facts of life and the knowledge of things as they really are-is the major force that augments the excellence of our nature and makes us more intelligent. Culture is the fruit of this intellectual passion of knowing things as they really are. The second force that adumbrates this concept of culture is the moral force which springs from one's - identity with "Nature" and desire to do good to humanity. Hence we can say that the two forces that lay the foundation of this concept of culture are- "curiosity to render an intelligent being more intelligent" and to make "the reason and will of God prevail".

Matthew Arnold arguing ahead with this thread of argument identifies these two forces - moral and intellectual - with two systems of philosophy or two ways of life- Hebraism and Hellenism respectively. The source of trouble in our public life, says Arnold, is the disparity between Hebraism and Hellenism or action and thought. Hebraism is rooted in the blind devotion that drives us at doing, at practice, at obligation without the proper understanding of the implications involved in it. We must, therefore, bring thought, intelligence and reconsideration on the facts of life. Hellenism says that happiness lies in thinking right while Hebraism says, "Blessed is he who feareth the eternal and delighteth in the commands of the eternal". It is also true that both the systems aim at the love and will of God. Hebraism takes its capital intimations from life- like morality, duty and obligation, while Hellenism tries to take all things into consideration. The governing idea of Hellenism is the spontaneity of consciousness while that of Hebraism is strictness of conscience. Hellenism by its unclouded clearness of vision and unimpeded play of thought aims at the removal of ignorance and possession of knowledge. It is pursuit after the truth and beauty of things the marks of which are radiance, light, peace and ease in life. Hebraism makes man afraid of himself showing the enormous difficulty on the path of perfection. It paralyses and thwarts man's will by making him conscious of 'Original sin' which is hideous hunch back sitting on the shoulders. Hellenism is based on the law of equipollency while Hebraism is based on the law of dislocation. The spirit of Hellenism is that of sympathy while the spirit of Hebraism is that of antipathy. Hebraism splits the human personality while Hellenism by its delicacy and flexibility of thought integrates the human personality. Hence the spirit of Hellenism is the spirit of poetry probing into the mysteries of life. Matthew Arnold, then, makes the pertinent observation upon the evils of the British Society in comparison with Greek way of life. The Greek way of life, in spite of its moral deficiency was on the right track towards the total perfection of human beings. But the British way of life which is rooted in the philosophy of Hebraism is on the wrong track failing to hitch its wagon to the star.



It is in this context, says Arnold, the culture has to play a dominant role to improve and perfect man, especially in the age of democracy where mechanical values are brought on the surface of life as if they are the only values of life, submerging the essential and the basic emotions and passions of life, which constitute the real stuff of life. Culture does not believe in the systems and system makers who have very small share in the formation of human destiny. Culture has no faith in the individual leader who pretends as if he is born to preside over the human destiny. Culture believes in the Co-ordination and Co-operation of the natural currents of humanity, which try to adumbrate that kind of philosophy founded on the principle of light and sweetness, sympathy and tolerance. Arnold says the love of freedom of British people is notorious. Because they want freedom for its own sake. "Freedom to do merely as one likes to do" is the British conception of freedom which makes the British Government to adopt the policy of relaxation which drifts the country towards anarchy. The removal of this anarchy necessitates the need for that kind of state which is "nation in its collective and corporate character entrusted with stringent powers for the General advantage, controlling the individual will in the name of an interest wider than that of individual". This requires the need for the sound central authority composed of "classless Community" of the "whole community". But unfortunately the British society is divided into three divisions none of which is capable of taking this task. Neither the aristocrats nor the middle class nor the working class is able to rule. Because each class tries to serve its own ends jeopardising the interests of the others. So it is necessary to select the "best selves" of the "whole community" so that the state becomes the organ of the collective "best selves" of the national right reason. If we want to form this type of Government how can we extricate the "best selves"? Because aristocrats are "barbarians" and they are Children of the established fact. Middle class is composed of "phillistines" who are averse to light hankering after material prosperity at any expense. The working class is "populace" composed of an illiterate people who lack light and sweetness. Yet Arnold maintains that there are some geniuses in all classes who stand as exceptionals to the classification of class consciousness. These are our humanitarians or best selves who should form the Government and exercise the central authority of the State. These people are the champions of our "Culture".

The publication of the first part of *Culture and Anarchy* with the Chapter entitled "Light and Sweetness" raised a sharp criticism from the critics of Arnold. They charged Arnold that he was propagating the "Religion of Culture" which is "Religion of inaction". It makes people more of Hamlets who adumbrate the philosophy of procrastination and inaction. Too much emphasis on thought intensifies the conscience which makes us cowards of all. To this Arnold retorted

that "inaction" is preferable to "bad action". He said culture is the only tool which by the power of its "light" makes the people realise that "no action" is superior to "bad action". Matthew Arnold, here, seems to identify more with Hamlet than with Othello who is symbol of fire and sword.

The real courage to act in life comes by the force of intelligent knowledge of things. It is knowledge of things as they really are that helps human beings to act boldly. In the absence of right kind of knowledge, every great action drifts towards creating chaos and confusion, disorder and lawlessness. Matthew Arnold's cause of championing the "Light and Sweetness" is not without justification. The courage issuing from "Light and Sweetness" is positive and instinctive, but not negative and repressive. It is, therefore, wrong to blame Arnold as the apostle of inaction which is of no value in life.

When we look to the prevalent conditions in India, it seems an urgent necessity to adumbrate Arnold's culture in our life. The whole country is drifting towards anarchy because of the disparity we find in our thought and action. When we witness verbal violence on the platform and physical violence in the streets, it seems that we have neither "Light nor Sweetness". We are letting loose the forces of disruption and disintegration to spread chaos and confusion in our public life. We should endeavour to hand over the power to our "best selves" coming from the "classless" community of our "whole - community". Then only we will have law and order and we can move in peace and prosperity raising the native dignity of our culture and civilization. To conclude Matthew Arnold's concept of culture is founded on the principle of utilitarian value as it aims to remove confusion and anarchy from our public life by restoring peace and happiness in our private life. Culture propagated by Arnold is not only pursuit of total perfection, but also a measure of safety. It also offers a firmer and sounder basis both for the present condition and future practice. It also offers a sound and stable basis for the formation of state composed of our best-selves. It is best possible means of distinguishing the transitory from the permanent. At the same time it also bridges the disparity between thought and action. This Arnoldian concept of culture is a positive contribution to the mankind in its pursuit of total perfection.

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# Hinduism on Trial.

(Rationalism Vs. Orthodoxy).

By Ranjeet Mal Mehta

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It is a tragedy and a matter for sadness that the rich heritage of knowledge left by the sages and seers of India for the advancement of the human race in different branches of activities should have been treated in an orthodox manner. The difficulty with the great Hindu religion is that there is no single book nor a single prophet commanding allegiance from all sections of the Hindu community, as is the case with all other leading religions of the world, who obey one prophet and are guided by a single book, e.g. Bible, Kuran, Zend-Avestha, Buddha's Sutras and Jains' Agamas.

The Hindu religious literature ought to be divided into two sections viz. (1) Vedas and Vedangas (Upnishads and their essence as embodied in Bhagwad Gita) and (2) Puranas and other religious books. The first category contains profound truths based upon study, observations, experience and holy communion. The other category is a conglomeration of writings on different topics and different activities and includes Mythology, dogmas, ritual, superstitious stories etc., which are unacceptable to all modernised rationalist because they are negated by unimpeachable evidence furnished by the discoveries of modern science. For example, in the Puranas it is stated that sun and moon are personalities moving about in the firmament in vehicles to which animals are yoked. What have the orthodox and dogmatic people to say on this subject? Examples can be multiplied. In this way some of the contents of the Puranas are absolutely untenable and it was for this reason that modernised Hindu religious leaders like Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekanand, Arvind Ghosh, Maharshi Raman, Swami Ramatirth; etc., completely ignored them. A similar attitude was adopted by eminent saints like Guru Nanak, Sant Kabir, Sant Dadu Dayal etc. etc.

The need of the hour is unity, harmony, reconciliation and allround advancement of all sections of Hindu community. The correct ideal was placed before the Hindu community at the time of crisis by illustrious leaders like Bhagwan Buddha and Mahaveer Swami, who adopted and preached a reformed version of Hinduism and rejected what was irrational and useless. They denounced animal sacrifices and insisted upon a life of peace, harmony, sublimity, sincerity, simplicity, cooperation, evolution etc. leading to individual as well as collective progress and prosperity. The bifercation of Hindu religious literature into Vedas and Vedangas (Upnishads) and Puranas should be kept in view and the former should be adopted and popularised and the latter should be consigned to oblivion because Hindus have always found it difficult to defend the stories of Puranas against the onslaughts of other religions like Christianity and Islam and the attitude of the rationalised minds based on the discoveries of science.



*“Mysticism denotes that attitude of mind which involves a direct, immediate, intuitive apprehension of God. It signifies the highest attitude of which man is capable, namely, a beatific contemplation of God, and its dissemination in the Society and the World.”*

— R. D. Ranade



# R e v i e w

**Pathway to God Through Tamil Literature: I. Through the**

*Thiruvācakam* : by G. Vanmikanathan. Published by The Delhi

Tamil Sangam. Sector 5. Ramakrishnapuram. New Delhi - 22

PP. xxxvi - 524. Price Rs. 7/. Postage Rs 1/75 by V. P. P.

The present work under review, is 'an interpretative translation' of a renowned Tamil classic - *Thiruvācakam* of Saint Māṇikavācakar -- one of the greatest saints of Tamil Nad. The poem is a spiritual autobiography of the Saint describing his Spiritual Pilgrimage from his Initiation by his *Sadguru*, to his blissful Union with the Lord. It is, as the author points out, " a paen of rapturous songs, the greatest love - drama on earth, a story of the human bride and the divine bridegroom " (P. 100)

The author himself is an ardent devotee of the Saint Śaṅkarācārya of Kāmakoti, a devout admirer of Saint Māṇikavācakar and his work, and a close Tamil scholar well-versed in Sanskrit, English and Hindi. Moreover, he devoutly studied *Thiruvācakam* for 5 years under the erudite guidance of a great Guru and with his personal rapport with the spirit of the poem tried to understand several moot points in it that had proved a despair to many a scholar. He has also made a comparative study of the Upanisads, Western mystic literature as well as the three great works of Dr. Ranade on the Pathway to God. In fact, as the author tells us, it was his "Pathway to God in Kannada Literature" that inspired him to write this book. He is, thus fully well-qualified to execute this responsible work so efficiently.

The work consists of two main parts; 1) Introduction - called 'An Original Interpretation' and 2) *Thiruvācakam* (Interpretative Translation). A short note about Tamil and its literature is given in the beginning and five appendices come at the close.

The first part of the work, comprising 100 pages and containing an elaborate mystical interpretation of *Thiruvācakam*, forms by far the most important

portion of the work. The author begins by giving a brief life-sketch of Māṇikavācakar. He tells us how he was born in a pious Brahmin, ministerial family, how he became very learned in both the religious and secular fields and was soon appointed as minister by the King...He had an inner craving for spiritual life as well as for finding a *Guru*. While on a King's mission he accidentally meets his *Guru* whom he regarded as God Himself and surrenders himself completely to him. The *Guru*, thereafter, initiates him and accepts him as his disciple and blesses him. As a result of his blessing, we are told, "the gift of poesy came to him and mellifluous verses of rare beauty and charm flowed from his lips in praise of the Lord who gave him the title "Māṇikavāk" - "he whose words are rubies." (Ten Saints of India P. 51.) The minister forgot his mission, bade good bye to worldly life and became a mendicant.

After this account of the Poet-Saint, the author describes the essence and plan of the poem *Thiruvācakam*. He tells us: "The *Thiruvācakam*," according to R. Dixiter, "related an autobiographical story of the different stages of Manikavacakar's spiritual life and experiences which ultimately enabled him to attain bliss ineffable and eternal. It is a torrential outflow of ardent religious feelings and emotions in rapturous songs and melodies." (PP.21-22)

The poem has 51 sections containing 658 stanzas in all. It has not been divided either into Cantoes or Books. The author, however, has, for the sake of facilitating his interpretation, provisionally divided it, after the pattern of the Western Mystics, into the following four Parts: i) Prologue ii) The Purgative Way, iii) The Illuminative Way and iv) The Unitive Way.

The Prologue deals with the description of Godhead - the nameless, formless God, God with forms and names immanent God in creation as well as 'the infinitely infinite Effulgence.' The Purgative Way deals with the moral and spiritual disciplines carried on by Māṇikavācakar, to conquer his self and apprehend Reality. It describes his frustrations, and despondencies in his efforts and his 'heart-rending entreaties' to the Lord to come to his succour and save him.

The Illuminative Way which forms the third part, relates in a soulful language, the deep, absorbing experience of his love for the Lord, with the imagery of human love-play between a bride and bridegroom. As his love developed in intensity, Māṇikavācakar, had visions of God both inside and outside - the vision of 'the ineffable Inner Light.' At times when he did not get the vision for a long time, he was assailed by fear and he sank in utter despair. He again used to get the visions of the Lord and in this way he could finally realise his

oneness with the Godhead - the Divine Ground. He merged in the Ocean of blessed Blisfulness and identified himself with Bliss itself. He thus attained the mystical union with the Lord.

Now follows the Unitive Way. The Saint now longs for the release from the human body, for the eternal bliss and the union everlasting. God, thereafter, bestows on him a beatific Vision which fills him with supreme peace, removing his longing for the release. He then begins to spread the Gospel of God among the people. He thus begins his mission for the welfare of the world, by inviting people to share the grace of God in these words:

Well in advance of your time,

Love God and be redeemed !

God is lavishing the contents of His principal treasury

On His devotees;

Come and rush forwards to receive it.

Finally when the Saint receives the call from the Lord, he readily dissolves' in the Divine Effulgence. Such is the exalted and inspiring Life Divine of Saint Mīṇikavācakar, described so very devoutly by the author, for which he deserves the warm gratitude of the aspirants.

In connection with such a Love-story, I am reminded of a note of warning sounded by Dr. Ranade—the Saint of Nimbāl—which I wish to relate here for the edification of the readers. "It is foolish," he says, "to regard the relation between the Self and God, as in any way analogous to the relation between the bride and the bridegroom..... There can be no analogue for the unique relation between Self and God in a state of ecstasy." "The love of God stands in a category altogether apart from any sexual relationship." "Eroticism has no place in Mysticism."

Another point which I want to bring to the notice of the author is his unconscious omission, to mention the name of Dr. Ranade in his acknowledgements, though his work was the source of his inspiration for writing this book.

— M. S. Deshpande

1 **The Aryan Ecliptic Cycle**, pp. 443, price Rs. 25/—

2. **Are the Gathas Pre-Vedic and**

**The Age of Zarathushtra**, pp. 126, price Rs. 7.50

by H. S. Spencer

Pub : H. P. Waswani, 1 Rajkamal, 795/3

Padamjee Park, Poona-2, 1965.

**The Aryan Ecliptic Cycle** is an outcome of long years of study and research by Shri H. S. Spencer. This book deals with the history of ancient Indo-Iranian religion from 25628 (Sic) B. C. to 292 A. D. – a very long and hoary past indeed!

Many scholars have tried to determine the date of the Vedas as well as of the Avesta. Their enquiry is based sometimes on astronomical considerations in the absence of any other evidence going back to such a great antiquity. The precession of seasons is a well recognised fact and some of the scholars have based their views mainly on this basis. Researches in geology and the movement of the North Pole have also been pressed into service in this regard.

Lokamāya B. G. Tilak in his famous book *Orion* comes to the conclusion that the Vedic period must go back at least to about 4000 B. C. when the vernal equinox coincided with the constellation Mṛgaśira (Orion). There is evidence to show that it may be pushed further back to 6000 B. C. when the vernal equinox coincided with Punarvasu, the presiding deity of which is Aditi. Hence it is called the Aditi period. In his *Arctic Home in the Vedas*, Tilak comes to the conclusion that the original habitat of the Aryans was near the North pole.

The present work of Sri. Spencer contains a long introduction extending over a hundred pages. Therein the author tries to show that the date of the last Ice Age as given by the geologists converges with the Astronomical epochs. It was about 10,000 B. C. that the invasion of snow and ice rendered the Arctic climate inclement and necessitated a southward migration. The vernal equinox in Pusya occurred in about 7000 B. C. The author places the advent of Holy Zarathushtra in this period and his life-time as being from 7129 to 7052 B. C. His teachings as found in the Gathas and other parts of the Avesta are also dilated upon.



The book is divided into five chapters. On the strength of the facts mentioned in Fargard I of the Vendidad, the first chapter traces the location of the original home, which is called Aryano-Vej in the Avesta and from which the Aryans moved southward due to glaciation.

The second chapter points out that it takes 25,920 years for the equinoxes to come back to the same point on the ecliptic. In 292 A. D. the equinoctial position was at Zero degree on the ecliptic. So it must have been there in 25,628 B. C. The tables on pages 136 to 141 show the movement of the vernal equinox through the Nakṣatras at various periods from 25,628 B. C. to 292 A. D. Śri Spencer refers to the book in Gujarati *New light on the Gathas of Holy Zarathushtra* by Kaviraj Khabardar in which that author observes that according to the old books on astronomy, Dhaniṣṭhā (Śraviṣṭhā) was the Nakṣatra of vernal equinox. "This would take us back between 21,788 and 20,829 B.C. as the period at which the Rig Veda existed or at least originated" (p. 144). The similarity of Avestan Yashtas with Rigvedic hymns in respect of diction and thought is very well brought out.

The third chapter describes the south-ward migration of the Aryans and their new contacts. This took place during the period of vernal equinox in the third quarter of Pūrvā Phalgunī between 10,028 and 9,789 B. C. when Yama Vivasvat (Yima Vivanghao as known in Avesta) was the fifth Manu. The whole region from the mediterranean littoral right upto the Indus "must once have formed part of a cultural continuum" (p. 206). This is said to be witnessed by R̥gveda I. 133 and 134.

The vernal equinox in Ārdrā, which is presided over by Rudra, falls between 5468 and 4509 B. C., when the principles of Advaitism became generally known (p.245). The next vernal equinox in Mṛgaśira lies between 4508 and 3549 B. C. In its third quarter (4268 to 4029 B. C.) we have the advent of Śri Rāmachandra among Hindus and Abraham among Jews. The next advent is that of Śri Krishna when the vernal equinox was in Rohini. B.V. Raman in his book 'Notable Horoscopes' opines that Shri Krishna must have been born on the midnight of 19th (20th) July 3228 B. C. He is said to have lived for 125 years and died on 18 2.3102 B. C. Sri C. V. Vaidya in his article, 'The age of the Gita' (Kalyāna Kalpataru, January 1935, pp.134-38) maintains that the Mahabharata fight took place in 3102 B. C. (This is corroborated by the fact that the Aihole inscription was written in 556 of the Śaka era, 3735 years after the Mahabharata war.)

In chapter IV the author traces the history of other ancient religions like those of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia and China. He also deals with the Hittite, Canaanite, Phoenician and Greek civilizations (p. 307-51). Sri Spencer prefers to call that ecliptic cycle as Aryan, because personalities belonging to the Aryan races gave out spiritual revelations to the mankind during that period, as evidenced by the Indian and Iranian scriptures.

In chapter V the author raises the question-‘What after the Aryan ecliptic cycle?’ He feels that “the new Ecliptic cycle which has begun with 293 A.D. will prove essentially a semitic cycle, though it must be admitted that it is too early yet to form any well considered opinion on the point.”

Sri Spencer then describes the rise of Islam :- “It is one of the strangest anomalies of Fate and one of the strangest facts of history that while the Prophet of Arabia preached a religion which teaches quite unequivocally the unity and similarity of All Revelations of Yore, his Arab followers should have been so ruthlessly fanatical in trying to impose their new-found faith upon those whom they conquered” (p.360). The Iranians escaped complete destruction by finding a refuge in India, where they have been staying over 1200 years. The author eulogises the vitality of Hinduism which produced innumerable sages and saints and successfully combated the attacking hordes. The Jews had lost their homeland under the impact of the Arab invaders. They got back their Israel in 1948. God the Omniscient alone knows if and when the Parsis will get back their homeland Persia (Iran).

Sri Spencer considers Krishna and Jesus as reincarnations of Zarathushtra and thus provides a wider implication to the statement in the Gita धर्मं संस्थापित्वा संभवामि युगे युगे । (4 8) He also points out the similarity between the Pancarātra sect and the Zarathushtrian Cult (pp 254-67). He declares that this ancient land of Bhārat is to this day the land of spirituality *par excellence*.

The spiritual teachings of Zarathushtra are worth pondering over:- Purity of thought is the basis of the success in reaching Real Happiness or Perfect Joy not only for ourselves as human beings but also for bringing it to all other earthly creations as well. Purity of mind becomes the source of spiritual Illumination and through this illumination comes the definite knowledge that what upto then could rest only on faith, rests really on fact. The Joy of Inner life overcomes revenge and hatred and does not allow a person to fall a prey to the base passions (pp.232-35). The Gathas show us the way how to develop internally through the purification and perfection of the ethical side of our nature (*Are the Gathas pre-Vedic*, p.63).

2) The second book *Are the Gathas Pre - Vedic* is a sort of appendix to the first book and provides a reply to the views of Kaviraj Khabardar. The latter opines that the Gathas are pre-Vedic and therefore also prior to the other parts of the Avesta. Śri Spencer comes to the conclusion that the Gathas can not be pre-Vedic. Some Vedic hymns are older than the Gathas, or are pre-Zarathushtrian, some are contemporaneous, while others are post-Zarathushtrian ( p. 29 and 84 ). The Ṛgvedic seer Nodha, son of Gotama, is pointed out to be a contemporary of Zarathushtra, as Nodha is mentioned in para 16 of the Farvardin Yasht ( p. 30 ).

Śri. Spencer deals with a very long span of time extending over many thousand years. Scholars who usually speak in terms of centuries have to think in terms of millanaries while speaking about such a hoary antiquity. When we deal with such a distant past, we are not always on firm ground in the absence of definite evidence, and we have to sift the evidence available and interpret it in a logical manner. The span of time dealt with here may appear to be a very long period indeed, but looking to the fact that Man has been staying on this planet called Earth for a million years, this period would not appear too long. It has been recently discovered that some continents disappeared into the ocean. A land-mass called Atlantis existed between America and Europe. Another land-mass called Lemuria (or Gondavana) lay between south Africa and India, the island Madagascar being the higher land of the submerged continent which may have extended southward as far as Australia (P.275,337).

Dr. Jwala Prasada Singhal in his book *The Sphinx Speaks* (Delhi 1963) refers to the Lemuria continent and the rift between Indian and Persian Aryans. He states that the Ṛgveda is earlier than the Avesta because 'there is not even a trace of Aryaram Veija in the Rigveda' whereas the Avesta mentions it as the most excellent country created by Lord Ahur Mazda. Moreover the Rigveda does not mention the approach of intense cold or glaciation which is clearly mentioned in the Avesta. This could indicate that the date of the Rigveda is prior to 10,000 B. C. the age of the last glaciation - ; how for fact, it is difficult to say at this stage. But the divergence of the diction, style and contents of the Upaniṣads from those of the Vedic saṁhitās shows that a considerably long time ranging over a few thousand years must have passed between them. The Upaniṣadic period probably extends from 5000 B. C. to 3000 B. C. and culminates into the Bhagavadgita. Śri Spencer traces the varying importance of the Vedic divinities in accordance with the receding equinox. In the Ṛgveda the largest number of hymns are addressed to Indra. The author ascribes this to the fact that Jyēsthā was the bright equinoctial star. This period lies between 16988 and 16029 B. C.

A critical and comparative study of the Vedas and the Avesta is yet a desideratum. More light deserves to be thrown on Indo-Iranian affinity. A comparative study of the Vedic and Avestan stellar systems would also be a good subject for research. It may help to a certain extent to solve the problem regarding the presiding deities of the various constellations.

It may be noted in this regard that the Vedic enumeration and concepts relating to the Nakṣatras very much coincide with those mentioned in the Avesta.

The similarity of the words in the Avesta and the Vedas becomes apparent at many places:- Ahura - Asura, Mithra- Mitra, Manthra -Mantra, Aspa - Aśva, Vaeda - Veda, Daeva - Deva, Vahishta - Vasiṣṭha, Kai - Kavi, Yazata - Yajatra (adorable), Sravao-Śravas (fame), apaurvim- apūrva (new), Athravan - Atharvan (priest), Armaiti - Aramati (goddess of prayer), Verethrangh - Vrtrahan (Indra) etc.

The book provides us with a good comparative study of various cultures in pre-historic times. It gives the impression that it is a work inspired by devotion and completed by sustained effort. One may not agree with all the views expressed by H. S. Spencer. But one would certainly be grateful to the author for bringing to light a number of facts that lay deeply hidden in the recesses of Time.

— B. R. MODAK

### **Light of Jain Teaching**

by Sri D. S. Paramaj, M. A., LL. B., Advocate Belgaum.

Foreword by Dr. A. N. Upadhye.

Publishers : Sanmati-Prakashan, Bahubali  
(Kolhapur) Maharashtra State.

Price : Rs. 4/—

The book under review is a collection of articles contributed to the Sanmati Magazine, published from Bahubali (Kolhapur). The author in these articles has made a successful attempt to explain the fundamental principles of Jainism to lay-readers both Jains and non-Jains. In doing so the author gives a



brief account of important tenets of Jainism like Daṣalakṣṇa - dharma, Anekāntavāda, Syādvāda, Dvādashanuprekṣa, Ratnatraya Dharma, Pancha Anu-Vrata etc. The discussion of these is quite refreshing and the presentation quite lucid: The parallels from English poets and the statements from the writings of Jain saints and sages quoted in the book are useful to follow the discussion. At various places the opinions of Western and Indian scholars have been mentioned to help the readers understand the principles of Jaina Metaphysics, Ethics, Religion and Cosmology. The book is a good introduction for the study of Jainism.

The author is right in holding the view that the ten commandments of Jaina religion such as forgiveness, humility or modesty, honesty, truthfulness, purity in body, mind and action, self-control or self-restraint, penance, renunciation, celibacy, contentment as also the Ratnatrayas like Right belief, Right knowledge and Right conduct are universal in their application. They are to govern the day-to-day life of all men irrespective of their sex, caste, colour, region. Truth and Non-Violence are the most fundamental and all others centre round them. Though these are not suggested by Jainism alone its speciality consists in giving them priority and in emphasizing their significance.

Anekāntavāda or the doctrine of manifoldness of reality and Syādvāda or the theory of relativity of human knowledge emphasize that the reality has infinite aspects. Human knowledge conditioned by space, time and stand point is bound to be relative. Each judgment made states partial truth and as such supplements every other. The notion of the relativity of knowledge presupposes the idea of Absolute which alone gives meaning to the former. Moreover, absolute knowledge though not possible for a common man is possible for an Omniscient or a Kevalajñani.

The Jains accept the law of Karma as a law of cause and effect applicable to the moral Sphere. They suggest that the law works by itself without the guidance of God. The law, being non-intelligent requires the guidance of an intelligent principle, God. To accept the law of Karma is not to accept fatalism or determinism as the law is compatible with freedom of action enjoyed by the individuals. Jains make the universe self-created and self-controlled ruling out the creator God thereby. In subscribing to this view they reject the pantheistic and theistic conception of God. Further they seem to hold the view that the worship and prayer are to be offered not to God but to the Tirthankaras who are like God and are the manifestation of virtues. Worship and prayer as important aspects of religious practice presuppose God. Jains in treating 'Jines' or conquerors as object of worship and prayer have not totally repudiated the idea of Godhead or divinity. Moreover to explain this complex universe exhibiting highest type

of order we require God who could be treated as great designer, supreme intelligence and master mind who has fashioned it. The creatorship of God, His omnipotence and goodness can be reconciled with the presence of evil if we make room for freedom of will.

Besides the articles dealing with these doctrines the book contains a few instructive and thought provoking articles entitled the Jain view of Conquest, Mine and Thine, From Nobody to Every body, Gurukul, a Blessing in Disguise.

The book is instructive and as such can be recommended to the beginners in the Study of Jaina Religion and Metaphysics. The purpose with which the book is written is fully served.

— K. D. Tangod.

**Is the so called Younger Avesta really Younger?** by H. S. Spencer,

Foreword by Dr. K. M. Munshi.

Published by H. P. Vaswani, 1, Rajkamal,

795/3, Padamjee Park, Poona-2, 1965. Price Rs. 6.50 net.

The author tries to show in this book that the teachings of Prophet Zarathushtra do not end with the Gathas and they include the rest of Avesta too. Some utterances of the prophet are quoted to substantiate the argument. The religious devotion and the emotional attachment of the author to the faith is admirable; perhaps, that is one reason why he goes all out to say that Zarathushtrianism is the first religion to expound complete revelation and it is the first monotheistic revealed religion of the world.

The main difficulty lies in the acceptance of dates. As Mr. Spencer believes that Zarathushtra was born in 7129 B. C., all the other problems emerge from this basic premise. As this is contested by many scholars and the date of Upanisads is fixed from 1000 B. C. downwards by many historians, the question

of what first is a matter of controversy. The main discussion in this book revolves round the question, 'Is the Younger Avesta really Younger?' The author has mustered several arguments and refuted several suggestions.

The arguments are regarding (1) the language of the Gathas and the rest of the Avesta. "The differences are due to locale and not time." (2) the differences in the forms of composition. The reply is that "The sermons were in short memorial verses, thus pointing to the prose original, no longer extant." (3) the differences in the nature of their respective contents.

The author partly depends on commonsense and logic to sustain his opinion. But, it is cold facts alone that can establish an opinion. For example, he says, "In the first place, the names of no such authors are known, and the absence of any such known names raises a strong presumption that their authorship can therefore be justifiably ascribed to Zarathushtra." In the present day historical research, presumption and lack of information to the contrary, cannot be taken as conclusive proof of a theory.

The author has taken up the arguments of Dr. Geiger, one by one, and tried to counter them by referring to the incidents, the teachings and the happenings, i.e., the internal evidence of the scriptures, recorded in every section of the Avesta. In reply to the argument of Anthropomorphism, the author enters into a "philosophical explanation."

There is, no doubt, that many western scholars tried to explain away or interpret the ideas and the antiquity of the Eastern religions and their prophets in a superficial manner. A better understanding of the Eastern thought and its background is necessary to render a truer picture. Therefore, a fresh attempt to re-read and renew research on the historical, literary and religious aspects of the contribution of the Eastern thinkers is welcome. It is no longer a fashion to accept whatever comes from the west as the most scientific. Historical research and scholarship from the East, has come of age. The West should attempt to understand the new arguments and analyse them with their modern "tools".

To this extent at least, Mr. Spencer has drawn the attention of the scholars in a sincere and sound manner.

— Prof V. EMANI

**The Age of Zarathushtra** by H. S. Spencer,

published by H. P. Vaswani, 1 Rajkamal,

795/3, Padamjee Park, Poona-2,

(Price Rs.3/-)

(Printed 1965. Introduction by Sri Prakasa.)

The author has taken great pains in this book to fix the date of the Iranian prophet of the Aryans, basing his calculations on astronomical data.

There are two aspects to be noted: The prophet's date is fixed much earlier to the date worked out by many modern Historians. The author differs on a vital point. The very date of dispersal of the Indo Iranian branch of the Aryans is placed around 2000 B. C. So, to disagree with this point of view and to make an assertion of a much anterior date requires scholarly pursuit and tenacity in research. The author displays this quality in this book. Secondly, he depended upon astronomical data for his date. Though Bal Gangadhar Tilak used similar approach to establish his theory of the Home of the Aryans, and some other Indian scholars depended on astronomical data to fix the date of Mahabharata war and the beginning of Kaliyuga, this attempt of Mr. Spencer regarding Zarathushtra is, perhaps, one of the first such attempts on Iranian problems.

The author observes that the introduction of the Metal Age in Iran was at the time of Yima Vivanghao - "that Yima ruled in the North Polar regions originally, then extended his dominion to the South for food and shelter due to increasing population, due to floods and glaciation; when North Polar region was covered with ice the Aryan had perforce to migrate to South."

Many of these observations run counter to the conclusions drawn by modern archaeologists e. g. : the original home of the Aryans, the commencement of the Age of Metals, the use of iron and other related problems of the Aryans.

As research and evidence on the Aryan problem is now on a much advanced stage, it will be necessary for any writer on the problem to take into account the evidence of the Archaeology and then try to reconcile one's conclusions with that.



It is generally accepted now that sketchy references in literature regarding these problems cannot be taken as conclusive to fix dates or movements.

Astronomical approach, no doubt, is another tool to dig into the past. But it has also limitations. A research scholar has to reconcile the evidence from different directions to give a convincing theory.

India being the home of astronomers since the beginning of Vedic knowledge, more of the Indian students may study this problem from the angle pointed out by Spencer and try to solve the riddles to give effective answers.

A detailed appendix is attached with tables showing Zodiacal signs, Nakshatras and their English and Avestic Equivalents. The book deserves serious study by all concerned.

— Prof. V. Emani

**A Shost Report**  
of  
**Academy of Comparative Philosophy & Religion,**  
**BELGAUM.**

(1-6-1971 to 31-10-1971)

There was only one meeting of the board of trustees and work of a routine nature was done.

The Editorial Committee for Pathway to God met twice and took decisions about the material to be included in the journal and its printing etc.

The 'Punya-tithi' of Shri Gurudev Ranade was celebrated on 6-5-1971 on a modest scale. Talks were delivered by Shri Sant Phutan -Maharaj of Karhad from 1st June for 3 days and thereafter, Dr V. G. Kulkarni, Principal of the Banashankari Science College of Dharwar, gave 3 talk in Kannad. The function closed with Arati and Prasad, when about a hundred persons had collected.

Shri Krishnashastry Marathe has continued his Sunday discourses in the Mandir hall. In addition, the following programmes were also arranged :

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Acharya Manmananand (Anand Marg, Dharwar)  | Hindi talks 2.  |
| 2. Shri William Gargi.                        | Hindi talks 2.  |
| 3. Shri Damodar S. Dashputra, Tryambakeshwar. | Marathi talks 9 |
| 4. Shri Digambar Vasudev Bua (Watharkar)      | Keertans.       |
| 5. Shri Sadanand Kanitkar, Shahir (Bombay)    | Cultural songs. |
| 6. Shri G. V. Tulpule, M. A. Sangli.          | Marathi talks 3 |
| 7. Shri Sakharambua Deshpande, Pandharpur.    | Keertans.       |

Five persons, whose names are given below, have become life sub-scribers of Pathway to God by paying Rs 100/- each

- (1) Shri R. V. Shirur, Hubli.      (2) Shri R. P. Prayag, Bangalore.  
(3) Shri R. V. Sardesai, Bombay.      (4) Lt. Col. B. L. Kulkarni, Tilakwadi.  
(5) Shri B. V. Parulekar, Bijapur.

Shri Himatbhai Goradia, Belgaum paid a donation of Rs. 101/-, bringing the total amount of his donation to Rs. 303/-. The 'Academy' is grateful to him for his sympathetic help.

The Seminar of the current year will begin on 12-11-1971 and continue for three days. The topic of discussion will be "God-Realization : Sadhana and Effects." The proceedings will be inaugurated by Dr. (Miss) Sarojini Mahishi, Minister of State for Tourism and Civil Aviation, New Delhi. There will be fourteen participants, who will read their papers on the topic. Some of them have been practising 'Sadhana' for years and are expected to speak by reference to their personal experience. Persons interested in the subject may take part in the discussions which will follow after each paper is read.

Dr. A. G. Javadekar, M. A., Ph.D., D.Litt. has agreed to deliver "Gurudev Ranade Memorial Lectures" of the current year on 'Moral Philosophy in the Light of the Bhagavatgita'. Dr. Javadekar is the Head of the Department of Philosophy in the Sayajirao University, Baroda. He is a distinguished scholar and at present the Executive President of the Indian Philosophical Congress. The dates of his lectures will be fixed soon in consultation with him.

The Seminar proceedings of 1970 (Doctrine of God) and the 'Gurudev Ranade Memorial Lectures' of that year (Religion in the Changing World : The Predicament of Man), delivered by Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, have been now printed and the books are available to the public.

More and more people are taking advantage of the reading facilities, provided by the "Gurudev Granthalaya". Books worth about Rs 1500/- have been added during this period.



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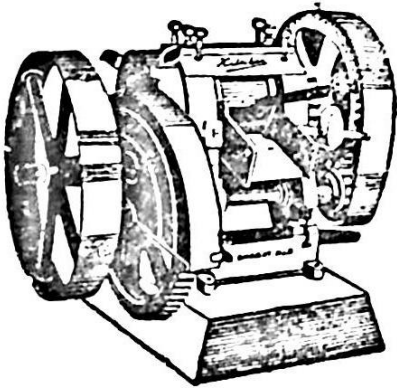
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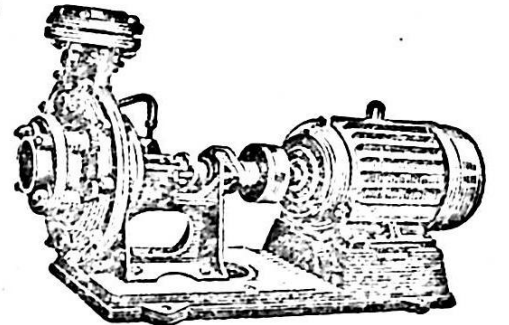
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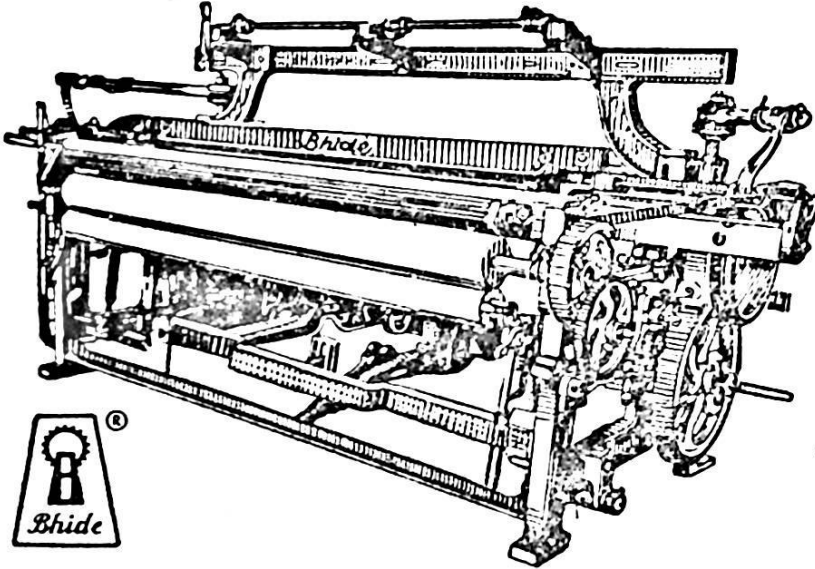
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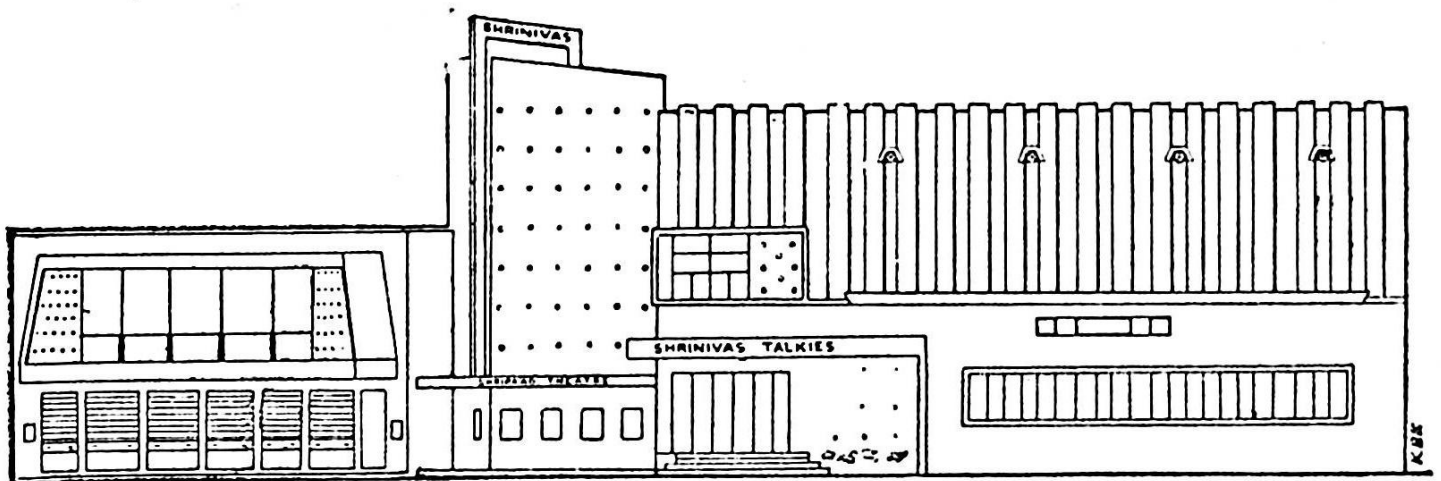
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