

Spiritual Awakening in Gandhi and other Indian Saints • R. D. Ranade



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R. D. Ranade

Foreword By Arun Gandhi

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IN
GANDHI AND OTHER INDIAN SAINTS

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SARVA SEVA SANGH PRAKASHAN
RAJGHAT, VARANASI-221001 (U. P.)
(INDIA)



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Prof. R. D. Ranade, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Allahabad University delivered a series of lectures on spiritual Life in Mahatma Gandhi and Hindi Saints in 1947 at Gujarat Vidya Sabha and later at other places. Sri M. N. Deshpande and Sri M. B. Lal have been kind enough to compile and present an edited version of these lectures. We are grateful to them for this help.

This book — “Spiritual Awakening in Gandhi and other Indian Saints” — provides certain insights into Mahatma Gandhi’s spiritual life which have not been depicted before by any writer in this form. It deserves to be read widely amongst earnest seekers of truth and preserved for posterity. We feel great pleasure in publishing these soul-inspiring lectures in the form of this unique book.

A scintillating foreward by Sri Arun Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma, has wrought new vigour into this half century old classic. In it he says, “if this book takes us closer to replacing the Law of Force with the Law of Love Prof. Ranade will have performed a great service to humanity.”

We are equally grateful to his son, Sri. Tushar A. Gandhi for giving us for the cover of this book a highly artistic multi-religious symbol drawn by him blending the symbols of all major religions of the world. It is a graphic summing up of what the Mahatma stood for all his life.

Rajghat, Varanasi-221 001

Date. 30.07.2003

— **Avinash Chandra**
Sanyojak
Sarva Seva Sangh-Prakashan

Cover design

(a multi-religious symbol)

by

Tushar A Gandhi

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Mahatma Gandhi Foundation, Mumbai.

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This book is being published with the kind permission of Gujarat Vidya Sabha given in the name of S.R Lad of Bombay who, in turn, requested M.N. Deshpande, a disciple of Prof. R.D. Ranade, to arrange for its publication by a reputed publisher.

Its first edition of 500 copies was published by Prof. Rasiklal Chhotalal Parikh, Hon. Director, B.J. Institute of Learning & Research, Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Bhadra, Ahmedabad on 2 October 1956, GANDHI JAYANTI, and printed by B. Rawat at Kumar Printery, 1454, Raipur, Ahmedabad.

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

As I write this foreword the people in the United States of America are awaiting President Bush's statement announcing the conclusion of the battle with Iraq but not the war. It may be the war will never end and that once more the United States will realize that violence is not always the best way to resolve conflicts. The result of this action and the lessons to be learned may take many months to realize.

For the present, there is a sense of jubilation among those who supported the war because Saddam Hussein, seen as the personification of evil, has finally been eliminated and we are told the world is now a safer place to live in. What is remarkable is the depths to which humanity allows itself to be exploited generation after generation. The one logical question that we need to ask and answer honestly is one that we keep pushing under the rug. The question is: which of the two is a greater threat to humanity – Saddam Hussain or the culture of violence?

We are told and we accept this explanation meekly that the Saddams and the Hitlers of the world are born evil and when they are eliminated the world becomes safer. In societies all over the world we have adopted the same system to deal with criminals. Lock them up or eliminate them and crime will be reduced. For generations we have been doing that but see very little impact on crime anywhere.

Why is it that we blindly accept a system of dealing with conflicts that we know does not work and when it does it is just temporary? Is it because we do not want to accept reality that true civilization of society means a radical transformation in our thinking, our behavior and our attitudes?

The world successfully eliminated Hitler but was not able to eliminate the hate and prejudices that he represented. Now the world has successfully eliminated Saddam Hussain but the inhumanity that he represented will live on because we have attacked the symptom and not the malady.

The alternative to the culture of violence is, obviously, the culture of nonviolence but before we baulk at the idea let us try to understand

what “nonviolence” means. A few weeks ago an American publisher sent me an out-of-print copy of “Mahatma Gandhi’s Ideas” by the Rev. C. F. Andrews* which, like Prof. Ranade’s book, is one that must be read widely for a better understanding of ahimsa or nonviolence.

There is a long and poignant letter by Count Leo Tolstoy, the Russian philosopher, to my grandfather, Mohandas K. Gandhi, in which Tolstoy confesses the urgent need to spread the wisdom of “passive resistance”¹ to save the world from certain disaster. Tolstoy laments that he is on his death bed and expressed the hope that Gandhiji who was then embarking on a vibrant political life would still be able to make the world understand and accept ahimsa or nonviolence.

To both Gandhiji and Tolstoy ahimsa represented “nothing else than the teaching of love uncorrupted by false interpretations.” They had both concluded that the “Philosophy of Nonviolence” is, quite simply, the “Philosophy of Love.”

It is only through love that we can bring about a “union of human souls” and create a climate and relationships between people where conflict would be reduced, if not eliminated altogether. I know, some of you will ask: How can anyone love people like Hitler and Saddam? We should not love what they do but we must respect them as human beings. Therefore, we ought not to attack the human being but analyze and resolve the issues that make people do bad things so that others are not forced into similar actions.

In the letter under review Tolstoy’s arguments echo what Gandhiji also has said that we humans have abandoned the Law of Love because it evokes in us the positive feelings and attitudes of compassion, respect, understanding and commitment.

Such positiveness in a materialistic society is anathema. The only way we can protect our greedy acquisitions is by the “Law of Force.” It is this pervasive attitude that compels us to build weapons of mass destruction and create power-crazy despots dreaming of dominating the world.

*Mahatma Gandhi’s ideas by Rev. CF Andrews, pub: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London. Page 195-196

Tolstoy argues it is because we need to justify the all-pervasive Culture of Violence that we deliberately corrupted the Divine Law of Love and replaced it with the Law of Force. This corruption of the Divine Law has taken place in every Faith tradition and, therefore, we find it necessary to discuss and debate theories of “Just Wars” and “necessary violence” so that we can justify the pursuit of a life style that by no stretch of anyone’s imagination can be regarded as civilized.

Tolstoy goes on to say: “...as soon as violence is permitted, in which ever case it may be, the insufficiency of the law of love is acknowledged, and by this the very law of love is denied.”

If there is Truth in what Gandhiji and Tolstoy said then humanity is at the crossroads – to turn right would mean accepting the Law of Love and proceeding to work towards creating a compassionate and committed world or we could choose to continue the leftward course and consolidate the Culture of Violence and the brutal life-style that never ceases to amaze us.

It is against this background that we must read Prof. Ranade’s book that deals with Gandhiji’s spirituality. There can be no doubt in anyone’s mind that religion, spirituality and God impacted Gandhiji in a very substantial way from his childhood. His chanting of the name of Rama to overcome his fears and his mother’s devotion to prayer and penance were all early childhood experiences that left their mark on his psyche. But I would like to suggest that Gandhiji’s determination to pursue truth with all honesty led him from one level to the next even in matters of faith.

Quite early in his adult life Gandhiji became aware of the gulf that divided the practice and the precept of Hinduism. Later he discovered that misinterpretation and misunderstanding of religion was a universal malady. To perpetuate control over believers the practice of expensive and often meaningless rituals was encouraged. And this soon became the norm. When Gandhiji realized that this was yet another way of perpetuating the culture of violence he took the next step upwards and said that life is an experiment and that Truth is God.

To fight and kill in the name of God is the worst form of evil according to Gandhiji, who was convinced that God is the epitome

of compassion, love, respect and understanding. Gandhiji believed that we human beings have divided the image of God because we want God to relate to the fragment of Truth that we hold precious. To bring back some semblance of sanity in people's understanding of religion Gandhiji advocated a friendly study of all the scriptures as the sacred duty of every individual. Scholars, he said, have often made critical studies of religions, but not many, perhaps not any, have made a "friendly" study.

Gandhiji himself made a friendly study and concluded that no religion could truly claim to "possess" the Truth but that all the religions in their own way are "pursuing" the Truth. The difference between possessing and pursuing makes a world of difference in people's attitudes. Those who believe they possess the Truth become arrogant and competitive leading to misunderstandings and conflicts while those who pursue the Truth, honestly and diligently, are imbued with humility, understanding and acceptance that others also have a bit of the Truth and that one could come to a better understanding and appreciation of one's religion by incorporating within it the fragments of truth from the others.

This philosophy of pursuit of truth led Gandhiji to conclude that ahimsa can only be interpreted as "love" and not as "nonviolence." Those of us who have interpreted ahimsa as nonviolence have, in fact, a great disservice and have hindered its universal acceptance. No form of "absolutism" can be acceptable without opening oneself to the charge of hypocrisy. There is much violence in nonviolence and nonviolence in violence, Gandhiji said, and therefore one needs to arrive at a deeper understanding of violence to appreciate nonviolence.

If there is hesitation among many around the world to accept the philosophy of nonviolence it is because there is a lack of proper understanding of both violence and nonviolence. Most people labor under the illusion that nonviolence is simply the opposite of violence so that if one does not practice physical violence one can legitimately claim to be nonviolent. This is not true at all because all of us knowingly and unknowingly practice passive, or non-physical, violence all the time in thousands of different ways. Unless we understand this and acknowledge the violence within us we cannot become the change we wish to see in the world.

Ultimately, I am convinced it is this perspective of religion and interpretation of ahimsa that led Gandhiji to believe that the best form of prayer was serving the distressed and the greatest spiritual attainment was putting the “Law of Love” into practice in everyday life.

This book will certainly add to scholarship and better understanding of Gandhian thought but we must also be conscious of the danger of “paralyses of analysis” as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said. If this book takes us closer to replacing the Law of Force with the Law of Love Prof. Ranade will have performed a great service to humanity.

I cannot claim to have had the honor of meeting Prof. Ranade but just reading his book was awesome but when asked to write a foreword I was dumbstruck because, for me this is the greatest irony of life. A high school graduate writing a foreword for a book written by such a venerable intellectual giant!! I submit my humble thoughts with utmost humility.

— **Arun Gandhi**

Founder and President
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

A Rare Book

We are happy to place in the hands of Gandhi lovers this rare half-century old book on the Mahatma by a distinguished philosopher and mystic, Professor R.D. Ranade. It is one of those unique books, if not the only one, that brings out the mystic in Gandhi and portrays him as a man of God. These were traits for which he was universally known and respected during his lifetime. After his death in 1948, he is known more as a “spiritual activist”, a pacifist politician and so on. In the vast literature that poured out for two years to mark his 50th death anniversary, there is hardly ever any mention of God.

The tragedy of Gandhi is not that he was killed by the bullet of a Hindu zealot but that the world has forgotten his last words, ‘Hey Ram’ (God), as he lay dying. The scene was a prayer meeting in an open ground where he had only a few minutes before joined the assembled crowd in recitations from the Bible, Gita of the Hindus and Muslim Quran. This was the standard Gandhian prayer meeting popular throughout the country among his followers, always held to the accompaniment of the spinning wheel which, in a curious way, symbolized Gandhi’s unshakable faith in God, and was part of the essentially integrated process of spiritual self-realization and self-reliance.

The classic tragedy of Gandhi is that the world remembers him as a man of peace and non-violence but not as a man of God, like Christ in whose footsteps he tried to walk all his life. He never tired of repeating that he was not unarmed in his struggle against injustice. He was armed with a weapon “mightier than the atomic bomb”, his “soul - force” which he invoked by constant (inner) chanting of Ramanama (name of God). This chant went on silently within him with every breath. His sole objective in life was to see God “face to face” and the non-violent struggle for freedom was merely a means to that end. Like Mother Teresa he saw in the “daridranarayan”, the poorest of the poor, God, whose service was the sole purpose of his life.

This book, titled “Spiritual awakening in Gandhi and other Indian Saints”, consists of lectures delivered by Prof. R.D. Ranade, a former vice-

chancellor of Allahabad University, less than a year before Gandhi's death on January 30, 1948. It places him in the company of Indian saints where he was seen to truly belong in those days, as a 'Mahatma' - a man of God. We feel we owe it to posterity to make this book a part of the limited Gandhian literature now available so that the divine message of 'Ramanama' of which Gandhi was an embodiment is not lost.

The 200-page book brings out how, like Christ and other saints and prophets, Gandhi and God cannot be separated. To talk of Gandhi without talking of God in the same breath misses the essence of Gandhi. In our view, in these lectures, Prof. Ranade has penetrated deeper into the soul of Gandhi than any writer we know. Prof. Ranade's lectures were brought out in book form with a print order of 500 copies in 1957 and were never reprinted. The book is thus extinct, not known even to most of Prof. Ranade's disciples and admirers.

The strength of the book lies in its ability to recreate the spiritual ethos that pervaded India over the centuries and produced some of the greatest saints of humanity among whom Gandhi was perhaps the last. (That ethos has all but disappeared since Indian independence in 1947). It shows how Gandhi shared with his saintly predecessors (like Tulsi, Mirabai and Kabir) their inspirations, aspirations and mystic experiences which were the 'guiding light' of his unique and successful non-violent battle for freedom.

The first part of this book has been devoted to the conception of spiritual life in Mahatma Gandhi under the three consecutive heads: (1) The Charkha and its seven historical conceptions, (2) The philosophical and spiritual influences on the life of Gandhi, and (3) the different stages of the development of spiritual life in Gandhi. According to Prof. Ranade this last part may, in fact, be regarded as the spiritual autobiography of Gandhi, supplementing his own early autobiography, "My Experiments with Truth", containing as it does his very own words on the subject.

This is followed by a crisp and equally penetrating study of the spiritual experiences of the great mystics of past centuries who influenced Gandhi. The book is thus an attempt to trace the common thread of one spiritual experience of God running through human history.

Little known today, the pivotal role of the ‘Charkha’ (the spinning wheel) in Gandhi’s life and philosophy, as also in Kabir’s, is beautifully surveyed right from its ancient roots, with God the master spinner whirling the wheel of Time and weaving the web of the universe. The ‘Charkha’ which formed the center-piece of the banner under which India fought for freedom is shown by the author as the symbol of creation in all great religions.

In one word this is a book about Gandhi’s unshakeable ‘FAITH’ in God without which, he repeatedly said, he was a cipher. And Faith is the fountain of love.

—**M.B. Lal**

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. R.D. Ranade the author of this book: was born on 3rd July 1886 at Jamkhindi in Bijapur District of Karnataka.



Prof. Ranade's first monumental work - The constructive survey of Upanishadic Philosophy was published in 1926. It instantly brought him international fame and in 1927 he was invited to join the Allahabad University (then known as the Oxford of India) by the then Vice Chancellor Dr. Ganga Nath Jha. Later he became Dean of the faculty of Arts and then Vice Chancellor. After his retirement from the Allahabad University in 1946 he lived at Nimbal and passed away on 6th June 1957.

Prof. Ranade was equally steeped in ancient western thought. His comprehension of Greek philosophy was based on first-hand understanding of the source. He studied Greek language including its script thoroughly and could quote passages from original Greek. His long essay, "Greek and Sanskrit; A comparative study", provides guidelines in comparative linguistics.

The life of Dr. Ranade was God-centered, God-inspired, God-possessed and God-intoxicated. His meditation continued uninterruptedly till the end. And he was soaked in Bliss Divine. He was a Mystic - philosopher. "Spiritual life," he said, "was the beginning of my career and let me hope, it will be its culmination as well."

"A mystic", according to Ranade may be a philosopher but is not necessarily so. His mystic experience is sufficient for his own elevation into divinity; but if he philosophizes, he may raise thinking humanity into a kingdom of Ends".

His books include 'Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy' (1927) described by the German savant, Prof. Garbe as 'A monumentum aere perennius (a permanent monument). This was followed by 'History

of Indian Philosophy: The Creative Period (jointly with Belvalkar) which begins with early Indian speculation to the advent of Buddhism. His Basu Mallik lectures in Calcutta university on 'Vedant: The culmination of Indian thought' was published posthumously in 1970. His work the Conception of Spiritual life in Mahatma Gandhi and Hindi saints (1956) is one of the greatest masterpieces among other works on Mahatma Gandhi, His voluminous book Mysticism in Maharashtra (1933) is based on the works of medieval saints in Maharashtra such as, Jananesvera, Tukaram, Ramdas, Eknath and others. This was followed by 1. Pathway to God in Hindi Literature in two parts (1954), 2. Bhagvad-Gita as a philosophy of God realization and 3. Pathway to God in Kannad literatu (1960). All these volumes constitute what may be called a spiritual encyclopedia of the wisdom of Indian seers.

While still at school at Jamkhindi, he came in contact with Sri Bhausahab Maharaj, the great saint of Umadi who blessed him with Divine Name (1901) and thus sowed the seed of his later spiritual greatness. He pursued his spiritual sadhana also along with his studies as a result of which he had wonderful spiritual experiences even in those early days. A great urge 'to find intellectual justification for these spiritual experiences' prompted him to study philosophy both Eastern and Western. He worked as a professor of philosophy in Ferguson College, Pune (1914) and Willingdon College, Sangli for ten years. He was twice a victim of protracted illness of a dangerous type from which he could get cure only through the all-abounding grace of his Sadguru (Master).

The year 1918 brought domestic calamities to Prof. Ranade, which resulted in intensifying his devotion and Sadhana. A dream vision (1922) directed him to Nimbai a small Railway station between Sholapur and Bijapur where he built a small house with the intention of settling down. It has now assumed the form of a small Ashram and has become a place of pilgrimage.

—M.N. Deshpande

QUOTES FROM GANDHI

I saw no form. I have never tried for it. I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice, definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the voice. The hearing of the voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain it was the Voice and struggle ceased. I was calm..... joy came over me. This was between 11 and 12 mid-night.” (Harijan, (8-7-33).

*

God whispered into my ears, “Nothing great could be achieved unless one cares for the smallest thing. God hangs the greatest weight upon the smallest pegs.”

*

I occasionally get faint glimpses of Truth.

*

With God as my supreme and sole Counselor, I felt that I must take the decision without any adviser.

*

He has never forsaken me even in my darkest hour. He has saved me often against myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been my joy. (Harijan, 6-5-33).

*

God could be found only through love, not earthly but divine. That love was lived by Mirabai. (Harijan, 23.11.47).

*

I believe in the perfectibility of human nature. Jesus came as near to perfection as possible.

*

I have learnt from Prophet Mohammad that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God.

*

Ramanama Meditation (repetition of God's name) must proceed from the heart and not from lips. Gandhiji tells us that the effect of such a repetition of God's name would soon be apparent. Pain would cease; mental and physical ailments would vanish. The name is a cure for all diseases.

*

But who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral. If he holds me as a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence in the place of the awful violence now ruling the earth, my weapon is mute prayer. (Non-Violence in Peace and War, page 250-251).

*

I have but shadowed forth my intense longing to lose myself in the Eternal and become merely a lump of clay in the potter's Divine hands, so that my service may become more certain, uninterrupted by the baser self in me. (Young India, 17. 11. 21)..

*

I must go with God as my only guide. He is a jealous Lord. He will allow no one to share His authority. One has, therefore, to appear before Him in all one's weakness, empty-handed and in a spirit of full surrender, and then He enables you to stand before the whole world and protects you from harm. (Young India, 3-9-31).

*

I am a stranger to Yogic practices. The practice I follow is a practice I learnt in my childhood from my nurse. I was afraid of ghosts. She used to say to me ' Repeat Ramanama,' What I learnt in my childhood has become a huge thing in my mental firmament. (Harijan, 5.12.36).

*

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I am much beholden to my late respected friend, the Hon'ble Shri. G.V. Mavlankar, President of the Gujarat Vidya Sabha, and my friend and former student Shri. Rasiklal Parikh, Director of the B.J. Institute, for having given me an opportunity of placing before the public my ideas on the Spiritual Realization in Mahatma Gandhi and Hindi saints. When in response to the invitation of the Institute I gave three lectures on (1) "The Spiritual Task before New India", and (2) "How all humanity could be made one", in the first week of August 1947, at Ahmedabad, I had promised that I would later develop these ideas by incorporating them in a fuller treatment. As Ahmedabad was the principal center of the life-work of Mahatma Gandhi, I thought there could be no better way of developing the subject than by first giving an account of the conception of the spiritual life in Mahatma Gandhi, who was a luminary of the first magnitude, not merely for Ahmedabad, but for the whole of India and the world, the one aim of whose life was to bring all humanity together under a banner, which we might style 'one God, one World, one Religion.'

2. Accordingly, the first part of this book has been devoted to the conception of spiritual life in Mahatma Gandhi under the three consecutive heads: (1) The Charkhâ and its seven historical conceptions, (2) The philosophical and spiritual influence on the life of Mahatma Gandhi, and (3) the different stages of the development of spiritual life in Mahatma Gandhi. This last part may, in fact, be regarded as the spiritual autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, supplementing his own early autobiography, "My Experiments with Truth", containing as it does his very own words on the subject.

3. It is well known what passion Mahatma Gandhi had for Hindi saints and Hindi literature. I had already given some idea of Hindi Mysticism in my three lectures at Ahmedabad in 1947. An opportunity came later on for me in March 1952 at Delhi, to develop this subject into a full-blown treatment of the teachings of Hindi saints under the heading the Origin, the Growth and the Culmination of their spiritual experience. The first two of these lectures were delivered at the Constitution Club,

New Delhi, under the presidentship respectively of Mr. Chandrashekhar Ayyar, Justice of the Supreme Court at New Delhi, and the Hon'ble Mr. R.R Diwakar, then Minister for Broadcasting and Information in the Government of India; and the last at the Rashtrapati – Bhavan under the auspices of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Union.

4. The third part of this book is devoted to the development of mystical experience in Kabir, the Apostle of spiritual unity, not merely among members of all religious communities of the world. Had Kabir lived today, he would have been the first person to preach such a gospel of universal spiritual unity. An opportunity was provided for the present writer in 1950 to give a discourse on Kabir at Allahabad on the First Kabir Jayanti Day initiated by the All India Radio. It is due to their courtesy that the article first appeared in the Leader and now in the present work. It may thus be seen that the common thread running through the work is the idea of one common spiritual experience running throughout the whole of humanity. We have begun with Mahatma Gandhi, proceeded with the Hindi saints and ended with Kabir.

5. In the preparation of the first chapter of this book, I have received immense help from Shri M. H Nagapurkar, Pune, who dived deeply into Gandhian Literature for supplying me with facts of various kinds. I am also indebted to Shri M. P. Anklikar, Bar-at-Law and Mr. G. G. Karkhanis, B.A; Congress veteran, and President of the Harijan Sevaka Sangha, Karnatak Pradesh, who helped me in various ways in the preparation of the first chapter. As regards the Delhi lectures, which are embodied in chapters two, three and four; I am much indebted to Shri. R. R Diwakar and Mr. S. N. Deshpande, M.A., B.Sc., who took all the trouble for arranging them. I am also deeply indebted to Prof. R. B. Athavale, M.A. and Shri Gururao Deshpande of the Radio Department, Dharwar, for having illustrated my lectures at Ahmedabad and New Delhi respectively by their beautiful songs. I am exceedingly indebted to Shri. D. P Shintre, stenographer, for taking down the entire Gandhi chapter in shorthand, as well as along with Shri B. R. Kulkarni, M. A., my former student and now Lecturer in the R. P. D. College, Belgaum, for reducing to shorthand all the three Delhi lectures recorded on the wire recorder and preparing a typed copy thereof, - a work of great labour and intelligence. I am indebted to Prof. K. V. Gajendragadkar, formerly Principal, H. P. T. College, Nasik and now

Professor of Philosophy of the Janata College, Dharwar, as well as my young friend Mr. Prahlad Hanamant Kulkarni, M. A., & Mr. S. A. alias Muchukund Paripatyadar, M. A., for preparing the indices. I must thank my friend and former student Shri. P. V. Pathak, M. A. for going through the proofs. Finally, I have to thank very heartily Shri Rameshwarnath Zutsi, Editor, Leader, Allahabad, for publishing some of these lectures from time to time about a couple of years ago in the Sunday issues of the Leader.

Nimbal, (S. R.)

7th June 1956

—**R. D. Ranade**

PUBLISHER'S NOTE ON THE FIRST EDITION

Under the terms of the donation made by Shri Chimanlal Popatlal Shah in 1946 in the name of his father Shah Popatlal Hemchand it was decided to organize series of lectures on the subject of Atman-Parmatman under the auspices of the B.J. Institute of Learning and Research of the Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad. It was also decided to name the series "Shah Popatlal Hemchand Adhyatma Vyakhyamala".

The inauguration of the series was made by the well-known philosopher Prof. R.D. Ranade, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Allahabad University. He delivered on the 6th, 7th and 8th of August, 1947, a course of three lectures on Spiritual Life in Mahatma Gandhi and Hindi Saints under the presidentship of the late Hon'ble Shri. Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar, the then President of the Gujarat Vidya Sabha. Prof. Ranade has been good enough not only to deliver the lectures but also to supply us the texts of his lectures in an enlarged form. He has also given us to include in this volume, the texts of his lectures on the same subject delivered at other places. We are grateful to him for this kindness.

Our feeling of pleasure in publishing these lectures is mixed with sorrow at the fact that Shri. Dadasaheb Mavalankar, who took such a keen interest in the advancement of higher learning and thought in Gujarat is not alive to see this publication, which he so much wanted to do.

19th September, 1956
Post Box No. 23, Bhadra
B.J. Institute of Learning & Research
Gujrat Vidya Sabha
Ahmedabad-1

—**Rasiklal C. Parikh**
Director

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**SPIRITUAL AWAKENING
IN GANDHI AND OTHER
INDIAN SAINTS**

The Essence of Gandhi

“I lay claim to nothing exclusively divine in me. I do not claim prophetship. I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. The whole of my activity whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical is directed to that end”

—*Gandhi in Young India*, 11-9-24.

“I have not been able to see any difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the Bhagavad Gita. Today, supposing I was deprived of the Gita and forgot all its contents but had a copy of the Sermon, I should derive the same joy from it as I do from the Gita”

— *Gandhi in ‘Young India’ Dec. 22, 1927*

[‘*One God, One World, One Religion*’]

Chapter 1

Conception of Spiritual life in Mahatma Gandhi

A

THE CHARKHA AND SEVEN HISTORICAL CONCEPTIONS

OF THE WHEEL

When the B. J. Institute of Learning and Research of Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad, extended its invitation to me to deliver a few lectures at their Institute, I gladly accepted the invitation. It was the first week of August 1947, which was a very eventful week in the history of India. The whole nation was eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Day of Independence on the 15th of August 1947.

The Subjects chosen by me for the two lectures were the “Spiritual Task before New India” and an analogous subject on “How all Humanity could be made One”. I promised to add to the material in my delivered lectures and that is the reason why the present work is before the public today. I was continuing my studies of the Hindi Saints at Allahabad and I thought I might give some comparative information about the Hindi Saints in the said lectures and consequently the two songs which were sung in the hall of the Institute were *jhînî, jhînî, bînî, chadariyâ*, on the first day and *Harino mârag che úûrâno* on the second.

The present writer was not satisfied with the title which occupied such great attention of the world a few years ago, namely, ‘One World’ and wanted to supplement Wendel Wilkie’s title by extending it to ‘**One God, One World, One Religion**’. These and other lectures elsewhere to which the present writer had directed his attention were all in pursuit of the idea he was intellectually seeking to achieve. The present writer had intended long to make a pilgrimage to Ahmedabad as the Headquarters of the life of Mahatma Gandhi and he thought that the present was a very good opportunity for giving some information as regards the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to Indian thought and culture. As he was proceeding to Ahmedabad from Bombay, he passed

[*The fundamental position occupied in Gandhi's spiritual teachings, of course, belongs to the Charkha.*]

by the pandal of the great exhibition that was going to be held at Bombay and opened by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in a few days' time. At the head of the *Mandap (pavilion)* he saw a *Chakra (Wheel)* of powerful luminosity, with radii of whirling and variegated colours, which was the representational symbol of Ashoka *Chakra* which the Indian nation had chosen as its supreme national symbol. When I went back in imagination as to how Ashoka had displayed his great *Chakra* at Saranath, I recalled to my mind how it was merely a pictorial replica of the great *Dharma Chakra* of Lord Buddha. What this *Dharma Chakra* is and what are its implications will be seen a little later in the course of the present chapter. One can very well understand the 24 spokes in the wheel, but nobody has yet attempted an explanation of the 32 spokes in the wheel at the head of the four lions at the top of the Sarnath Pillar whose fragments have been preserved today.

In any case he thought that the vision of the *Chakra* which the present writer regarded as merely an outward representation of the great mystical *Chakra*, was a good omen for his visit to Ahmedabad and he, therefore, decided to develop this idea of the *Chakra* with its base in the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi with parallel and supernumerary additions from other practices and scriptures so as to show how all of them are merely ectypes of the Great Mystical Wheel.

My idea is to give in a nutshell the spiritual teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and his achievements in that direction. The fundamental position occupied in the spiritual teachings, of course, belongs to the Charakhâ, (*spinning wheel*) which was the one aim of his life to preach and practise. Mahatma Gandhi built an ethics and his spiritual doctrine on this edifice which will be our endeavour to describe in the present chapter. Accordingly, the present chapter will be divided under three sections. The first section will be devoted to seven conceptions of the wheel, fundamental among which is Mahatma Gandhi's conception of the wheel which, he tells us, he had derived from the Bhagavad Gîtâ. This we shall call the sacrificial wheel of the Bhagavad Gîtâ.

Mahatma Gandhi also tells us that he had derived some very important notions from an Islamic description of the wheel from a jurist philosopher of Egypt of the tenth century upon which there existed an excellent

The Celestial Wheel of Islam and the Cosmic wheel of the Upanishads are conceptions of the divine wheel of heaven.

commentary written about 250 years ago. This we shall call the Celestial Wheel of Islam. Very analogous and certainly prior to this celestial wheel of Islam are what the present writer may call the Cosmic wheel of the Upanishads and the Astronomical Wheel of the Bhâgawata, the Islamic, the Upanishadic and Bhagwata conceptions being all devoted to a sublime description of the wheel in the heavens.

After these four conceptions of the wheel in the heavens we shall come to two other conceptions, namely, the Causal Wheel of Buddhism, which also must have influenced the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, as well as the Yogic Wheel of Kabir, which is almost a pattern of the Gandhian Wheel and which was a wheel in reality because Kabir was himself a spinner and a weaver. Finally, we shall see how these six wheels are merely replicas of the great Mystical Wheel which is at the back of them and which gives reality to them all as the idea of the Good in the various ideas in Plato.

Section two of the present chapter will be devoted to the philosophical influences that Gujarat exercised on Mahatma Gandhi's mind in his early career. Irrespective of the fact that almost every system of philosophy is represented in Gujarat, of which particularly three have been noticeable as having made a deep impression on the mind of Mahatma Gandhi — the Jain Ideal, Vallabhite Vaishnavism and the devotionism of the Bhakti School in Gujarat and elsewhere.

The third section of the present chapter is devoted to the contribution that Mahatma Gandhi has made to spiritual life. In the first place, under this head we shall discuss his Doctrine of God. Secondly, we shall see what insistence he makes upon certain moral and spiritual virtues; then we shall trace the stages of the pilgrimage through which, according to Mahatma Gandhi, one must pass before one reaches the goal. Fourthly, we shall discuss the Dark Night of the Soul, both personal and social, which Mahatma Gandhi himself had to experience, and finally we shall get a few glimpses of the spiritual realisation which he had attained.

Anyone who will care to read the remaining chapters of this work or acquaint himself with the framework of the Pathway to God in Hindi

The development of Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual mind is exactly on the lines through which every great seeker of spiritual realisation has passed

literature, which is being published elsewhere, will see that the development of Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual mind is exactly on the lines through which every great seeker of spiritual realisation has passed—the Doctrine of God, the Moral and Spiritual Virtues, the Pilgrimage, the Dark Night and the Intimations of Self-realisation.

Let us begin by considering the great economico-ethico-spiritual conception of the Charkhâ that Mahatma Gandhi introduced into Indian life. It is a great consolation to hear that this idea was suggested to Mahatmaji by the Bhagavad Gîtâ. He himself tells us: "The reader will be interested in knowing that my belief is largely derived from the Bhagavad Gîtâ. I do not wish to suggest that the author of the Divine Song had the spinning wheel in mind. He merely laid down a fundamental principle of conduct and applied it to India. I can think of spinning as the fittest and most acceptable sacrificial body-labour. I cannot imagine anything nobler or more rational than that". It must also be said that two other philosophic symbols influenced him in this direction, namely, the Dharma Chakra of Buddha and the Yogic Chakra of Kabir. In fact, Gandhiji's Charkhâ seems to be a triple formulation of the contribution which the Gîtâ, Buddhism and Kabir made to Indian philosophical and practical speculation.

We shall see a little later how in his reply to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatmaji quotes nine full verses beginning with *niyatam kuru karma tvam* in Sanskrit from the Bhagavad Gîtâ in Young India of 13th October, 1921, which according to Mahatma Gandhi constitute the fundamental platform of the philosophy of the spinning wheel. This passage of nine verses could be divided into two parts of six and three each. In the first six we are given the conception of sacrifice and in the next three we are given the conception of the wheel. Combining the two together, we might say that these nine verses have suggested to Gandhiji the conception of the sacrificial wheel. Whether the author of the Bhagavad Gîtâ had the spinning wheel in mind, Mahatmaji doubts, but that he had the wheel in mind, there is no question (*evam pravartitam chakram*) Anyway the spinning wheel is to Gandhiji the supreme symbol of sacrificial action.

*Detachment, therefore, constitutes the supreme
pinnacle of human action, according to Gandhiji.*

A little later when Gandhiji wrote his famous Anâsakti Yoga, a treatise on the Bhagavad Gîtâ, he contributed two further points to the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, namely, the philosophy of detachment and an allegorical interpretation of the relationship between Arjuna and Krishna. In regard to the first it is important to remember that the word ‘detachment’, which Gandhiji employs, is a far better word than non-attachment. Non-attachment is negative while detachment is positive. Gandhiji goes on to the length of saying that Ahimsâ was an earthly conception while Anâsakti was a heavenly one. Bhaktî and Jòâna also whirl round about this sun of Anâsakti like planets. Detachment, therefore, constitutes the supreme pinnacle of human action according to Gandhiji.

Then again when he tells us that the Bhagavad Gîtâ is to be interpreted merely in an allegorical fashion, we can call to our mind what he has also said about Râmâyana and Mahâbhârata elsewhere, both of which he regarded as merely allegorical representations of certain ethical or spiritual conceptions. He says: The Mahâbhârata and Râmâyana, the two books that millions of Hindus know and regard as their guides, are undoubtedly allegories as the internal evidence shows. That they most probably deal with historical figures does not affect my proposition. Each epic describes the eternal duel that goes on between the forces of darkness and the forces of light.” Gandhiji does not deny that the names Arjuna, Krishna, Râma, Bibhîshana are historical names, but the aim of these epics, he tells us, is peace and not war, as Anandawardhana once said about Mahâbhârata itself, and instead of interpreting them from the point of view of actual physical warfare, let us interpret them from the point of view of the internal conflict between the forces of light and the forces of darkness ultimately leading to the victory of the forces of light. One may or may not agree with this merely allegorical interpretation of the Mahâbhârata and the Râmâyana. Still it cannot be gainsaid that the first two points that Gandhiji has made, namely, his doctrine of sacrificial body labour as the supreme teaching of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, as well as the doctrine of detachment as the highest moral virtue, are landmarks in the history of Gîtâ interpretation.

[*All of man's desires are fulfilled when the highest aim is achieved, namely, the vision of Atman.*]

It will be necessary to add two or three other points to this discussion of the Bhagavad Gîtâ by Mahatma Gandhi. In the first place, the sacrificial action, which is taught by the Bhagavad Gîtâ in this passage, has got certain limitations. One wonders whether the absolutely *Nishkâma* (selfless) ideal is preached here in the Bhagavad Gîtâ. "Please the Gods by your actions and Gods will please you." *devân bhâvayatânenâ te devâ bhâvayantu vah!* Says the Bhagavad Gîtâ. It also tells us that all our desires will be fulfilled (*istakâmadhuk*) by this sacrificial action of ours. It is all right to offer our first share to the Gods and men and thus to please them and let us be content with the remnants, says the Bhagavad Gîtâ. That is a very healthy principle of sacrificial action. Incidentally it may be said that *utchhista* (remnant) was also regarded as a *devatâ* (deity) in the Atharva Veda. One who does not partake of only the remnants of the sacrifice for himself is merely feeding on sins, says the Bhagavad Gîtâ. In that way, if we please God, we shall have a double aim simultaneously achieved—plentitude in this life and beatitude in the next. Sacrificial action, according to the Bhagavad Gîtâ, seems to be a double-barrelled gun in the matter of the achievement of our aim. One wonders what reaction this would have on the *Anâsakti* theory of the Bhagavad Gîtâ. The answer would not be far to seek as the present writer has pointed out in his 'Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy'. Let us refer to that famous passage from the Upanishads that tells us:

aptakâmah sarvakâmah nishkâma âtmakâmah

(All of man's desires are fulfilled when the highest aim is achieved, namely, the vision of Atman). It is only that which is purely *Nishkâma*, everything else is *Nishkâma* by sufferance. One may not be too critical of the Bhagavad Gîtâ but one must supplement the eudemonistic doctrine taught in the above passage of the Bhagavad Gîtâ by the selfless realisation of the Self taught by the Upanishads. A second point to which we must draw attention in application of Gandhiji's interpretation is the concatenation which the Bhagavad Gîtâ brings about between the five conceptions (1) the metaphysical, (2) the ethical, (3) the meteorological, (4) the economic and (5) the biological. This great

[*Mahatma Gandhiji's conception of the spinning wheel evoked great criticism from Dr. Rabindranath Tagore in the year 1921.*]

concatenation¹ constitutes the human endeavour to proceed from one to another relying upon the supreme principle of sacrifice.

*Annâd bhavanti bhûtâni parjanyaâdanna-sambhavah !
yajjâd bhavati parjanyo yajjâh karmasamudbhavah !!*

*karma brahmodabhavam viddhi brahmakshara-samudbhavam !
tasmât sarvagatam brahma nityam yajne pratisthitam !!**

* The translation of the above two verses from Bhagvat Gîtâ (III-14-15) is as follows. From food (i.e., from reproductive power sustained by food) creatures are born. Food is produced by rain. Rain is born of sacrifice and sacrifice originates from action. Works of sacrifice have their authority in the Veda. Veda has been revealed by the Supreme Being. Therefore the all comprehending Veda is established in Sacrifice (that is, has performance of sacrifice as its fundamental teaching).

Finally, we are told by the Bhagavad Gîtâ that the highest duty of man is to set the wheel of reality in motion. Give push to the incessantly moving wheel of reality and thus help the order of the universe, says the Bhagavad Gîtâ *Evam pravartitam chakram*.

The author of the Bhagavad Gîtâ did really use the word Chakra and so, as I have pointed out, he did have the conception of the spinning wheel that is only a small illustration of this wheel of reality. To turn this wheel of reality is to help in the orderly progress of the universe.

Mahatma Gandhiji's conception of the spinning wheel evoked great criticism from Dr. Rabindranath Tagore in the year 1921, when he contributed an article on the subject to the Modern Review. We shall first state the salient points in Dr. Tagore's criticism and then see how Mahatma Gandhi answers them. Dr. Tagore tells us that he would have been in full agreement with Mahatma Gandhi if the utility of the machine power had to be stressed but there is limitation to this idea.¹ The Charkhâ is good so far as it goes; but it cannot be expected to do

(1) — Mahatma Gandhi has declared war against the tyranny of machine which is oppressing the whole world, we are all enrolled under his banner. (p 431, Modern Review, Oct.21.)

Swaraj is not concerned with our apparel only, it cannot be established on cheap clothing; its foundation is in the mind: Tagore.

all the work that is expected of it.² In fact, Mahatma Gandhi's one Mantra (devotional incantation) is 'Spin and weave, spin and weave', with which Dr. Tagore does not agree.³

Mahatma Gandhi, says Tagore, asks his votaries to surrender their intellects.⁴ A bee-hive which contains within itself bees which at the bidding of nature have to surrender their sex for the sake of efficiency carries with it its own prison house.⁵ It is not only the apparel that matters in the winning of Swarâj, but progress all round in various branches is required. Mind is more powerful than cotton.⁶ The lyre could not be set to music only on one string. A number of strings are required before good music could be produced.⁷ A nation must advance

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- (2) The Charkhâ in its proper place can do no harm but will rather do much good (p.430, Modern Review, Oct.21).
 - (3) ——— It was only necessary to cling to an unquestioning obedience.... To some MANTRA, some unreasoned creed. (p. 428, Modern Review, Oct-21-Tagore). But his call came to one narrow field alone. To one and all he simply says: Spin and weave, spin and weave. (p. 430, Modern Review, Oct.21).
 - (4) Firstly, because I conceive it to be the very first duty to put up a valiant fight against this terrible habit of blindly obeying orders, and this fight can never be carried on by our people being driven from one injunction to another. (p.431, Modern Review, Oct.21).
 - (5) When nature called to the Bee to take refuge in the narrow life of a hive, millions of bees responded to it for the sake of efficiency, and accepted the loss of sex in consequence. (p. 430, Modern Review, Oct.1921)..... any country, the people of which can agree to become neuter for the sake of some temptation or demand, carries within itself its own prison-house.
 - (6) But where, by reason of failure to acknowledge the differences in man's temperament, it is in the wrong place, there thread can only be spun at the cost of a great deal of the mind itself.

Swaraj is not concerned with our apparel only, it cannot be established on cheap clothing; its foundation is in the mind, which, with its diverse powers and its confidence in those powers goes on all the time creating Swaraj for itself. (p.430.Modern Review, Oct. 1921)

- 7) "Let all seekers after truth come from all sides".... It is he who should teach me that merely one string will not serve for a true Vina; that the materials required

I had not even seen a Charkhâ when I first advocated its use. In fact, I called it a hand-loom in Hindi Swaraj in 1909, not knowing a spinning wheel from a hand-loom. (Visit to Bannu N.W.F. 1938).

in all its arts and sciences and a perfect system of moral and intellectual discipline should be evolved before it can go ahead to attain Swarâj.

Mahatma Gandhi replied to this criticism equally acutely just ten days after Dr. Tagore's article had been published. Mahatma Gandhi's arguments in *Young India* could be set down as follows: He has never asked people to surrender their reason and when Dr. Tagore asked them to revolt he should have considered whether it was an opinion forced upon them or whether they had arrived at it after a long and laborious thought.¹

Beyond this rational point of view Mahatma Gandhi stresses three more important points, economic, moral and spiritual, in order to advocate the efficacy of the Charkhâ. Mahatma Gandhi tells us that he could safely predict its great function even before he was able to see it.² Until the year 1909, he tells us, he had not seen the Charkhâ and had confounded it with a handloom: but he was so fully convinced about its utility that he had no hesitation in advocating it. The economic aspect must be first looked to.³ A poor man's hunger cannot be assuaged by

are many and various; that the lines of its moulding must be shapely and precise; that if there be anything faulty, it will fail to make good music... that all laws of science and technique of art must be rigorously and intelligently followed. (Beauty and Austerity) (p.429, *Modern Review*, Oct.21-Tagore)

- (1) It is good therefore that the Poet has invited all who are slavishly mimicking the call of Charkhâ boldly to declare their revolt. Let him go deeper and see for himself whether the Charkhâ has been accepted with blind faith or from reasoned necessity. (*Young India*, 13-10-21. Reply to Tagore).
- (2) I have again and again appealed to reason, and let me assure him that if happily the country has come to believe in the spinning wheel as the giver of plenty, it has done so after laborious thinking, after great hesitation. (*Young India*, (13.10.21.)
- (3) I had not even seen a Charkhâ when I first advocated its use. In fact, I called it a hand-loom in *Hindi Swaraj* in 1909, not knowing a spinning wheel from a hand-loom. (Visit to Bannu N.W.F. 1938).

In fact the economic finds its consummation in the moral. The Charkhâ might be regarded as a symbol of non-violence.⁶ It is not my invention.

singing a song from Kabir.¹ Hungry I was, says the Bible, and you fed me not; naked I was and you clothed me not. These are the barest essentials of life and any scheme which does not look to the fulfilment of these is hardly worth its name. We must indeed learn to live before we can hope to die for humanity.² Dr. Tagore's bird can fly into the free air if it is fed, but a bird which is starving can hardly be coaxed even into a flutter of its wings.³ In losing the Charkhâ we have lost our left lung and have developed a galloping consumption.⁴ Therefore I appeal to the poet sage, says Mahatma Gandhi, "to spin the wheel as a sacrament." The moral aspect is not less important than the economic.⁵

In fact the economic finds its consummation in the moral. The Charkhâ might be regarded as a symbol of non-violence.⁶ It is not my invention.

(1) I have found it impossible to sooth suffering patients with a song from Kabir.

(2) India is naked and starving.

‘I was naked and you clothed me not;’
 ‘I was hungry and you gave me not to eat.’
 The Bible (Young India, 29.6.21.)

(3) True to his poetical instinct the Poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. These birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood has flown during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching birds who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. (Young India, 13.10.2 Reply to Tagore)

(4) I claim that in losing the spinning wheel we lost our left lung. We are therefore suffering from galloping consumption. (Young India, 13.10.21. Reply to Tagore).

(5) I do indeed ask the Poet and the Sage to spin the wheel as a sacrament. (young India, 13.10.21. Reply to Tagore.)

(6) Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. (Young India. 13.10.21. Reply to Tagore).

“God whispered into my ears, says Mahatma Gandhi, nothing great could be achieved unless one cares for the smallest thing. God hangs the greatest weight upon the smallest pegs.”

My discovery consisted only in linking it with non-violence.¹ ‘It would pain me’, says Mahatma Gandhi, ‘to behave like a patron of the poor.’² I must associate myself with the lowliest in order that they might feel themselves one with me. Through them also, in this way, I might establish a contact with the whole of humanity.³ The Charkhâ might be taken to be a symbol for all moral virtues.⁴ As regards its spiritual aspect, Mahatma Gandhi quotes an English lady. He tells us how the sonorous tunes of the Charkhâ filled her always with tender emotions as it did the heart of every Indian woman in India. Indian women sing their beautiful songs to the tune of the Charkhâ. ‘I have no difficulty in imagining the possibility’, says Mahatma Gandhi, ‘of a man having nothing but a bit of flint and dial for lighting his path or his matchlock, ever singing new hymns of praise and delivering it to an aching world a message of peace and good-will upon earth.’⁵ God whispered into my ears, says Mahatma Gandhi: “Nothing great could be achieved unless one cares for the smallest thing. God hangs the greatest weight upon

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- (1) The Charkhâ is not my invention. It was there before. My discovery consisted in linking it to the programme of independence and non-violence. (Visit to Bannu N.W. F. 1938).
 - (2) ... I will not commit the sin of becoming their patron. (Young India, 13.10.21. Reply to Tagore).
 - (3) We should all do the labour that the poor must do and thus identify ourselves with them and through them with all humanity.
 - (4) Later on he discovered the tremendous power hidden in the Charkhâ. That power was the power of non-violence. If it meant non-violence, as it did, it also meant a moral life. (Delhi Dairy, 13.12.47).
 - (5) There is a music about the spindle which the practised spinner catches without fail. (Young India, 18.8.21). A Christian lady writes:- “To the music of the spinning wheel the women will sing their beautiful song, tell their stories of old and the beauty and contentment of simple home life will be renewed. If I had the gift of a poet I would sing the song of the spindle wheel, of its beauty and its usefulness, of its poetry and its religious value. But I am not gifted. The song is singing in my soul (Young India, 29.6.21)

My God is myriad formed and I see Him in the spinning wheel; and that is how I establish communion with Him according as the spirit moves me (Harijan, 8.5.37).

the smallest pegs.”¹ The spiritual tunes of the Charkhâ have made me see the myriad-formed God in the Charkhâ. It is to me, a complete symbol of rational, economic, moral and spiritual perfection.”²

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- (1) God whispered into my heart, ‘ If you want to work through non-violence, you have to proceed with small things, not big”. (Visit to Bannu N.W.F.)
 - (2) My God is myriad formed and I see Him in the spinning wheel; and that is how I establish communion with Him according as the spirit moves me (Harijan, 8.5.37).

It seems that Mahatma Gandhi developed his notion of the Charkhâ from a Mohammedan friend who wrote to him about the Charkhâ in Islam in 1921.

B

THE WHEEL IN ISLAM, BUDDHISM AND KABIR

It seems that Mahatma Gandhi developed his notion of the Charkhâ from a Mohammedan friend who wrote to him about the Charkhâ in Islam in 1921. This conception comes out of the writings of Kazi Noman Ben Mahomed, Jurist Philosopher and man of letters and religion in Egypt, who had, it is supposed, lived in the 10th century A.D. as well as the commentary on his work by Shaikh Ibrahim Saifee who lived about 250 years ago. Mahatma Gandhi is not quite sure about the certainty of these dates while the account about the Charkhâ seems to him a little fanciful. Nevertheless he recommends that conception. In this conception the physical world is regarded as merely a replica of the celestial world. The wheel consists of two parts—one higher and one lower—the upper one representing the heavens and the lower one the earth. The upper is the wheel proper and the lower one is the spindle. The twelve spokes of the wheel correspond to the twelve constellations (*râshis*) of the heavens.

It may be said in passing that this conception of the *râûis* was known to the Greek and Egyptian astronomers while it is supposed that in India it appears somewhat later. But the conception of the stars, planets and constellations might be regarded as a very early development in India. The two poles, the North and the South, constitute the two supporting parts of the wheel and there is an axis that connects them both. As we have said above, the earth constitutes the spindle of the wheel; the four elements constitute the material or the cotton, the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms constituting the yarn that is spun out of it. The string that connects the spoke and the spindle is the influence which the heavenly bodies exercise upon the earth. The handle of the wheel is the human being and the spinner is God Himself. This we may well regard as constituting the celestial conception of the wheel in Islam.

How glad would Mahatma Gandhi have been if he had known that the conception of the wheel is present in the earliest literatures of India. It is present in the Vedas and the Upanishads, as we shall presently see,

This is equivalent to saying that all existence is woven in water, water in air and so on until everything is declared to be woven in Brahman.

as well as later in the Bhâgwata also. As Fr. Heras pointed out in his article on the Indian National Flag (1947) the conception of the wheel in the Rg Veda constitutes the wheel of the universe. It is of course an elementary conception that is later developed in the Upanishads and still more developed, as we shall see, in the Bhâgwata. If we take the following verse from the Rg Veda

*Dwâdaûa pradhayaschakramekam trîni nabhyâni ka u
tachhiketa !
tasmintsâkam triûatâ na shankvoarpitâh sashtirna
chalâchalâsah!!*

We shall see that the wheel of the year which is described therein has got twelve parts in its periphery which constitute the 12 months of the year. The three naves round about the hub constitute the three seasons. The naves and the periphery are connected together by 360 spokes that are the days of the year, while the central hub of the wheel is God. "Who is there," asks the poet. "Who has known the intimate nature of this wheel?" This idea does not yet bring out the conception of the warp and the woof that is introduced by the Upanishads.

In the Brhadâranyaka Upanishad there is a famous passage (III 6) in which we are introduced to Gargi as interrogating Yâjnavalkya on certain fundamental conceptions. "Of what do the beings of the earth constitute the warp and the woof," asks Gargi; and Yâjnavalkya replies, "Of water." "Of what does water constitute the warp and the woof?" Yâjnavalkya replies, "Of air." Air in its turn constitutes the warp and the woof of the intermundia, the intermundia, of solar regions of Brahman. "Of what does the Brahman constitute the warp and the woof." Asks Gargi. "Do not ask too much, Gargi," said Yâjnavalkya. Do not transcend your limitations, lest your head will fall off." Gargi refrained from asking further questions. This is as much as to say that the recourse to the regressus ad-infinitum is always beset with difficulties and that there must be a limit to the regressus. The above Upanishadic passage introduces the conception of the warp and woof: *otam cha protam cha*. This is equivalent to saying that all existence is woven in water, water in air and so on until everything is declared to be woven in

It is important to remember how the author of the Upanishad very dexterously brings out the conception of the warp and the woof in the idea that everything is woven in the supreme contexture of God.

Brahman. In fact there is an infinite number of such concentric circles in Reality; but for our purposes five would do.

Let us be satisfied with these five for the purposes of mystical experience. God is a great circle who envelops everything that exists. God is the all enveloping circle including inside it, necessarily, the sun, the intermundia, air, water, and all beings. It is important to remember how the author of the Upanishad very dexterously brings out the conception of the warp and the woof in the idea that everything is woven in the supreme contexture of God.

We next pass on to a sublime astronomical conception from the Bhâgawata about the *Úíúumâra* Chakra that the author of the Bhâgawata spares no pains in developing to the utmost extent. Those who see the whirling of the heavens round about the Pole Stars may easily be struck by the regular, rotatory and circular motions that the heavens display round about these unmoving foci. Various conceptions have been made use of in developing this notion of the Chakra.

Some people have talked about it as a bear, and the seven sages big and small have been described as the Ursa Major and the Ursa Minor which revolve a round the North Pole. Others have talked about it as *sunah sepa* or the dog's tail. Others still have called it a crocodile, a porpoise or an alligator. This is a great conception no doubt; but the word used is not so happy—*Úíúumâra*. The killer of a child is no compliment to the cosmic form of God. This conception consists in the description of an alligator spread out in the heavens with its tail at the North Pole and probably the tip of its mouth at the South Pole, which latter fact, has been left unsaid. The body of the crocodile has been described as spherical or *Mandalâkâra* and the entire heavens as whirling round about these two poles with stars, constellations and planets going on their continual round and exhibiting the motion of a perpetual wheel set up by god in the stellar regions. We may, for convenience sake, call it here the stellar or the astronomical wheel. The form of the *Úíúumâra* Chakra was supposed to be revealed to Vâsudeva in his spiritual meditation. It is the form of an alligator or a crocodile whirling through the vast expanse of the heavens. As we have said above the

He who contemplates on this form of God day and night, says the Bhâgawata, becomes entirely bereft of his sins.

alligator is spread in the heavens in spherical form, with its tail up and face down. At the end of its tail in the North is the pole star and on tip of its palate in the South is the Canopas (Agasti) or Argus, the second most brilliant star in the heavens.

The constellations of the seven sages form its waist. This forms of sisumâra is situated between the Ajavtîhi the Âkâsa Gangâ, the up and down portions of milky way. The entire galaxy of the stars constitutes the vast numbers of hair on the alligator's body. So far about the Târâs or stars. The seven planets find their place in the internal part of the alligator's body, Mars in the Mouth, Mercury in the throat, Jupiter on the hump, the Sun in the thorax, the Moon in the heart, Venus in the navel and Saturn at the Upastha. So far about the Grahâs or planets. What about the Nakshatras? The famous 27 along with the addition of Abhijit are divided into two batches of 14 each, one batch being on the left side of the alligator and the other on the right. The Nakshatras on the left side of the alligator are the 14 constellations beginning with Pushya at the left buttock and ending with Uttârâsâdhâ at the left nostril and the 14 on the right side commence with the Abhijit at the right nostril and end with Punarvasu at the right buttock. In between the two extremes of Pushya and Uttârâsâdhâ on the left side of the alligator are Âdeshâ at the hind leg, the 8 Nakshatras from Maghâ to Anurâdhâ at the ribs, Jyeshtha at the fore leg, Moola at the ear and Purvâshâdhâ at the eye. In between the two extremes of Abhijit and Punarvasu on the left side are srâvana at the eye, Dhanishthâ at the ear, satatâraka at the fore leg, the 8 Nakshatras from Purvâbhâdrapada to Mriga at the ribs and Ârdra at the hind leg. This is veritably a *Nakshatratârâgrahasamkula* form of God, constituting the *Ûûumâra chakra*. He who contemplates on this form of God day and night, says the Bhâgawata, becomes entirely bereft of his sins.

We have seen hitherto the importance which Mahatma Gandhi attached to the sacramental wheel of the Bhagavad Gîtâ and later on the celestial wheel in Islam, which may be regarded as having made some influence on Mahatma Gandhi's mind, specially, after having compared it with two other earlier conceptions in Indian thought—one from the Upanishads and the other from the Bhâgawata, the last of which might

Gandhiji's point was that Buddha did really believe in God, and that he identified God with the moral government of the world.

be regarded as one of the most magnificent conceptions of the wheel to be ever construed by man.

Let us now pass to the so-called Causal Wheel of Buddhism which also must be regarded as having made a deep influence on Gandhiji's mind. In fact Gandhiji's identification with Buddhism came from Buddha's identification with the Law or God. Gandhiji's point was that Buddha did really believe in God, and that he identified God with the moral government of the world.¹ I have heard it contended, he says, that the Buddha did not believe in such a God. This, however, is not the correct interpretation that may be attributed to Buddhism.² The present writer believes that Mahatma Gandhi's interpretation is correct, and that the other interpretation namely the a-psychic and the a-theistic pertain only to the *Hînayânist* philosophy and, may be, even the Mahâyânist. Above and beyond both these systems, the *Hînayânist* philosophy and may be, even to the Mahâyânist, there is a mystical element in Buddhism which has recently been brought to light and without which, as Mrs. Rhys Davids says, no great religion could have been either founded or propagated. We shall come to this point at the end of our discussion of the Causal Chakra of Buddhism.

At present it is necessary to remember that just as the 'Cross' is the symbol of the Christianity and the 'Crecent' of Islam, similarly the Dharma Chakra is the essential symbol of Buddhism. It will be seen that this conception of Dharma Chakra was present in Buddhism before Ashoka founded his Great Royal Chakra. Three interpretations may be given of this Chakra. In the first place, it may designate the victory of the conqueror over all the quarters. Secondly, it may represent the victory of the Dharma over physical force. And thirdly, it may be a symbol of the ever-moving *samsâra* - the whole process from birth to

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1. He (Buddha) emphasized and redeclared the eternal and unalterable existence of the moral government of this universe. He unhesitatingly said that the Law was God Himself. (Y.I. 24-11-27).
 2. I have heard it contended the Buddha did not believe in God. In my humble opinion such a belief contradicts the very central fact of Buddha's teaching (Y.I.24.11-27.)

Buddha taught the nature of suffering in its four aspects which can ultimately be reduced only to two categories, suffering and its removal.

death and rebirth again, implying the principle of continuity. The first interpretation may have a political element, the second a religious element and the third a philosophical one. All these three elements are contained in the symbolism of the Chakra we have referred to. Also we may note that the Dharma Chakra has been represented at 'Sarnath' as lying under the feet of Lord Buddha. The present writer could not understand for a long time why Buddha was regarded as over-riding the Dharma Chakra or Wheel of Law. But in course of time the idea dawned upon him that Buddha had transcended the operation of the "Bhava Chakra" and risen superior to it. Buddha striding the Wheel of Law from the ordinary point of view seems an arrogant act. But a man who attains to mystical experience may be allowed to over-stride it as was done by Lord Buddha Himself. Readers of Kannad Literature may well recall to mind the utterance of a great Karnatak saint with reference to such an act: *Hâu tuli dene mâninî!*

What in fact was the essential teaching of the Buddha so far as his turning of the Dharma Chakra or Wheel of Law initially was concerned? Three points have been enumerated in regard to this teaching as having constituted it. In the first place, Buddha taught the middle path which was the same as the *Ashtânga Mârگا*, not ethically very different from that taught by Jainism or even from that taught by the Bhagavad Gîtâ. The five virtues *Ahimsâ* (Harmlessness), *Satya* (Truth), *Asteya* (Abstinence from stealing), *Brahmacharya* (Celibasy) and *Aparigraha* (Without possessions) are common to all. While however in the case of Jainism, there is a recognition of *samyajjôâna* (Right knowledge), *Samyagdaræana* (Right vision) and *Samyakchâritrya* (Right conduct) in the case of Buddhism, there is a recognition of *Úila* (Correct behaviour), *Samâdhi* (Transcendental experience) and *Prajnâ* (Wisdom).

The Bhagavad Gîtâ enumerates a large number of other virtues for its ethical scheme. On the whole the middle path which the Buddha taught and which was regarded as a sort of revelation to him under the Bo-tree was nothing more than the realisation of the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean. Secondly, the Buddha taught the nature of suffering in its

It teaches that the cardinal error, namely, ignorance, the first link in the chain must be removed in order that all the remaining links in the chain may snap automatically.

four aspects which can ultimately be reduced only to two categories, suffering and its removal. The four-fold scheme does not hold water and hides a tautology. Buddha's doctrine of suffering is, on the whole, very analogous to the later doctrine of Schopenhauer. Thirdly, the most distinguishing feature of Buddhistic doctrine is the Dharma Chakra or the concatenation of 12 *Nidânas Avidyâ, Samskâra, Nâmarûpa, Bhava, Úadâyatana, Sparûa, Vidòana, Upâdâna, Triúnâ, Jâti, Jarâ* and *Marana*. This represents the perpetual round or the vicious circle of *Samsâra* from birth to death and from death to birth over again, thus establishing a chain between our previous life, our present life and our future life.

If we consider the nature of this Dharma Chakra in some detail we shall see that in the first place it teaches the doctrine of *Tat twam bhavasi* instead of *Tatvamsi*, which latter is static while the former is dynamic. Secondly, it teaches that the cardinal error, namely, ignorance, the first link in the chain must be removed in order that all the remaining links in the chain may snap automatically. So far so good. But if we just consider the scheme of the *Nidânas* philosophically, we shall find that it is nothing more than a hotch-potch of psycho-ideological or pseudo-mystical categories, a concatenation of epistemological, eschatological, metaphysical, cosmological, psychophysical, ethical and biological categories. The essence of Buddhism is founded on this treatment of the *Nidânas* by most of the expounders of Buddhism. The real secret of Buddhism, however, lies elsewhere. In fact the Buddha's teaching was so early that the Hînayânists who came some centuries later could hardly penetrate to the secret of his teaching. That tradition continued for a long time and later came the Mahâyânists who only half understood the secret of Buddha's teaching and got some insight into its spiritual nature. It is not, however, till we come to recent times that we understand the real mystical tenor of Buddha's philosophy expounded with reference to the originals. Mrs. Rhys Davids, who along with her husband wrote a book on Buddhism in 1912 was obliged to recant entirely a quarter of a century later when she published the second edition of her Buddhism reinstating and establishing firmly the mystical nature of the teaching of the Buddha. Mrs. Rhys Davids states in this connection that there

What does this post illuminational soliloquy mean except that the Buddha had seen the maker of the house, either in the sense of the Self who is the maker of the body or God who is the maker of the universe?

could be no foundation or propagation of any faith without a mystical insight. It is not without reason that she says 'peccavi' when she compares her later teaching with her original one. Monier Williams has given a fine account of the different stages of the mystical teaching of Buddha. What the revelation of Buddha under the Bo tree was we cannot imagine. It certainly was not the discovery of the concatenation of categories called the Causal Wheel that was enough to fill Buddha with an impetus towards propagating his gospel. The illumination he received under the Bo-tree must have been of a different kind altogether. Not a mere insight into the Casual Law or the Middle Path or the nature and causes of suffering. It is only students of the psychology of religion that can understand the real nature of this illumination. In this connection we may say that we have to take note of the two occasions of light for the Buddha which have been stressed. Let us refer to Mahâparinibbâna sutta (S. B. E. Vol. XI, Buddhist Suttas.) to know what these are. Also we have to consider two very fine statements by Buddha himself in order to convince us about his spiritual experience. One was at the time of his revelation itself at Buddhagayâ and the other at the time of his death at Kusinara. Let us take and ponder over verses from the Majjhima Nikaya¹ :

*Anekajâtisamsâram sandhâvissam anivvisam!
Gahakârakam gavesanto dukkho jâti punappunam!!
Gahakâraka ditthosi pâna geham na kârasi!
Savvâ te phâsukâ bhaggâ gahakûtam visankitam!!*

What does this post illuminational soliloquy mean except that the Buddha had seen the maker of the house, either in the sense of the Self who is the maker of the body or God who is the maker of the universe? What does this post illuminational soliloquy mean except that the Buddha had seen the maker of the house, either in the sense of the Self who is the

1. These two verses also occur in Dhammapada in chapter, Jaravaggo. Their translation is as follows: 'I have run through a course of many births looking for the maker of the dwelling and finding him not, painful is birth again and again. Now you are seen, o builder of the house, you will not build the house again. All your rafters are broken your ridge pole is destroyed.

We are told how the dying Buddha exclaimed, "heed ultimately not what men say. Heed the inner Monitor, the still small voice."

maker of the body or God who is the maker of the universe? Also was it not this very conception of the Inner Monitor itself, to which he referred at the time of his death? We are told how the dying Buddha exclaimed, "Heed ultimately not what men say. Heed the inner Monitor, the still small voice." Buddhism is not mere a-cosmism, is not a mere psychologism without a soul. It is tinged with mystical experience, the full extent of which has been denied to us on account of the passage of time and consequent loss of literature.

We have said above that the Bhagavad Gîtâ and Buddhism deeply influenced Mahatma Gandhi in his doctrine of the Charkhâ. A third, not less powerful influence, came from Kabir, the Mohammedan saint of Northern India, who made no difference between one religion and another. His was the vocation of a weaver. Mahatma Gandhi has said that Aurangzeb made caps but Kabir wove Chaddars, hence he calls Kabir a greater emperor than Aurangzeb. One of the finest songs that influenced Mahatma Gandhi in this connection appears in his *Âûrama Bhajanâvali*. The song is *Jhînî Jhînî bînî chadariyâ* that is well known throughout Northern India, and it was one of the earliest songs that the present writer came to know at Allahabad some years ago. It describes the Yogic Wheel of Kabir by means of which the chaddar of the human body and mind is said to be produced by the great Maker. Details of this we shall see in a later chapter of this work. At present it would be necessary only to point out the yogic aspect of this wheel. Kabir tells us that the Idâ and the Pingalâ, the two great chords of the sympathetic nervous system constitute the Tâna and the Bâna, the warp and the woof of the cloth woven.

The Sushumnâ constitutes the interlacing thread that strengthens and beautifies the structure made by the Tâna and the Bârna. Also Kabir tells us that the Chaddar is composed of *Ashtakamaladala*. Now this expression is capable of two interpretations. Either it might mean a wheel with eight petals, blades or spokes; it might also mean an assemblage of eight lotuses. In either case this Yogic Wheel must be rotated before the Chaddar of the human body could be produced. Dâdu, a compeer of Kabir takes this conception a little further. The protuberances in the original cotton, namely the vices, must first be

We may say, the most classical example of this mystical wheel is the wheel which protected Parikshit in his mother's womb and which he saw round himself as his guarding angel.

taken away. The warp and the woof in Dadu are constituted by the Prema and Prâna instead of the Idâ and the Pingalâ as in Kabir. The name of God constitutes the bobbin through which the thread must keep passing, while the internal emotions constitute the colour that is to be interspersed in the length and the breadth of the cloth woven. In any case these Mohammedan weavers have told us how this beautiful garment is to be produced by means of the Yogic Wheel.

We have seen hitherto various conceptions of the Wheel or Chakra. We have seen the Sacramental Wheel in the Bhagavad Gîtâ; we have seen the celestial wheel in Islam; the cosmic wheel in the Upanishads and the astronomical wheel in the Bhâgawata. We have also seen the causal wheel of Buddhism and the yogic wheel in Kabir. All these wheels, it may be said, are merely like phenomenon to the noumenon of the Mystical Wheel or like the various ideas to the mystical idea of the Good. All the six wheels that have hitherto been described constitute the relevant conceptions which rise spirally towards the supreme mystical wheel. They are copies of the original which rises behind them and which sustains and supports them. There are only scattered references to this Mystical Wheel here and there. This is a matter of experience and not of description. Succinctly there are five points in regard to this mystical wheel: Its form, its light, its colour, its sound and its motion. We may say, the most classical example of this mystical wheel is the wheel which protected Parikshit in his mother's womb and which he saw round himself as his guarding angel. Hence the propriety of the name that is given to him.

As in the case of a firefly its light serves to terrify, to protect and attract, in the case of the mystical wheel also, we may say it terrifies, protects and attracts. As regards the form of the wheel, it may be described in the shape of one circle or a number of concentric circles and with or without spokes. The light with which it is filled and by means of which it becomes radiant easily resolves itself into a number of colours according to the wont of the physical law. The sparkling colours have been described as *Abhinava Navaranga* as going beyond

It is exactly in terms of what Gandhi talks about the music of the spinning wheel which is more attractive than any other music.

any description of such symbols as VIBGYOR. VIBGYOR would be too small and too limited a description for the colours. Its sound has been described by Kabir, as the saint of Umadi has told us, *Charakhâ terâ ranga phirangi! gui gui gui bole*. It is exactly in terms of what Gandhi talks about the music of the spinning wheel, and which is more attractive than any other music. Mahatma Gandhi goes to the length of calling the music of the harmonium or the concertina almost despicable as compared with it; and as regards its motion, one does not know what to say about it. As the *Isâvâsyopanishad* had put it:

*Tadejati tannaijati tad dûre tadvantike !
Tadantarasya sarvasya tadu sarvasyâsya bâhyatah!!*

“It moves and it does not move; it is both far and near; it is both inside and outside of man”. It is this mystical wheel which lies at the back of all the wheels that might be constructed on earth by man. We have said above how glad Mahatma Gandhi would have been if he had known that the *Upanishad* and the *Bhâgawata* supported his conception of the wheel as the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* itself did. How gladder still would he have been if he had known that it is this mystical wheel which lies as the archetype behind them all and of which they are all ectypal expressions.

Gandhi has told us that he had derived his practice of uttering the name of God while he was yet a baby from his nurse. We shall see of what value this has been to him later on.

C

INFLUENCE OF JAINISM, VALLABHISM AND DEVOTIONALISM

We have hitherto seen one important section in Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual teaching, namely, about the Charkhâ as a moral, economic and spiritual emblem. Let us now pass on to the second section of the treatment, namely, the influence that was exercised on the life of Mahatma Gandhi by the philosophical and spiritual conditions in Gujarat where the early years of his life were spent. Of course, he has told us that he had derived his practice of uttering the name of God while he was yet a baby from his nurse. We shall see of what value this has been to him later on. He also tells us that there were two great influences that predominated in him during his early career, namely, Vaishnavism and Jainism. He was born a Vaishnava he tells us; he also tells us that a great spiritual influence was exercised on him by the famous Jain teacher Rayachanda. There were other systems of philosophy in Gujarat of course, but particularly these three might be taken to have influenced Mahatma Gandhi deeply, namely, Devotionalism, Vallabhism, and Jainism.¹ We shall take them in the reverse order as that is the historical order and let us therefore begin with Jainism.

It is necessary for us to point out here the chief traits of Jainism which may be said to have influenced the mind of Mahatma Gandhi. We shall not reiterate what others have said; we shall only mention those points which are of particular importance in Jainism. In the first place, the Jain metaphysical doctrine might be taken to be a doctrine of Pan-psychism, or in terms of natural science, hylizism or in more philosophical

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1. By Birth I am a Vaishnavite and was taught Ahimsâ in my childhood. I have derived much religious benefit from Jain religious works as I have from scriptures of the other great faiths of the world. I owe much to the living company of the deceased philosopher, Rayachanda Kavi, who was a Jain by birth. Thus though my views on Ahimsâ are a result of my study of most of the faiths of the world, they are now no longer dependent upon the authority of these works. They are a part of my life, —(Modern Review, October, 1916.)

In the case of Jainism, neither Moral law, nor Moksha nor the Tîrthankara are subject to the influence of Relativism.

terminology monadism, a doctrine where gradation and representation become the two chief factors of reality. The Jains do allow the gradation of existences and at the same time in the course of spiritual development they also speak of mirroring of representation (*kevalajnâna*).

The second characteristic of Jainism is the doctrine of probabilism or Relativism. Mahatma Gandhi has said in one place that in any particular case he may be right or even that his honest critics may be right, that the world might be regarded as real as well as unreal.¹

This is exactly the Jain doctrine of Relativism or probabilism. (*Anekântavâda* or *Syâdvâda*). We shall not enter into the details of this doctrine but we may point out only three criticisms. In the first place, Relativism stops at Tîrthankara², Moksha (Final emancipation) and the Moral Law, as in Herakleitos whose doctrine of perpetual flux stops at God. In other words in the case of Jainism, neither Moral law, nor Moksha nor the Tîrthankara are subject to the influence of Relativism. Secondly, from the logical point of view, we may say that probabilism must have categorical basis, just as in higher logic we are concerned with the proof of the categorical basis for all hypothetical and disjunctive propositions. Thirdly, this Relativism may be justified if we are speaking about the ineffability of spiritual experience, for spiritual experience can not be accurately described and if it may be described it may involve terms like those as in *tadejati tannaijati* (it moves and it does not move), which we have noted just a short while ago.

Then thirdly the great Jain teachers speak about the two different points of view, namely *Vyavahâra* and *Nishcchaya*. We shall not enter into

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1. I am always true from my point of view and often wrong from the point of view of my honest critics. I know we are both right from our respective points of view.
 2. In Jainism 24 Tîrthankaras or Founders have appeared from time to time, Rsabha being the first and Mahâvîra the last. They were sipiritually enlightened and had acquired infinite knowledge, happiness and power and conquered the flesh and attained supreme purity, Mahâvîra the last of the 24 Tîrthankaras was born in the later part of the sixth Century B.C. near Vaisali (called Bassoli not far from Patna in Bihar)

Great veneration for life of any kind whatsoever and consequent non-violence is the first distinguishing characteristic of Jainism.

the details of these here. We may only point out that this distinction is exactly like the distinction between *Samvrti satya* and *Parinishpanna satya* in Buddhism, the *Vyâvahârîka* and the *Pârmâthika* in Sankara's philosophy, phenomena and noumena in Kant, and appearance and reality in Bradley. This doctrine of two truths is a sort of metaphysical trick to disarm the pressing opponent and it is natural that the above philosophers make use of it to defend their case.

In regard to the doctrine of God, the Jain criticism is chiefly directed against the Naiyâyika syllogistic proof of God. Their one cause of disapproval is the personal God, his creative power and all those anthropomorphic traits with which we are conversant in a criticism of theism in Western philosophy. The eternity of the world, according to Jainism, makes a creator superfluous and hence it can safely dispense with a personal Being. Nevertheless in the development of Jainistic doctrine, this does not come in the way of their belief in such a supreme existence like "paramâtman" (supreme soul), as we shall see a little later in the case of the great Jain teacher Pûjyapâda.

The chief contribution, however, Jainism made to thought was in respect of moral teaching. Great veneration for life of any kind whatsoever and consequent non-violence is the first distinguishing characteristic of Jainism. Secondly, silence or Maunam is another of their great teachings. Thirdly, self-mortification, mendicancy and starvation unto death are also very strongly recommended by them. Fourthly, philanthropy or generosity is also the chief mark of moral life as advocated by Jainism, and finally imperturbability is what is mentally and morally aimed by the Jain teachers. Dogs bark at Mahâvîra when he halts by them as they did at Richard III in Shakespeare. We also know how Mahâvîra attained to the practical achievement of the doctrine of imperturbability like that of the Bhagavad Gîtâ *Ûitoshanasukhadukhkheúu tathâ mânâpamânayoh*. This was actually achieved by Mahâvîra when he meditated in snow- like cold during winter and under the blazing midday sun in summer. We can easily see how all such doctrines have exercised a great influence on the mind of Mahatma Gandhi.

Pûjyapâda also tells us in further verses to realise the identity between ourselves and Paramâtman.

The highest achievement of the moral life according to Jainism is of course omniscience that involves omnipresence and omnipotence, which last includes both physical and spiritual power. It is very interesting to see how some of the great Jain teachers like Pûjyapâda advocate bliss as the highest goal to be aimed at by man. This is to be achieved by succession of five stages through which the eclipse of man's life must pass, Âstrava (the inflow of Karmik molecules that bind the Jîva), Baðdha (the bondage to the Karmana body), Samvara (the checking of fresh Karmas for the Jîva), Nirjarâ (the shedding of the past Karmas) and Moksha (Salvation as the Jîva realizes his true nature). Karman might catch hold of the soul as in a catalepsy, and darkness might spread over the spiritual life of man but gradually its hold may be loosened and man might shine again in the glorious light of spiritual realisation.

Such a doctrine of high spiritual realisation was advocated by the Jain sage Pûjyapâda who lived in the third century A. D. We have seen in the case of Buddhism how its mystical aspect came to be recognised only in the course of history. Even so, the spiritual teaching of Jainism, though clouded in the mist of atheistic and probabilistic doctrine during the lapse of centuries, came to be revived by the great sage Pûjyapâda with a new spiritual halo. One wonders when one reads the Samâdhi Sataka of Pûjyapâda what difference there could be between the real Jain and the real Vedantic doctrines. We have selected eight verses from the Samâdhi Sataka of Pûjyapâda which would serve as a sort of a prayer hymn for any religion whatsoever. The two early verses relate to the necessity and value of the virtue of silence. The third verse tells us how "Paramâtman" should be the chief object of our meditation. Let us remember the word "Paramâtman" which is absolutely of a Vedantic shape. The great sage Pûjyapâda makes a distinction between the *Bahirâtman*, the *Antarâtman* and the *Paramâtman*, the outer self, the inner self and the supreme self. This Âtman should be the only object of our speech, enquiry and pursuit. Pûjyapâda also tells us in further verses to realise the identity between ourselves and Paramâtman. Finally we are told by Pûjyapâda how the Paramâtman is to be itself realised in a state of beatification and illumination. This is really the mystical side of

There was another influence on Mahatma Gandhi's mind coming out of the environments in which he lived and developed that of Vallabhaite philosophy which occupies such a prominent position in the life of Gujarat.

Jainism which brings it on all fours with the other great religions of the world.

There was another influence on Mahatma Gandhi's mind coming out of the environments in which he lived and developed. This was the influence that came from the Vallabhaite philosophy which occupies such a prominent position in the life of Gujarat. Vallabha, as every-body knows, was a South Indian Brahmin, was born while his parents were on their pilgrimage to Banaras, and afterwards lived and founded a "matha" (monastery) at Mathura where he developed his philosophy and from which place he propagated his faith. The reason for the spread of the Vallabha faith in Rajasthan and Gujarat is due not to the direct work of Vallabha himself but to the trek which Lord Krishna himself undertook in his lifetime from Mathura to Dwarka. Every place he visited in his travels became holy. While most of the other Vedantic philosophers such as Ācāraka, Mādhyama, Rāmānuja and Nimbārka might have only visited Mathura, Vallabha made Mathura his headquarters; that is the reason why Vallabhaite philosophy made such a deep impression upon the saints of Northern India, such as Surdas in Uttar Pradesh, Mirabai in Rajasthan and Narsi Mehta in Gujarat. Lord Krishna's residence at Dwarka, his travels to Mathura and his death at Prabhas were responsible for the spread of Krishnite theism in that part of the country. Vallabha was fortunate in this respect and it was due more to the association of Krishna with that part of the country than to the efforts made by Vallabha himself that his philosophy spread in Northern India.

Vallabhaite philosophy might be looked at from four points of view: the notion of *Brahman* (Supreme Reality,) the notion of *Jīva* (individual soul), the notion of *Jagat* (phenomenal world), and the notion of summum bonum. As regards the first, namely, his doctrine of the highest reality, it is very interesting to see that three of the earliest *sūtras* in *Bādarāyana Janmādyasya yatah Ākshatarnāūabdham* and *Ānandamayoabhyāsāt* postulate the proof of Brahman on cosmological, ontological, and teleological grounds respectively. Also Vallabha's famous idea that the *Jagat* is a manifestation of *sat*, *jīva* of *sat* and *chit*, and God of *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ānanda* is also founded on these three *sūtras*.

The sūtra became the foundation stone for other thinkers who built their conceptions of the micro-cosmic soul upon it.

As regards the nature of *Jīva*, Vallabha is also fortunate to get certain special mentions like those of *Viṣphuliḍga* or *Amsa* in the famous *Bâdarâyana sūtras* which enable him to postulate *Anutva* about the micro-cosmic soul or *Jīva*, for example as in *Amūo nânâvyapadeūât*. The *sūtra* became the foundation stone for other thinkers who built their conceptions of the micro-cosmic soul upon it. As regards the conception of *Viṣphulinga* parallels in European philosophy are not wanting when we hear of such expression as fulgurations, scintillations, effluences, emanations, and the rest. In any case *Jīva* is the smallest miniature part of Brahman (Supreme Reality) constituting a fundamental part of it.

How to reconcile this notion of the *Jīva* with its expansiveness? How in other words to reconcile *Anutva* and *Vibhutva* the micro-cosmic and the macro-cosmic nature of the soul? That was the problem before Vallabha and he was able to solve it by reference to such *sūtras* from *Bâdarâyana* as *Vyatireko gandhavat* and *Avirodhah chandanavat*. Just as Chandan being in one place spreads its fragrance all around it, similarly *Jīva* which though restricted to a particular locus spreads its influence outside it. Having put forth the combination of the two notions of *Anutva* and *Vibhutva* in the case of *Jīva* it became possible for Vallabha to posit a theory about the relationship between Brahman and Jiva in terms of identity. The *Tatvamasi* according to Vallabha is an actual fact and is arrived at by the process of *Abhidhâ*, while according to Sankara it is arrived at by the process of *Laksana* and for that matter *Jahadajahallaksnâ*. We shall not enter into the details of this problem here as it is a technical problem for students of Indian philosophy.

As regards the nature of *Jagat* an Upanishadic passage came to the help of Vallabha. Vallabha's doctrine is a realistic doctrine—a doctrine which in terms of the *yathornanâbhih srjate grnhate cha* may be styled arachno-morphism. The reality of the world made it possible for Vallabha to speak about the existence of the world in *kâranâvasthâ* before creation, *kâryâvasthâ* during creation and *kâranâvasthâ* again after dissolution, so that Vallabha was enabled to explain this reality in terms of *Âvirbhâva* and *Tirobhâva*. One very significant *sūtra*, which so far as we know has not been interpreted in a proper way, we might

This has resulted in two theories of the summum bonum in Vallabha, Maryâdâ on the one hand and Pushti on the other, the limited and the unlimited of Pythagoras.

offer to Vallabha as coming to his help in his doctrine of the relationship of God to the world. The sūtra *yathâ Ubhayathâ Takshâ* has been rather badly interpreted by most of the commentators. To us the word *Ubhayatâ* seems to connote the material cause and the efficient cause together. Just as a carpenter takes a material and an instrument and creates his article by their help, similarly God the incomparable carpenter very dexterously offers himself as both the material and efficient cause and thus creates the world.

The second point in regard to the relationship between Jagat and God in Vallabha is his famous teaching about the Leelâ. Sankara had explained the world in terms of illusion. Ramânuja introduced the category of similarity and Madhava spoke about it in terms of eternal difference between Brahman and Jiva on the one hand and Brahman and Jagat on the other. Vallabha sportively finds support for his doctrine of sport or Leelâ in the famous sūtra *Lokavattu Lîlâkaivalyam* and hence he is able to say that the world was created by God in sport. We shall see what Mahatma Gandhi has to say about this sport a little later. At present it would be necessary to remember that the category which Vallabha introduces in metaphysics, namely, Leela became very attractive in course of time.

This has resulted in two theories of the summum bonum in Vallabha, *Maryâdâ* on the one hand and *Pushti* on the other, the limited and the unlimited of Pythagoras. The limited is the mythologico-historical conception of Vrindâvan: Râdhâ, the Gopi's, the cows, the trees, the river and so on as constituting the fine scenery of Vrindâvan. Also corresponding to these items in the physical world, there is the conception of the unlimited in the other world namely the Goloka, which according to Vallabha is superior even to Vaikuntha. It is not given to man to love and to be wise. Vallabh's attachment to the scenery of Mathura made him plan an archetypal Vrindavan in the heavens called Goloka, and regard it as superior even to the habitat of Vishnu. It is, however, necessary to remember that even if such a conception might appeal to the popular mind, the notion of the Gopîs sometimes becomes a difficult question and very often in the history of religious practice it has degenerated into unseemly spectacles. Every spiritual thinker must take

There was third influence on the life of Mahatma Gandhi that came from the devotional atmosphere in Gujarat. Mahatma Gandhi was influenced by the teachings of the saints in Gujarat and elsewhere.

care to understand the real nature of the Gopîs as women who see Krishna or the Godhead inside themselves as well as outside themselves instead of a personal entity with whom they could have worldly relationships. That would save many a spiritual teacher from dangerous situations.

Finally, we may consider Vallabha's doctrine of *Pushti*, which is the doctrine of Grace and at the same time the doctrine of grace over grace rising like Alps over Alps: *Pushti, Pushtipushti, Mahâpushti*. When one is enough where is the necessity of three? *Entia non sunt multiplicanda*. These are, we suppose merely words without any positive or concrete content. Nevertheless it would be interesting to see that this *Pushti* or grace from God cannot descend upon us unless three things are fulfilled. The devotee must feel Prema (Love) for God; he must have Âsakti for Him; and ultimately he must succumb almost to the vice of devotion —*Vyasana*. Such devotees do not care for liberation. They care only for the spiritual life and its consummation here below in this physical world not waiting for another world or existence.

There was third influence on the life of Mahatma Gandhi that which came from the devotional atmosphere in Gujarat. Mahatma Gandhi was influenced by the teachings of the saints in Gujarat and elsewhere. It would not be possible to evaluate the total influence exercised by these saints. So we shall restrict our attention, for the sake of illustration, to only three, namely, Narsi Mehta, Preetam and Mirabai. Narsi Mehta and Preetam are of course great teachers of Gujarat and Mirabai, as we shall see, belongs to Rajputana, (Rajasthan), who looks on one side to Gujarat and on the other to Northern India; hence it is that she has written poems both in Gujarati and Hindi, though the latter preponderate. Nevertheless, she did exercise influence on the mind of Gujarat. Among the three songs we shall be discussing, the central idea in Narsi Mehta is that of the vinculum—God-devotion as binding all devotees of God together. In Preetam we find the daring attitude and in Mirabai the attitude of submission. Students of the psychology of religion know how these two attitudes, the militant and the submissive are to be found sometimes independently of each other, some times together. Further the poem of Narsi Mehta, which we shall be considering, has a great parallel with a

[*Everything should be dear to us not for
its own sake but only through God.*]

poem from Tulsidas and the poem of Preetam with that of Kabir. Mahatma Gandhi was of course very fond of another poem by Narsi Mehta *Vaishnavajana to téné kahê* but we thought we could select no better poem from the devotional and the comparative points of view than the one which we shall immediately proceed to consider.

It is a remarkable thing indeed that the central points brought out in the two poems of Narsi Mehta and Tulsidas, namely, *Nârâyananu nâma ja letâ* and *Jâke priya na Râmavaidehî* are exactly similar. This point has not attracted the attention of scholars. So the present writer is taking the liberty of placing it before them. There are such similarities in the teachings of Tulsidas and Narsi Mehta on this head that one keeps wondering how these might be explained. Tulsidas tells us that if anybody stands in the way of God—devotion, we should brush him aside. In the same style Narsi Mehta speaks about our rejection of all those who have no love towards God. It matters little whether it is father, mother, brother, guru or husband who stand in the way. They should all be rejected is the doctrine which both Tulsidas and Narsi Mehta propound. Both Tulsidas and Narsi Mehta thus tell us that between any two friends or relatives such as husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister and so on. God—devotion is the only link of real love not any carnal love, nor any physical love, nor even any intellectual love. It is the spiritual love, the love of God, which binds all people together. In this connection, we can also recall to our minds the famous Upanishadic utterance *Na vâre sarvasya kâmâya Sarvamidam priyam bhavati, Âtmanastu kâmâya Sarvamidam priyam bhavati*. The mother should be dear to us not for her own sake but through God; the son should be dear to us not for his own sake but through God; Everything should be dear to us not for its own sake but only through God. Love for God thus becomes the highest binding force. The illustrations which Narsi Mehta and Tulsidas give to propound the necessity of this central virtue of God-Love are almost identical. Bharata as having renounced his mother and Prahlad having renounced his father for the sake of God-love are illustrations common to both. Bibhishana as having abjured his brother and Bali as having left off his teacher have been mentioned by Tulsidas. The *Rishipatnis* as having renounced their husbands are mentioned by Narsi Mehta. Finally, the *Brajavanitanha* as having forsaken their husbands for the sake of

[*Narsi Mehta tells us that the rejection of our relatives
should be like the casting of a slough by a serpent.*]

Krishna are mentioned both by Tulsidas and Narsi Mehta. We may note the expression *Brajavanitanha*. Neither Tulsi nor Narsi use the word Gopis but use alike the word *Brajavanitanha* in this connection. One is kept wondering whether Narsi Mehta may have influenced Tulsidas in this matter, especially as Narsi Mehta lived about a 100 years before Tulsidas. That was the question that troubled the present writer, but he consoled himself by remembering that the doctrine of the renunciation of the relatives and almost the same illustrations occur in Tukaram also, though he does not mention the *Brajavanitanha*. Tukaram tells us in a famous Abhanga :-

Nârâyanî ghadé jené antarâya! hota bâpa mâya tyajâvî tî

Yera priyaputra dhanâ kona lekhâ! Karitî tî dukkhâ pâtra satru

*Prahlâde Janaka Vibhishane bhandhu! Râjya mâtâ Nindyu
Bharate kelî*

*Tukâ mhané sarva dharma hariche pâya! Ânika upâya
dukkhâmûla!!*

On the whole, therefore, the present writer is inclined to believe that there might be a parallelism of thought between Narsi Mehta and Tulsidas instead of any direct influence, though the parallelism remains very wonderful. Further the idea of Narsi Mehta *Pâmî padâratha châra ré* has an echo in Tulsidas *châri chanakako* in another connection. This implies that all the four *Purushârthas* (Dharma, Artha, Kâma and Moksha) are attained in our pursuit of God. There is, however, one original feature both in Narsi Mehta and Tulsidas, in connection with their doctrine of God-love. Narsi Mehta tells us that the rejection of our relatives should be like the casting of a slough by a serpent. *Jema taje Kanchukî sâpa ré* is the trump card of Narsi Mehta. On the other hand, we may note that the most characteristic feature of Tulsidas is the bond of God-love, the vinculum substantial which binds all the devotees of God together.

After a discussion from Narsi Mehta of the place of God-devotion in the scheme of spiritual realisation, we come to a very significant point namely,

[*Suffering and travail experienced by man in the pursuit
of God are sure to be rewarded in course of time.*]

the difference between the two attitudes, the militant and the submissive, which such seekers show in their pursuit of the spiritual goal. These attitudes might also be called the optimistic and the pessimistic, the attitudes of determination and resignation, of power and impotence. Milton's *L'Allegro* and *IL Penseroso* very beautifully bring out the distinction between these two attitudes. Generally saints belong to one of these two types. But there might possibly be a saint here and there who might belong to both. We may say in connection particularly with Kabir and Ramadas that they illustrate a combination of both the tough-minded and the tender-minded attitudes. This, however, is a problem which we have treated elsewhere.

In the poet Preetam, we have an excellent description of invincible courage required for the pursuit of the spiritual path. He gives us two significant illustration to show the courage required for the pursuit of the spiritual path. He gives us two significant illustrations to show the courage required in treading the path. It is only the man who rushes to the bottom of the sea with indomitable courage, says Preetam, who can come out with his hands full of pearls: on the other hand, he who stands simply looking on the shore will be rewarded with only oyster-shells. Then again, says the poet, when a man throws himself in the midst of conflagration, he can be rewarded with beatific joy; on the other hand, if he simply stands looking on, he will be tormented by burning fire.

Premapantha pâvakani jvâlâ! bhâli pâcchâ bhâge jo ne!

*Mâhi padyâ te mahâsukha mâne dekhanahârâ daze jo ne
(Pritam)!!*

Such intrepidity, says the poet, is required for the treading of the spiritual path. We have an excellent parallel in Kabir for this conception when he tells us *Âge age dâvâ jale re pîche hariyâ hoyâ!* In front of us we see a great conflagration. But as we proceed towards the conflagration, green verdure will follow us. This is as much as to say that the suffering and travail experienced by man in the pursuit of God are sure to be rewarded in course of time, by the Grace of God. Also we might note another

Mirabai makes five requests to her Lord. She addresses him as a Jogi. Whether by Jogi she means her spiritual teacher Raidas, or Lord Krishna Himself, it is not an easy matter to settle.

parallelism between Preetam and Kabir when Preetam says that he who offers his head to God will be rewarded by the draughts of ambrosial juice. *Sîsa samrape te pâme rasa pîvâ jone.* says Preetam. *Harirasa mahengâ so piye dhada pe sîsa na hoya* says Kabir.

We have referred above in connection with our treatment of Narsi Mehta to Tulsida's famous poem *Jâke priya na Râma Vaidehî* which has a point of contact with Narsi Mehta. It may be remembered that the poem of Tulsidas has got another great feature about it, namely, its connection with Mirabai. Tulsidas's poem has been regarded as a reply to a letter which Mirabai is supposed to have written to him concerning some difficult situations in her family. Mirabai was troubled at home, her husband was dead, her brother-in-law was giving her every imaginable trouble. Everybody regarded her almost as an outcast; and so being very much dissatisfied with her own life, she wrote a letter to Tulsidas as to what she should do, as to whether she should go out of the house and renounce all claims to the kingdom. The song is supposed to be the reply which Tulsidas gives. The question has been debated as to whether this may be taken as a historical event. On the whole, however, the conclusion among scholars is that it may be so taken.

This poem of Mirabai which we are considering is a very famous one. This poem has got about it an extraordinary mixture of music, rhetoric and mysticism. Almost any person who is interested in musical performances knows what great importance is attached to the song *Jogi mata jâ, mata jâ*. The poem is exceedingly popular. Not merely does it contain music of the highest order, not only does it express mystical experience which is absolutely *sui generis*, but from the point of view of rhetorical science also, it might be taken as one of the best specimens of poetical compositions, a fact which has not been hitherto noticed.

Mirabai makes five requests to her Lord. She addresses him as a Jogi. Whether by Jogi she means her spiritual teacher Raidas, or Lord Krishna Himself, it is not as easy matter to settle. It has been supposed that Krishna had appeared once in the form of a Yogin to the Gopis. Whatever this might be, Mirabai implores the Lord in the first place not to depart from her. Whether this refers to a physical vision of her Lord or a mystical

[*Mirabai requests her Lord to be in constant communion with her in some form or other.*]

vision, we have no grounds to determine. In any case she pathetically implores her Lord not to depart, *jogi mata jâ, mata jâ, mata jâ*. This is Mirabai's first request. In the second place, she says that as the path of God-devotion stands in a category absolutely *sui generis* it may not be possible for an insignificant creature like herself to be able to tread that royal road. She would, therefore, request her Lord to take her by the hand and put her on a by-lane that will lead to it. *Hamako gaila lagâ jâ*. We may notice here the great difference that lies between the two readings *gaila batâ jâ* and *gaila lagâ jâ* which latter is infinitely more valuable as we shall see later so far as *Vastudhwani* is concerned. Thirdly, if that may not be possible, she says, she would ascend a sandal-wood funeral pyre and she requests her Lord to set fire to it by his own hand and then go. Fourthly, when her body would be reduced to ashes in the funeral pyre, let her Lord come and besmear his body with her ashes: that also would be a cause of great satisfaction to her. Finally, as a culminating act of the process, she would regard herself as most fortunate if the Lord deigns to merge her light with the Divine.

We shall see by a consideration of all these five alternatives that Mirabai requests her Lord to be in constant communion with her in some form or other. It will be easily seen that there is a gradation in the different alternatives that she proposes. Physical presence of the Lord, taking her by the hand to lead her to a by-path, setting fire to her funeral fire, besmearing his body with her ashes and finally the mergence of her light with the Divine light may easily be seen to be the ascending rungs in the ladder of spiritual communion with the Divine. This is an excellent illustration of what we might call *Utkarshâlankâra*. The word *sâra* as used by rhetoricians does not come up to the level which *utkarsha* reaches. The present song might thus be taken to be an extraordinary specimen of *utkarshâlankâra*.

It is customary among rhetoricians to speak of three kinds of *dhwani*.. (*sound*), *Alankâradhwani*, *Vastudhwani* and *Rasadhvani*. So far as the first is concerned we have in the poem, as we have seen above, a very remarkable illustration of *Alankâradhwani* in the form of *utkarsha*.

It is natural that songs like the three typical ones we have selected from Narsi Mehta, Preetam and Mirabai were likely to surcharge the whole spiritual atmosphere of Gujarat and the surrounding parts in which Mahatma Gandhi lived and developed.

Secondly, as her spiritual teacher is the single focus of Mirabai's attention through all her demands, as he is in fact then very alpha and the omega of her existence, this might itself be taken as a superb specimen of *Vastudhwani*. Finally, we find in the poem a very notable illustration of Karunarasa. Mirabai is weeping, she offers to ascend the funeral pyre, is prepared to have her body reduced to ashes provided her Lord besmears his body with them—all these are full of the highest kind of *karunarasa* or pathos. There could be no better example of the combination of *Alankara-Dhvani*, *Vastu-Dhvani* and *Rasa-Dhvani* than this sublime poem of Mirabai. It is natural that songs like the three typical ones we have selected from Narsi Mehta, Preetam and Mirabai were likely to surcharge the whole spiritual atmosphere of Gujarat and the surrounding parts in which Mahatma Gandhi lived and developed.

*I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God,
and God's Law and God are not different things or facts.*

D

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM ON GANDHIJI

We have seen hitherto the influence which was exercised on the life of Mahatma Gandhi by Jainism, Vallabhism, Vedânta and the Bhakti School. We have had opportunity already, while discussing the conception of the Wheel in Buddhism, to see the general influence which was exercised on Mahatma Gandhi's mind by the philosophy and ethics of Buddhism. Let us now proceed to discuss the influence which Christianity and Islam exercised on his mind.

Mahatma Gandhi regards Jesus as a great spiritual teacher of humanity, who made a considerable influence on his mind. Gandhiji does not need either the prophecies or the miracles to establish Jesus's greatness as a spiritual teacher. According to him there is no miracle in the story of the multitude being fed on a handful of loaves. "Even a magician", says Gandhiji, "can create that illusion, and woe worth the day on which a magician could be hailed as a saviour of humanity." Referring to the story of Jesus raising up a dead man to life, Gandhiji states his own experience when he raised a relative's child from supposed death. Gandhiji, however, does admit that "Jesus had certain psychic powers. But he brought to life not people who were dead but who were believed to be dead. The laws of nature are unchangeable and there are no miracles in the sense of infringement or interruption of Nature's Laws." As regards the question of supposing that Jesus was an embodiment of absolute perfection, Gandhiji tells us that Jesus came as near to perfection as possible without having reached absolute perfection which can be predicated only about God. Let us see what he says in this connection. "I believe in the perfectibility of human nature. Jesus came as near to perfection as possible. To say that he was perfect is to deny God's superiority to man. Being necessarily limited by the bonds of flesh, we can attain perfection only after the dissolution of the body."

Mahatma Gandhi was not a blind follower of any religion nor did he ever think of appeasing any particular community by adoring its religious founder.

“I have read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed and forbade others to copy him. Someone asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing.” ‘Because I live on food divine,’ he said.”

He is of the opinion that every thing must submit to the test of reason, and it is because of this rational element in Islam, says Gandhiji, that it has appealed to so many people. Moreover, Gandhiji tells us that Islam was spread not by the power of the sword, but by the prayerful love of an unbroken line of its Saints and Fakirs. Some may object, says Gandhiji, that there is a warrant for drawing the sword in Islam. But Gandhiji answers that the “ conditions laid down are so strict that they are not capable of being fulfilled by everybody. Where is the suffering, the love and the purification,” asks Gandhiji, “ that must precede the very idea of drawing the sword.” He further proceeds to describe the process of development of the Prophet of Islam. How the Prophet fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received revelations. Everybody knows that Gandhiji himself was given to fasting and prayer. As regards the presence of the practice in Islam, Gandhiji observes: “ In the life of the Prophet I have read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed and forbade others to copy him. Someone asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing.” ‘Because I live on food divine,’ he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I have learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God.”

Summarising his general view of the exponents of Christianity and Islam and of the two great religions, Mahatma Gandhi observes: “I reject the claim of Moulvis to give a final interpretation to the message of Mohammed as I reject that of the Christian clergy to give a final interpretation of the message of Jesus. Both must be interpreted in the ‘lives’ of those who were given these messages in silence and in perfect self- dedication. Bluster is no religion, nor is vast learning stored in capacious brains. The seat of religion is in the heart.”

After a study of the various religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam to the extent it was possible for him to do, Gandhiji had come to the conclusion that it is necessary to discern an underlying unity among all these religions. In fact, his cry was that of “One God, One World, One Religion” as we have called it at the beginning of the work.

I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's Law and God are not different things or facts. (Harijan, 23-3-40).

E

MAHATMA GANDHI'S SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

We now pass on to the third section of our present chapter, namely, the spiritual autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi. The two sections that have preceded were only preliminary to this, the first having dealt with his fundamental conception of the Charkhâ in its economic, moral and spiritual aspects and the second with the philosophical and devotional influences that had been exercised on the mind of Gandhiji during his early development. The present section of spiritual life in Mahatma Gandhi we shall divide in five parts. In the first part we shall discuss his doctrine of God; in the second his conception of moral and spiritual virtues; in the third his spiritual pilgrimage; in the fourth the dark night of the soul which he experienced many times during his life, in its personal, political and social aspects; and finally the intimations of spiritual realisation to which he attained during his career. These five parts put together may be recorded— especially because they contain the very words of Mahatma Gandhi — as constituting his spiritual autobiography. Gandhiji may not have been a student of philosophy; yet the conceptions he developed about the nature of God are worthy of consideration even by philosophers.

Mahatma Gandhi's conception of God is the out-pouring of his own experiences. These are not any arguments from logical reason. They are, therefore, even more valuable for those who want to realise the practical nature of God. Gandhiji tells us that he never regarded God as a person.¹

That puts an end once for all, according to Gandhiji, to the conceptions of God as a person reigning in any systems of philosophy or religion in India or elsewhere. He regards God as nameless and formless. One reason

1. I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's Law and God are not different things or facts. (Harijan, 23-3-40).

*The inner voice about which Gandhiji has spoken
many times is also identified by him with God.*

which he assigns for his theory is that there are a thousand names of God in Hinduism as well as a large number of names in Islam.¹

Ananta nâmî to Anâmî says Ramdas also. As God is supposed to have many names, he is without any name, says Mahatma Gandhi, and as he is supposed to have many forms he may be regarded as formless. Beyond this impersonal conception of the Godhead, Gandhiji also develops the identification of God with such notions as Truth, Love, Conscience, Goodness, Fearlessness, Light and Life, which involve certain epistemological, moral and scientific views of God.²⁻³ The inner voice about which Gandhiji has spoken many times is also identified by him with God. God is all these and yet beyond these, says Mahatma Gandhi. Of His Eternal Law we can only know as through a glass darkly, and yet even a faint glimpse of Him, says Mahatma Gandhi, is enough to inspire one with joy, hope and faith.⁴ Beyond this conception of Law is his conception of the mysterious power that pervades the entire universe. I feel it, he says, though I am not able to see it.⁵ There is no blade of grass

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1. In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God..... As God has many names, God is Nameless, and since God has many forms, we also consider Him Formless. And when I came to study Islam I found that Islam too had many names for God. (Young India, 31-12-31).
 2. For me the voice of God, of Conscience, of Truth, or the Inner Voice, or the still small Voice, mean one and the same thing. (Harijan, 8-7-33)
 3. To me God is Truth and Love, God is ethics and morality God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet He is above and beyond all these (Y.I. 5-3-25)
 4. Nothing can happen but His will expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He. We neither know Him nor His Law save through the glass darkly. But the faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope and faith in the future. (Harijan, 9-12-1939.)
 5. There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervade everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. (Young India, 11-10-28).

The Jain Yogi told him “rather than kill the serpent, allow yourself to be killed by it.

that can either grow or move without it.¹ Finally, Gandhiji rebukes all those who pooh-pooh the name or concept of God. ‘What a solemn affirmation,’ he asks, ‘except belief in God and belief in the reality of God?’ The word “God” you may banish from the Congress, but you can never banish the Thing itself. Conscience is a poor substitute for it.² Nothing else can take its place except a solemn belief in the reality of God itself.

Let us now proceed to the moral and spiritual virtues upon which Mahatma Gandhi laid so much stress. The first of these, of course, is the virtue of non-violence. It was the Jain Yogi, Rayachand, who mentioned the value of it for the first time to Mahatma Gandhi. When Mahatma Gandhi posed a question to him as to what he should do when a serpent was threatening his life, whether he should kill it or not, the Jain Yogi told him “rather than kill the serpent, allow yourself to be killed by it.”³ As we have said above, Jainism had made a deep impression on Mahatma Gandhi in the practice of many virtues, but particularly so in this, namely, the virtue of non-violence. This virtue he also derived from Buddhism and maintained an exacting regard for all life and therefore non-injury to any living being whatsoever.

Gandhiji tells us that non-violence is not a simple affair. In fact, it is the crown of all virtues. Unless you are perfect in the practice of other

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1. Therefore, I do not think that He answers in every detail every request of ours, but there is no doubt that He rules our action, and I literally believe that not a blade of grass that moves, without His will. (Harijan, 23-3-40).
 2. One may banish the word ‘God’ from the Congress but one has no power to banish the Thing itself. What is a solemn affirmation, if it is not the same thing as in the name of God? And surely Conscience is but a poor and laborious paraphrase of the simple combination of three letters called God. Y.I. 5-3-25).
 3. A correspondent reminds me of the advice given to me by Shri Rayachand (A Jain Yogî - who made a deep spiritual influence on him.) When I approached him with a doubt as to what I should do if a serpent threatened to bite me. Certainly his advice was that rather than kill the serpent I should allow myself to be killed by it. (Y.I. 25-11-26)

I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. (Young India, 11.12.1924.)

virtues, you can never attain to the virtue of non-violence even in its rudiments.¹ When questioned about his idea of Bolshevism, Mahatma Gandhi said that he did not know much about it, but from what he knew about Bolshevism, he could say it was a combination of violence and denial of God.² In fact mathematically, there are four possibilities in regard to this question. There may be persons who believe in violence and no God; these are the Bolsheviks; others might combine the idea of violence with the idea of God; others may speak about non-violence and yet place no belief in God; and finally there may be those who believe in non-violence as well as in God. To this last category did Mahatma Gandhi belong. The social, political, and international efficacy of this virtue of non-violence Mahatma Gandhi is never wearied of stressing. He says that it was his ambition to preach universal non-violence, especially for the regulation of international relations.³

But he felt probably that it was a little beyond him and also that he had not the requisite attainments to preach such high conception. Before I preach this kind of non-violence” he says, I must be free from all passions: I must be wholly incapable of sins.⁴ “Coupled with this virtue of non-violence is the virtue of silence upon which, in the spirit of Jainism or Shintoism, Mahatma Gandhi lays so much stress. We are familiar with the three Japanese models of monkeys one of which would not look,

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1. *Ahimsâ* does not displace the practice of other virtues but renders their practice imperatively necessary before it can be practiced even in its rudiments.
 2. I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. (Young India, 11.12.1924.)
 3. I preach non-violence for the regulation of international relations by non-violent means. But my incapacity must not be mistaken for that of the doctrine of non-violence. I see it with my intellect in all its effulgence. My heart grasps it. But I have not yet the attainments of preaching universal non-violence with effect. (Young India, 7.5.1925).
 4. I can regulate my passions, I keep them under subjection, but before I can preach universal non-violence with effect, I must be wholly free from passions, I must be wholly incapable of sins. (Young India, 7.5.1925).

For over fifty years I have trained myself never to be concerned about the result. What I should be concerned about is the means, and when I am sure of the purity of the means, faith is enough to lead me on.

another would not hear and a third would not speak. Mahatma Gandhi also tells that he derived this virtue from the advice of the Hon'ble Mr. G.K. Gokhale. It consists in shutting all the three chief doorways of sense to their respective objects. *Kannu mucchu, kivi mucchu, bāyi mucchu* was also the advice given in Kannad to an aspirant in his spiritual audition. It was also for this reason probably that Mahatma Gandhi used to maintain absolute silence on Mondays believing in the high efficacy of silence in perfecting a moral and spiritual life. Next, as regards the relationship between the means and ends, Mahatma Gandhi looks always to the purity of the means. We should, therefore, take care of the means, he says, and leave the ends to take care of themselves. Purity of means, he says, inspires unyielding faith that puts an end to all fear and trembling¹ There is no further looking back when once the purity of means has been attained. When asked why he was called a "Mahatma" when he was not performing any miracle, he said, he was not a Mahatma, he was an ordinary being like others. He was even frailer than they. He seemed to have surpassed them, however, in one thing, namely, in his unyielding faith in God.²

Beyond this list of virtues about which we have talked above, the spiritual songs which Mahatma Gandhi recited in his Asrama filled him with the conceptions of purest virtues. They served him as lights on the path of life, and he expected that they would be performing the same function for others if they sang them believing in them and behaving according to

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1. For over fifty years I have trained myself never to be concerned about the result. What I should be concerned about is the means, and when I am sure of the purity of the means, faith is enough to lead me on. All fear and trembling melt away before that faith and once we have launched forth there is no looking back. (Harijan, 22.9.1940).
 2. The friend had asked him to work a miracle and save India and the Hindus and Sikhs if he was really a Mahatma. Gandhiji had never claimed to be a Mahatma. He was an ordinary human being like any one of them, except that he was much frailer. The only difference in his favour might be that his faith in God was perhaps stronger than theirs. (Delhi diary : P. 41, 26. 9. 47)

“*God could be found only through love, not earthly but divine.
That love was lived by Mirabai. (Gandhiji in Harijan, 23.11.47)*”

them. Thus, for example, Mirabai inspired him with the virtue of Divine Love;¹ Narsi Mehta suggested ideas of service and compassion to humanity: *Vaisnava jana to tene kahiye*.² Surdas filled him with the idea of self-reproach; he called himself a sinner like Bunyan playing tipcat on Sundays.³ Finally, Gandhiji tells us that he always hummed the song of Tulsidas in his Asrama in order to ask for God’s Grace *Bhaktidâna dehu âja*. In fact, asking for God’s Grace seems to Mahatma Gandhi the culmination of all spiritual virtues.⁴

A ticklish question has been asked as to whether Gandhiji had any Guru. It has been supposed that the Jain Yogi, Rayachand, was his Guru, but

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1. God could be found only through love, not earthly but divine. That love was lived by Mirabai. (Harijan, 23.11.47)
 2. God himself, says the Bhagwad Gîtâ, seeks for His seat the heart of him who serves his fellowmen. That is why Narsi Mehta who ‘saw and knew’ sang, “ he is a true Vaishnava who feels concerned other’s woe’. (Y. I. 24. 9. 55).
 3. You have heard Surdas’s hymn. It is the passionate cry of a soul hungering for union with the Divine. According to our standards he was a saint but according to his own he was a proclaimed sinner;.... but he felt the separation form the Divine so keenly that he uttered that anguished cry in loathing and despair. (Young India. 23. 1. 30).
 4. During these days of grace, privilege and peace I have hummed upto myself a hymn we often sing at the Satyagraha Asram. It is good that I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a free rendering of it with the reader. The words of hymn better express my state than anything else I can write. Here they are:

My honour O! God is in Thy keeping,
Thou art ever my Refuge,
For Thou art protector of the weak,
It is Thy promise to listen to the wail of sinners,

I am a sinner of old, help me,
Thou to cross this ocean of darkness
It is Thine to remove the sin,
And Misery of Mankind,
Be gracious to Tulsidas,
And make him Thy devotee.
(Young India, 9.10.24.)

I must therefore warn all against accepting imperfect ones as GURUS. It is better to grope in the dark and wade through a million errors (on the path) to Truth than to entrust oneself to one who knows not that he knows not. (Y. I. 3-12-25).

Gandhiji tells us that though he had the highest regard for Rayachand he never enthroned him in his heart as a Dharma Guru.¹ Of course, he tells us that Raychand was along with Tolstoy and Ruskin one of his life-long inspirations and that from time to time he derived mental, moral and spiritual encouragement and support from him. But still he does not regard him as his spiritual teacher.² Mahatmaji had a very high notion of a perfect spiritual teacher.³

An imperfect teacher cannot be tolerated in spiritual life; a perfect teacher is one who is a *Jnânî*; a knowing one, a seer; such men are rare, says Gandhiji. On the other hand, there are many imperfect teachers who, as he puts it, know not that they know not.

As regards the name of God, we are told by Gandhiji that he was afraid of ghosts in his babyhood and a nurse had told him to repeat the name of

1 **Although I had the highest regard for Rayachandabhai, I could not enthrone him in my heart as my Dharma-Guru. I am even now busy searching my spiritual Guru. The adage that one cannot attain enlightenment without a Guru is indeed true. Fruition in the effort to get a Guru is possible if one keeps on searching according to his competence. It means that every aspirant has the right to select his Guru according to what he deserves. However the success of the search rests on the will of God. Even now I have not been able to place Rayachandabhai as my Master in my heart. In course of time however we can see how I keep on getting his support. For the time being it is adequate to mention that there are three contemporary persons who have deeply influenced my life. Rayachandabhai has startled me by his enlightened understanding.**

(Editor's translation from Hindi book 'Âtmakatha' page 112-113)

- 2 I believe in the Hindu theory of GURU and its importance in spiritual realisation. I think there is a great deal of truth in the doctrine that true knowledge is impossible without a Guru. An imperfect teacher in mundane affairs may be tolerable but not so in spiritual matters. Only a perfect *Jñâni* (a knowing one, a seer) deserves to be enthroned as GURU. {Autobiography or the story of my experiments with truth, p. 113.}
- 3 I must therefore warn all against accepting imperfect ones as GURUS. It is better to grope in the dark and wade through a million errors to Truth than to entrust oneself to one who knows not that he knows not. (Y. I. 3-12-25).

Meditation on Râmanâma (repetition of God's name) must proceed from the heart and not from lips. As Gandhiji tells us, the effects of such a repetition of God's name would soon be apparent. Pain would cease; mental and physical ailments would vanish.

Râma and that was the beginning of his spiritual life. He tells us also that he was never a Yogi. His mind was given over to the repetition of Râmanâma. From his childhood onwards till he arrived at a later age, it had assumed huge proportions.¹ Now what is this Râmanâma?

Gandhi has got the same conception about Râma which Ramadas had.

Gandhiji's Râma is not the historical Râma, the son of Dasaratha, but is the eternal and imperishable spiritual entity.² *Râma hâ kâlachâ suta Dasharathâchâ Ananta yugâchâ Âtmârâma* says Ramadas also. In that way, Gandhiji tells us that the names of Jesus and Allah as embodiments of the highest divinity would be equally suitable.³ Mahatma Gandhi believes in the absolute equality of all religions and hence he does not make any distinction between the highest God in one religion and in another.⁴

Meditation on Râmanâma (repetition of God's name) must proceed from the heart and not from lips.⁵ As Gandhiji tells us, the effects of such a repetition of God's name would soon be apparent. Pain would cease;

1. I am a stranger to Yogic practices. The practice I follow is a practice I learnt in my childhood from my nurse. I was afraid of ghosts. She used to say to me 'Repeat Râmanâma.' What I learnt in my childhood has become a huge thing in my mental firmament. (Harijan, 5. 12. 36).
2. My Râma, the Râma of our prayer is not the historical Râma, the son of Dasharath, the king of Ayodhya. He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship. (Harijan, 28. 4. 46)
3. A Christian may find the same solace from the repetition of the name of Jesus and a Muslim from the name of Allah. All these things have the same implications and they produce identical results. Only the repetition must not be lip-expression, but part of your very being. (Harijan, 5.12.36)
4. We have regular readings of the Bhagwad Gîtâ; then we have hymns from the various saints of India, including hymns from Christian Hymn-books and readings from Quran. We believe in the equality of all religions. (Harijan, 5.12.36)
5. Worship or prayer, therefore, is not to be performed with the lips, but with the heart. And that can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammerer and the ignorant. Prayer must cleanse one's heart. (Y. I. 24.9.25)

*A man who repeats the Name of Râma with devotion would
be his own healer; he does not require any medical help.*

mental and physical ailments would vanish. The Name is a cure for all diseases.¹ A man who repeats the Name of Râma with devotion would be his own healer; he does not require any medical help.² Gandhiji tells us his own experience as well as the experience of his companions that with the help of Râmanâma he could live without food for days together.³ Râmanâma is actually like a living stream and not like an accumulated reservoir of water. It is a source of power.⁴ It is because of this name which resided firmly in the heart of Hanumân that he got in exhaustible strength.⁵ In fact, Gandhiji raises Râmanâma to the position of an “Atom bomb” in spiritual life⁶.

What about the process of repetition of God’s name? Gandhiji tells us that the process of *Sâdhanâ* is a very laborious one.⁷ Not a minute in my

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1. “All mental and physical ailments.’ Gandhiji explained simply, “ are due to one common cause. It is therefore but natural that there should be a common remedy.” Almost everyone is sick in body or mind, he said; Repeating ‘Râma Râma Râma,’ while intensively concentrating on godliness, goodness, service and selflessness paves the way for the remedial functions of mudpacks, sitzbaths and massage. (The life of Mahatma Gandhi, part 2 by L. Fisher).
 2. Râmanâma the infallible remedy. I myself have been a devotee of Tulsidas from my childhood and have therefore always worshipped God as Râma. An individual with whom contemplation on God has become as natural as breathing is so filled with God’s spirit that he needs no other treatment. (Harijan, 24.3.46).
 3. I am giving you a bit of my experience and that of my companions when I say that he who has experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together, but not without prayer. (Y. I. 23.1.30)
 4. The conservation of vital energy has been likened to accumulated wealth, but it is in the power of Râmanâma alone to make it a running stream of ever increasing spiritual power. (Harijan, 29. 6. 47)
 5. Râma was not only on the lips of Hanumân. He was enthroned in his heart. He gave Hanumân incomparable strength. (Y. I. 24.9.25)
 6. I have said that to repeat Râmanâma from the heart means deriving help from an incomparable power. The atom bomb is as nothing compared with it. This power is capable of removing all pain. (Harijan. 13.10.46).
 7. There is no doubt whatsoever that Râmanâma contains all the power that is attributed to it. No one can by mere wishing enshrine Râmanâma in his heart. Untiring effort

We must be satisfied with devoting some definite time every day to the repetition of God's name. The effect of such a process will be that we will soon be free from our attachments.

life have I been forgetful of God^{1A}. A philosopher's stone was not obtained for the mere asking and even then it continued to be non-existent. What then to speak about the immediate results of Râmanâma? Gandhiji makes a concrete suggestion in respect of the manner of repeating Râmanâma. He tells us we might take God's name with every breath.^{1B} Lord Buddha advised Râhula to contemplate by breathing in and out.^{1C} Now the question arises how long a man should meditate on God's name? This question cannot be readily answered, says Gandhiji. For some, one minute would suffice, for others not even twentyfour hours would be enough. We ordinary mortals should take the *via media*. We must be satisfied with devoting some definite time every day to the repetition of God's name.²⁻³ The effect of such a process will be that we will soon be free from our attachments; also we may derive help from moral meditation

is required as also patience. What an amount of labour and patience have been lavished by men to acquire the non-existent philosopher's stone? Surely, God's name is of infinitely richer value. (Harijan, 17.2.46)

- 1a With my hand on my breast, I can say that not a minute in my life am I forgetful of God. (Y.U.I. Vol.2. P.65)
- 1b A devotee of Râma may be said to be the same as the steadfast one (sthitaprajâa) of the Gîtâ. He will live in the consciousness of the soul within and look to the care, first and last of the Indweller. Such a man will take God's name with every breath. (Harijan 29.6.47).
- 1c Majjhima Nikaya 62 and 118; also Khuddaka Nikâya 12.
2. One minute may be enough for some, 24 hours may be too little for others.... For us ordinary mortals there must be a middle path between these two extremes... Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. (Y. I. 10-626)
3. Some one will say we should be offering our prayers every minute of our lives. There is no doubt about it, but we erring mortals... will find it impossible to remain perpetually in communion with the Divine. We therefore fix some hours when we make a serious effort to throw off the attachments of the world, for a while. (Y. I. 23-1-30)
- 4a. The virtues mentioned in Bhagavad Gîtâ are: Fearlessness, Purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge, concentration, and Perseverance. Those stated by Patanjali are: Freindship, Compassion, Joy, Indifference, Promotion of others welfare and Purification. Buddha also mentions Maitri, (friendship) Karunâ (compassion) and Muditâ (Joy)

One must feel a real hunger for prayer, says Mahatma Gandhi. "My soul is longing for God. I feel intense longing to lose myself in the Eternal, macro-cosmic nature of the soul."

on some virtues. That at the time of our meditation we should think of such qualities as goodness, selflessness, godliness, fearlessness and so on, is exactly in the manner in which the esoteric school of the Theosophists would tell us to meditate on moral virtues^{4a}; for example, the virtues mentioned in the initial verses of the 16th Chapter of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ *Abhayam sattva - samæuddhirjòâna - yoga-vyavasthitih!* or as stated by Patanjali *Maitrî - karunâ - muditâ-pekûâbhâvanâtaschitta prasâdanam!*

Prayer was Gandhiji's spiritual forte. As a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, so does a devotee of God feel hunger for the name of God.¹ One must feel a real hunger for prayer, says Mahatma Gandhi. "My soul is longing for God. I feel intense longing to lose myself in the Eternal. I desire to be like a lump of clay in the Potter's hands.² Let Him fashion me as He likes," he says. Prayer does not consist in asking any boon or favour from God.³ It should not be petitional; but it should be for the sake

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1. Prayer is the very core of man's life as it is the most vital part of religion. Prayer is either petitional or is inward communion. It is no mere repetition of empty formula. Any amount of repetition of Râmanâma is futile if it fails to stir the soul.....It must be in clear response to the spirit which hungers for it. And even as a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, a hungry soul relishes a heart-felt prayer.(Y. I. 23-1-30)
 2. I have but shadowed forth my intense longing to lose myself in the Eternal and become merely a lump of clay in the potter's Divine hands, so that my service may become more certain, uninterrupted by the baser self in me. (Y. I. 17. 11. 21)
 3. Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. (Y. I.23.1.30).
 4. We should by living the life according to our lights, share the best with one another, thus adding to the sum total of human effort to reach God. (Harijan, 28.11.36)
 5. The Divine Mind is unchangeable; but that Divinity is in every one and everything-animate and inanimate. The meaning of prayer is that I want to evoke that Divinity in me. Now I may have that intellectual conviction but not a living touch. You are not going to know meaning of God or prayer unless you reduce yourself to a cipher. (Harijan, 19-8-39).
 6. It seems to me that it is yearning of the heart to be with the Maker, an invocation for His blessing. It is in this case the attitude that matters; not words uttered or muttered. (Y. I. 10.6.26).

“*The biggest of Karma-Yogis never gives up
devotional songs or worship.*” (Harijan 13.10.46)

of communion with God. Mahatma Gandhi had a very high notion of *Satsanga*. When people of the same ideas meet they help each other in their onward and upward progress⁴. That is the reason why community prayers are very helpful for leading all towards God. The question arises, “Can we, by prayer, change God’s mind?” Gandhiji answers that God’s mind is unchangeable; and yet man might change himself to the extent that he might find satisfaction with whatever God gives him.⁵⁻⁶ Let him develop the attitude of reconciliation or at - one - ment, as the Bible puts it. Let us be satisfied with whatever God does for us, and there lies the realisation of our highest welfare.

A question might be asked whether such repetition of God’s name may not smack of hypocrisy, says Mahatma Gandhi.¹ The number of times given over to repetition and prayer does not constitute spiritual progress. ‘Which is more valuable’? a critic asks Mahatma Gandhi. ‘Are you prepared to leave the rosary and the worship for the sake of service to humanity’?²

Gandhiji says that he smells laziness in such a question as also a sort of agnosticism. Further, he tells us in the manner of the Bhagavad Gîtâ that the Karmayogis who have hitherto lived have never left off their worship of God. All these three answers might be regarded as illustrations of the

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1. It may well be asked whether I am not adding to the current hypocrisy, by continued insistence on Râmanâma. I must not be deterred by such forebodings. Silence thus brought about is harmful. (Harijan, 29-6-47)
 2. It is harmful if, owing to stress or exigencies of work one is unable to carry daily devotions in the prescribed manner. Which of the two should be given preference? Service or rosary?- whatever the exigencies of service or adverse circumstances may be, Râmanâma must not cease. The outward form will vary according to the occasion. (Harijan, 17.2.46).
 3. Would it be better for a man to give the time he spends on the worship of God to the service of the poor? and should not true service make devotional worship unnecessary?- I sense mental laziness as also agnosticism in this question. The biggest of Karma-Yogis never give up devotional songs or worship. Idealistically, it may be said that true service of others is itself worship and that such devotees do not need spend any time in songs etc. As a matter of fact, Bhajans etc. are a help to true service and keep the remembrance of God fresh in the heart of the devotee. (Harijan, 13-10-46).

*I believe in faith in things where reason has no place
for example the existence of God. (Harijan, 6-12-36).*

ignoratio elenchi to the question that is posed. Gandhiji however gives the real answer, when he says that devotion to God heightens the power of our service to our fellowmen.³ Such a man sees God in all beings *yo mām paúyati sarvatra, sarvam cha mayi paúyati*. That is the reason why we should do our meditation and prayers.

Finally, what are the criteria of spiritual experience in man? Mahatma Gandhi gives us some fine answers. In the first place, it is the supersensuousness of experience that constitutes its reality and value. Everything that comes from the senses, he says, is valueless. It is only that which rises above our sensuous experience, that is entitled to the name of the Real.¹ So far so good; but Mahatma Gandhi also proceeds to the second answer. I believe in faith, he says, and the reality of any religion. Belief is real to me. If I cannot reason out the existence of God I do believe in Him.² Faith in God is the second criterion of the reality of our experience, says Mahatma Gandhi.³ The correctness of this answer, however, may be gainsaid by those who do not want to dislodge reason from its proper place. Nevertheless the third answer which Gandhiji gives is very good, namely, it is only when we find a change and development in the character and conduct of a man that we are entitled to say that he has lived a spiritual life. It is the transformed character and conduct of a man, therefore, says Gandhiji, that constitutes the real index to his spiritual development.⁴

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1. Sense perceptions can be, and often are, false and deceptive, however real they may appear to us. Where there is realisation outside beyond the senses it is infallible. (Y.I. 11-10-28).
 2. I believe in faith in things where reason has no place for example the existence of God. (Harijan, 6-12-36).
 3. Reason is powerless to Him. Faith is essential. My logic can make and unmake innumerable hypotheses. An atheist might floor me in a debate. But my faith runs so very much faster than my reason that I challenge the whole world and say ‘ God is, was and ever shall be’ (Y.I. 21-1-26).
 4. It (realisation) is proved not by extraneous evidences but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the presence of God within. (Y.I. 11-10-28).

Also we have a very fine utterance from Gandhiji in which he calls God a tyrant. "He is the greatest tyrant ever known", he tells us, "for, He dashes the cup while we are lifting it to the mouth".

F

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

In the development of the spiritual life of any great realiser there is often a dark night of the soul. In the case of Mahatma Gandhi this dark night bore a two fold aspect— a personal one and a social one. Very often in the case of other realisers the personal aspect alone is predominant. In the case of Mahatma Gandhi the social aspect was equally important as the personal, if not more. Even in his early days we find him pining after God." My heart pines to see God", he says, " I occasionally get faint glimpses of Truth,¹" But it seems this was not sufficient for him. Also in his autobiography, he tells us how his mind was on a rack. He experienced perpetual torture in as much as he was still so far away from the Great Being who governed every breath of his life.² Very often like the saints of Gujarat, or Maharashtra or Karnatak or the Hindi belt, he comes to quarrel with God and goes on to the length of questioning His bonafides. "He is a jealous Lord, who will allow no one to share his authority, and the only recourse left for man is to bow down to him in submission" says Mahatma Gandhi.³ Also we have a very fine utterance from Gandhiji in which he calls God a tyrant. " He is the greatest tyrant ever known", he tells us, "for, He dashes the cup while we are lifting it to the mouth, and under cover of free will, He leaves a margin so small as to provide mirth for Himself at our expense." Like flies to the wanton boys, so Shakespeare also tells us, are we to the gods who kill us merely for their sport. Read-

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1. He pines ' To see God face to face' and often has 'had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God ' (Y. I. Vol. 1, p 4)
 2. " For it is an unbroken torture to me that I am still so far from Him who, as I know, governs every breath of my life." (The Experiment with Truth, Vol. I, Page 8)
 3. I must go with God as my only guide. He is a jealous Lord. He will allow no one to share His authority. One has, therefore, to appear before Him in all one's weakness, empty-handed and in a spirit of full surrender, and then He enables you to stand before the whole world and protects you from harm. (Y. I. 3-9-31)

When we come to the end of his career in the year 1947, we have a large number of utterances wherein the dark night assumes the darkest shape. "My voice is lost in the wilderness," he says, "my mind has lost its potency."

ers of James's "Will to Believe" know how he describes man as the dog of God. Man has only a limited freedom; he can only move within the orbit described by the tether tied to his neck. Such a kind of limited freedom is given to us by God.

So far as the aspect of quarrel with God is concerned, we can recall to our mind a very celebrated song of the Saint of Nimbargi *Enu mâdi di kbenna devâ*, where he makes a catalogue of indictments against God. In order to remove himself from the influences of these charges, the only course left to God, the Saint says, is to fall prostrate at the feet of his Spiritual Teacher. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi's description of the allowance of a little freedom to us would also put one in mind of Vallabha's doctrine of Sport or Leelâ. Mahatma Gandhi has also talked about the 'Leelâ' in such a connection. It is because of His Leelâ that God allows man a little freedom.¹This is also a fine example of the influence of Vallabhism on Mahatma Gandhi.

After this personal aspect of the dark night, we shall come to the social aspect. This aspect of the dark night came to Mahatma Gandhi somewhat late in his life, but the early stages were seen in 1939 when he describes himself as absolutely disconsolate. He is in perpetual quarrel with God. Why should God allow such things to go on?²

When we come to the end of his career in the year 1947, we have a large number of utterances wherein the dark night assumes the darkest shape. "My voice is lost in the wilderness," he says, "my mind has lost its potency."³ One does not know why God should be so cruel as to allow

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1. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His Sport-Leela. (Y. I. 5-3-25)
 2. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart, I am in perpetual quarrel with God that he should allow such things to go on, (Harijan, 9-9-1939)
 3. He knew that his was a voice in the wilderness. If it was not and if it had the potency which it had before, he knew that nothing of the savagery would ever have happened. (Delhi Dairy, 28-9-47)

Finally, he also tells us in 1947, that if fratricide did not stop and the ruin of India was to come, it was better that he was removed from this earthly theatre.

such things to go on.” Gandhiji feels himself out of court.¹ His words have lost all their weight, he says. In fact, he became a back number and nobody cared for him in these days of machines, aeroplanes, navies and what not.²

It seems this was almost a sort of prognostication when he actually felt that the period of his life was approaching its end. People requested him, he says, that he should live for 125 years, but he tells us that he had lost all desire to live long.³ “My only authority over my countrymen,” he says, “is the moral authority;⁴ but if nobody cares for it I have no concern with society. When I find that I cannot help the savagery that is going on, my only weapon is mute prayer.” Finally, he also tells us in 1947, that if he could be of no further use to the society, it is better that God should take him away.⁵ If fratricide did not stop and the ruin of India was to come, it was better that he was removed from this earthly theatre.⁶ It was this kind of personal and social dark night through which Mahatma Gandhi had to wade until he got his glimpses of spiritual realisation.

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1. He knew that he was out of court today. (Delhi Diary, 7-9-47)
 2. There was a time when India listened to him. Today he was a back number. He was told he had no place in the new order where they wanted machines, navy, air force and what not. (Delhi Dairy, 26-9-47)
 3. He said that many friends had hoped he would live to be 125 but he had lost all desire to live long, let alone 125 years. He could not live while hatred and killing marred the atmosphere. (Delhi Dairy, 2-10-47)
 4. But who am I? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral. If he holds me to be a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence in the place of the awful violence now ruling the earth, my weapon is mute prayer. (Non-Violence in Peace and War, page 250-251)
 5. If God wished to take further work from him, he would do so. But he certainly felt that today his words had ceased to carry weight, and if he was not able to render more service, it would be best that God took him away. (Delhi Dairy, 3-10-47)
 6. He had made his final choice. He had no desire to live to see the ruin of India, through fratricide. His incessant prayer was that God would remove him before any such calamity descended upon their fair land. (Delhi Dairy, 17-9-47)

PICTURE OF GANDHI

Not that he (Gandhi) had no experience of the Inner Light; but he tells us that this Inner Light must be supported by the Voice of God, and then alone it may become effective.

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SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE (The Inner Voice)

Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual experience seems to have begun very early and it probably rose to its culmination towards the end of his career. So far as his mystical experience is concerned we have divided its development in three stages. In the first stage we have his utterances about the Inner Voice, which might be likened to the *Anâhata* Sound of mystical experience. In the second stage we have got some utterances of his which indicate that he received messages from the Inner Voice, but what these were he has left unsaid. In the last stage we have at least two definite utterances of his in which he not merely says that he received messages but also tells us the very words in which they were clothed.

We shall begin by considering the first stage in a historical perspective. In the year 1921 we have got an utterance from Mahatma Gandhi telling us that he heard the still small voice and also probably that he saw a pillar of fire. Normally, he says, man shuts his ears to the one and his eyes to the other.¹ If we collected together the mystical experience of Mahatma Gandhi, we might say on the whole that he was an audile rather than a photic or morphist. Not that he had no experience of the Inner Light; but he tells us that this Inner Light must be supported by the Voice of God, and then alone it may become effective.² In the year 1924 we are told by him that the whole of his activity was directed to that end—ethical, social, political and humanitarian.³ In the year 1925, he speaks of the virtue of

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1. My firm belief is that He reveals Himself daily to every human being but we shut our ears to the still small voice. We shut our eyes to the Pillar of fire in front of us. I realize His omnipresence. (Y. I.25-5-21)
 2. When this Inner Light corresponds with the promptings of the smaller Inner Voice, then that flash has the mark of inspiration. (Free Press Journal, 10-1-33)
 3. I lay claim to nothing exclusively divine in me. I do not claim prophetship. I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. The whole of my activity whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical is directed to that end. (Young India, 11-9-24).

We are told by Mahatma Gandhi that it is only when we are passing through critical times that we get a glimpse or vision of God.⁴

the dancing to the tune of the Bansi, exhorting people that if they were fortunate to hear this, all would be well with them.¹ In 1933, we are told by Mahatma Gandhi that the Inner Voice had become increasingly audible. This is as much as to say that the Inner Voice having started from a small beginning assumed greater and greater sonorousness and power as time rolled on.² In 1936, we have a general reflection of his to the effect that this divine music is constantly going on inside us; only very few are able to listen to it. It is just because human senses drown the delicate music, that men are unable to hear it. He, however, tells us that he who rises superior to the senses can hear the voice of God. Gandhiji tells us that this sound is going on incessantly in us, in that matter imitating Sankarâcharya who spoke in his *Yogatârâvali* about '*Antah pravarteta sadâ ninâdah!*' Finally, we are told by Gandhiji that this divine music is infinitely superior to anything that we can hear by means of our senses.³

A second category of his mystical utterances consists of his statements that he heard the musical voice; but we are unable to know what the contents were. These two occasions were respectively in 1940 and 1948. We are told by Mahatma Gandhi that it is only when we are passing through critical times that we get a glimpse or vision of God.⁴ In 1940

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1. We must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His Bansi (flute) and all would be well. (Young India, 5-3-25)
 2. I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as years have rolled by. He has never forsaken me even in my darkest hour. He has saved me often against myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been my joy. (Harijan, 6-5-33).
 3. The Divine Music is incessantly going on within ourselves; senses drown the Delicate Music which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can hear with our senses. (Harijan, 13-6-36).
 4. Men have critical periods in their lives they find themselves at certain moments in their lives utterly distracted. It is in these moments that we have a glimpse of God, a vision of Him who is guiding every one of our steps in life. (Harijan, 39-8-39).

“With God as my supreme and sole Counsellor, I felt that I must take the decision without any adviser.” (Delhi Diary, 12.1.48)

India was passing through one such critical occasion. The question was about the anti-war propaganda by non-violent means. He had a resolution to that effect for the A.I.C.C. Mahatma Gandhi tried for some time vainly to influence the members of the A.I.C.C., but only after an excruciating experience of some divine message he may have received. In the interim he was absolutely confident of the veracity of this experience and communicated it to others. Pandit Nehru in commending the resolution said “How great Mahatma Gandhi spiritually is, I cannot say; but I can tell you that he is politically without a peer.’ Then followed a short statement by Mahatma Gandhi in justification of the resolution that he put forth. Mahatma Gandhi said,

“The thing I have placed before you is not small. I myself had thought it was small. But it was not so. It has not come from my intellect. It has come from the recesses of the heart where dwelleth the Innermost. It is He who has given it. It was born at the end of unfinite travail.” (Harijan, 22-9-40).

Another occasion of such Divine communication was in 1948, just a few days before his earthly career came to an end. Gandhiji wanted to go on an unending fast to melt the hearts of the Indian Nation—the Hindus, the Muslims and Sikhs. He did not want any fratricide or spilling of blood. He was prepared rather to throw down his own life than be a helpless witness to such a dreadful spectacle. Mahatma Gandhi said on this occasion:

“There are friends who do not believe in the method of the fast for the reclamation of the human mind.... With God as my supreme and sole Counsellor, I felt that I must take the decision without any adviser. If I have made a mistake and discover it, I shall have no hesitation in proclaiming it from the house top and retracing my faulty step. There is little chance of making such a discovery. If there is clear indication as I claim there is, of the Inner Voice it will not be gainsaid. I plead for all absence of argument and inevitable endorsement of the step..... I urge everybody dispassionately to examine the purpose and let me die, if I must, in peace... rather than that I should be a helpless witness of the destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam.” (Delhi Dairy, 12-1-1948)

On this occasion we are told by Mahatma Gandhi that before he entered on the fast, the Inner Voice had prompted him to undertake the fast in the interest of India and humanity.

We can understand from this how he tells us that there was on these occasions a clear indication of the course of action to be adopted, dictated to him by the Inner Voice of the Supreme Counsellor, there was no necessity for him to listen to any advice given by man. He was prepared to act implicitly according to the dictates of the Inner Voice.

We have seen hitherto only two general statements from Mahatma Gandhi in which he tells us that he received messages but does not say what the contents of them were. Two other such messages are also available to us from which we can see Mahatma Gandhi not merely heard the Inner Voice but also words emerged from it. A Kanarese saint tells us *Nâda úabda dolu mulugi déné* that a man with spiritual experience is not merely able to hear the spiritual sound, but he is also able to hear the words of God. This also in technical terminology is called *Sambhâsana* (conversation), as contrasted with *Darœana* (vision) and *Sparœana* (touch). Let us see what the contents of these communications from the Inner Voice to Mahatma Gandhi actually were.

The two occasions on which these communications came to him in the shape of words as revealed by Mahatma Gandhi were both connected with the question of untouchability. The first occasion was in 1933 and the second in 1938. In the first the whole of India was agitated on the question of separate electorates for the Harijans. Ramsay McDonald, the British Premier, had given his verdict that there shall be separate electorates for Harijans. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to meet this challenge by being prepared to sacrifice his life. We know from history how all the great leaders of India laid their heads together at Bombay and Poona in order to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi. No small credit is due to Dr. Ambedkar also, who ultimately submitted to the pressure of the great leaders of the Indian nation. On this occasion we are told by Mahatma Gandhi that before he entered on the fast, the Inner Voice had prompted him to undertake the fast in the interest of India and humanity. This communication, we are told by Gandhiji, was preceded by a terrific

“I saw no form. I have never tried for it. I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice, definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the voice.” (Harijan, 8.7.33)

struggle inside himself upon which alone it supervened. Let us hear Mahatma Gandhi’s actual words on this subject:

“The first question that has puzzled many is about the Voice of God. What was it? What did I hear? Was there any person I saw? If not, how was the Voice conveyed to me? These are pertinent questions.

I saw no form. I have never tried for it. I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice, definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the voice. The hearing of the voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the Voice and struggle ceased. I Was calm — joy came over me. This was between 11 and 12 midnight. (Harijan, 8-7-33).

A second occasion of the same phenomenon as regards the self-same question of untouchability occurred in 1938, which is even more graphical than the one we have described above. Mahatma Gandhi tells us how this spiritual experience came upon him.

“It relates to my 21 days’ fast for the removal of untouchability. I had gone to sleep..... At about 12 O’clock in the night something wakes me up suddenly and some voice— whispers,

‘Thou must go on a fast’.”

“ ‘ How many days’ I ask.

The voice again says ‘Twenty-one days’.

‘When does it begin’ I ask.

It says, ‘You begin tomorrow’.

(Harijan, 10-12-38)

“But I can say this, that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true voice of God. For me the Voice was more real than my existence.” (Harijan, 8-7-33).

These are definite words of communication and contain definite instructions as to the time, the manner and the period of the intended fast unto death from which the Inner Voice alone could save Mahatma Gandhi if it pleased.

Let us see what Mahatma Gandhi has to say about this experience himself from the psychologico-philosophical point of view. He denies that it could be a piece of his own imagination; he really believed that it came to him as the Voice of God. Let us hear what he says.

“Could I give any further evidence that it was truly the Voice that I heard and that it was not an echo of my own heated imagination? I have no further evidence to convince the sceptic. He is free to say it was all self-delusion or hallucination. It may well have been so. I can offer no proof to the contrary. But I can say this, that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true voice of God. For me the Voice was more real than my existence.” (Harijan, 8-7-33).

We are prepared to take Mahatma Gandhi’s words as true. It is not impossible for one to get such glimpses of Divine intention, if it pleases God, to guide a man on the spiritual path. Philosophers might debate among themselves as to whether these are cases of delusion or hallucination; but the strength of the experience, the equipoise of the mind and the squaring of reality with the words of the message may justify beyond doubt the truth of the communication thus received from God.

SOURCES OF THE CHAPTER I

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नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
 शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिध्येदकर्मणः ॥ ८ ॥
 यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
 तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसंगः समाचर ॥ ९ ॥
 सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
 अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽत्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १० ॥
 देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
 परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ ११ ॥
 इष्टान्भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
 तर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ १२ ॥
 यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
 भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणान् ॥ १३ ॥
 अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।
 यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४ ॥
 कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
 तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥
 एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
 अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ १६ ॥

[भ. गी. अ. ३]

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अथ हैनं गार्गी वाचकनवी पप्रच्छ याज्ञवल्क्येति होवाच यदिदं सर्वमप्स्येतं च प्रोतं च कस्मिन्नु खल्वाप ओताश्च प्रोताश्चेति वायौ गार्गीति कस्मिन्नु खलु वायु०... अंतरिक्षलोके गार्गीति कस्मिन्नु खल्वन्तरिक्षलोक०... आदित्यलोके गार्गीति कस्मिन्नु खल्वादित्य प्रोताश्चेति ब्रह्मलोके गार्गीति कस्मिन्नु खलु ब्रह्मलोक ओताश्च प्रोताश्चेति स होवाच गार्गी मातिप्राक्षीर्मा ते मूर्धा व्यपन्तदनतिप्रभ्यां वै देवतामतिपृच्छसि गार्गी मातिप्राक्षीरिति ततो ह गार्गी वाचकनव्युपरराम ॥६॥

[बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद्, अ. १, ब्राह्मणं ६]

HINDI POEMS

HINDI POEMS

HINDI POEMS

PICTURE OF GANDHI

But from 1940 onwards to 1946 I developed a certain taste for Hindi mysticism at the hands of my barber and my door-keeper, a Bhaiya -Ranade

Chapter 2

SPIRITUAL REALISATION IN HINDI SAINTS

Its (1) Genesis, (2) Growth and (3) Consummation.

Mysticism is a word with which I have been familiar for the last forty years and it was only when I first read Underhill's *Mysticism* that I got some idea of it. On the whole one might say that the word mysticism represents exactly what the Upanishadic seers have called *Mauna*—silence and then enjoyment of God in silence. That is what mysticism means. There were a great number of mystics in Christianity as well as Mohamedanism and among Hindu mystics. Among Hindu mystics Sadasiva Brahmendra Sarasvati has been one of my special favourites. I have studied with great interest his commentary on the *Brahma Sûtras* as well as his commentary on the *Yoga Sûtras* and a mere look at the fine photograph appended to his works will show what a great man he was.

But these things apart, coming to the subject of our discourses this time, I would rather choose the general title of "Spiritual Realisation in Hindi Saints", and under this general heading I want to discuss three developing topics. The first is the "Genesis of Spiritual Realisation" which is our topic today. The second will be the "Growth of Spiritual Realisation". Lastly it will be the "Consummation of Spiritual Realisation." A question might be asked as to why I am going to talk about Hindi mysticism, and naturally so. My own idea is that when I had spent about eighteen valuable years of my life at Allahabad, it would have been most unjustifiable if I had not studied Hindi mysticism nor expounded it. One of my friends, Pandit Devi Prasad Shukla, Principal of the Madan Mohan Malaviya College, Allahabad, has been one of my tempters in this direction. I might confess that till 1940 I had not much idea of Hindi mysticism. We heard somewhat in Maharashtra about Kabir, Raidas, Dadu, Sena and so forth. But from 1940 onwards to 1946 I developed a certain taste for Hindi mysticism at the hands of whom shall I say to you at the hands of my barber and my door-keeper, a Bhaiya.

So I might say that for the last six years on the average I have spent six hours a day on the study of Hindi poet-saints.

Now these two persons knew excellent Hindi songs and I was tempted to enter into the meaning of them. I meet them almost always even now. But what seed these and a few of my students at the time sowed developed after my retirement from the University into a full blowing plant. So I might say that for the last six years on the average I have spent six hours a day on the study of Hindi poet-saints. It is not time alone that matters, but it is the comparative study of Hindi mystics along with the mystics of Maharashtra, Karnatak and other states of India, as well as of Christianity and Islam which matters. I might say that I now know the writings of these mystics of India in the original from three different regions, one is Karnatak, the other is Maharashtra, and the third is the Hindi belt. I have neither the age nor the energy nor the ability to study the writings of saints from the other languages. I think I should have done with this subject of mysticism from the analytical point of view, when in addition to my already published book on Maharashtra Mysticism, I have finished two other books.

I am proposing, one on Hindi Mysticism and the other on Karnatak Mysticism. The book on Hindi Mysticism may be coming out very soon in two parts, one volume of sources and the other volume of exposition. It is not possible to do full justice to the subject in three short lectures. I only wish to call your attention to a few salient points on the subject. We are all encouraged to study the Hindi language, thereby also we are encouraged to study Hindi literature; but nobody encourages us to study philosophy and religion as embodied in Hindi literature. There is not a single institute in the whole of India which devotes its attention to a comparative study of the great Hindi saints and no small credit is due to my friend Pandit Devi Prasad Shukla who put the idea into my mind.

Now I may tell you how we might develop a real appreciation of the teachings of these great Hindi Saints by a consideration of some such passages as I shall be quoting soon. A fine passage in Tulsidas's Vinaya Patrikâ tells us what we might regard as our chief intellectual incentive towards our knowledge of God. If we analyse the incentives that lead us Godward in the literatures of the different states of India as well as of

Tulsidas tells us that this ephemeral world is like a picture drawn by an artist without hands and without colours on a wall which does not exist.

other religions we might find that there are certain sets of ideas which are alike in all of them, I am going to speak only about a few this evening. In a very celebrated poem in the Vinaya Patrikâ *Kesava kahi na jâya kâ kahie?* we are told by Tulsidas that it is impossible to understand fully the architectonic skill of the Creator. “The way in which you have constructed the World, O Creator,” says Tulsidas, passes beyond our comprehension.” If we just look at the handiwork of God either in the macrocosm or in the microcosm our imagination reels and our mind remains enwrapped within itself.

“So that any philosophical discussion of Thy powers becomes impossible.” The greatness of the work of God, in short, says Tulsidas, is ineffable. In fact this comes very near to the cosmo-teleological argument in Kant, that is the contemplation either of the cosmical creation process or of the end to which the whole creation moves.

In the second place Tulsidas tells us that this ephemeral world is like a picture drawn by an artist without hands and without colours on a wall which does not exist. This evidently is a conglomeration of impossibilities. Students of philosophy know the familiar definition of philosophy as the search by a blind man of a black cat in a dark place where it is not. So also in Plato we know that famous utterance in the Seventh Book of Republic. An archer and no archer, aiming and not aiming, at a bird and no bird, killed it and did not kill it with an arrow and no arrow. These are evidently a plethora of contradictions. So the artist in Tulsidas without hand, painting without colours on a wall which does not exist in exactly an analogue of these. But I might call your attention to other parallels e.g. take the following famous verse from a great Kashmiri poet:-

Nirupâdânasambhâramabhittâveva tanvate!

Jagachchitram namastasmaî kalâûlâdhyâya úuline!!

This looks exactly like a prototype of Tulsidas’s utterance and it is not impossible that the two might have derived their ideas from Vidyanayas’s *Pânchadâsi* from the celebrated chapter on Chitradîpa. This shows incidentally also that Tulsidas was a great Sanskrit scholar.

An unreal cause might strike terror in the minds of the percipients (Na marai bhîti, dukha pâiya yadi tanu here) and thus produce real effects.

Thirdly, we are told by Tulsidas how a crocodile living in the waters of mirage swallows without mouth all the animate and inanimate objects that go to partake of the water.

Ravikara nîra basai ati dârûna

Makararûpa tehi mâhî!

Vadana hîna so grasai âharâchara

Pâna karana je jâhî!!

An unreal cause might strike terror in the minds of the percipients (*Na marai bhîti, dukha pâiya yadi tanu here*) and thus produce real effects. What great parallels has this conception of Tulsidas in other religious and philosophical systems? As for example, look at Āmkarâchârya. In the great *Bhâshya* (commentary) on the *Vedânta Sûtras* which he was written he gives us an idea, we might say, is exactly like that of Tulsidas; or Tulsidas's idea, we might say, is exactly like that of Āmkarâchârya. That may be better way to put it because Āmkarâchârya was about eight centuries earlier than Tulsidas. A thing might be unreal, but the effect might be real. Āmkarâchârya says that the *Rajjusarpa* might be unreal; but it might create a real fear in the mind of the man who will thus take to his heels. On the other hand, we are told by Āmkarâchârya in his *Úataúlokî* how an unreal cause might produce a real and yet beneficial effect.

Swapne mantropadeshah shravanaparicitah satva esa prabodhe!

The Mantra which Guru may give to his disciple in a dream may become real and fructuous during his life as it did in the case of Tukârâma. So both from the bad effects and good effects unreality may lead to reality. We have thus seen that great writers such as Plato, Vidyâranya, Āmkarâchârya and the Kashmiri Poet, in order to befool the understanding of people and to tell them of the limited power of their intellect, dwell on contradictions and say it is not merely by intellectual endeavor alone that we can hope to reach the Absolute.

Some people say that the world is real; others say that it is unreal; yet others say that it is both real and unreal. But Tulsidas says that he has transcended all these delusions because he has realised the self.

The next point in Tulsidas is a very philosophic one and I think beyond almost the comprehension of a mere Hindi writer. He says we must transcend the consideration of reality, unreality and real unreality. Some people say that the world is real; others say that it is unreal; yet others say that it is both real and unreal.

*Kou kaha satya, jhûtha kaha koû
Jugala prabala kari mânâ!*

But Tulsidas tells that he has transcended all these delusions because he has realised the self.

*Tulasidâsa pariharaî tîni bhrama
So âpa hi pahîchânâ!*

It may be seen that we are preferring the reading

*Tulasidâsa pariharaî tîni bhrama
jo âpa hi pahichânâ!*

to the reading *so âpa hi pahichânâ!* According to one only he can transcend the three delusions who has realised the self. According to the others unless we have transcended the delusions we cannot realise the self. This raises a very important philosophic question. How are the two things related—transcendence of delusions and the realisation of the self. Which is the cause and which is the effect? It may be said that the two are interdependent like the obverse and the reverse sides of the same coin, that neither could be achieved without the other and that, if at all, the two are achieved simultaneously. If we were, however, to choose between the two alternatives we would rather say that he who has realised the self will be able to transcend the delusions and nobody else.

Those, however, who have been technical students of the *Vedânta Sûtras* know that this three-fold distinction of reality and real-unreality has firm

[*It is thus admirable how a great Hindi poet
could reach such heights of imagination.*]

grounding in the Vedântic systems. Reality was aimed at by Râmânüja, unreality by Úamkarâchârya and real-unreality by Nimbârka. Many great scholars have spent their brains on the correct interpretation of the Sûtra of Bâdarâyana *Ahikundalvat* and discussed *ad nauseam* whether the serpent and the coil is real or whether both the serpent and the coil are equally real. All these doctrines Tulsidas sets aside and preaches a doctrine of self-realisation. It is thus admirable how a great Hindi poet could reach such heights of imagination. So it is very desirable that Hindi mysticism should be studied from a comparative point of view. Unless we have a firm grounding in Sanskrit and a knowledge of the different provincial literatures of India as well as a knowledge of universal comparative philosophy, we cannot hope to open the treasures of the great Hindi saints.

This is the first poem I wanted to discuss. It is desirable that songs should be sung in order that they might relieve the talker, give some pleasure to the hearers as well as enable them to see whether what one says is correct or not.

I am now considering another song from Surdas. The Gopi's here are addressing a song to Uddhava or Krshna, they do not know whom. Literally, the song seems to be addressed to Uddhava, really it is addressed by the devotion they bore to Krshna that they could not distinguish between Uddhava and his Master Krshna. And they begin to accuse Krshna of certain things which imply an incentive to spiritual life which I shall explain just now. In the first place, a Gopi says, O Uddhava, thou art cutting down mango trees; thou art planting pricking thorns. Wherever there is sandalwood to be found you are consigning it to flames. Good things you despise and bad things you encourage. You are rehabilitating the thieves and make the good people run away and place reliance on those who bear tales to you.

Chora basâvata sâha bhagâvata,

Chugalani kau etabâra!!

[“The good people are punished and
the bad people prosper”- Kant.]

I cannot understand thy three-fold manner, O Uddahava,

Karnî, Kathanî and Rahanî

Neither of these can I understand in your case. So we have come to the conclusion, say the Gopis, thy court the assembly hall, is merely chaotic, *Andhâdhundha darabâra*. “The good people are punished and the bad people prosper”- that is what in a sense the Gopîs have said to Uddhava or Kṛṣṇa. In Maharashtra there was another poet named Tâtyâji who has said the same thing. I do not know whether he knew the song of the Gopis. He is in a sense re-echoing the very words of the Gopis.

*Dâtô ko bandhana pade, bhikârio ko daulata chadhe,
Choro ko imârata badhe, duúmana ko mukti-siddhi,
Sevak ko..chindhi, pativrâtâ ko vipata badî, chhinâla jâ
vaikuntha chadî,*

Tâtyâji ki aisi bâni hai andhâdhundha sarakâra hai!!

“Liberal donors are put into prison, and beggars are placed on the throne. Chaste women fall into adversity and courtesans fly to heaven. Tatyaji says, verily, that the world—court is only full of anarchy.” What is the philosophic consequence of this that perturbed the intellect of such a great German philosopher like Kant. Kant who in his first Critique namely the Critique of pure Reason could not by any intellectual arguments prove the existence of God has found a very suitable argument in the second Critique that is, the Critique of Practical Reason, when he finds the proof of God upon this disparity between dessert and fruit. Good people suffer in the world, bad people prosper. How is an adjustment to be made between dessert and fruit, asks Kant. He gives two answers. In the first place, he says, we have to posit an immortal life - a long life through which the good people who have suffered in this world might be rewarded in the next; and the bad who have been prosperous in this life might be punished later on. So this mal-adjustment in the world implies, says Kant, the proof of immortal life.

Second, it requires a judge who is to adjust the dessert to fruit. That great judge is God. It is only God who can adjust works to fruits.

Second, it requires a judge who is to adjust the dessert to fruit. That great judge is God. It is only God who can adjust works to fruits. So this proof of God which is known as the moral or judicial proof is very famous in the History of Philosophy. In the last Critique of Judgment, Kant comes to the teleological proof that is next to this moral proof, but this moral proof stands highest in the case of Kant. According to Kant, this discrepancy between desert and fruit leads on the one hand to the proof of an immortal life, and on the other, to the proof of God; but in our case who are discussing the nature of the spiritual life how does it affect us? Is it not our concern, as members of the spiritual world, to so feel and pray within ourselves that Providence may bring about an adjustment between merit and reward. If these are not righted here and now at least the endeavour will inspire us with a strong spiritual impulse for bringing about this very necessary desired adjustment. This may be regarded as a second incentive to spiritual life.

I now pass on to the third incentive to spiritual life namely, from a consciousness of our own sins. It might seem surprising that a consciousness or a memory of our sins might lead us on to a holy and spiritual life and yet it did so in the case of Indra as Tulsidas points out. He begins by taking illustrations of four different deities—Úamkara, Brahmâ, Kârîkeya and then he passes on to the whole legion of the gods in reference to their contemplation of Indra's glory. Tulsidas begins by considering the case of Úamkara. Úamkara had no axe to grind. His salvation came from Râma and therefore he was full of love for looking at the Chabî of Râma and he drank of the beauty of Râma with fifteen eyes – 5x3 *Panchamukha* and *Trinayana* makes fifteen. Unfortunately, the third eye burns. But it did not burn in the case of Râma at all. Brahmâ enjoyed the beauty of Râma with eight eyes only. Why eight 4x2. But he repented that he had lost one of his heads, otherwise he would have enjoyed the Chabî of Râma with ten eyes instead of eight. One of his heads was cut off for some of his bad actions. So he enjoyed God with eight eyes only with a sense of repentance. Kârîkeya, who followed and who is known as Shadânana, had six faces and he enjoyed the Chabî of Râma with twelve eyes which Tulsidas says is one and a half times

“Weep not my sister; the child of these holy tears shall never perish”;
and St. Augustine became the second founder of Christianity.

the number of eyes of Brahmâ. So he was very elated. There was the further reason for his joy because Kârtikeya was a life-long *Kumâra* and Râma was a *Kumâra* till that time. So he took a particular pleasure in enjoying the *Chabî* of Râma.

And finally we come to the point of Indra. Indra enjoyed the *Chabî* of Râma with a thousand eyes. He had to thank his very sins that led him to his great enjoyment of God with a thousand eyes instead of either fifteen or eight or twelve. He was an *Ahilyâjâra* which is also interpreted in the Vedas as the Sun being the paramour of Night, but mythologically speaking one might understand Indra as having had a thousand holes in his body on account of his almost culpable sensuality and now Indra thanks himself for his previous sins because they enabled him to enjoy the *Chabî* of Râma with a thousand holes in his body. And lastly, there was that host of gods who were jealous of Indra. “Oh, he is enjoying the beauty of Râma, they said, with a thousand eyes; we cannot enjoy it even with two.” There is a peculiar word that Tulsidas uses in this connection *Sihât*, that is to say either praise or become jealous. The gods either praised Indra or were jealous of him.

Now if we were to analyse psychologically the different emotions exhibited by all these great deities while enjoying the *Chabî* of Râma we can see in the first place that the psychological attitude of Úamkara was that of love; in the case of Brahmâ it was repentance; in the case of Kârtikeya it was elation; in the case of Indra it was gratefulness; and in the last case, in the case of gods, it was either jealousy or praise. So all the psychological emotions have been brought about by Tulsidas in that simple affair of the gods looking at the *Chabî* of Râma at the time of his marriage and his particular insistence upon Indra enjoying the beauty of Râma more than any other God. That does not mean that we should lead a life of sin. It might have been historical thing or merely an allegorical thing. A consciousness of our own sins might also enable us to realise God as it did in the case of St. Augustine. Augustine led a very sinful life in the beginning and so his mother Moneca went to her teacher St. Ambrose and she asked him in what way her son could be saved, and she began to shed tears. So St. Ambrose said, “Weep not my sister; the child of these holy tears shall never perish; and St. Augustine became

So even a consciousness of our own sins, provided we mend our ways and never return to the bad life, will be a sure incentive to the realisation of our spiritual life.

the second founder of Christianity. Having led a life of sin in the beginning he later became one of the great saints of the world. So even a consciousness of our own sins, provided we mend our ways and never return to the bad life, provided we go forward courageously on the path of virtue, will be a sure incentive to the realisation of our spiritual life.

I shall now consider two further incentives to spiritual life from the Hindi Saints and then finish this lecture. The first incentive will be concerned with the contemplation on death. We have had famous philosophers in antiquity who have made this contemplation on death - an incentive to their spiritual life. The Stoics made a continuous use of it. St. Paul used to say "I die daily." This is as much as to say that only when we keep the fact of death every moment before us that we might be encouraged to devote continuous attention to the spiritual life. There is a famous poem in Surdas *Jâ dina mana panchî udi jaihai!!* in which he tells us in his usual poetic manner how this contemplation on death might be achieved. In the ordinary course of nature when we look at a tree we find that when the foliage of the tree has fallen down then the bird which used to sit on it flies away. Surdas reverses this relation and tells us by a sort of a *Viparyayâlankâra* that the bird flies away and then the foliage of the tree falls down. Surdas has in his mind the crumbling down of all senses, organs, affections, passions as soon as the self has flown away.

This is as much as to say that when the soul has left the body the entire foliage of the tree namely senses, organs etc. falls down. The reason for contrary experiences in nature and in the human body is evidently that while in the latter case the connection between the bird and the foliage is organic, that in the first case is only accidental. In the case of the tree the bird comes and perches on the tree as if the tree is external to it. In the case of human being the bird which is perching on the tree of the body makes the tree its own organic vesture. This organic connection between body and its organs might well be seen in the appearance of heat lingering in the body – cells even after the soul has departed and the man is dead. This of course occurs in the case of an old man, say, a

Surdas therefore warns us to take thought that this contemplation on death should make one think early enough about turning the body to its proper use long before the bird has flown away.

father, but in the case of a young child Surdas tells us further that the lustre and form and colour of the body of the child whom one had fondly loved have departed adding a poignant note to one's contemplation on the ravages of death in general.

*Kaham vaha nîra, kahâ vaha úobhâ, kaham ranga rûpa dikhai
hai!!*

Let not the *Dehî* take pride, says Surdas, by a sort of a malapropism, — for Surdas wants to use the word *Dehî* in the sense of a body — let not the body make you proud, Oh arrogant man, your only destiny is to fall a prey to jackals, crows and vultures. *Syâra kâga gidha khai hai!* If it does not become a coveted mouthful to these creatures, its next destiny would be to be either putrified, or be reduced to worm, or be turned into ashes and mingled with dust, for it was from dust it originally came. Surdas therefore warns us to take thought that this contemplation on death should make one think early enough about turning the body to its proper use long before the bird has flown away.

Surdas also adds a mental element to this physical contemplation on the state of the body after death. Those you have loved in life, says Surdas, will begin to despise you as soon as you are dead. Others will be afraid of you lest you might be turned into a ghost and catch hold of them and devour them. In either case your relatives will insist upon your body being turned out of the house immediately after your death. Your sons and daughters whom you had reared with so much affection through your life and with fervent prayers to gods and goddesses, for their welfare, will break your cranium with a bamboo stick when your body has been burnt and throw the pieces to the four winds, lest a future grave digger might catch hold of them and inspire a philosophic Hamlet to ponder as to whether the cranium belonged to a politician, a lawyer, or a jester. It is time for you to think therefore, Oh foolish man, to seek the company of the saints, for it is only in their company that you will get something which will be worth your while. It is from them that you might learn to turn your body and mind to their proper spiritual use. Surdas repents that he has wasted a very valuable life without attaining God.

[*The course of events in history, says Kabir, is beyond any astronomical or scientific calculations.*]

The last incentive to spiritual life we may consider in this lecture is the inscrutability of an unseen power which guides the destinies of the world. Now this inscrutability might take any of four different forms. Either it might concern itself with the indeterminateness of this power as such and its consequent unpredictability and incalculability. This would be a reasonably scientific attitude. But it may also assume the metaphysical shape of a belief in fatalism and may result in an unpurposive view of the universe. Even some of the great politicians sometimes express their belief in such a power and call it fate. A third alternative might take the shape of a belief in a world order of what the Stoics call nature and may result in some such utterance as “All that is good to Thee, Oh Nature, is also good to me.” A fourth might be a man’s modest attitude— that of resignation or humility or submission to the will of God. Under this last head we shall very soon come to a poem from a Hindi saint who has expressed his idea in the famous lines

Jaba ho tumhârî marjî , taba prâna tanase nikale!!

In the famous song of Kabir *Karama gati tare nâhi tarî* We have been supplied with a number of illustrations to support this contention of the inscrutability of the unseen power. Kabir first tells us how the great sage Vasishtha with all his knowledge of the heavenly bodies could not find out a suitable stellar conjunction for the coronation of Râma. What we find is, says Kabir, that Dasaratha died before the coronation took place, Râma was banished to the forest by his stepmother and Sîtâ was kidnapped by the demon king. The course of events in history, says Kabir, is beyond any astronomical or scientific calculations.

A second illustration he gives is that of the famous king Nrga. It was customary to suppose that whoever gave a cow in charity was lifted to the heavens on account of the merit he had earned. In the case of Nrga, however, in spite of having given a crore of cows in charity he had ultimately to be born as an ever-nodding lizard, because once upon a time he was obliged to nod his head when the question was put to him as to whether the cow he was offering in charity was not the one he had already given away before.

Krishna was a great friend of the Pandavas and yet the Pandavas were subjected to all sorts of adversities and humiliation.

Eka gau jo deta vipra ko so sura loka tarai!

Koti gau râjâ Nrga dînhî so bhavakûpa parai!!

The illustration which has been given by Surdas in the song which is very similar to that of Kabir tells us how God very often reconciles himself with the wrong course of events. Prahlâda disobeyed his father. Disobedience is a crime. The crime led Prahlâda to a state of bondage. In order to relieve him from bondage God was obliged to take on the form of a man-lion and kill the father. Now how does this action of God rhyme with the moral principle? It might rhyme with the will of God to punish the wicked but the principle of morality namely, obedience to the father is here set at naught. All this involves a certain incalculability in the achievement of a particular end.

Krshna was, on the other hand, a great friend of the Pândavas and yet the Pândavas were subjected to all sorts of adversities and humiliation.

Pândava jinake âpa sârathî, tina para vipatti parî!

At every point during their warfare with the Kauravas they were subjected to critical situations through which only the transcendent power could lift them. What happened at the time when Bhîshma was almost on the point of vanquishing the Pândavas? Krshna had to bring Shikhandî to kill the renowned warrior. What happened when Drona was told falsely that his son Asvatthâmâ was dead? Dhṛṣṭadyumna had to come forward to kill the great Brahmin preceptor of archery. What happened at the time when Karna who was about to throw the deadliest atom bomb of ancient times, namely his Sakti on Arjuna? Krshna had to take resort to getting the chariot of Karna stuck up in the earth in order that Arjuna might be free to deliver his killing arrow at his invincible enemy. Was not Asvatthâmâ successful in killing all the progeny of the Pândavas when Krshna by an artifice had taken away the Pândavas from the clutches of misfortune?

Another illustration which Kabir gives is that of a deer. It is customary to understand the lines

Do we not know in contemporary history how and to what ultimate fate Hitler was subjected in spite of his great and continuous conquests through a number of years after the late war broke out?

Kaha vaha phanda, kaha vaha pâradhi,

Kaha vaha miraga charî

as referring to the Hema Mrga which Râma pursued. Why was not Râma able to keep an unclouded intellect when he pursued the deer of gold? The Sanskrit poet says

Asambhavam Hemamrgasya janma, tathâpi Râmo lulubhe mrgâya!

Prâyah samâpannavipattikâle, dhiyopi pumsâm malinîbhavanti!!

It does not seem that the juxtaposition of the words in this line supports such an interpretation. On the other hand we can legitimately go to an interpretation of this line in the spirit of the famous Sanskrit Subhâshita which so far as I can recollect, may have been taken from the Bhâgavata

Chhittvâ paûamapâsya kûtarachanâm bhagktvâ balâdvâgurâm

Paryantâgniûikhâkalâpajatilânnîhsrutya dûram vanât!

Vyâdhânâm ûragocharâdadhi javenotplutya dhâvanmrgah

Kûpântah patitah karoti vimukhe kimvâ vidhaû paurusam!!

The verse tells us how a man might push successfully through a chain of calamities with courage and fortune but ultimately succumb to the inevitable. We are told in the famous verse how a deer escaped from the meshes and traps that were set for him, escaped from the hideouts where it was, intended to be cornered, by the pursuing hounds, escaped from the poisonous arrows of invincible archers, escaped all these catastrophes, dancing with joy as it did, it went and fell into the waters of a well and there gave up the ghost. The deer died and his vaunted conquest of calamities came to naught. The inescapable law of destiny was too strong for him.

Do we not know in contemporary history how and to what ultimate fate Hitler was subjected in spite of his great and continuous conquests through a number of years after the late war broke out? Did he not conquer France in eight days? Did he not subject England to unimaginable travail and fire, particularly London which he almost reduced to ashes? Did he

Surdas however is more submissive to the will of God. His great anxiety is how God might relieve him from a whirlpool of disasters.

not intend to descend into Asia from the Caucasus and did he not succeed in getting India bombed from the other side by his ally? Was he not almost successful in subjugating Russia but only Stalingrad held him? Did he not lift away Mussolini from the clutches of his enemies when he had already been taken prisoner in Italy itself? And ultimately was he not obliged when he was cornered in Berlin from all sides to shoot himself and his mistress for fear that he might otherwise be caught alive and become a butt of ridicule to the whole world? He laughs best who laughs last; and it is the ultimate conquest that matters. As that great master of literary style Mr. Churchill said a few years ago England always lost battles but always won the war.

Kabir shows himself to be almost a fatalist in the song we are considering-

Karamgati târai nâhi tarî—————

————— *honî hoke rahî*

Surdas however is more submissive to the will of God. His great anxiety is how God might relieve him from a whirlpool of disasters. His only recourse is an utterance like this

Sûradâsa bali jâta charana kî kaise sûra tarâî

To him resignation or submission to the will of God would be a more potent instrument of achieving the end than either belief in an unseen power or a philosophic reconciliation with a world order. Whoever in the course of history has emerged successful except through an alliance with God?

HINDI POEMS

HINDI POEMS

HINDI POEMS

HINDI POEMS

PICTURE OF TULSIDAS

Different views on God would not lead us very far in determining the nature of God. We must ultimately have spiritual experience.

Chapter 3

The Growth of Spiritual Realisation in Hindi Saints

Yesterday I discussed the different incentives that led to the genesis of spiritual realisation. Today I shall go on to consider in brief how the growth of spiritual realisation takes place. Evidently here two principles are required—the moral and the religious- the moral virtues and the idea of God. Under the first head come all the different virtues and especially the virtue of God-devotion which is responsible for the growth of the spiritual life. Secondly an intellectual conception of the nature of God would help in propping up one's search for spiritual realisation. We shall consider in the first place what different virtues will be required for the spiritual life and which of them might be regarded as supreme. And in the second place we shall consider a number of views about the nature of God advanced by different Hindi saints so that by contemplating on them we can come to formulate our own idea of God. In fact the different views on God would not lead us very far in determining the nature of God. We must ultimately have spiritual experience. But it is not given to every man to be born with the mystic's spoon in his mouth, hence even an intellectual apprehension of God might make a man arrive at the determination of an idea of God which would suit him best

Finally we have very famous song in Tulsidas in which he discusses what he regards as the new nine kinds of Bhakti. From the times of the Bhâgavata downwards we have known a famous verse which tells us:

*Æavanam kîrtanam visnoh smaranam pādasevanam!
archanam vandanam dâsyam sakhyamâtmanivedanam!!*

There are some points of merit and also there are some points of defect in this. We do not want to enter into these here because our principle business is to consider Tulsidas's conception of Bhakti.

Tulsidas might well be regarded as a literary Avatâra of Vâlmikî, in as much as he clothes in a Hindi garb most of the ideas and sentiments of Vâlmikî.

There is one point, however, concerned with *smaranam* and *kîrtanam* which I may have to discuss. Now these two words are understood in different ways in the South and Uttar Pradesh. In the South the *Smarana* is *Nâmasmarana* and *Kîrtana* is a religious discourse or a sermon interspersed with songs. In Uttar Pradesh *Smarana* is internal recollection in the mind, *Kîrtana* is external recollection by word of mouth. Both the views are good in their own way. Tulsidas, however, does not make this nine-fold division of *Bhakti* as it is usually understood the basis of his scheme. It has been customary to regard Tulsidas as an *Avatâra* (incarnation) of Vâlmikî. We do not know whether we may believe in such an idea. Probably we may require great factual evidence before we can prove that one is an *Avatâra* of the other. Nevertheless, Tulsidas might well be regarded as a literary *Avatâra* (incarnation) of Vâlmikî, in as much as he clothes in a Hindi garb most of the ideas and sentiments of Vâlmikî. In this nine-fold scheme of *Bhakti*, what he calls *Navadhâ Bhakti*, Tulsidas is very closely following what the *Adhyâtma Râmâyana* has to say about the same topic. Tulsidas has almost adopted the whole scheme of *Adhyâtma Râmâyana in toto* though there are a point or two of excellence in Tulsidas and a point or two of excellence in *Adhyâtma Râmâyana*. We shall combine the two schemes, group them in a logical order and then see the ingredients of what might be called the nine-fold scheme of devotion. Putting the two schemes together we might say that there are three strands of development in the nine-fold scheme. These might for the sake of convenience be called the “Contributory”, the “Essential” and the “Effective”. Under the first come a number of moral virtues which are necessary for spiritual realisation. The second strand consists of three different kinds of *Bhakti* pertaining to the service of the saints and the spiritual teacher. Under the third strand come properly the five kinds of *Bhakti* which might be exhibited in an effective pursuit of God. So on the whole these three strands show different kinds of *Bhakti* which together make up the nine-fold scheme.

Moral virtues (Contributory)

1. *Amâna, virakti, Santosa Paradosâdarûana* and so on.

Services of Teacher (Essential)

According to the Adhyâtma Râmâyana and Tulsidas, the first kind of Bhakti is devoted to moral virtues in general.

2. *Santana kara sangâ!*
3. *Guru-padapankajasevâ!*
4. *Mote santa adhika kari lekhâ!*

Pursuit of God (Effectual)

5. *Mama gunagâna (vyâkhyâtrtvam madvachasâm)!*
6. *Rati mama kathâprasangâ!*
7. *Mantrajâpa!*
8. *Mohi maya jaga dekhâ*
9. *Mama bharosâ*

According to the *Adhyâtma Râmâyana* and Tulsidas, the first kind of Bhakti is devoted to moral virtues in general. Now there are many specifications of these moral virtues, a proper development of which alone constitutes the first Bhakti. Tulsidas cites these virtues as *Amâna*, *virakti*, *santosa*, *paradosâdaræna* and so on but he is careful to tell us in Aristotelean spirit that these virtues cannot be achieved in a single day. He uses the words ‘Nirantara’ and *Bahukarmâ*. We must continuously practise these virtues until they become perfected in us. Aristotle tells us “ethos is ethos” character is habit. When we add one instance of a particular virtue to another day after day then we can say that particular virtue becomes established in us.

This however raises the question—which of the different virtues may be regarded as supreme. The Bhagavad Gîtâ in a very celebrated passage of the 12th chapter has cited a number of virtues in the lines

Advestâ sarva bhutânâm.....!!

adding by a sort of *Bhaktimân me priyo narah!!* that Bhakti is the crown of all these virtues. In ancient ethics we are conversant with the discussion in Plato as to whether wisdom or temperance or courage might be regarded as the highest virtue. In modern ethics the same discussion applies in the case of justice, benevolence and equity. In Christian times faith, hope and charity were regarded as great virtues

*According to Nârada the highest kind of Bhakti
cannot be defined in terms of bharosa (surrender).
It must be defined in terms of Prema (love).*

and charity as supreme among them all. Everywhere we find there is an attempt to reach what may be called the central or the supreme virtue. In Tulsidas as well as in the Bhagavad *Gîtâ* devotion to God is regarded as the highest virtue.

In the second strand we have got three different kinds of Bhakti enumerated both by Tulsidas and Adhyâtma Râmâyana. *Santana kara sangâ* the company of the saints is the first virtue, *Guru-pada-pankaja-sevâ* the service of our spiritual teacher constitutes the second, *mote santa adhika kari lekhâ* to regard one's spiritual teacher as higher than the Godhead as the third.

In the last strand of our spiritual development we exhibit five different kinds of spiritual virtues one after another. The first and the second are concerned with the singing of the qualities and the praises of God *mama gunagâna*, as well as his exploits *rati mama kathâprasangâ*, and his words or message *Vyakhâttrvam madvachasâm*. In order that God-devotion might develop in us we must sing his praise, think of his qualities, narrate his exploits and contemplate on the spiritual words which he might have left for us. The third *Bhakti* under this head is concerned with the uttering of God's name *Mantrajâpa*. The fourth and the fifth are concerned with the seeing of God everywhere *mohimaya Jaga dekhâ* and a complete belief in God *Mama bharosa* which is also expressed by the great Vedantist Úri Madhvâchârya in his famous words *Raksisyatîti visvâsah!* "God is in the heaven and all is right with the world." This maxim ought to direct the aspirant's progress, and help him in his onward march. According to Tulsidas, therefore, *mama bharosa* a complete belief in the beneficence and the power of God constitutes the highest Bhakti. We might contrast with this the views expressed by Nârada. According to Nârada the highest kind of Bhakti cannot be defined in terms of *bharosa*. It must be defined in terms of Prema. *Sâ tvasmin paramapremarûpâ* One who reads the *Nârada-bhakti-Sûtras* cannot but be struck by the mystical nature of the Bhakti which he has enunciated.

For example, for the sake of God, he tells us, Bharata left off his mother, Prahlâda left off his father, the Gopi's left their husbands and Bibhîshana left his brother.

Yallabdhvâ pumân siddho bhavati, amrto bhavati, trpto bhavati!

Yatprâpya na kinchidvyançhati, na úochati, na dvesti, na ramate, notsâhî bhavati!!

Yajòyâtvâ matto bhavati stabdho bhavati âtmârâmo bhavati!!

Nârada does give certain definitions of supreme Bhakti according to Parâúara, Garga and Úândilya but he ultimately stresses his own point of view, namely, that Bhakti may be regarded as *Paramavyâkulatâ* (intense longing) about God.

There is again another very famous poem in Tulsidas *Jâke priya na Râma-vaidehî* where he points out how God-devotion might be regarded as the supreme *vinculum* which binds all those aspirants after God. It is rather a difficult poem.

This verse is regarded as Tulsidas's reply to a letter which Mirabai had written to him concerning some difficult situations in her family. Mirabai was troubled at home, her husband was dead; her brother-in-law was giving her every imaginable trouble. Everybody regarded her almost as an outcast; and so being very much dissatisfied with her own life, she wrote a letter to Tulsidas as to what she should do, as to whether she should go out of the house and renounce all claims to the kingdom. The song is supposed to be the reply which Tulsidas gives. The question has been debated as to whether this may be taken as an historical event. On the whole the conclusion among scholars is that the event might be regarded as historical. Another special feature of the poem is that Tulsidas gives his own personal opinion in the matter. *Eto mato hamâro*. Whenever any important idea comes up Tulsidas gives his own personal opinion.

More mata bada nâma kahu te also Nija vichâra anusâra

In this case likewise he gives his personal opinion. This question is about the value of God-devotion. We shall first see how Tulsidas gives certain illustrations. For example, for the sake of God, he tells us, Bharata left off his mother, Prahlâda left off his father, the Gopi's left their husbands and Bibhîshana left his brother. In spite of these things, however, says

So according to Tulsidas, if any one comes in the way of our God-devotion we must renounce him. Christ also says in a similar manner. "leave off thy father and mother and follow me".

Tulsidas, their names have become symbols of auspiciousness in the world *bhe jaga-mangalkârî!*. In spite of their derelictions of duty their names have become mementoes of universal respect and praise. So according to Tulsidas, if any one comes in the way of our God-devotion we must renounce him. Christ also says in a similar manner. "leave off thy father and mother and follow me", Carlyle also expressed the same sentiment, "he who does not believe in God is our enemy. Our only business is to fight him to the death." We have already seen how the Bhagavad Gîtâ regards God-devotion as the supreme virtue. If you follow the argument of the 12th chapter in the Bhagavat Gîtâ, you will find that in the last eight verses Bhakti is regarded as supreme among all virtues. Now Tulsidas makes a very important statement here.

Nâto neha Râma ke maniyata, suhrda susevyam tahâ lou

That is to say between any two friends or relatives such as husband and wife, father and son, and so on God-devotion is the only link of real love—not any carnal love, nor any physical love, not even any mental love. It is the spiritual love—the love of God—which binds all people together.

I have to call the attention of my hearers to a philological point here. Let us take the two lines

Nâtô neha Râma ke maniyata, suhrda susevya taha lou!

Anjana kahâ âkhi jehi phûtai bahutaka kahâ kahahu lou!!

Now this is the reading that we have adopted in our text. Instead of the word *Tahâ* two of the readings suggested are *Jahâ* and *kahâ*. I have discussed in my annotations to the poem that the reading *jahâ lou* is not of much value, because it makes *suhrda susevya* the antecedent and *nehse nâtâ mânânâ* the consequent. In the case of reading *tahâ lou* this difficulty is avoided. *Râma ke nehse nâtâ mânânâ* becomes the antecedent of which *Suhrda susevya* becomes the consequent. But according to this interpretation the first line would become an indicative statement and second line an interrogative statement. Also it involves a

On the whole the point of the two most important lines in Tulsidas is that God-devotion must serve as the bond of union between two relatives or friends.

Pratîpopamâ instead of a direct *Upamâ* which should certainly have been better. On the other hand, if we understand the reading *kahâ* in the first line the questions in the two lines become parallel with one another and there is no *Pratîpopamâ* but a direct *Upamâ*.

There is however one difficulty in this namely, that the word *nâto* will have to be spilt up into *nâ* and *to* so that the interpretation would be — how can you call a man a friend or a relative unless he has an affection for God. What is the use of that collyrium which would only destroy your vision? On the whole the point of the two most important lines in Tulsidas is that God-devotion must serve as the bond of union between two relatives or friends. This reminds us of the famous doctrine of Leibnitz in his *Monadology* that the monads which are all independent have no direct relationship with one another except through the central monad and that the only relationship that can subsist between them is the relationship through God. God thus becomes the *Vinculum Substantiale*. God according to Leibnitz is the *monads monadum* and all the other monads are bound to this central monad by a bond of substantiality. Similarly, God-devotion according to Tulsidas is the bond of substantiality between any two relatives or friends. This idea is also otherwise expressed in an Upanishad which tells us that the spokes of a wheel are connected with each other only through a hub which is God and not directly. *Arâ nâbhâvivârpitâh!!* Also one can easily recall to mind the famous Upanishadic utterance

Na vâre sarvasya kâmâya sarvamidam priyam bhavati!

Âtmânastu kâmâya sarvam priyam bhavati!!

The mother should be dear to us not for her own sake but through God; the son should be dear to us not for his own sake but through God; everything should be dear to us not for its own sake but only through God. God-devotion thus becomes, according to Tulsidas, and the Upanishads the highest and the central virtue.

Tulsidas expresses this idea very finely in *Savaiyyâ-*

To be in samipya - the presence of God, says Bahiro, while one is dying, is the highest absolution. This is Madhava's doctrine of liberation.

*So jananî so pitâ soç bhrâta!
 So bhâmina so suta so hita merî!
 Soî sago so sakhâ soî seveka!
 So guru so sura sâhiba chero!!
 So tulasi priya prâna samâna!
 Kahâ lau batât kaho bahutero!
 Jo taji geha ko deha ko neha!
 Saneha sau Râma ko hoya sabero!!*

The idea of God-devotion as the *Vinculum Substantiale* has nowhere been brought out so beautifully as in these lines.

This God-devotion carried to an extreme becomes the virtue of God-resignation—what might in Sanskrit be called *Úaranâgati*. An ordinary Hindi poet called Bahiro has written a very fine poem both musically as well as spiritually. At present I want to point out the spiritual and philosophic substance of this great spiritual and philosophical poem by this ordinary person Bahiro who is not very much known to fame.

Itanî kripâ ho swâmî, jaba prâna tanase nikale

Bahiro is imagining here what ought to be his prayer to God when he is leaving his body. He says there are five alternatives possible. In the first place I want a sort of *Ratana mukti* he says

Srikrsna Krsna kahakara meri jâna tanase nikale!!

Let me say 'Krshna Krshna' and die in God, so this is what may be called *Ratana Mukti*. The second is the *Sâmîpya Mukti* which is known to Vedantic scholars, especially to students of Madhva.

Jaba sâvaro nikata ho, taba prâna tanase niale!!

To be in samipya - the presence of God, says Bahiro, while one is dying, is the highest absolution. This is Madhava's doctrine of liberation. Then another kind of alternative he suggests is *sârûpya*. You know that the great doctrine of Râmanûja on the subject of absolution was *Sârûpya*

When God has shown his vision, says Bahiro, let me die in that vision being absorbed in it so that there might be no difference between God and myself.

niranjanah paramam sâmyamupaiti!! To be like God, not to be simply in his presence or to be near him but to be exactly like him was what Râmanûja demanded. *Sanmukha sâvaro khadâ ho* says Biharo. After that we come to the doctrine of Úamkarâchârya, namely, the doctrine of *Sâyujya*. Let me be merged in God, says Úamkarâchârya.

*Yathâ nadyah syandamânâh samudreastamgachchhanti
nâmarûpa vihâya!*

*Tathâ vidvân, nâmarûpâdvimuktah parâtparam purusamupaiti
divyam!!*

When God has shown his vision, says Bahiro, let me die in that vision being absorbed in it so that there might be no difference between God and myself. *Âpahi darasa dikhâvai taba prâna tanse nikale!!* This is also what has been said by Pataòjali as well as by the Bhagavad Gîtâ. The ultimate absolution should be according to Pataòjali

Tadâ drastuh svarupeavasthânâ!

and according to Bhagavad Gîtâ.

Yatra chaivâtmanâtmânânam paúyannâtmani tusyati!!

In any case to be merged in God is the highest ideal. The *Sâyujya Mukti* is to be one with God according to Úamkarâchârya. After these four alternatives *Ratana Mukti*, *Sâmîpya Mukti*, *Sârupyâ Mukti*, *Sâyujya Mukti* Bahiro asks for another alternative - *Sarana Gamana Mukti* - absolution by resignation. I do not want to be near you, or like you, or be absorbed in you. What I want is that I should die in the attitude of absolute resignation to you. Do as you like, let thy will be done. *Jaba ho tumhârî marjî, taba prâna tana se nikale!!*. A modern Indian Philosopher and spiritual philosopher for that matter, Aurobindo Ghosh, has insisted upon this virtue of submission (*saranagamana*) to the will of God as the highest one should strive for. Those who have read any of the four Gospels-Matthew, Mark, John and Luke might remember that while Christ is praying to God on the night before his crucifixion, in the Garden of

“*I desire*”, says Jesus “*that my life be spared for spreading your Gospel in the world, but if it be Thy will that I should pass away, let Thy will be done.*”

Gethamane, he exclaims ‘*Eloi Eloi lama Sabachthani*’. I desire, he says, that my life be spared for spreading your Gospel in the world, but if it be Thy will that I should pass away, let Thy will be done. This is the great Christian example of self-resignation to God. Ramanuja’s ‘*prapatti*’ is also good Sanskrit counterpart of this doctrine of resignation. So then this small poet Bahiro has given us the quintessence of the teachings of these great philosophers in his doctrine of self resignation.

Hitherto we have discussed certain virtues which are necessary for the realisation of our ultimate goal such as the virtues of God devotion and God-resignation. We shall now proceed to consider the latter part of the subject of this lecture namely an intellectual determination of the nature of God. At the beginning an aspirant should formulate an idea of God. He should consider all the views about God that have been expressed in the history of philosophy and religion. This means a very big problem. A study of comparative philosophy and religion thus becomes a *sine qua non* for an intellectual determination of the nature of God. At the present place we shall discuss the topic from an intellectual point of view. We shall not consider any mystical views about it, nor even shall we discuss all the different views that have been held by the great Hindi saints. We shall discuss here only five views- the first is that of Râmânanda, the second of Kabir, the third of Nânak, the fourth and the fifth of Raidas and an anonymous absolutistic poet whose views mostly agree with those of Raidas. The saint whom we know in the Maratha country as Rohidâsa is the same as Raidas in Uttar Pradesh.

In the first place I shall speak about Râmânanda. Now Ramananda is a big name. He was supposed to be a resident of Banaras and is supposed to have belonged to Râmânûja’s school. He became the teacher of Kabir merely by uttering the words ‘Râma Râma’ He was also a spiritual teacher of Raidas. He did not make any distinction between a Brahmin or a Mohamedan or an untouchable. It is for that reason probably that his views were not very much liked in his time. Râmânanda is supposed to be also a teacher of Vithalpant, the father of Nivritti and Jnânadeva. So the line of Jnânadeva might also in a sense be regarded as being connected with Râmânanda, though his proper teacher belonged to the Gorakhnâth school. Râmânanda has written one very fine poem. He has

It is not necessary for one to go out. God is inside us. God is here, there and ewverywhere.

no other poem to his credit and it comes to us from the Granth Saheb of Nânak. It is a very brilliant poem. It would do credit to any man who might write volumes on the realisation of God.

You might have seen from this song that it has got more Kabirism about it than Tulsism. One does not know how many changes may have been effected before it went into the Granth Saheb; but discussing the poem as it is before us, it is a wonderful poem both philosophically and mystically. Where shall I go out he asks - *Kata jâie re ghar lâgyo rangū!!* My whole house has been filled with colour and with different kinds of colour. My intellect has become stationary and my mind refuses to move. Where shall I go out? You ask me to go out to search God and worship him. It is not necessary for me to go anywhere. Whenever I may go out I shall find merely stones and water.

Jaha jâie taha jala paravâna!

Tû pûri rahyo hai saba samâna!!

It is not necessary for one to go out. God is inside us. God is here, there and ewverywhere.

Jethe tethe dhondâ pâni! Ugâcha vanavana hindonî kâya hote!!

says Ramdas. So on the whole Râmânanda teaches the doctrine of universal-pervasiveness—pervasiveness in Green's terminology—in nature as well as in mind. He is present in the whole universe and at the same time he is present in me.

Once upon a time the idea occurred to me, he says, that I might collect very fragrant sandal powder and then go out to worship God. But my teacher showed me that my Lord was present inside me and that I had the 'chandan' and 'chowa' inside me.

Eka divasa mana uthî umanga!

Ghasi chandana, choâ bahu sugañdha!!

Pûjana chale, brahma thâi!

So brahma batâyo guru, mana hi mâhî!!

Mirabai's experience is distinguished by the phenomenon of colour and Nivr̥ttinātha's experience is distinguished by the phenomenon of fragrance.

That raises a very important question. His house was full of colour, and his mind was full of fragrance. So now those who are students of mysticism know that Ramananda is talking here about certain peculiar experiences which are not to be found generally among other mystics. People speak about light and sound, more or less, but they rarely speak about colour and fragrance e.g. Mirabai speaks about colour —

Phâguna ke dīna chāra re holī khel manā re!

Mirabai's experience is distinguished by the phenomenon of colour and Nivr̥ttinātha's experience is distinguished by the phenomenon of fragrance. Colour and fragrance as manifestations of spiritual energy are somewhat rare and these Rāmānanda experienced inside himself. So it was not necessary for him to go outside at all. Then he says that by the power of the experience of God all his delusion was at an end. *Sakala nikala bhrama kâte mora*. My whole delusion in its extent and intent was cut away. The extensiveness and the intensiveness of my delusion was at an end by this vision of God. So in this short poem Ramananda has given us some very fine ideas and I think he deserves to be called the founder of the school of mysticism in Northern India. So this is one important idea of God, namely that of Rāmānanda which I have placed before you.

Another idea of God is the famous idea of Kabir.

In a jubilant mood Kabir tells us how we should wave our lights before God. We shall see later on when we come to Raidas how he pooh-poohs the idea of performing any Arati at all. He is criticising Kabir in a certain way which we shall see later on. It is of course from the height of absolutist philosophy but Kabir is speaking here in more or less a mystic mood. Now the first thing to be noted in this poem is that Kabir is here talking about *Parama Purusha*, the highest person and he says there are two characteristics in which this *Parama Purusha* manifests himself.

Parama ujyârâ and Úabdadhuni ghantâ!

Light and sound therefore are the manifestations of the spiritual energy that is God. Now what is the relation between the idea of *Parama*

Now you will see that in this poem Kabir identifies Parma Purusha with Niraðjana and God Deva niraðjana aura na dũjã

Purusha and another idea in Kabir namely, that of Niranjana. If we carry our minds back to the text of the Upanishads or of the Bhãgavata we shall see that the Upanishads speak of

Niranjanah paramasãmyamupaiti !

and the Bhãgavata speaks of *Æudhosi buddhosi niranjanosi*.

Niraðjana here means collyriumless—that in which there is no dark colour, no Tamas. Now you will see that in this poem Kabir identifies Parma Purusha with Niraðjana and God Deva *niranjana aura na dũjã* - concepts with which his followers later dissociated themselves. He does not make a distinction between Parama Purusha and Niranjana. So far then about the theology in Kabir himself. But later on Kabirite theology i.e. the theology of the followers of Kabir makes this Niranjana, as some writers have called it, into a Saitan. How? Because he becomes the centre of all creative activity *swarga mrtyu pãtãla* come from him. In fact, even *Brahmã, Vishnu* and *Mahesha* come from him. Those of us who know Çankara's philosophy know how he makes a distinction between *Iswara* and *Brahman*. It is this same distinction which has been attributed to Kabir by his followers namely, the distinction between Niranjana and Parama Purusha. This Parama Purusha according to Kabir is Brahman and Niraðjana is *Iãwara*. As later on also in a mystical interpretation of his chief contribution to spiritual experience namely, the distinction between *sabda and Anãhata*, Kabir himself has said that *Anãhata* might die but *Çabda* remains *Anãhata hu mari jãya*, but this is another matter which we shall discuss sometime later. So *sabda* and *Anãhata, Parama Purusha and Niranjana, Brahman and Ishwara* are parallel conceptions. According to Kabir they are identical. According to his followers they are regarded as different. I do not think that the followers of Kabir were just to his memory.

They said one very peculiar thing about this Niranjana, namely that he is the husband of his mother as well as the son of his mother. That is what Kabirite theology or the followers of Kabir have said. Some of *you* might recall to mind what has been said in the Vedas.

Nanaka gives two illustrations as for the immanence of God in us. As fragrance in a flower or image in a mirror, so is God inside us says Nanak.

Mâturdidhisumabravam swasurjârah!

ûrunotu nah bhrâtâ indrâsya sakhâ mama!!

This is Rita about the God Pushan. Now this has been allegorically interpreted. Pûshan is here regarded as the lover of his mother. What is the interpretation? Pûshan is the Sun-God. He is the lover of his mother because the day follows the night and there is intermediate twilight, namely, the Dawn who is his sister. But it matters little to the poet, if he designates Pûshan as the lover of his mother or the paramour of his sister. What the Vedic poet has said about Pûshan, Kabir's followers have said about Niranjana. Kabir probably himself said nothing or little of it. But even supposing that he did so we must give an allegorical interpretation to it. I shall give you two utterances where he has actually said *Eka niranjana so mana lâgâ!* My whole mind is now concentrated on Niranjana. I do not want anything else. *Anjana âvai anjana jâî niranjan sab ghati rahyo samâî* Anjana or Tamas or collyrium comes and goes but *Niranjana* remains all pervasive. So it seems Kabir does not make any distinction between Parama Purusha and Niranjana. He regards the two as identical. I am placing these views of God before you so that you might examine them and see where your alliance may lie.

I shall discuss a few forthcoming contributions to the idea of God in Hindi theology, like those of Nanak and Raidas, and after these have been finished, I shall also finish the lecture.

In the first place in this poem Nanak speaks about God's all pervasiveness. God is immanent in the whole universe as well as in ourselves. Nanaka gives two illustrations as for the immanence of God in us. As fragrance in a flower or image in a mirror, so is God inside us says Nanak. Now the first might easily be admitted fragrance in a flower. It is what might in Ramanujan terminology be regarded as the relation between *Guna* and *Gunin* qualities and the substance that possesses qualities; but his analogy of image in a mirror being the prototype of God invites some difficulty. Now the question is—is the mirror more real or the image more real. Probably we have to understand Nanak's analogy of image only in poetic sense and not in a realistic sense. The image is of course unreal. The

It is a wonderful idea. I saw God's vision internally as well as externally says Nanak. There is an identity of experience internally and externally.

image will appear so long as the thing mirrored is there, but the mirror will remain for ever. Now an allied though a somewhat different conception occurs in the Bhagavad Gîtâ and Kabir. In the Bhagavad Gîtâ we have

Mayi sarva midam protam sùtré maniganâ iva!

'I am the thread of all these existences. All these existences are woven on me as on a thread.' God is here to be regarded as the central string upon which the pearls of all existences are woven. So God is here to be regarded as a Sûtra or a vinculum. Raidas inverts the idea and says, thou art the pearl, O God, but I am the thread in thee. Now those who are connoisseurs of pearls know that the pearl will have no value unless a thread be made to pass through it. God would have no value unless the devotee can pierce him like a thread. So the *Bhakta* becomes the thread even though so unsubstantial; and God though substantial has no value without a thread. Who will care for you, O God, unless the thread of the devotee is there to make you what you are? - asks Kabir. So these are poetical analogies to be spiritually interpreted. Kabir also said elsewhere—just as you cannot see the redness in a menhadi plant—it lies immanent in a Menhadi—so is God immanent in us. The red colour becomes evident only when you torture the Menhadi, when you grind it with a stone; similarly, this red colour will appear only when we have undergone a certain travail. There is, however, another important idea in Nanak. It is this:

Bâhara bhîtara eka hî jâno!

Yaha guru jòana batâi!!

It is a wonderful idea. I saw God's vision internally as well as externally says Nanak. There is an identity of experience internally and externally. Now this is very important from the psychological point of view. If you see a thing outside and then shut your eyes you might have an image of it. You might have what might be called either positive or negative image of the same or complementary colour but Kabir's idea is— so also is Nanak's- that they see the same God both internally as well as externally. Now if you see a thing inside, open your eyes and see exactly the same

[*Unless you have known your own self the moss of
delusion will not come to an end” - Nanak*]

outside, then the psychological experience becomes a metaphysical and mystical fact *bhîtara rahâ so bâhara dekhai!* Says Kabir. What I see inside me I am seeing outside me; not that I am implementing within myself what I am seeing outside. So the real procedure is what you see inside, you must be able to see exactly outside. The sameness of the vision of God internally and externally becomes a cardinal fact of mystical experience. The last point in Nanak is—

Binu âpahi chînhai mite na bhram kî kâi!!

Unless you have known your own self the moss of delusion will not come to an end. Nanak has spoken a little while ago about God. He is now speaking about the self. Evidently he is identifying the self and God. So on the whole this poem of Nanak is a very important one from many points of view. I shall now go to the final two poems of Raidas which I will explain.

In these two poems there are four points which I want to discuss—two physical and two moral. In the first place, Raidas is here in a way criticising his spiritual brother Kabir. Kabir has already talked about *Âratî*. “Where shall I kindle my lights, O God,” asks Raidas *Âratî kahâ louî jovâi!* That is filling thy servant with wonder *Sevaka dâsa achambo hovaî!* Thou art present everywhere and where shall then I plant my lights. Secondly, is it not a parody to wave lights before Thee, O Resplendent God, when through every one of Thy hairs dazzles the brilliance of a thousand Suns?

Koti bhânu jâkî sobhâ romaî

Kahâ âratî aganî homaî

“Even supposing a Bairagi were to use vessels made of highest quality of gold and place lights in them God will not appear to his foolish vision. What is then the use of your golden vessels or brilliant lights? They will not help you.” In a similar style I am reminded of an utterance of great Kanarese saint—the saint of Nimbargi- who when his disciples went to him and waved lights of camphor in his house, said: what is the use of

“*Thou art present, Lord in the image and Thou art present in the flowers. Placing flowers on Thy image is like placing God on God.*”

burning this quantity of camphor? If God could be attained by burning huge quantities of camphor, people would invest hundreds and thousands of rupees on the purchase of camphor. But God is not to be bought so cheaply. In a similar manner waving lights in golden vessels is of no use, says Raidas. In an analogous vein an anonymous absolutistic Hindi poet says, “it is a great problem to me, O God, how to appease Thee. There is no article which I can use for Thy service.”

Bahuta haîrâna hû bhagavan tumhe kaise rizaû maî!

Koî vastu nahî aisî jise sevâme lâu maî!!

“Thou art present, Lord in the image and Thou art present in the flowers. Placing flowers on Thy image is like placing God on God.”

Tuma hi mûrtî me bhî, tuma hî vyâpak ho phûlo me!

Bhalâ bhagavân ko bhagavâna para kaise chadhâu maî!!

If I were to make an *Âvâhana* (invokation) to Thee, it will be doing injustice to thy omnipresence, because Thou art present here as everywhere.”

Âvâhana karu kaise ki tuma maujuda ho hara jahâ!

If I were to ring a bell in order to wake thee up it would be an act of great disrespect because thou art always wakeful.”

Nirâdara hai bulâne me agara ghanî bajâu maî!

“If I were to make any offering to thee, it would be carrying coal to New Castle, because Thou art the master of everything in the world and thus no offering could be made to Thee.”

Lagânâ bhoga kâ bhagvan eka apamâna karnâ haî

Khilâtâ haî jo saba jaga ko usé kaise khilâu mai!

“Waving lights before Thee would be extremely ridiculous because any light that we might place before Thee is like darkness before that great

[“When I have not sinned at all”, says Raidas,
“what is the use of asking grace from Thee.”]

luminous Being before whom the Sun, the Moon and the Stars themselves look only like dark bodies.

*Haî jisakî jyoti me rouana sâraja chandramâ târe!
Badâ andhera haî swâmî agara dîpaka dikhâu mai!!*

We might see from this poem how its author regards God not merely as the source of all lights, as Raidas did but also as the source of all sound fragrance and power, as well as omnipresent or universally immanent.

This line of argument is in continuation of what we have seen in Raidas above.

Let us now proceed to two further points in Raidas, those which deal with the moral questions of sin and liberation. “When I have not sinned at all”, says Raidas, “what is the use of asking grace from Thee.”

Jo hama pâpa karata nahi bhûdhara, toû tu kahâ nasâvaî!!

Since I have not put my feet into mud, what is the use of washing my feet with water? It is only those who have committed sins that should pray to God to free them from sins. “When the mind of the man is in the grip of sensuality then alone can the Name of God save him from its might”—

mana malîna visayârasa lampata! Tôî Hari nâma sambhârê!!

“But when I am quite free from sensuality and free from passions, of what use could your Name be to me.”

Jo hama vimala hridaya chitta antara dosa kauna parihari hau!!

And lastly, says Raidas, people are imploring Thee to give salvation or absolution; I am not going to pray to Thee at all.

Abandha mukta kâ kari haû!

“I am already free, how can you bestow freedom on me?” Independence will come to those who are dependent, but cannot come to those who are already independent. So Raidas does not want to put himself in a prayerful attitude towards God at all.

“I am already free, how can you bestow freedom on me?” Independence will come to those who are dependent, but cannot come to those who are already independent. So Raidas does not want to put himself in a prayerful attitude towards God at all.

Gentlemen, I have placed before you only a few conceptions of God in this lecture particularly those of Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and Raidas. Many more conceptions are possible. I have not discussed in this context similar conceptions by reference to Tulsi-Ramayan and Sûrasâgara. After gathering all these views, comparing them, with the views of other saints and philosophers of other states of India and elsewhere, you can come to a certain determination only. This will not help you much; but it will at least give you some consolation. If that is attained the path further may become somewhat clear for you.

SOURCES OF THE CHAPTER III

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Supernal Bhakti as a Diamond with nine faces

- चौपाई:- नवधा भगति कहउँ तोहि पाहीं ।
 सावधान सुनु धरु मनमोही ॥
 प्रथम भगति सन्तन्हु कर संगी ।
 दूसरि रति मम कथाप्रसंगा ॥
- दोहा:- गुरुपदपंकजसेवा, तीसरि भगति अमान ।
 चौथी भगति मम गुणगण करइ कपट तजि गान ॥
- चौपाई:- मन्त्र जाप मम दृढ़ विश्वासा ।
 पंचम भजन सुवेद प्रकासा ॥
 छँठ दम सील विरति बहु करमा ।
 निरत निरंतर सज्जन धरमा ॥
 सातवँ सम मोहिमय जग देखा ।
 मो ते सन्त अधिक करि लेखा ॥
 आठवँ जयालाभ सन्तोषा ।
 सपनेहुँ नहि देखइ परदोषा ॥
 नवम सरल सब सन छलहीना ।
 मम भरोस हिय हरप न दीना ॥
 नवमँह एकड जिनके होई ।
 नारि पुरुष सचराचर कोई ॥
 सोइ अतिसय प्रिय सबरी मोरे ।
 सकल प्रकार भगति दृढ़ तोरे ॥

: २ :

Leave away thy father and mother and follow me.

जाके प्रिय न राम वैदेही ॥टे०॥
 तजिये ताहि कोटि बैरि सम
 जयपि परम सनेही ॥१॥

तजेव पिता प्रसाद, विभीषण
 बन्धु भारत महतारी ।
 बलि गुरु तजेव नाह ब्रज बनितन्ह
 भे जग मङ्गलकारी ॥२॥
 नातो नेह राम के मनियत
 सुहृद सुसेव्य तहँ लौं ।
 अंजन कहाँ आखि जेहि फूटइ,
 बहुतक कहँ कहँ लौं ॥३॥
 तुलसी सोइ आपनो सकल विधि,
 पूज्य प्राण ते प्यारो ।
 जासों होइ सनेह राम सौं
 एतो मतो हमारो ॥४॥

: ३ :

Absolute resignation to the Will of God

इतनी कृपा हो स्वामी,
 जब प्राण तन से निकले ।
 श्रीकृष्ण कृष्ण कह कर,
 मेरि जान तन से निकले ॥१॥
 श्रीगंगजी का वट हो,
 श्री जमुनजी का वट हो ।
 जब साँवरो निकट हो,
 तब प्राण तन से निकले ॥२॥
 सन्मुख साँवरा खड़ा हो,
 मुरली का स्वर भरा हो ।
 चित मे जो तू अढ़ा हो
 तब प्राण तन से निकले ॥३॥
 जब प्राण कण्ठ आवे,
 कोइ रोग ना सतावे ।

आपहि वरस दिखावे,
 तब प्राण तनसे निकले ॥४॥
 दुनिया है अपनी गर्जी,
 बहिरो की यह अर्जी ।
 जब हो तुम्हारी मर्जी,
 तब प्राण तन से निकले ॥५॥

: ४ :

Rāmānanda on the internal immanence and the universal pervasiveness of God

कत जाइए रे, घर लाग्यो रंगु ।
 मेरा चित न चलै, मन भयो पंगु ॥१॥
 एक दिवस, मन उठी उमंग ।
 घसि चन्दन चोआ बहु सुगन्ध ॥२॥
 पूजन चले, ब्रह्म ठाई ।
 सो ब्रह्म बतायो गुरु, मनहिं माही ॥३॥
 जहँ जाइए, तहँ जल परवाना ।
 तू पूरी रह्यो है सब समाना ॥४॥
 वेद पुरान सब देखे जौय ।
 उहाँ तो जाइए, जो इहाँ न होय ॥५॥
 सतगुरु मैं, बलिहारि तोर ।
 जिन सकल निकल भ्रम काटे मोर ॥६॥
 रामानन्द स्वामी रमत ब्रह्म ।
 गुरु का सबद कौट कोटि करम ॥७॥

: ५ :

The God of Kabir as Niranjana

ऐसी आरति त्रिभुवन तारै
 तेजपुंज तहँ प्राण उतारै ॥ १ ॥

पाती पंच पुहुप करि पूजा
 देव निरंजन और न दूजा ॥ २ ॥
 तनमन सीस समरपन कीन्हा
 प्रगट ज्योति तहँ आतम लीना ॥ ३ ॥
 दीपक ज्ञान सबद धुनि घंटा
 परम पुरिख तहँ देख अनंता ॥ ४ ॥
 परमप्रकाश सकल उजियारा
 कहै कबीर मैं दास तुम्हारा ॥ ५ ॥

: ६ :

Nanak on the unity of the internal and external God

काहे रे धन खोजन जाई ॥टे०॥
 सर्वनिवासी सदा अलोपा,
 तो हे संग स माई ॥ १ ॥
 पुष्प मध्य जिमि बास बसत हैं,
 मुकुर मँह जैसे छाई ॥ २ ॥
 तैसे ही हरि बसै निरंतर
 घट ही खोजो भाई ॥ ३ ॥
 बाहर भीतर एक ही जानो,
 यह गुरु ज्ञान बताई ॥ ४ ॥
 कह नानक बिनु आपहि चीन्हें,
 मिटै न भ्रम की काई ॥ ५ ॥

: ७ :

Raidas on the futility of waving lights before an
 Omnipresent God

आरति कहां लौ जोवै।
 सेवक दास अचम्भो होवै ॥ १ ॥
 बावन काश्चन दीप धरावै।
 जड वैरागी दृष्टि न आवै ॥ २ ॥

कोटि भानु जाकी सोभा शेमै ।
 कहा आरती अगनी होमै ॥ ३ ॥
 पाँच तत्त्व तिरगुनी माया ।
 जो देख सो सकल समाया ॥ ४ ॥
 कह रैदास देखा हम माहीं ।
 सकल ज्योति रोम सम नाहीं ॥ ५ ॥

: ८ :

On forgiveness as having no function before sinlessness

पावन जस है माघो तेरा,
 तू वारुन अधमोचन मेरा ॥ टे० ॥
 कीरति तेरी पाप बिनासे,
 लोग वेद यों गावैं ।
 जो हम पाप करत नहि भूधर,
 तो तू कहा नसावै ॥ १ ॥
 जव लग अंग पंक नहि परसै,
 तौ जल कहा परवारै ।
 मन मलीन विषयारस लम्पट,
 तौ हरिनाम सँभारै ॥ २ ॥
 जो हम विमल हृदय चित अन्तर,
 दोष कौन परिहरिहौ ।
 कह रैदास प्रभू दयाल हौ,
 अबन्ध मुक्त का करिहौ ॥ ३ ॥

[*There were 18,000 manuscripts,
Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali and the rest.*]

Chapter 4

The Culmination of Spiritual Realisation in Hindi Saints

Indian philosophy is a subject to which I have devoted attention for the last 42 years. I began my study of Vedant in the year 1908, tried to have a knowledge of different systems of Indian philosophy, was much perplexed and could not understand; the texts were very bad. The edition of *Sarvadarsanasangraha* published in Pune in those days was a very bad one. Recently they have published a better one. To add to the difficulty of the subject, when you are given a very bad text the difficulties of the learner are enormously increased. So my study of European philosophy came to me as a rebound from my study of Indian philosophy. I might say that I began my study of European philosophy in the year 1910 and when I had gone a long way with it, say till 1914, then I turned back and found that there were great treasures of thoughts in Indian philosophy.

It is only when we take a comparative view of things that we understand any of them better. This happened in the case of Indian philosophy. I might say that, years ago I had read Colebrooks's Essay's which was one of the most brilliant and accurate books that have ever been written on Indian philosophy. That came to me as an inspiration. Maxmuller's book though learned, is comparatively poor in brilliance in comparison to Colebrook's essays.

Then when I was appointed Curator of the Government Manuscripts Library at the Deccan College for the period 1914, when the permanent incumbent of the post had gone to Harvard, a vision opened before me. There were 18,000 manuscripts, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Pali and the rest, Kashmiri Recensions, particularly of the Rigveda which was written on *Bhûrjapatra* in 5th or 6th Century A.D., immense manuscripts on Samkhya and *Yoga*, innumerable dissertations on Nyâya and Vaicœsika and so forth which opened my vision. I saw vast literature and what I

It would have been a breach of trust for me not to have studied Hindi Literature and placed its spiritual values on the pedestal of comparative philosophy and religion.

had gathered somewhat from Colebrook, or a little from Maxmuller, I wanted to supplement and support from my study of all these things. My study of European philosophy came to my aid; and so we planned out a history of Indian philosophy in those early days 1914-16. Some three or four volumes have already been published in that series. And now after having gone over to Allahabad and stayed there for about 20 years I wanted to repay my debt to the literature and the place which has conferred many obligations on me. I served the Allahabad University from 1927 to 1946 and it would have been a breach of trust for me not to have studied Hindi Literature and placed its spiritual values on the pedestal of comparative philosophy and religion. So I began my study early in 1940 and after retirement I find that the treasure which has been left to us by the Hindi saints is as valuable as that given to us by Maharashtra and Karnataka. These three languages only I know in the original. Other Indian languages I do not know in the original. I must confess my ignorance.

As I have said in my first lecture, I have neither the time nor the energy nor the age to plumb the spiritual treasures of other languages such as Gujarati, Bengali or Tamil, though I can understand a little of Gujarati. But these three languages, Hindi, Marathi and Kannad, I understand in the original and I have planned out three volumes. I have published one on Maharashtra mysticism,¹ the other on Hindi mysticism² is going to be published soon, and the third is also in the course of preparation and publication, a couple of chapters of which have been already published by the Karnatak University and at Belgaum.³

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1. The volume 'Mysticism in Maharashtra' (Indian mysticism) by Prof. R.D. Ranade was published in 1933 and reprinted in the years 1982 and 1988 by Motilal Banarasidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi - 110007.
 2. The Volume 'Pathway to God in Hidi Literature has been published in three editions 1954, 1986 and the latestone in 1997 by Shri Gurudeva Ranade Samedhi trust, Nimal R.S. 5862", Kaonark, India.
 3. The volume on Kannad Mysticism has been published under the title Pathway to God in Kannad Literature by Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai - 400007, the latest third edition in 1989.

Mysticism is derived from the Greek word
'*mustein*' which means to shut one's lips.

Now mysticism as I have pointed out many times—is a word very greatly misunderstood. Even the words *Rahasyavâda* or *Chayâvâda* in Hindi have not a definite connotation. It is not merely an imaginative thought about nature or about its forces or an emotional upsurge concerned more with feelings than with reality that constitutes mysticism.

Mysticism is derived from the Greek word '*mustein*' which means to shut one's lips. So mysticism is a philosophy or realisation and enjoyment of God in silence. Wherever this is to be found whether in Christianity or Islam or any literatures of India it might be called a philosophy of mysticism or of *Mauna* (silence).

That was the meaning that I gave for that word. A God-realiser is one who sits silent, *lafje gustâ khânâ thâ!* does not utter any words at all and enjoys the creation and workings of God within himself. To describe God or Reality by word of mouth is impossible. Our real experience of it is in the hearts. So this is the attitude of mysticism.

I wanted to discuss with you today a few poems from Hindi literature which contain this attitude of *Mauna* (Silence). What I have seen is that people have studied Hindi literature no doubt and are writing excellent Hindi but are not understanding its real philosophic and religious import as much as they should. This would come to them only after a study of universal comparative philosophy and religion, with special reference to Sanskrit as well as study of the literature of other states of India. Towards the end of my lecture I will give you a few comparative quotations from a Kanarese poet which would fit in exactly with the teachings of Kabir and Dadu.

The Kanarese poet, so far as I understand, might not have known much of Hindi and yet the import of his Kannad poem is exactly like that of the poems of Kabir and Dadu. So unless we study all these literatures comparatively and in the original we can not understand the full import of their teachings.

Now I want to discuss with you today five songs—two from Kabir, two from Tulsidas and one from Dadu. My subject-matter would be a

The spiritual Charakhâ (spinning wheel) which Dadu depicts is a very wonderful thing. I know that those who are here are greatly advanced in the use of the Charakhâ and I can have only an intellectual conception of it.

continuation of what I have said in my last two lectures at the Constitution Club. There I discussed in my first lecture the incentives to spiritual life and in the second, the moral virtues and an intellectual idea of God which are necessary for the growth of spiritual life. I call it intellectual because at the beginning it is impossible for an aspirant to have any mystic conception of God.

In the present lecture I will discuss a few points like Kabir's conception of a Sadguru (spiritual teacher), Tulsidas's view of meditation by the Name, the method of meditation according to Kabir, the function which Tulsidas ascribes to the *Rasanâ* (Tongue) in the scheme, and finally, the help which Dadu gives for practical meditation as well as the consummation of spiritual life which consists in the dedication of one's handiwork to God.

The spiritual Charakhâ (spinning wheel) which Dadu depicts is a very wonderful thing. I know that those who are here are greatly advanced in the use of the Charakhâ and I can have only an intellectual conception of it. I must regard myself as a very small man indeed as compared with the great sacrifices that many of the persons assembled in the Hall have made. Nevertheless, it might be given to a man to think intellectually and spiritually in the matter and that I have tried to do. And I shall place before you towards the end of this lecture the full significance of what I might call the spiritual Charakhâ.

In the first place, I shall begin by considering what Kabir means by a Sadguru: *Voî satguru santa kahâvaî.*

On the subject of a Sadguru we find that there are four different characteristics which Kabir attributes to a Sadguru. Gurus are very cheap nowadays. But Kabir's Sadguru is a very different job altogether. There are certain moral characteristics, there are certain physiological characteristics, there are mystical characteristics and ultimately there are some social characteristics.

If a man has got these requisites, moral, physiological, mystical and social, according to the ideas which Kabir puts forth before us then we may regard him as Sadguru, and no other.

[*Joy of beatification is the first characteristic of a Sadguru*]

In the first place, such a Guru, says Kabir, is always full of joy; he is never weary; he is never dejected, *Sadâ vilâsa trâsa nahi mana me*. Joy of beatification is the first characteristic of a Sadguru and as a consequence of this joy, which is a still more difficult thing, a man becomes fearless as the Upanishads say:

Ânandam brahmano vidwân na bibheti kadâchana! Na bibheti kutaschana!

Now we might have joy and yet we may fear; then we have not reached the higher stage, says Kabir. A real saint is he who enjoys beatification as well as fearlessness: *Nirbhaya pada pâve*, says Kabir. Joy and fearlessness are thus the two chief moral characteristics of a Sadguru.

Then there are certain physical or physiological characteristics. Nodding he does not move, speaking he does not forget. Going and walking, his mind is motionless : *Dolata digaî na bolat bisæai* So while he is moving his mind he is concentrated on God. As Bacon would say, a *remove local* does not bring about in him a *remove internal*. That is one physical or physiological characteristic. Second, he has no necessity to shut the doorways of sense. *Prâna¹ na rundhaî pavan na rokaî* It is not necessary to control the breath nor to control the Indriyas (senses):

**Prâna punja kiriyâ te nyârâ
Sahaja samâdhi sikhâve!*

He teaches Sahaja Samâdhi which is different from *Prâna puja kiriyâ* that is any sort of action in which *Prâna* is regarded as of the highest importance. He does not find any necessity for the control of *Prâna*. He teaches *Sahaja samâdhi* which means that one has merely to look out or within and see God.

This is another characteristic. A third and a more difficult characteristic to interpret would be that the aspirant leaves the earth and leaves the heavens and erects an intermediate bottomless cottage in between:

*Prâna is not merely the breath but the the vital force which keeps up all of the body.

[*A great and boisterous roaring sound of various kinds wells up within the bosom of the mystic*]

Dharatî tyâgi akâsa hu tyâgâi adhara madaiyâ châvaî. This is not exactly like Trisanku (Trisanku antarâle tista). He leaves off the earth that is the base of his mystical meditation, namely the navel, and he leaves off also the heaven which is the void peak in his brain (*Úûnya Úikhara*) and in between he erects a foundationless cottage : *adhara madaiyâ châvai*. Kabir is here speaking of a certain kind of *Kumbhaka* which is called *kevala kumbhaka* which is so highly prized by *sankarâchârya* in his famous verse-

Sahastraúah santu hathesu kumbhâh

Sambhâvyate kevalakumbha eva!

The *kevala kumbhaka* is a *Kumbhaka* which is reached without any effort. It is neither *adhah kumbhaka* nor *Úrdhvakumbhaka* but it is a *Kevala Kumbhaka* attained in the region between the navel and the brain. He who achieves this object, namely *adhara madaiyâ* might be regarded as having been endowed with another great physical characteristic of a *Sadguru*.

Then there are two other mystical characteristics of which Kabir speaks. The *Sadguru* makes his consciousness enter *sabda*. That *Anâhata sabda* of which great saints and philosophers have spoken is to Kabir the *sine qua non* of spiritual life. A great and boisterous roaring sound of various kinds rises up within the bosom of the mystic of which *Charandas* and many other saints in the school of Kabir have spoken. This kind of *Anâhata Nâda*² is also familiar to other mystics. One poet has said—

**dhamya kinkini nâdam sinham úankham nâdam!*

bheyrâdika mahânâdam anubhava manalubdham!!

**Anâhata Nâda*:The above sanskrit verse mentions it as the sound as of the jingling of bells, roaring of lion, blowing of conch, beating of drum which a spiritually advanced mystic hears as a result of attainment of supersensuous and intuitive powers. Similarly mystics also enjoy a variety of other powers such as smell without a nose, touch without the body, smell without the rose or flavour without the tongue.

Not merely is a saint able to see the form of God himself but he can show it to others also: Nayanana alakha lakhâvâi. And he lifts up the curtain of darkness and makes one visualise Âtman (soul):

So these are the kinds of voices which a saint experiences within himself.

Now Kabir makes a distinction between *Anâhata* and *sabda*. *sabda* he regards as a higher reality and *Anâhata* its expression. That takes us into a certain philosophical discussion of the relation between *Anâhata* and *Sabda*. We would look upon them as identical. In the Upanishads also the word *Anâhata* has been defined as Kabir would like to define it. Whatever sound comes from the digestive process also could be called an *Anâhata*, says an Upanishad.

We do not think that is the sound of which these mystics are speaking. *Anâhata* is that which is an unstruck sound. In one place Kabir has spoken—

Anâhata hû mari jâya!

So *Anâhata* also might disappear according to Kabir. That of course is a problem that I leave to students of comparative mysticism. The book *Hathayogapradîpikâ* says that this sound is likely to disappear but I leave it to those who have got an experience of *Anâhata* to say the final word in the matter.

Finally, as regards the social characteristics of a saint, we are told by Kabir that not merely does he himself drink the cup of the Name but also makes others drink it: *Âpu piye mohi pyavaç.*

Not merely is he able to see the form of God himself but he can show it to others also: *Nayanana alakha lakhâvâi*. And he lifts up the curtain of darkness and makes one visualise *Âtman* (soul):

Paradâ dûra karâi âkhina kê nija darasana dikhlâvâi!

He makes others hear the *Anâhata* sound but does not entangle them in it:

Anahata úabda sunâvai nahî anhata asamhâvâi!

If there is a great spiritual teacher the experience must descend to his disciples by the law of spiritual gravitation. If they do not get it he hardly deserves the title of a Sadguru.

All this implies that if there is water at a higher level it must descend to a lower level. If there is a great spiritual teacher the experience must descend to his disciples by the law of spiritual gravitation. If they do not get it he hardly deserves the title of a Sadguru. So the social efficacy of a Sadguru is also another important characteristic of a *Sadguru*, says Kabir.

I next go on to the two songs one after another of Tulsidas on the method of meditation. Tulsidas as you know, insists upon *Nâma*, so also does Kabir. I shall first give an account of the famous passage from *Tulsi Râmâyana: Nâma rûpa huî îsa upâdhî* which regards *Nâma* and *Rûpa* as the two attributes of God.

Now this is a very great philosophical poem from the pen of Tulsidas. It is not a mere literary interpretation of it that matters; but it has a great philosophical import. On the first day when I spoke about the poem from *Vinaya-Patrikâ: Keshava kahi na jâya kâ kahiya!* said how Tulsidas wants to go beyond reality, unreality and real unreality. Here also is a very great philosophical poem from the *Râmâyana* of Tulsidas. We are told that *Nâma* and *Rûpa* are two attributes of GOD-UPÂDHIS, corresponding exactly with the word ‘Substance’ which Spinoza has used. Thought and extension are the two attributes of Substance but do not constitute the substance. Similarly, *Nâma* and *Rûpa* do not constitute God but they are the attributes of God.

Now there has been a great deal of discussion as to what Spinoza means by his attributes. Some people have taken his theory of attributes to be a parallelistic theory and others a double-aspect theory. Even so, we can take *Nâma* and *Rûpa* either in a parallelistic sense or the two aspects of the same substance, namely, God.

In order to understand the full significance of the expression “attributes” we have to study Spinoza. Attributes, says Spinoza, are what the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance. In addition to attributes there are modes in Spinoza’s philosophy as there are *Jhâkiyâ* in Hindi Literature. These are of course unreal. The double - aspect theory implies that *Nâma* and *Rûpa* are the obverse and the reverse

[*God comes with greater love, says Tulsidas, to the man who meditates on his Name without thinking about His Form:*]

sides of the same coin or the two different facets of the same diamond, namely, God.

A second point of Tulsidas is if we enquire which of them is greater whether *Nâma* or *Rûpa* Tulsidas gives a cautious though an intelligent answer. It is impossible for us to say which is greater, says Tulsidas. To say either *Nâma* or *Rûpa* is greater is committing a sin:

Ko bada chota kahata aparâdhû!

Suni guna bheda samajho hrđi sâdhû!!

But the philosopher knows in his heart, says Tulsidas, which is greater and sits mum.

And he makes a further point, namely he who contemplates on God's name without thinking about His Form, without thinking as to whether his meditation by means of the Name would ever result in his vision of the Form, is superior to the man who meditates on the Form of God. Because his meditation is *Nishkâma* (without reward).

To meditate on God conceiving his Form in our mind is *Sakâma* (with expectation of reward). And to meditate on God without conceiving his Form is *Nishkâma*. God comes with greater love, says Tulsidas, to the man who meditates on His Name without thinking about His Form:

Sumiriya nâma rûpa binu dekhe!

Âvata hrđaya sanaya bisekhe!!

So this is another point in Tulsidas's discussion.

There is a fourth important point in the song of Tulsidas which we are considering, namely the conflict between Saguna and Nirguna as being resolved by *Nâma*. What does this mean? Now those who have studied Kant's philosophy and especially that most difficult chapter on Schematism would understand exactly what Tulsidas means.

According to Kant, perception and understanding will not meet without the help of an intermediate imagination. Similarly, conflicts of Saguna and Nirguna, says Tulsidas, cannot be resolved without the office of an

According to some great Indian systems of philosophy it is from the Sphota (big bang) the ultimate reality that all the existences in the Universe spring. The Vaiyâkaranas say that the ultimate reality is Sphota.

intermediary, namely, the Nâma. Nâma is *Ubhayaprabodhaka* the illuminator, *Susâkhi* the witness, and *Dubhâkhi* the interpreter of both. It teaches Saguna to respect Nirguna and Nirguna to respect Saguna. The great function of Schematism, bringing together the opposite irreconcilables, is the function, here performed by Name, according to Tulsidas.

Let us now consider another important point in which there is a great insistence of Nâma as the symbol of ultimate reality. Now consider into how many difficult and most important provinces of philosophy this conception of Nâma leads us. What is the doctrine of *Sphota* in Indian philosophy?

When I came to my newly built bungalow at Allahabad, I saw a fruit called *phûta* which is something like a watermelon. But the peculiar quality of it is that it breaks out into many parts simultaneously. It develops lines of cleavage. According to some great Indian systems of philosophy it is from the *Sphota* (big bang) the ultimate reality that all the existences in the Universe spring. The Vaiyâkaranas say that the ultimate reality is *Sphota* and the Mimâmsakas and the Alankârikas also say that *Sphota* is the ultimate reality. The very opening lines of Pânini's *Ashtâdhyâyî* tell us how everything came from the Damaru of samkara.

So then this Nâma plays the part of a Damaru, develops lines of cleavage and ramifies into different existences. It is the ultimate reality—the Noumenon, as it might be called in Kantian terminology. It also performs the same function which the Logos does in Christian philosophy, or Buddhi in Sâmkhya philosophy.

What does the Logos do? 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God', is an utterance from St. John of which everybody is aware. So the word or Logos is the intermediate between man and God. Similarly, in Sâmkhya philosophy the reconciler between *Prakrti* and *Purusha* is Buddhi (intellect). It interprets *Prakrti* and *Purusha* and *Purusha* to *Prakrti*. Similarly, here it

*Now how is this going to be done: the tongue uttering the name of God
and the ears being deprived of their evil propensities and made pure.*

is the Name which interprets *Saguna* to *Nirguna* and *Nirguna* to *Saguna*.

Look at these three great philosophic conceptions in this poem, namely, the conception of attributes, the conception of schematism and the conception of *Sphota*. All these are implicit in the poem. What I have done is only to express them in the language of modern thought.

Now in the case of myself and in the case of people like myself, says Tulsidas, the tongue has only brought shame to the temple of the mouth. That mouth in which God should have taken his seat, my tongue has defiled and brought shame upon it. In that it has an accomplice, namely, the ears. It is engaged in *Parâpavâda*, *paranindâ* and *Kâmakathâ* has a peculiar taste for fruitless discussion *vâdavivâdasvâda*. The ears are helping it by a contemplation of sexual and erotic matters which serve as the moonlight for the blossoming of 'dispute'. So what is the way out? Tulsidas says, So that thou might take away the sins of the ears, engage thyself in the utterance of God's name. This is the first point which Tulsidas makes.

Now how is this going to be done: the tongue uttering the name of God and the ears being deprived of their evil propensities and made pure. The rhetoricians' trick of explaining such a phenomenon by the help of either *vibhâvanâ* which is *kâranâbhâve kâryotpattih* or the *Asangati* which is *bhinnadeshakâlatveapi kâryakârana — bhâvotpattih* would not help us here. As Kant would say, it is the unity of apperception alone which would bring the tongue and the ears together. Whatever the tongue does would be reported to the central telephone exchange namely the Self, which Kant calls the unity of apperception, and through that also the ears would be exonerated from their sins. So it is the self or the unity of apperception that is here the schematiser between the *Rasanâ* (*Tongue*) and the *sravana* (*Hearing*).

Other possible physiological explanations would be those of restitution, exchange or transfer. Those who would like to take merely a

[*The Self must intervene before the tongue
could wash off the sins of the ears.*]

physiological view of things would explain the phenomenon by such laws as those of Restitution, Transfer or Exchange.

Incidentally, we may refer to Bergson's observations in this connection. Bergson made capital out of a particular experience which he saw in the first Great War. Some soldiers developed aphasia because their speech centre on the left side of the brain, namely, broca's area, was pierced by a bullet shot. But later on after a year or two there was a sort of a restitution of the function of speech on the other side of the brain so that the right side began to work.

We know that the centre of speech in the brain for the right-handed man is in the left and the centre of speech for the left-handed man is on the right side. Processes of restitution or transfer or exchange which might be made use of for the explanation of this phenomenon themselves rest upon the unity of apperception whose physiological expressions they are.

In the case under discussion, the tongue could not be expected to wash off the sins of the ears merely by the laws of restitution, exchange or transfer. The unity of apperception would alone serve the purpose of the telephone exchange for inter-communication as well as the clearance-house for the washing of sins. The Self must intervene before the tongue could wash off the sins of the ears.

Then there is another very important physiological statement which Tulsidas makes. There is the *Ravi* in us and there is the *sasî* - the *Idâ* and the *Pingalâ*, the two parallel chords of the sympathetic nervous system.

Now Tulsidas says that the flavour-centre in the brain corresponding to the physiological organ of the tongue lies near the *sasi* (*sasi samîpa rahî*) and away from the *Ravi*. *sasi* gives nectar and the *Ravi* produces mirage.

Thou livest, Oh Tongue, says Tulsidas, near the *sasi*, then why not partake of the nectar produced by the *sasi* instead of following the mirage produced by *Ravi*. Do not follow *Ravi*, follow *sasi*.

[*Tulsidas, however, simply wants to encourage the
tongue to partake of the nectar of God's name*]

As a matter of fact the symmetry of the body system would require that the flavour centre be situated absolutely equidistant from both the *Idâ* and the *Pingalâ*, and therefore there should be no partiality for one in favour of the other. Why is it then that Tulsidas advises the flavour-centre to co-operate with the *sasi* which, he says is nearer it and keep the *Ravi* at a distance?

It is evident that Tulsidas does this for merely poetical reasons and there need be no physiological sanction for it. Tulsidas, however, simply wants to encourage the tongue to partake of the nectar of God's name and we do not want to deny that privilege to the tongue.

Lastly, in this poem Tulsidas asks us why not make a combination of *Mati* and *Kriyâ*. Why not make reason the mate of action:

Jâta rûpa mati, yukti ruchira mani

Ruchi rachi hâra banâvahi!

Let the golden thread of thought pass through the jewels of action and produce a beautiful necklace. Do good things and think of good things and adorn the neck of *Râma* by this beautiful necklace. In that way, says Tulsidas to the tongue, thou will not merely have taken away the sins of my ears because they have heard bad things but thou wilt get eternal renown for having saved Tulsidas from the evil life and led him Godward. All this comes out of the *Rasanâ* making the utterance of the name of God its sole function. That is the great doctrine of Tulsidas on the value of the utterance of the name of God. We shall see in the next *Pada* (poem) from Kabir that follows, what he has to say about it.

The distinction between Tulsidas and Kabir is the distinction between the tongue and the breath. You have to meditate entirely within yourself by the help of the breath and one of the characteristics of the success of your meditation would be that the Name would reveal itself before you: *Sumirana jo âvaî* So that name which will reveal itself before you automatically, unconsciously even, without your thinking about it, is the only *Nâma* which is *Ajara* and *Amara*.

If Kabir is right in insisting that the Name must reveal itself before you in meditation, Tulsidas is right in insisting that we should not discuss whether Nâma or Rûpa is superior.

So it is exactly antithetical to what Tulsidas says; and yet both are right. If Kabir is right in insisting that the *Name* must reveal itself before you in meditation, Tulsidas is right in insisting that we should not discuss whether *Nâma* or *Rûpa* is superior.

Then Kabir tells us to direct our attention upwards and open the window of the lateral ventricle:

Khidakî khulavâvo

Shri Aurobindo Ghosh lately said that one of the chief endeavours of the *Sâdhaka* should be to direct one's consciousness upwards. What that is or what physiological process it involves only the *Sâdhakas* might know. But even if one is successful in directing one's consciousness upwards that does not enable him to open the window. This is also the idea which is familiar in a Kanarese poet. When I opened the door, he says, I found the glory of God everywhere:

etta nodidaratta srngârasadanâ!

It is however to be remembered that it is not merely by the effort of the self that the window of the lateral ventricle would be opened. It is only by the grace of God that it will open-not by any effort of man.

Then, says Kabir, let the Self of such a *Sâdhaka* take a bath at the confluence. What is the confluence? Those who have studied Kabir's psychology know that the confluence is where *Idâ* and *Pingalâ* and *Sushumnâ* meet, where the so called *Gangâ*, *Yamunâ* and *Sarasvatî* meet.

All these three nerves meet in the lateral ventricle. So let the consciousness of the aspirant take a bath there and swim like a fish in that lake and when it will be able to do so one miracle will happen, namely., it will be able to see an inexpressible form upon which it should meditate:

Tâhi bicha ika rûpa hai!

Vohi dhyâna lagâvo!!

Now I shall go on to the final verse in our discourse, on the Spiritual Charkhâ, (spinning wheel) namely, what a meditator ought to do in the process of meditation which may be compared to the setting in motion of a Charkhâ.

So unless our consciousness is directed upwards, unless it bathes in the lake of the lateral ventricle, unless it enters the territory called Ajara and unless it is able to see that inexpressible form of God, we shall not be entitled to have satisfied ourselves with saying that we have entered the path of God. Such a one alone, says Kabir, deserves the name of a *Sâdhaka*.

Now I shall go on to the final verse in our discourse, on the Spiritual *Charkhâ*, (spinning wheel) namely, what a meditator ought to do in the process of meditation which may be compared to the setting in motion of a *Charkhâ*. Here, of course, you know the famous song of Kabir:

Jhînî Jhînî binî chadariyâ

There is another song of Dadu which is very important in this connection *korî sâla na châdaî re* and very peculiarly as I pointed out to you at the beginning of this lecture, there is a song on this head from a Kanarese poet called Sharifsaheb. He also was a Mohamedan. Somehow all these spinners and weavers seem to be Mohemedans-Dadu, Kabir, and Sharifsaheb. And they all agree in teaching us the supreme value of the spiritual *Charkhâ*.

By the by, I think that just as North India is entitled to have a knowledge of any language of the South, South India is also entitled to have knowledge of at least one language of the North. I am placing this view so that you may take it for what it is worth. I shall put all these three songs together and tell you what these mystical weavers and spinners mean by the spiritual *Charkhâ* by means of which the process of meditation might be consummated.

In the first place, says Sharifsaheb, we must take the cotton of our mind and take away all the dust and the dross out of it — *kasarane kaledu kalegala tegedu* the evil propensities and all the evil passions — and then silver might be produced. Incidentally, we may also say that according to Dadu the holes and the protuberances in the woven cloth

According to Sharifsaheb our Āsana, the posture upon which we sit for meditation, is to constitute the pedestal of the Charkha.

would have to be taken away before the final product becomes ready. They should not be allowed to remain.

Then, according to Sharifsaheb our *Āsana*, the posture upon which we sit for meditation, is to constitute the pedestal of the *Charkhâ*. Our two sympathetic cords, the *Ravi* and the *sasi*- as I told you some time back, the *Idâ* and the *Pingalâ*-constitute the two poles of the *Charkhâ*. Now the spokes of the wheel are held in position by the ten *Vâyus* (*Daúavâyugelamba nûligala bigidu*) and the *Charkhâ* is to be set in motion. Of course, these are additions to what Dadu and Kabir have said.

Coming to the subject proper, they all agree in saying that there should be concentrated attention in the plying of the *Charkhâ*. *Ekamanâ rasa ârambha lâgâ*. Sharifsaheb gives the illustration of a lady who is spinning and advises her only to look to the act of spinning. Do not look here and there, says Sharifsaheb. *Dârikârasa ninna mâriya nodalu, mâri etti nodabedammâ*. Other passers by might come and cast a glance at you, but do not return their look. That is not your job. Your job is merely to spin. Do that. So, one-pointed and concentrated attention is what is wanted by this spiritual spinner.

Then there is a further important idea in Kabir. Other people talk of only one *Charkhâ*. Kabir talks of eight: *Astakamaladala charakhâ dolaî*. He tells us all the eight *Chakras*, namely, the

Mûlâdhâra, svâdhistâna, manipura, anuhata,

Visûddhi, âjniâ, lalâta, sahastrâra

should be simultaneously set in motion.

It is not merely one *chakra* that is inside us. There are eight such *chakras* or plexuses. The setting in motion of the eight *chakras* simultaneously is a wonderful phenomenon and constitutes the majestic progress of the aspirant towards God.

So Prema and Prâna must go together. In the process of uttering the name of God through our breath there ought to be also a devotion to God.

There has been a certain amount of discussion and a little difference of opinion as to what we should mean by the expression: *Aútakamaladala charakhâ dolaî!*

Some people say that we ought to regard it as a sort of an *Açetakamala* which is not correct because there are no *Açetadals* at all. There are two, four, six, ten, twelve, sixteen but not in Kabirite physiology. So in the expression *Astakamaladala*, *Dala* must mean a *samûha*(assemblage). That entire galaxy of the eight *chakras* should be set in motion and this is done by means of our concentrated spiritual attention. It is not merely by the control of our breaths (*Prânanirodha*) not even by shutting the *Indriyas* (*Indriyanigraha*) that the spiritual energy inside us can be set in motion. So it is a very wonderful idea, namely, of the setting in motion of the eight physiological *chakras*.

Then further *Prema prâna lagâi dhâgâi* says Dadu-our *Prema* and *Prâna* should constitute the *Tânâ* and the *Bânâ*. *Prema* means devotion to God and *Prâna* means physiological breath. Our physiological breath must be made the vehicle of our love to God, says Dadu.

In a similar vein Kabir has said that the *Anâhata Úabda* should be made the horse on which the Self should ride: *Dîjaî surata pathâya úabda turîya asavâra haî!*

So *Prema* and *Prâna* must go together. In the process of uttering the name of God through our breath there ought to be also a devotion to God. It is not merely a mechanical utterance of the name of God, but a remembering of the name of God through devotion.

A famous saint in south India- the saint of Umadi-used to explain the famous line from Ramdas *Prema Prîtîne bândhâve* in this manner. Our breath, he used to say, should be tied to our devotion to God. They must go together.

Kabir and Dadu make these the *Tânâ* and the *Bânâ*, but they also make a further important addition implied in the expression *Antargati rangarâtâ*

Now great people, says Dadu, are humble workers. It is a very important conception. The greater you are, the more humble you are. So the more concentrated you will be in God, the more of a devout worker you would be.

Inner spiritual emotions spring inside us, they say, in the process of our spiritual contemplation. Those purple or multi-coloured emotions that spring inside us would constitute the coloured threads in the piece that we may be weaving.

So *Antargatirangarâtâ* is a very important expression. We must have that spiritual concentration and that devotion to God which should result in multi-coloured experience.

Then Dadu says we must be very careful lest any one thread might break because those who are spinners and weavers know that if we miss even a single thread there will be a misconnection resulting in a broken end or a gap in the cloth woven. Let us therefore take care that our 21,600 breaths in 24 hours which constitute the threads might be woven into a beautiful and continuous cloth.

It is evident that this number is arrived at by 24 hours of 60 minutes multiplied by 15 breaths per minute. Not a single breath should be lost, says Dadu, for fear that there might be a gap in the spiritual cloth woven.

Now great people, says Dadu, are humble workers. It is a very important conception. The greater you are, the more humble you are. So the more concentrated you will be in God, the more of a devout worker you would be.

That constitutes the real criterion of a spiritual spinner and weaver. He might be the head of all—even the President of the Union - and yet unmindful of his dignity, he would work like a common worker:

Sakala úiromani bunai bichârâ!!

Ultimately, what is to be the product of this devout labour of spinning and weaving? It is to be a good garment, a beautiful and a durable garment. Sharifsaheb calls it a *Pîtâmbara*; Dadu calls it a *Gahar Gajanâ*, and Kabir calls it a *Châdar*. Whatever the name one may

If our spinning and weaving in this spiritual process results in the ultimate dedication of our life and actions to God, what higher consummation could we ever hope to achieve?

give to it, in all humility we should offer it to God as the supreme dedication. Kabir says about this Chadar.

So châdara sura nara muni odhî!

Odhî kaî mailî kînhî chadariyâ!!

Sages and saints and Gods have made this Châdara dirty. I have worn it well about myself and kept it pure and clean. Now in my last hour, says Kabir, I offered it to you in the original condition in which You gave it to me, reminding us of the utterance in a similar condition of a great Kanarese saint who might be regarded as his spiritual ectype:

Appâ gururâyâ ninnadu ninage vâpitu!

(‘I only dedicated to you, Oh! My Master, what was already yours.)

If our spinning and weaving in this spiritual process results in the ultimate dedication of our life and actions to God, what higher consummation could we ever hope to achieve?

SOURCES OF THE CHAPTER IV

: १ :

The Moral Characteristics of a Sadguru

साधो सो सदगुरु मोहिं भावै	॥ ८ ॥
सत्तनाम नाम का भर भर प्याला, आप पिप मोहिं प्यावै	॥ १ ॥
मेले जाय न महन्त कहावै, पूजा भेट न लावै	॥ २ ॥
परदा दूर करै आखिन का, निज दरसन दिखलावै	॥ ३ ॥
जाके दरसन साहब दरसै, अनहद शब्द सुनावै	॥ ४ ॥
माया के सुख दुख करि जानै, संगन सुपन चलावै	॥ ५ ॥
निस दिन सतसंगत में राँचै, शब्द में सुरत समावै	॥ ६ ॥
कह कवीर ताको भय नाही, निरभय पद सरसावै	॥ ७ ॥

: २ :

On the Supreme Value of Name as the Schematiser between Nirguṇa and Saguṇa

नाम रूप दुइ ईस उपाधी ।	॥ ८ ॥
अकथ अनादि सु सागुशि साधी	॥ १ ॥
को बड़ छोट कहत अपराधू ।	
सुनि गुनभेद समुशिहहिं साधू	॥ २ ॥
रूप विशेष नाम बिन जाने ।	
करतल गत न परहि पहिचाने	॥ ३ ॥
सुमिरिय नाम रूप बिन देखे ।	
आवत हृदय सनेह बिसेखे	॥ ४ ॥

नाम रूप गति अकथ कहानी ।
 समुझति सुखद, न परत बखानी ॥ ५ ॥
 अगुन सगुन बिच नाम सुसाखी ।
 उभय प्रबोधक चतुर दुभाखी ॥ ६ ॥

: ३ :

Tulsidas's Apostrophe to the Tongue

काहे न रसना रामहि गांवहि ॥ टे ॥
 निसदिन पर अपवाद वृथा कृत,
 रटि रटि राग बढावहि ॥ १ ॥
 नर सुख सुन्दर मन्दिर पावन,
 बसि जनि ताहि लजावहि ।
 ससि समीप रहि त्यागि सुधा कत,
 रविकर-जल कहाँ धावहि ॥ २ ॥
 कामकथा कलि कैरव चन्दिनि,
 सुनत स्रवन दै भावहि ।
 तिन्हहि हटकि भजि हरि कल कीरति,
 करन कलंक नसावहि ॥ ३ ॥
 जातरूप मति, युक्ति रुचिर मनि,
 रचि रचि हार बनावहि ।
 सरन सुखद, रविकुल-सरोज रवि,
 राम नृपहिं पहिरावहि ॥ ४ ॥
 वादविवाद स्वाद तजि, भजि हरि,
 सरस चरित चित लावहि ।
 तुलसिदास भव तरहि, तिहूँ पुर,
 तूँ पुनीत जस पावहि ॥ ५ ॥

: ४ :

On Internal Meditation by Means of Name

अजर अमर इक नाम है,
 सुमिरन जो आवै ॥ टे ॥

बिन ही मुख के जप करो,
 नहिं जीभ डुलावो ॥
 चलति सुरत ऊपर करौ,
 नैनन दरसावो ॥ १ ॥
 जाय हंस पश्चिम दिसा,
 खिरकी मुलवावो ।
 तिरबेनी के घाट पर,
 हंसा नहवावो ॥ २ ॥
 पानी पबन की गम नही,
 बोहि लोक में जावो ।
 ताहि बिच इक रूप है,
 बोही ध्यान लगावो ॥ ३ ॥
 जिमी असमान बहौ नही,
 वो अजर कहावै ।
 कहे कवीर सोइ साध जन,
 वा लोक मँझावै ॥ ४ ॥

: ३ :

On Intense Concentration
 या विधि मन को लगावै,
 मनके लगाए प्रभु पावै ॥
 जैसे नटवा चढ़त बांस पर,
 डोलिया डोल बजावै ।
 अपना बोझ धरै सर ऊपर,
 सुरति बरत पर लावै ॥ १ ॥
 जैसे भुजङ्गम चरत बनहिं में,
 ओस चाटने आवै ।
 कबहुं चाटे कबहुं मनि चितवै,
 मनि तजि प्रान गँवावै ॥ २ ॥

सो चादर सुर नर मुनि ओढी,
 ओढि कै मैलो कीनी चदरिया ॥ ५ ॥
 दास कधीर जतन करि ओढी,
 ज्यों की त्यों घर दीनी चदरिया ॥ ६ ॥

: ६ :

Like a good weaver, Please your master by producing
 a durable Garment of close and continuous Texture

कोरी साल न छाँडै रे,
 सब धावर कौं काटै रे ॥ ७ ॥
 प्रेम प्राण लगाई धागै,
 तत्त तेल निज दीआ।
 एक-मना इस आरम्भ लागा,
 ज्ञान राळ भर लीया ॥ १ ॥
 नाम नली भरि बुण कर लागा,
 अन्तरगति रंगराता।
 ताणै बाणै जीब जुलाहा,
 परम तत्त्व सों भाता ॥ २ ॥
 सकलशिरोमणि बुने बिचारा,
 सान्हा सूत न तोडै।
 सदा सचेत रहै लौ लागा,
 ज्यों टूटे त्यों जोडै ॥ ३ ॥
 ऐसे तनि बुनि गहर गजीना,
 साई के मन भावै।
 दादू कोरी कर्ता के संगि,
 बहुरि न इहि जग आवै ॥ ४ ॥

Kabir is a saint for all humanity. People suppose that he merely spiritualised the Hindus and Muslims.

Chapter 5

The Spiritual Autobiography of Kabir

I have been holding Kabir in the highest esteem for a large number of years. In my part of the country Kabir occupies a position not inferior to the one occupied by saints like Jnânesvara and Tukârâm. I find this equality between the great saints of Northern India and the two great saints of Maharashtra fully established.

Kabir is a saint for all humanity. People suppose that he merely spiritualised the Hindus and Muslims. This is far less than the truth. He was one of those who have aimed at spiritualising the whole of humanity. At his time the two chief communities that were of any importance in India were, of course, the Hindus and the Muslims, though his attention was not confined to these two communities only. At the present moment particularly, if both Hindustan and Pakistan abide by the message of Kabir, it will lend a powerful support to the agreement that has been recently reached between the two great Prime Ministers.

Kabir is a saint to whom all the world must listen. His message will bring together all humanity—Christians, Jews, Muslims and the rest. Kabir is an angel of universal peace and goodwill. It is from this point of view that I am looking at Kabir.

Kabir's Spiritual Development

Today I want to talk on the spiritual realisation of Kabir as described by himself in his various poems. A great man's work really constitutes his autobiography and so it is in the case of Kabir. The literature is vast, but I have selected 16 typical poems from Kabir, representing the various stages of his own spiritual development and containing in essence the whole of his spiritual philosophy.

I divide the subject under eight heads. First, I shall speak of the importance which Kabir assigns to the Guru in spiritual life. Secondly, I will discuss some of the points in the method of meditation by the Name

The first characteristics of a Sadguru is that he must be able to establish in his disciple a vision of God wherever the eye is cast.

which Kabir advocates for spiritual realisation. Thirdly, I shall illustrate from Kabir what in Western religious psychology is called ‘The Dark Night of the Soul’, in which the spiritual aspirations of Kabir are not yet fulfilled but are on the way to being fulfilled soon. There after, I shall discuss the beginnings of the spiritual realisation in Kabir. Afterwards I shall proceed to describe the growth and semi-culmination of his spiritual experience. Later, I will consider the points in which Kabir speaks of his highest spiritual experience almost in Sufistic terminology. After that I will go on to the Vendantic approximations in Kabir’s thought. Kabir does not seem to have studied any of the Systems of Indian Philosophy; but he must evidently have heard much. My last point would be those autobiographical elements in Kabir when he has reached the zenith of his spiritual career and speaks of himself as Messiah or a liberator.

Characteristics of a Sadguru

I begin with the characteristics of a *Sadguru* according to Kabir. “Who is *Sadguru*” asks Kabir, and then he proceeds to give the characteristics of a *Sadguru* in his famous song:

Voî sadguru santa kahâvai!

The first characteristic of a *Sadguru* is that he must be able to establish in his disciple a vision of God wherever the eye is cast. Also to him the internal and external perception of God must be alike. If there is internal perception to which nothing external corresponds, then it can not be evidently a case of super sensuous experience and may be ultimately unreal. Kabir wants to establish a perfect parity between the internal and the external perception of God:

Bâhira rahâ so bhîtara dekhe!

Bhîtara rahâ so bâhira dekhe!!

The second characteristic of a *Sadguru* is that he teaches *Sahaja Samâdhi* to his disciple. I am not going into details about the meaning of this expression here. The conception of ‘*Sahaja Samâdhi*’ occurs in a verse, which I shall discuss later. At present it is enough to say that

What does Kabir mean by saying that one must leave the earth and leave the heaven, and erect a bottomless cottage in between.

he teaches his disciple how to acquire ‘*Sahaja Samâdhi*’ (*Sahaja Samâdhi sikhâvai*)

The meaning is that we have only to look out to have a vision of God. You have neither to hold your breath nor shut your nostrils, says Kabir—

Dvâra na rundhe pavan na rokaî!

In a line which seems difficult of interpretation, but which I think I have successfully interpreted:

Dhartî tyâgî akâsahu tyâgâî!

What does Kabir mean by saying that one must leave the earth and leave the heaven, and erect a bottomless cottage in between. It is evidently the conception of *kevalkumbhaka* as between the *Adhah kumbhaka* and *ûrdhvakumbhaka sahastrâûh santu hatesu kumbhâh sambhâvyate kevalkumbha eva* says Úamkrâchârya.

This is the kind of *Kumbhaka* that Kabir is describing, when he says that he has thatched a cottage in between the heaven and the earth. The earth is the navel and the heaven is the head. Always in the thorax, we must always have the *Kevala Khumbhaka* says Kabir. This seems to be the interpretation of the physiological aspect of ‘*Sahaja Samâdhi*, of which Kabir is speaking.

The third requirement of a *Sadguru*, says Kabir, is that he must not get himself entangled in the *Anâhata* nor entangle others in it.

Now this *Anâhata* is very important from the point of view of spiritual experience. Those who have read Adi Úamkarâchârya’s philosophical writings, specially the *Yoga-Târâvali*, know what great importance he attaches to the *Anâhata* —

*Anâhatâkhyo bahubhih prakâraî antah pravarteta sadâ
ninâdah!*

*Nâdânusandhâna namostu tubhyam tvâm sâdhanam
tatvapadâya jâne!!*

[*Firstly he must make sure of the vision
of God for himself and his disciples;*]

The word is not *Anahat* or *Anuhat* but *Anâhata*, the unstruck sound. Now peculiarly enough, though Kabir gives importance to this *Anâhata* in his conception of the spiritual sound, the word (sabda) itself occupies a higher place than *Anâhata* in his metaphysics *Anahata hu mari jâya! dâsa kabîrâ nâma re!*

Parallels In Upanisads

I quote for a parallel to this conception of Kabir a few lines from the Upanishads which are not very well known, but which some people at least might have read: (1) *ayamagnivaiúvânaro yoayamantah purusho yenedamannam pachyate yadidamadyate tasyaisa ghoso bhavati yametatkarnâvapidhâya úrunoti*, (2) *tasyaisâ úrutih! yatra karnâvapi grhyâ ninadamiva, nadathuriva, agneriva, jvalata upaúrunoti* (3) *sa yadotkramisyan bhavati nainam ghosam ærunoti!*

This seems to be the idea of *Anâhata* according to these Upanishads. Kabir understood the word very well, but for his metaphysical and spiritual philosophy he rated *Ssabda* as higher than *Anâhata*. What Kabir wants to say is that the real teacher is he who does not get himself entangled in the *Anâhata*, nor gets his disciple entangled in it. That is the view which Kabir takes about the place of *Anâhata* in spiritual experience.

Finally, the moral characteristic of a *Sadguru* should be actionlessness in the midst of action:

Karma karai nihakarama kahaî jo!

This is exactly the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gîtâ. He engages in action but he is not contaminated by the results thereof. Also such a *Sadguru* must be for ever full of joy:

Sadâ vilâsa trâsa nahî mana me!

Bhoga me joga jagâvâi!!

These then ultimately seem to be the characteristic of *Sadguru*. Firstly he must make sure of the vision of God for himself and his disciples,

The second point in Kabir's methodology of spiritual experience is that he insists always upon internal meditation:

secondly he must teach the principle of *Sahaja Samâdhi* and thirdly he must not be entangled in action and should always be in the enjoyment of spiritual happiness.

The Methodology of Meditation

After having discussed the nature of the *Sadguru*, Kabir proceeds to stress some points in the methodology of meditation by means of which God may be attained. The first of these is evidently the Name of God, by the help of which the Teacher directs his disciple to meditate on God. Secondly, we are told that this meditation must be of a fully concentrated type. And thirdly, this meditation must be immediate, must be practised here and now and must not suffer any loss of time. When all these criteria are fulfilled, the disciple may regard himself definitely as on the way to God.

I now proceed first to discuss the stress which Kabir lays on the Name of God. Like other great Saints of India he says that it is the '*Nâma*' which matters:

Ajara amara ika nâma hai!

Now what *Nâma* is *Ajara* (imperishable) and *Amara* (immortal)? Kabir gives an answer which rarely any person has given:

Ajara amara ika nâma hai Sumirana jo âvaî!

Not one which offers of itself to our mind but that which reveals itself to us supersensuously at the time of meditation.

There is a vast difference between these two conceptions. It is not the Name which we choose for ourselves that constitutes the *Ajara* and *Amara Nâma*. 'While we are meditating', says Kabir, 'there is a celestial *Nâma* which unfolds itself to our auditory sense at the height of meditation'. That Name is '*Ajara* and *Amara*.' So when a man comes into possession of this Name, his path Godward becomes clear.

The second point in Kabir's methodology of spiritual experience is that he insists always upon internal meditation:

‘Do not move your lips, do not move your tongue and yet utter the Name of God’.

Binahi mukha ke japa karo!

Nahi jîbha dulâvo!!

‘Do not move your lips, do not move your tongue and yet utter the Name of God’. How is this to be done? Students of Vedantic Psychology have known that there are four kinds of speech: ‘*parâ*’ ‘*pasyantî*’, ‘*madhyamâ*’ and ‘*vaikharî*’.

Watson, the great behaviourist of modern times, has said that every idea is accompanied by a certain throat -throbbing. The Name is also attended by a certain throat-throbbing. We must go beyond this throat-throbbing. How this is to be done only the aspirants know.

A third point of Kabir’s spiritual methodology is that he says that we should direct our Self upwards in the process of meditation:

Ulati surata ûpara karo —

Khirakî khulavâvo!!

Open the window, which in medical psychology is called the lateral ventricular, open that ventricular.

Jâya hamsa pacchima disâ!

Let the Hamsa or swan-like self go by the western path, let it go up, and let it take a bath in the *Trivenîsamgama*. What is this *Triveni Samgama*? It is the confluence of ‘*idâ*’, ‘*pingalâ*’ and ‘*susumnâ*’. In this confluence let the ascending self take a bath. After purifying himself by this bath, he will find that he is face to face with an indescribable Form of God:

Tâhi vicha ika rûpa hai!

upon which he should concentrate his attention. That Form is indescribable.

Here the Form is not to be conjured up by the imagination nor is it an object of hallucination. It is what veritably reveals itself to you in the

[*In this manner, says Kabir, an aspirant shall walk
upon the rope of the meditational method.*]

process of meditation as the Name had revealed itself earlier. When these things are attained, says Kabir, we may regard ourselves as definitely on the path of God.

The Aspirant's Path

We next proceed to another verse,

Yâ vidhi mana ko lagâvâ!

which tells us that the spiritual aspirant must be full of concentration. Kabir gives three illustrations.

The first is the illustration of an acrobat. What does an acrobat do? He climbs on a bamboo, then he begins to walk on the rope, taking a very heavy load on his head. If he falls down he might die instantly. He is so concentrated that in spite of the heavy load on his head, he is able to walk on the rope, in a balanced posture. In this manner, says Kabir, an aspirant shall walk upon the rope of the meditational method.

Secondly, Kabir gives the illustration of a serpent. It is a popular tradition in the mythology of Hindustan that the serpent comes sometimes to lick dew drops. In this process the serpent is supposed to put its jewel aside and keep an intent eye on it while partaking of the dew drops:

Osa châtane âvâ!

mani taji prâna gavâvâ!!

Similarly, God is just like a jewel in the process of our worldly enjoyment. We must always keep an intent eye on the jewel of God in the midst of our actions.

Thirdly, the aspirant of Kabir must have that intensity of devotion as that of 'Satî'. What will she do? Her husband is burning on the pyre. Her father and mother have gathered round about her and her relatives are looking at her. She is unconscious of the presence or even the existence of the people round about her. Her whole attention is concentrated upon her dead husband. In this process she throws herself upon the funeral pyre to be burnt along with her husband. Such a fury

*Why should we load this ass of the
body with unnecessary burdens?*

of devotion the aspirant must have before he is locked in an eternal union with God. Let him do any ceremonial or religious action he pleases *dhûpa dîpa naivedya argajâ* but it is only his intense and devoted concentration that may lead him to the final union with God.

A third *pada* of Kabir about this process of meditation tells us that a spiritual aspirant should always take note of the relevancy of the actions that he is doing:

Bhûle mana samaja ke bâda ladaniyâ!

Why should we load this ass of the body with unnecessary burdens?

Where are you going, O Tradesman, along with your caravan, asks Kabir.

Tânda lâda kahâ ko lâi jaîyo

If you go a little further you will be in a foreign land.

Âge mulukha biraniyâ!

Kabir tells us that such a Tradesman should make his bargains here and now and not wend towards a foreign place: for, who knows what may happen when one is in a foreign place?

Our worldly experience is like that of a foreign land. There is neither market nor tradesman. *âge hâta na baniyâ* says Kabir. Why are you looking to foreign countries where you expect to start selling goods?

According to Kabir we should be in the position of a tradesman who makes his bargains here and now. Students of Pythagoras might recall to mind as to how Pythagoras directed his disciples in this fair of life. In a similar manner it is only by taking note of the above things, says Kabir, that we can reach our final destination:

Yaha pada hai nirabaniyâ!

[*This Dark Night of the Soul is a phenomenon
known almost in every religious system.*]

The dark night of the Soul

So far about the pilgrimage for entrance into the spiritual path. Kabir himself was not free from disappointments. Students of religious psychology know that there is a stage called ‘ The Dark Night of the Soul’ when after every effort spent in the cause of realisation a man finds himself helpless and hopeless. There is a such stage almost in the case of every spiritual aspirant. I shall indicate here one small passage where Kabir is suffering from his separation from God:

Prîti lagî tuva Nâma kî

I shall paraphrase what Kabir says: ‘I am panting to see Thy form; meet me instantly, My Lord! My mind is concentrated upon Thy Name and it is not out of my consciousness for a single moment. Show Thyself to me, My Master, in Thy unbounded Grace. My eyes are thirsting for Thy vision; my eye-lashes do not close; the door of Thy vision has been shut to me. I am keeping awake day and night. I shall not separate from my Lord, if once I happen to find him.’

Kabir ultimately found his Master who was then dearer to him than his soul. This Dark Night of the Soul is a phenomenon known almost in every religious system. We have illustrations from Bunyan, Tukaram and St. John of the Cross. As Carlyle says, the darkest hour is nearest the dawn. Hence it is that such a dark night of the soul if truly experienced is a harbinger of the coming light. So was it in the case of Kabir.

After this Dark Night of the Soul it is customary in books of religious psychology to begin with the various stages of real spiritual experience. Let us see the various stages in Kabir.

The Beginning of Realisation

In his verse-

Apane ghata diyânâ bâru re!

Kabir tells us that his mind was like the wick, the Name of God was the oil, and God Himself the fire to light up the wick. When the wick, the

*The spiritual territory is altogether different
from whatever we have seen or heard.*

oil, and the fire were brought together *jagamaga jota nihâra mandira me!* Kabir was able to see the glittering light inside the tabernacle of his heart.

Now those who are students of Upanishadic Philosophy know how this kind of light constitutes one of the visions described in the svetasvâra Upanishad-

Nihâradhûmârkânâlânîlânâm

Khadyotvidyutsphatikâûanînâm!

Etâni rupâni purahsarâni

Brahmânyabhivyaktikarâni yoge!!

These are the fore-runners, so that this sparkling light also is a fore-runner in the case of Kabir. But the value of his experience was that he was definitely on the way to his goal. Kabir tells us that when one has seen this glittering light one should make a *nyochhâvar* (sacrifice) of everything that he has including body to God, being assured of the vanity of mind and possession as an oblation to human life. It is only then that you live only for the sake of God realisation and for nothing else. In this way Kabir's spiritual realisation began.

Growth of Spiritual Experience

What are the characteristics of the growth of spiritual experience? Has Kabir described them?

Maharama hoyâ so jânâi sâdho! Aisâ desa hamârâ!!

Only he who knows the secret of reality can understand the nature of our territory.

Veda kitâba pâra nahi pâvata,

Kahana sunana se nyârâ!

The spiritual territory is altogether different from whatever we have seen or heard.

There are words without sounds and pearls without shells. There is lightning without a cloud and there is light without the sun.

Then Kabir goes on to give his further experience. “In the first place,” he says. “I have heard the sounds of conches and trumpets and lyres. There are words without sounds and pearls without shells. There is lightning without a cloud and there is light without the sun. *Brahman* which is shining forth is putting to shame all luminosity whatsoever.” And then, says Kabir, beyond these there is an infinite and incomprehensible Beyond:

Âge agama apârâ!

The territory which very few pilgrims have yet reached There’, says kabir, ‘is our habitation’:

Kaha kabîra vaha rahani hamârî!

Bûjhaî gurumukha pyârâ!

“Only he who is initiated by a Guru and who is dear to his Guru can understand the meaning of what I say.”

When The River Engulfs The Ocean

I spoke about the rise and growth of spiritual experience in Kabir. I shall add to the discussion another song from Kabir to give a further touch to the growth of his spiritual experience. The final state of his spiritual experience I shall not discuss in my present discourse. I shall consider it later when I shall be speaking about his *Dohâs* and there discuss how far it tallies with the experience of the great saints of the world. I am discussing today the verse:

Chuvata amî rasa bharata tâla jaha!

Kabir says when the lake becomes full on account of the oozing of the mellifluous juice, then a sky-reaching sound breaks forth as a submarine volcano in eruption might send its waters into the sky:

Chuvata amî rasa bharata tâla jaha

Saba uthe asamânî ho!!

In such a state various kinds of musical instruments produce each its own harmony:

We should note the connection between these two points: the oozing of the mellifluous juice from the cells into the lateral ventricle and the rise of the sky-reaching sound therefrom. In the next verse which we shall be discussing presently, we shall find the position is reverse. When such a sky-reaching sound breaks forth then the lake of the lateral ventricle becomes full with mellifluous juice. At a later stage I shall discuss what is the connection between these two points. At present it is enough to say that as every cell begins to discharge ‘*Amîrasa*’ or the mellifluous juice at the time of meditation, the fullness of the lake breaks itself out into the sonorous voice which reaches the sky. A second point which Kabir discusses here is that the river overflows, and engulfs and even soaks up the ocean:

Sarîtâ umadi sindhu ko sokhâ!!

I wish to say that the self in the aspirant becomes so expansive that it envelopes *Brahman* itself.

Nahî kachu jâya bakhâni ho!

This phenomenon of the river absorbing the greatest ocean cannot be explained, says Kabir, in adequate terms. Then he says that in such a state of spiritual experience there is neither the sun nor the moon nor the stars, neither day nor night.

Nahî vaha raina bihânî ho!

Those who have read the Upanishads can see the parallelism of this to the passage where we are told:

*Na tatra suryo bhâti na chandratârake nemâ vidyuto bhânti
kutoayamagnih!!*

Then again we are told that in such a state various kinds of musical instruments produce each its own harmony:

Bâje bajaî sitâra bânsurî

*It is the experience of eternity being compressed in a single moment
which fills him with the consciousness of the infinite power of God.*

and further there is a *Rarankâra* of soft words. So what is this *Rarankâra*? *Rarankâra mruduvâni ho!*

We do not know of any system of philosophy which describes this *Rarankâra*. It may stand either for *Omkâra*, *Ramaramakâra* or *Râmarâmadhvani!!*

So it is not merely the sounds of musical instruments that break forth but veritably the words *Râma Râma* with slender tunes at the time of the *Samâdhi* of the aspirant.

Then further we are told by Kabir:

Dasa avatâra eka rata râja!

Now this is open to two interpretations: All the ten *Avatâras* are incessantly and continuously present before him, or otherwise all the ten *Avatâras* pass before him in a cinematographic show in one night. There are outbursts of involuntary praise:

Astuti sahaja sayân! ho!

How could one describe the value of that experience? Words fail to describe it. It is the experience of eternity being compressed in a single moment which fills him with the consciousness of the infinite power of God. These, says Kabir, are serious and secret matters which rarely any one is able to comprehend:

Kaha! kabîra bheda kî bâta!

Biralâ ko! pahachân! ho!

After having discussed the rise and growth of spiritual experience, though not yet its culmination, we pass on to the psychological and moral effects of Kabir's spiritual realisation. There is a very fine verse in Kabir which tells us-

Rasa gagana guphâ me ajara jharâ!

[*Kabir proceeds to tell us that such a man
in Samadhi enters the tenth cavity -*]

Realisation: Its Moral Effects

As I said in my discussion of the former verse, we are told in the present one that as a consequence of hearing the *Anâhata* sound, the cells of the brain begin to discharge mellifluous juice in the lateral ventricle which becomes like a lake. So here we see that the sound becomes an instrument of which the mellifluous juice becomes the consequence. How are the two statements in the preceding verse and the present one to be reconciled?

Those who have read Kant's ' Critique of Pure Reason' know that there is something like reciprocal causation, *Anâhata Úabda*; having its influence on the oozing of the mellifluous juice and the oozing of *Amîrasa* having its influence on the rising of the *Anâhata Úabda*; these are the two sides of what Kant would call Reciprocal Causation. We are absolutely at our wit's end in discussing which is the earlier and which is the later.

Another way of explaining the two phenomena would be from the point of view of their co-existence, but whether reciprocal causation or co-existence may be true, there must necessarily be between them a unity of apperception. Call it the brain, call it the mind, call it the self or spirit, if you please, the two phenomena cannot be explained without an ultimate unity of substance.

Kabir proceeds to tell us that such a man in Samâdhi enters the tenth cavity -

Dasa me dwâre tâli lâgî,

Alakha purakha jâko dhyâna dharâ!

This is a particular mannerism of Kabir in regard to the experience of God in the head. *Tâli* might be interpreted either as *Samâdhi* or even as Key. In another place Kabir says *khidakî khulavâvo*. The lateral ventricle must be opened before one is able to see God. In one Kanarese verse of the famous sage Vijayadas we are told—

Death keeps away from us when we are thinking about God. Lust, anger, arrogance and avarice must all come to an end. Also all desires, all actions, all illusions, all sins and all diseases must come to an end.

Hari karuna vemba kîli kaî doreyitu

The Grace of God was the key by means of which he unlocked this lateral ventricle.

Whatever their rationale may be, I am placing these experiences of the great saints before my critical readers. There are two famous lines in the poem of Kabir which I do not know how adequately to evaluate or to praise-

Kâla karâla nikata nahî âvaî, kâma krodha mara lobha jaraî!

Jugana jugana ki trsâ bujhâtî, karam bharama adha vyâdhi tarâ!!

These two lines must be carved on the heart of every Sadhaka. What is the use of our Samâdhic experience unless it dissolves itself into physiological, metaphysical and even moral consequences? Death keeps away from us when we are thinking about God. Lust, anger, arrogance and avarice must all come to an end. Also all desires, all actions, all illusions, all sins and all diseases must come to an end. When such a state is reached, says Kabir, true immortality is attained and death ceases to have any sway -

Amara hoya kabahû na marai!

These in short are the moral and psychological effects of spiritual meditation.

Influence of Sufism and Vedanta on Kabir

Now I go on to discuss two or three more *padas* of Kabir, wherein some Sufistic influence is perceivable. Here the language is also changed. There are more Urduised and Punjabi words than Bhojapuri or Khadî-Bolî—

Darasa divânâ bâvalâ, alamasta phakîrâ

Kabir tells us further that every breath of the saint is almost like a cup of wine. This is under Sufistic influence. In every breath that the saint dedicates to God he is drinking a cup of immortal wine.

What is the meaning of *Darasa divânâ bâvalâ*. The spiritual aspirant becomes ‘*divânâ*’ or mad after the vision of God. Then he becomes *Alamasta phakîrâ* and *Asmata kê dhîrâ*. So, entirely maddened by the vision of God such a saint leads a life of solitary independence. The body clings to him, as described in the famous *Bhâgvata*, as an *uttarîya* to a drunken man -

*Deham cha naúvaramavasthitamutthitam vâ
Siddho na paúyati yatoadhyagatmat svarûpam!
Daivâdupetamatha daivavaúûdupetam
Vâso yathâ parikrtam madirâmadândhah!*

Those who have read Pâli literature know how in one dialogue of Buddha we read the description of a *khaggavisâna* or rhinoceros. The name of the *sutta* is *khaggavisâna sutta*. The Saint of Kabir becomes such a *khaggavisâna* or a totally detached person.

Kabir tells us further that every breath of the saint is almost like a cup of wine. This is under Sufistic influence. In every breath that the saint dedicates to God he is drinking a cup of immortal wine. A Hindu would have said nectar. But we do not mind it because wine here is nectar. What are the effects of drinking this cup of immortal wine?

Piyata piyâla ksema kê sudhare saba sâthî

The saint drinks wine while his associates are improved. This is a sort of *Asangati alankâra*. Prima facie these two things are unconnected and yet one rises from the other. A man has lead a pure and spiritual life and it will result in improving the character and ideals of his associates: Kabir also tells us that such a saint moves and nods like an elephant in ruts:

Âtha pahara jhûmata rahe, jasa maigala hâthî!

This, of course, is not an ideal to be kept or attained by every aspirant. Rarely a man like Kabir can hope to reach that stage.

It was with this divine love that Kabir was filled to the brim. As a consequence of his intoxication by God-love, he remained absolutely independent, self-poised and self-sufficient.

Finally, he tells us that when a saint takes this wine of love he becomes free from infatuation and doubt. He reaches a state of perfect equanimity. The pauper and the prince are to him alike -

Bandhana kâta moha kâ, baithâ nirasankâ!

Vâke najara na âvatâ kyâ râjâ kyâ rankâ!!

In such a state of perfect equanimity the saint exists. He has a hidden vision, valuing his own soul, he cares for nobody and sits in divine contemplation. The saint in Kabir sitting in posture in divine ecstasy is definitely on a par with the Upanishadic sage who sits singing to himself the song of universal unity-

Etat sâma gâyan âste! hâva, hâva, hâu!

God-Intoxication

In another verse *Hamana hai iûka mastânâ* Kabir describes his love towards God using the famous word *Ishka*. The word *ishwka* carries a double sense. It may mean love to the Beloved as well as love to God. Many so called mystics have spoken as if they could institute a comparison between sexual love and divine love. I have said in my book on *The Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy* how this comparison is totally faulty. Even one of the Upanishads has said:

*Tadyathâ priyayâ striyâ samparisvakto, na bâhyam kinchana
veda nântaram, evamevâyam purusah prâjôenâtmanâ
samparisvakto na bâhyam kinchana veda nântaram!*

In spite of the dictum that all *upamâs* (*similes*) involve similarity, it is very desirable to remove all appendage of sexual relationship from the conception of divine love. To describe God as the beloved, whether in the masculine or in the feminine sense, is equally wrong. The love of God stands in a category altogether apart from any sexual relationship.

It was with this divine love that Kabir was filled to the brim. As a consequence of his intoxication by God-love, he remained absolutely independent, self-poised and self-sufficient. It was therefore,

Then again, says Kabir, to him the name of Hari was most dear as also the Form of God which was always present before him; Kabir was not separated from his Lord even for a single moment.

unnecessary, he says, that anybody should ‘awaken him from his slumber’ and impose any *houiyârî* on him.

Now the word *houiyârî* might have been employed here in either of the two senses. Kabir tells us that as he was entirely filled with God-intoxication, it was not possible for anybody to rouse him from that state. Also, as he was in union with God, he knew his duties very well and it was unnecessary for anybody to bring him to the consciousness of his duty.

Then again, says Kabir, to him the name of Hari was most dear as also the Form of God which was always present before him; Kabir was not separated from his Lord even for a single moment.

Three consequences followed from this continuous vision of God. In the first place, there was no necessity for him to have friendship (*yârî*) with the world.

Secondly, it was not necessary for him to entertain any expectations (*iñtajârî*) whatsoever. All of his desires were fulfilled and there was no necessity for him to expect anything from anybody.

Thirdly, all his anxiety (*bekarârî*) was at an end, as he knew that God would always protect him, support him and vindicate him.

On the whole, therefore, it may be seen that Kabir’s divine love made him rise superior to all ideas of *yârî*, *Iñtajârî* and *Bekarârî*. Finally, Kabir says, the reason why he was able to attain to this state, was that he had entirely unburdened himself of the load of duality.

Duality was a very heavy load indeed. As unity of experience has in Kabir taken the place of duality, he could walk on the slender path of spiritual life with great ease. Had he taken the load of duality on his head, the razor-edge of spiritual experience might have mortally injured him and made all spiritual progress impossible.

“The diamond of the realisation of God is within me,” says Kabir,
“I am in sure possession of it, why should I open it now and again?”

Equanimity through God-possession

In another verse, Kabir tells us how such a saint acquires an absolute equanimity through God-possession.

Those who have read Greek philosophy know that ‘Epoche’ was regarded as the greatest moral virtue by the Stoics, Epicurians and Sceptics alike. Silence, (Maunam) Speechlessness is ‘Epoche’.

Mana masta huâ taba kyo bolai!

What necessity is there for a man to speak when he has reached that spiritual stage? It is much better to be silent than to move the lips. So, Kabir is describing here the state of Epoche after God-realisation. He gives us four illustrations:

In the first place, he says, is it necessary for a man who is in possession of a diamond and has tied it in a knot, to open it out from time to time and see whether the diamond is there or not? The diamond is there. “Similarly, the diamond of the realisation of God is within me,” says Kabir, “I am in sure possession of it, why should I open it now and again.”

Secondly, Kabir gives us an illustration of a balance with two pans. So long as one has not attained the vision of God, one pan is up and the other pan is down-

Halakî thî jaba chadhî tarâju

Pûrî bhaî taba kyô tolaî!

But by the attainment of God, the upper pan becomes equal with the other, as the pan containing gold and *Tulsi Patra* became equal with the pan of Krishna. What remains to be weighed?

Pûrî bhaî taba kyô tolaî!

The saint in all ways thus becomes equal to God.

Then Kabir tells us that such a saint always lives in a state of God-enjoyment. In Uttar Pradesh it is customary for women to sell liquor.

Who can prevent a liquor woman from drinking as much liquor as she pleases? Similarly, who can prevent the saint, who has once realised the vision of God, from enjoying that vision as much and as long as he likes?

Who can prevent a liquor woman from drinking as much liquor as she pleases? Similarly, who can prevent the saint, who has once realised the vision of God, from enjoying that vision as much and as long as he likes? Kabir also gives a fourth illustration:

Hamsa p e m anasarovara, T la-talaiy  kyo dolai!

‘A *Hamsa* has reached his final habitat, the *M nasa Sarovara*. Why should he try to hunt out small lakes and tanks?’ When we have reached the highest God inside our heart why should we open our eyes?

In the end Kabir tells that he has found God behind a sesamum. Another variant of this idea is to be found in a Hindi maxim which tells us *Tila ole pah ra!* There is a mountain behind a sesamum. In the same manner, says Kabir, I have found the great God behind the tiniest thing as a sesamum. Tukaram has told us that the great God who fills the universe, makes his home even in a sesamum. The tiniest particle in the universe and the smallest cranny according to Carlyle is full of the presence of God. The microcosm is fully present in the macrocosm. The macrocosm fully reveals the presence and the power of God.

Vedantic Influence on Kabir

I discuss now a few Vedantic ideas in Kabir. One such is his description of *M y * as a great temptress. He calls *M y * as the wife of *Ramaiy *. In another connection I have discussed the relationship of *M y * and * svara* in the question of Niranjana. At present we may say this great *M y * tempts every person in the world. She wields her great power in the celestial world. She causes consternation in the minds of everybody. Gods and *Munis* (*ascetics*) have suffered alike. Gods like *Brahm *, *Vishnu* and *Mahe * and *Munis* like *N rada*, *Srng * and *Par  ara* have all fallen prey to this temptress. Saints and *s dhus* have suffered equally from her temptation.

Yog s are no exception, they are also tempted by *M y *. On being tempted by *M y * they begin to ponder how this should have happened

*The Grace of God has saved me, says
Kabir, blessed be the Name of Lord !*

by combing their beards. The whole world has suffered by the enchantments of this *Mâyâ*. I alone, says Kabir, have been fortunately saved from her temptation. I caught up the rope of the *sabda* and by its help have crossed the sea of existence—

Úabada dora gahi utare pâra!

The Grace of God has saved me, says Kabir, blessed be the Name of Lord !

Then in another verse *Sâdho sahaja samâdhi mil!* We have another Vedantic description in Kabir. Some time back we have explained the physiological side of *Sahaja Samâdhi*. Here we have to make a distinction between an absolutistic interpretation of *Sahaja Samâdhi* and a mystical enjoyment of it.

The true *Sahaja Samâdhi*, says Kabir, goes on increasing in a geometrical ratio. It is the culmination of spiritual wealth. In the poem of Kabir which we are considering we find two different strata. It is just the difference between the absolutistic philosophy and mystical experience. In a fine Sanskrit verse we have exactly the illustration of the absolutistic description of *Sahaja Samâdhi*.

Âtmâ tvam girijâpatih sahacharâh prânâh úarîtram griham

Pujâ te viúayopabhogarachanâ nidrâ samâdhisthitih!

Sanchârah padayoh pradaksinavidhih stotrâni sarvâ giro,

Yadyatkarma karomi tattadakhilam úambho tavârâdhanâm!!

All that we talk is in prayer to you, O God. Every step we take is a perambulation about you, O God. My enjoyment is your worship and my sleep is ecstasy. This might be the philosophy of an idler. What are the characteristics of mystical enjoyment?

Ânkha na muñdou kâna na rudhoû tanika kasta nahi dhâroû!

Khule naîna pahichânoû hasi hasi sundara rûpa nihâroû!!

Kabir exclaims: 'I shall say what can be said. Nobody listens to me, nobody cares for me. It is this which fills me with astonishment.'

Do not shut your eyes, do not close your ears, but see God, recognise Him and laugh. This is the exact meaning of the mystical enjoyment in *Sahaj Samâdhi*.

Then Kabir tells that all dirty emotions must come to an end even on account of the physical influence of *Āhabda*. If I get up or sit down my mind is fixed on God. This is the way of life which Kabir calls: *Unmanî rahanî*. We have known the distinction between *kahanî*, *Rahanî* and *Kathnî*. What is the use of mere talking, what is the use of thinking, we must live philosophy. I sing it in living, says Kabir—

Kaha Kabîra vaha rahanî hamârî bûjhe gurumukha pyârâ!

Unmanî rahanî so paragata kari gât!!

In that state we should remain absolutely attuned and merged.

Kabir as Messiah or a Liberator

I told you at the beginning of this talk that there are certain autobiographical utterances in Kabir when he had reached the zenith of his power which have a bearing on his character as a Messiah or a Liberator. Here is one such auto-biographical reflection—

Kahû re jo kahibe ko hoî!

Kabir exclaims: 'I shall say what can be said. Nobody listens to me, nobody cares for me. It is this which fills me with astonishment. People follow each his own whim and nobody cares for another. Struck by avarice and arrogance people have lost their very self. While crossing this ocean of life they become exhausted in the very middle and innumerable persons have gone to the bottom of the sea. God in his great graciousness has commanded me to save at least some. I find my exertions of no avail. Do not blame me any longer; says Kabir. Do not these lines remind us of Mahatma Gandhi towards the end of his career?

We now come to a *pada*:

Guru ne mohi dînhî ajaba jadî

*My Guru, says Kabir, has given me a miraculous herb.
It was full of mellifluous juice Amrta rasana bhari. I
deposited it in a safe vault inside my heart.*

wherein the whole spiritual life of Kabir might be regarded as having been summed up. My Guru, says Kabir, has given me a miraculous herb. It was full of mellifluous juice *Amrta rasana bhari*. I deposited it in a safe vault inside my heart.

Now the value and power of this herb is that all the five *Nâgas* and the twenty-five *Nâgins* die an instantaneous death as soon as they smell it. What are these five *Nâgas* and twenty-five *Nâginis*? It is interesting to find Kabir talking here so in terms of *Sâmkhya* Philosophy. We have a famous passage in *Îsvara Kṛshna* which describes the twenty-five *Tatvas* :

*Mûlapraktivikrtirmahadâdyâh praktivikrtayah sapta!
Sodaûakastu vikâro na praktinârpi vikrtih purusah!!*

If we just think of the lacuna in this enumeration of *Kapila* we shall see that he has not made any mention of five *Prânas*. The five *karmendriyas* are there; the five *mahâbhûtas* are there; the five *tanmatrâs* are there; and five other entities are there, but there is no mention of the *Pancha Prânas*. The five *Prânas* are *Nâgas* and the twenty-five *Tattvas* are *Nâginis*. All these die an instantaneous death when they smell this mystic herb.

The power of this herb is thus superior to the five *Prânas* and the twenty-five elements. Beyond these five *Nâgas* and twenty-five *Nâginis* there is also a dark great cobra which is representative of Death. This *Kâliyâ*, who threatened *Kṛshna*, of course does not die by means of this herb. Death cannot die but he becomes terrified. He is terrified by the vision of the *Sadguru*: . Thus, says Kabir, he was saved by the power of the *Sadguru*. No doubt, not merely was he saved but he was able to save those who were his associates.

Laî parivâra tarî!

Parivara Mukti

This conception of *Parivara Mukti* of which Kabir is speaking is different from the conception of *Sarva Mukti* which has occupied a

Kabir says that on account of the presence of God's power in him he was able to save not merely himself but all those who had been fortunate to come into spiritual communion with him.

prominent place in contemporary Indian thought. I think that the conception of *Sarva Mukti* is wrong. It breaks the law of sufficient reason. It is too much to believe that when one saint is born the whole world is saved. The *Parivâra Mukti* is understandable, but *Sarva Mukti* passes beyond our comprehension. It is all very well for Lord Buddha to say poetically:

Kali-kalusa-krtâni yâni loke!

Mayi nipatantu vimuchyatâm hi lokah!!

In contrast with such a conception of *Sarva Mukti* stands the conception of *Eka Mukti* which is familiar to the student of Vedantic thought. Has not Carlyle told us to look to our own saving and leave the saving of the world to its Maker?

The conception of *Parivâra Mukti* of which Kabir is speaking takes a via media between *Sarva Mukti* and *Eka Mukti*. The *Sarva Mukti* and the *Eka Mukti* are the thesis and the anti-thesis of which *Parivâra Mukti* is a synthesis. The *Sadguru*, according to Kabir, is therefore one who liberates not merely himself but also his associates. His associates get the benefit of a spiritual *vinculum* with him. Do not the iron filings catch up the power of the magnet? It is following such a line of thought that Kabir says that on account of the presence of God's power in him he was able to save not merely himself but all those who had been fortunate to come into spiritual communion with him.

Sources of The Chapter V

: १ :

The Characteristics of a Sadguru

बोई सतगुरु सन्त कहावै,
 नैनन अलख लखावै ॥
 होलत ठिगै न थोलत बिसरै,
 जन उपदेश ददावै ।
 प्रानपूज्य किरिया तें न्यारा,
 सहज समाधि सिखावै ॥ १ ॥
 द्वार न रूधै, पवन न रोकै,
 नहिं अनहत अरुझावै ॥
 यह मन जाय जहां जग जबही,
 परमात्म दरसावै ॥ २ ॥
 करम करै निहकरम रहै जो,
 ऐसी जुगुत दिखावै ।
 सदा विलास प्रास नहिं मन में,
 भोग में जोग जगावै ॥ ३ ॥
 धरती त्यागि अकासहुँ त्यागै,
 अधर मढ़ैया छावै ।
 मुज सिखर की सार सिला पर,
 आसन अचल जमावै ॥ ४ ॥
 भीतर रहा सो बाहिर देखै,
 दूजा दृष्टि न आवै ।
 कहत कबीर बसाये हंसा,
 आबागमन मिटावै ॥ ५ ॥

: २ :

On Internal Meditation by means of the Name

अजर अमर इक नाम है,
 सुभिरत जो आवो ।

बिन ही मुख के जप करो,
 नहि जीभ डुलावो।
 चलटि सुरत ऊपर करो,
 नैनन दरसावो ॥ १ ॥
 जाय हंस पच्छिम दिसा,
 खिरकी खुलवावो।
 तिरबेनी के घाट पर,
 हंसा नहवावो ॥ २ ॥
 पानी पवन कि गम नहि,
 वोहि लोक में जावो।
 ताही बिच इक रूप है,
 वोही ध्यान लगावो ॥ ३ ॥
 जिमी असमान बहां नही,
 वो अजर कहावै।
 कट्टे कवीर सोइ साथ जन,
 वा लोक में जावै ॥ ४ ॥

:५:

Hand over to God, unsullied, This Fine Vesture Which
 He has so skilfully woven

झीनी झीनी बीनी चदरिया ॥ टे ॥
 काहे कै ताना काहे कै भरनी,
 कौन तार से बीनी चदरिया ॥ १ ॥
 इडा पिंगला ताना भरनी,
 सुखमन तार से बीनी चदरिया ॥ २ ॥
 आठ कँवल दल चरखा डोलै,
 पाँच तत्त्व गुन तीनी चदरिया ॥ ३ ॥
 साँइ को सियत मास दस लागे,
 ठोंक ठोंक कै बीनी चदरिया ॥ ४ ॥

जैसे सती चढ़ी सत ऊपर,
 अपनी काय जरावै।
 माता पिता सब कुटुम्ब तियागै,
 सुरति पिया पर लावै ॥ ३ ॥
 धूप दीप नैवेद अरगजा,
 ग्यान कि आरत लावै।
 कहै कबीर सुनो भाई साधो,
 फेर जनम नहिं पावै ॥ ४ ॥

:४:

If You Want to do the Right Thing : Do It here and now.

भूले मन समझके लाद लदानिया ॥ १ ॥
 टाण्डा लाद कहांको लै जैयो,
 आगे मुलुख बिरनिया ॥ १ ॥
 सौदा करे तो यहि जुग कर ले,
 आगे हाट न बनिया ॥ २ ॥
 पानी पिचे तो रतन कुएँ का,
 आगे घाट न पनिया ॥ ३ ॥
 कहै कबीर सुनो भाई साधो,
 यह पद है निरबनिया ॥ ४ ॥

:५:

Kabir on Separation from God • Constant Bali at the
 time of Death

श्रीति लगी तुव नामकी,
 पल बिसरै नाई।
 नजर करौ मेहर की
 मोहिं मिलौ गुसाई ॥ १ ॥
 बिरह सतावै हाय अब,
 जिव तड़पै मेरा।

तुम देखन को चाव है,
प्रभु मिलौ सवेरा ॥ २ ॥

नैना तरसे दरस को,
पल पलक न लागै।

दर बन्द दीदार का,
निसि बासर जागै ॥ ३ ॥

जो अब के प्रीतम मिले,
करूँ निमिष न न्यारा।

अब कबीर गुरु पाइया,
मिला प्रान पियारा ॥ ४ ॥

: ६ :

The Name of God as the Oil which enables the wick
of Mind to be inflamed with the Fire of God

अपने घट दियना धारु रे।
नाम के तेल सुरत के धाती,
ब्रह्म अग्नि उदगारु रे ॥ १ ॥

जगमग जोत निहार मन्दिरमें,
तन मन धन सब वारु रे ॥ २ ॥

झूठी जान जगत की आसा,
बारंबार बिसारु रे ॥ ३ ॥

कहे कबीर सुनो भाइ साधो,
आपन काज सँवारु रे ॥ ४ ॥

: ७ :

Kabir on a Mystic's life in the Region of Supersen-
suous Experience

महरम होय सो जानै साधो,
एसा देस हमारा ॥ ६ ॥

बेद किताब पार नहिं पावत, कहन सुनन से न्यारा	॥ १ ॥
सुन्न महल में नौबज बाजे, किंगरी बीन सितारा	॥ २ ॥
बिन बादर जहँ बिजुरी चमके, बिनु सूरज उजियारा	॥ ३ ॥
बिना सीप जहँ मोती उपजे बिन सुर सन्द उचारा	॥ ४ ॥
ज्योति लजाय ऋष जहँ दरसे, आगे अगम अपारा	॥ ५ ॥
कहे कबीर बहँ रहनि हमारी, बूझे गुरुमुख प्यारा	॥ ६ ॥

:८:

Kabir on the Sublimity and Ineffability of Mystical Experience

चुबत अमीरस भरत ताल जहँ, सन्द उठै असमानी हो	॥ १ ॥
सरिता उमड़ि सिन्धु को सोखै, नहिं कछु जाय बखानी हो	॥ २ ॥
बाँद सुरज तारागन नहिं बहँ नहिं बहँ रैन बिहानी हो	॥ ३ ॥
बाजे बाजे सितार बाँसुरी, ररङ्कार सृदुबानी हो	॥ ४ ॥
कोटि झिलमिलै जहँ तहँ झलकै, बिनु जल बरसत पानी हो	॥ ५ ॥
दस अवतार एकरत राजें, अस्तुति सहज सयानी हो	॥ ६ ॥
कहे कबीर भेद की बातें बिरला कोइ पहचानी हो	॥ ७ ॥

:९:

Kabir on the Moral and Psychological Effects of Mystical Realisation

रस गगन गुफा में अजर झरै	॥ ८ ॥
बिन बाजा झनकार उठै जहँ, समुझि परै जब ध्यान धरै	॥ १ ॥
बिना ताल जहँ कमल फुलाने, तेहि चढ़ि हँसा केलि करै	॥ २ ॥
बिन बन्दा बजियारी दरसै, जहँ तहँ हँसा नजर परै	॥ ३ ॥
दसवें द्वारे ताली लागी, अलख पुरुख जाको ध्यान धरै	॥ ४ ॥
काल कराल निकट नहि आवै, काम क्रोध मद लोभ जरै	॥ ५ ॥
जुगन जुगन की कृपा गुमाती, करम भरम अध व्याधि टरै	॥ ६ ॥
कहे कबीर सुनो भइ साधो अमर होय कबहुँ न मरै	॥ ७ ॥

: १० :

On the Madness of Intoxication through God-vision

दरस दिखाना बाबला, अलमस्त फकीरा ।	
एक अकेला ट्टे रहा, अस्मत का धीरा ॥ १ ॥	
हिरदे में मौजूद है, हरदम का प्याला ।	
पीवेगा कोई जौहरी गुरुमुख मतवाला ॥ २ ॥	
पियत पियाला प्रेम का सुधरे सब साथी ।	
आठ पहर झूमत रहे जम मैगल हाथी ॥ ३ ॥	
बन्धन काट मोह का बैठा निरसङ्गा ।	
बाके नजर न आवता क्या राजा क्या रंका ॥ ४ ॥	

धरती तो आसन किया तम्बू असमाना ।
 चोला पहिरा खाक का रहा पाक समाना ॥ ५ ॥
 सेवक को सतगुरु मिलै कछु रही न तबाही ।
 कह कबीर निज घर चलो जहँ काल न जाही ॥ ६ ॥

: ११ :

Kabir on the Freedom of Intoxication through God-love

हमन है इशक मस्ताना,
 हमन को होशियारी क्या ।
 रहै आजाद या जग में,
 हमन दुनिया से यारी क्या ॥ १ ॥

जो बिछुड़े हैं पियारे से,
 भटकते दर ब दर फिरते ।
 हमारा यार है हममें,
 हमन को इन्तजारी क्या ॥ २ ॥

खलक सब नाम अपने को
 बहुत कर सर पटकता है ।
 हमन हरि नाम रँचा है,
 हमन दुनिया से यारी क्या ॥ ३ ॥

न पल बिछुड़े पिया हमसे,
 न हम बिछुड़े पियारे से ।
 उन्हीं से नेह लागा है,
 हमन को बेकरारी क्या ॥ ४ ॥

कबीरा इशक का माता,
 दुई को दूर कर दिळ से ।
 जो चलना राह नाजुक है,
 हमन सर बोझ भारी क्या ॥ ५ ॥

: १२ :

On the Equanimity of Intoxication through God-
possession

मन मस्त हुआ तब क्यों बोलै	॥ ८ ॥
हीरा पाव गाँठि गठिवायो, बार बार चाको क्यों खोलै ।	
हलकी थी जब चढी तराजू, पूरी भइ तब क्यों तोलै	॥ १ ॥
सुरत कलारी भइ मतवारी, मदवा पी गइ बिनतोलै ।	
हँसा पाए मानसरोवर, ताल-तलैया क्यों डोलै	॥ २ ॥
तेरा साहब है घट भीतर, बाहर नैना क्यों खोलै ।	
कहै कबीर सुनो भइ साधो साहिब मिल गए तिल-ओले	॥ ३ ॥

: १३ :

The Grace of God in the shape of Anāhata saves
Kabir from the Reign of Universal Deceit

रमैया कि दुलहिनि लूटल बजार	॥ ८ ॥
सुरपुर लूट नागपुर लूटा, तीन लोक भच हाहाकार	॥ १ ॥
ब्रह्मा लूट महादेश लूटा, नारद मुनिके परी पिलार	॥ २ ॥
स्त्रिणीकी मिन्नी करि डारी, परासर के उदर बिदार	॥ ३ ॥
कनफूँका चिदकासी लूटे, लूटे जोगेसर करत बिचार	॥ ४ ॥

हमतो बचि गे साहज दयासे
 सब्द डोर गहि उत्तरे पार ॥ ५ ॥
 कहत कबीर सुनो भइ साधो
 इस ठगिनीसे रहो हुसियार ॥ ५ ॥

: १४ :

Kabir on living in Sahaja Samādhi

साधो सहज समाधि भली ॥ १० ॥
 गुरुप्रताप जा दिन से जागी,
 दिन दिन अधिक चली ॥ ११ ॥
 आंख न मूँदों कान न रूंधौ
 तनिक कष्ट नहिं धारौ ।
 खुले नैन पहिचार्नौ हंसि हंसि
 सुन्दर रूप निहारौ । ॥ १२ ॥
 सबद निरन्तर से मन लागा
 मलिन वासना त्यागी ।
 ऊठत बैठत कबहु न छूटे
 ऐसी तारी लागी ॥ १३ ॥
 कह कबीर यह उन्मनि रहनि
 सो परगट करि गाई ।
 दुख सुख से कोइ बरे परमपद
 तेहि पद रहा समाई । ॥ १४ ॥

: १५ :

Kabir on his having received a message for the
 deliverance of the world

कहूँ रे जो कहिबे फी होइ ॥ १० ॥
 ना कोइ जानै ना कोइ मानै,
 ताते अचरज मोइ ॥ ११ ॥

अपने अपने रंग के राजा,
 मानत नाही कोइ।
 अति अभिमान लोभ के घाले,
 चले अपन-पौ खोइ ॥ २ ॥
 मैं मेरी करि यह तन खोर्यो,
 समझत नहीं गँवार।
 भौजल अन्न पर धाकि रहे हैं,
 बूढ़े बहुत अपार ॥ ३ ॥
 मोही आज्ञा दई दया करि,
 काहूँ कूँ समुझाइ।
 कह कबीर मैं कहि कहि हास्यो,
 अब मोहिँ दोस न लाइ ॥ ४ ॥

: १६ :

Kabir on the Conception of Parivāra-mukti

गुरु ने मोहि दीन्ही अजब जडी ॥ १ ॥
 सो हि जडी मोहि प्यारि लगतु है,
 अमृत रसन भरी ॥ २ ॥
 काया नगर अजब इक बँगला,
 ता में गुप्त धरी ॥ ३ ॥
 पाँचों नाग पचीसों नागिन,
 सूँघत तुरत मरी ॥ ४ ॥
 या कारे ने सब जग खायो
 सतगुरु देख डरी ॥ ५ ॥
 कहत कबीरा सुन भाइ साभो,
 लै परिवार तरी ॥ ६ ॥

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