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तो चालतें ज्ञानाचे बिंब।
तयाचे अवयव ते सुखाचे कोंभ।
माणूसपणाची भांब। लोकांसी भागू।।

सद्गुरू श्री गुरूदेव रानडे
Sadguru Shri Gurudev Ranade

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Appeal for Articles

As any journal depends on articles from potential writers, we appeal all of you to send in articles to us. Self-Knowledge is beyond all religions, caste and creed. Remembering this aspect Nisargavaani will contain wide range of topics not only related to the Self-Knowledge expounded by Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj specifically but also Self-Knowledge teachings of various saints, experiences related to the practice of their methods, biographies, teachings, experiences related to the practice of methods taught by other spiritual masters, teachings and stories from religions other than Hinduism, interpretations of sacred texts and verses, spiritual travel and insights, poetry and of course feedback from our worthy readers. We firmly believe that Spirituality is in itself has a wide and diverse covering aspects.

Suggestions

As a guideline, we request that as far as possible articles should be short (say around 750 words), medium (around 1500 words) or in longer format (around 2300 words).

Please send in your contributions through e-mail to
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EDITORIAL

The Great Contribution of Shri Gurudev Ranade to the Inchgeri Sampradaya

When we look at the history of the Indian spiritual tradition, one distinctive feature becomes particularly evident: its development has not taken place merely through the composition of scriptures, philosophical speculation, or religious institutions; rather, it has been carried forward through the lives of saints who attained direct spiritual realization and through the lineages of disciples who followed them. The Nimbargi or Inchgeri Sampradaya, which developed within the cultural milieu of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and South India, is one such experience-oriented spiritual tradition. In the modern history of this tradition, along with Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar, Shri Amburao Maharaj, Shri Siddharameshwar Maharaj, and Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj, the place of Shri Gurudev Ramachandra Dattatreya Ranade is particularly distinctive. Gurudev Ranade did not merely inherit the spiritual legacy of this tradition; he enriched it remarkably by integrating philosophy, the literature of the saints, comparative study of religions, modern intellectual thought, and experience-based spirituality. Therefore, it would be inadequate to view his contribution merely within the framework of the history of a particular spiritual lineage. Rather, it must be regarded as an important

chapter in the history of modern Indian spiritual thought.

Without understanding the background of the *Nimbargi* tradition, the significance of Gurudev Ranade's work cannot be fully appreciated. The origin of this tradition is closely associated with the spiritual life of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj. Later, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar established *Inchgeri* as an important centre of this spiritual path. Hence, in the course of time, this tradition came to be known as the **Inchgeri Sampradaya** as well. The spiritual practice of this tradition places greater emphasis on **inner transformation** than on external rituals. Through the Name received from the Sadguru, its constant remembrance, meditation, and complete surrender at the feet of the Sadguru, the seeker is guided towards the direct experience of the **Self**, which is the central aim of this path.

Shri Gurudev Ranade was born on 3 July 1886 in Jamkhandi, Karnataka. From an early age, he displayed exceptional intellectual ability and a deep curiosity about spiritual matters. He went on to pursue higher education and emerged as a distinguished scholar in the field of philosophy. Yet, it was the spiritual awakening he experienced in his youth that gave a distinctive direction to his life.

On 25 November 1901, he received spiritual initiation from Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar. This was far more than a mere religious ceremony; it marked the beginning of a spiritual journey that would profoundly shape the course of his intellectual and spiritual life. The spiritual experiences that followed, together with his deep desire to understand their philosophical basis, drew him towards the serious and systematic study of philosophy. According to the entry on Gurudev Ranade in the Marathi *Vishwakosh* (Encyclopaedia) after entering the spiritual tradition of Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj, he began to have profound spiritual experiences. In his quest to understand the philosophical foundation of these experiences, he turned to the study of philosophy. This reveals one of the central principles underlying his entire life and work: for Gurudev Ranade, philosophy was not merely an intellectual pursuit or an exercise of reason; it was a means of understanding, articulating, and giving philosophical expression to spiritual experience.

The most distinctive feature of Shri Gurudev Ranade's personality was the rare and profound synthesis of the scholar and the spiritual aspirant within him. Although he was a university-educated professor, a scholar of philosophy, and a university administrator, he did not approach spirituality merely as an object of academic study. He personally undertook spiritual discipline, sought direct spiritual realisation, and then endeavoured to understand and articulate the philosophical significance of those experiences. Consequently, his thought reflects a remarkable harmony between rigorous philosophical inquiry and the inner illumination born of spiritual realisation. In his understanding, spiritual experience was not contrary to reason; rather, it opened another dimension of knowledge through which some of the fundamental questions of philosophy could be approached more deeply and comprehensively. It was this distinctive standpoint that enabled him to articulate Indian spirituality in a language capable of engaging meaningfully with the modern intellectual world, while remaining rooted in the experiential tradition of Indian spiritual thought.

The principle of the Guru (*Gurutattva*) is at the very heart of the spiritual discipline of the Inchgeri tradition. Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj was a decisive influence in the spiritual life of Gurudev Ranade. The understanding that the Guru is not merely a teacher who imparts instruction, but a Sadguru who guides the seeker on the inward journey towards Self-realisation, was deeply rooted in his spiritual life. Yet Gurudev Ranade's devotion to his Guru was never one of blind imitation or unquestioning acceptance. At the heart of his *gurubhakti* was the earnest practice of the path shown by the Guru and the direct realisation of Truth through that practice. In this way, he gave the Guru–disciple relationship within the Inchgeri tradition the character of a process of spiritual enquiry and verification. His approach was to practise the discipline imparted by the Guru, examine its effects within his own inner life, and ascertain the truth through direct spiritual experience.

In describing the philosophical character of the Inchgeri tradition, Gurudev Ranade is said to have referred to it as the **'Swarupa Sampradaya',** according to the tradition's records. *Swarupa* signifies

the realisation of one's own true Self. From this perspective, the ultimate aim of spiritual practice is not to attain anything in the external world, but to behold and realise the Supreme Truth within oneself. This understanding reveals an intrinsic connection between the Upanishadic tradition, the tradition of the Saints, and the Inchgeri Sampradaya. Gurudev Ranade discerned a fundamental spiritual thread of ***Swarupa-darshana***—the realisation of one's true Self—running through the lineage from ancient sages such as *Narada* and *Yajnavalkya* to saints such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Tukaram, Kabir, Nanak, and Nimbargi Maharaj. Thus, rather than viewing the Inchgeri Sampradaya as a narrow sect, he explained it as a modern expression of India's long and enduring tradition of Self-realisation.

Another profoundly important aspect of Gurudev Ranade's contribution was his elucidation of the philosophical significance of *Nama-smarana* and the practice of meditation. In the Inchgeri tradition, the *Nama* received from the Sadguru is not merely a word to be repeated; it is a means of connecting the seeker's consciousness with the Supreme Truth. The mind is constantly drawn towards external objects. Desires, attachments, greed, ego, and inner restlessness prevent the mind from attaining stability. Through the sustained practice of *Nama-smarana* and meditation, the mind gradually turns inward.

It is here that his approach to **'experiential spirituality'** assumes particular significance. He did not build his understanding of spirituality merely upon philosophical concepts. Rather than engaging in purely intellectual speculation about a principle that cannot be spiritually experienced, he held that it is more important to undertake spiritual practice and realise that truth through direct experience. This approach makes his spirituality both rooted in faith and guided by critical inquiry. A threefold principle emerges in his thought: faith inspires spiritual practice, spiritual practice leads to direct experience, and direct experience provides the foundation for philosophical understanding.

The third, and perhaps the most enduring, dimension of his contribution is evident in his profound study of the literature of the Indian saints. Gurudev Ranade studied the literature of spiritual

realisation in the Marathi, Hindi, and Kannada traditions of the saints. In the works of Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Tukaram, Ramdas, Eknath, Kabir, Guru Nanak, and other saints, he did not see merely devotional literature; he revealed the profound spiritual experience and distinctive philosophical vision underlying it. Through his studies, the literature of saints emerged as 'records of spiritual experience' rather than being confined to the realm of theology or devotional songs. As mentioned in the Marathi Encyclopaedia, he surveyed the tradition of spiritual realisation from the Upanishads through the Marathi, Hindi, and Kannada literature of the saints, and developed an independent philosophical position from it.

The significance of this work is particularly evident in the context of the Inchgeri Sampradaya. For the continuity of a spiritual tradition, the names and biographies of its Gurus alone are not sufficient; it is essential for succeeding generations to understand the spiritual philosophy underlying that tradition. Gurudev Ranade accomplished precisely this.

He placed the practices of *Nama-sadhana*, devotion to the Sadguru, Self-realisation, and the direct experience of God within the broader historical framework of Indian philosophy. As a result, the spiritual message of the tradition was no longer confined to a particular Sampradaya; it emerged as a broader spiritual vision in dialogue with the Upanishads, Vedanta, and the Indian tradition of the Saints.

This broad and inclusive outlook is also reflected in the social ethos of the Inchagiri Sampradaya. According to the teachings of this tradition, the right to undertake spiritual practice should not be determined by religion, caste, region, economic circumstances, educational qualifications, or social status. What is essential for spiritual practice is sincerity, ethical living, faith in the Sadguru, and consistent spiritual endeavour.

Gurudev Ranade's work was not confined to writing books. He was also a highly influential figure in the field of higher education. He taught philosophy at Fergusson College and later served at the University of Allahabad as Head of the Department of Philosophy, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and eventually as Vice-Chancellor. Through his academic

career, he helped establish Indian spiritual thought as a subject worthy of serious engagement within the field of university philosophy. In 1924, he founded the **Academy of Philosophy and Religion** in Pune, encouraging the comparative study of different philosophical systems and religions. He later sought to give an institutional form to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, guided by the broader ideal of spiritual unity.

It is here that one of the most significant aspects of his contribution becomes evident—the dialogue between spirituality and modern academic disciplines. On the one hand, he was a practitioner of a spiritual tradition grounded in the grace of the Sadguru, *Nama-sadhana*, and direct spiritual experience; on the other, he was a professor of modern university philosophy. He did not regard these two worlds as contradictory. He demonstrated that the spiritual experiences of the Indian saints could be studied through the tools of modern philosophy, and that the modern educated mind could also approach spiritual experience through critical and disciplined enquiry. In this way, his life and work became an important bridge between Indian spiritual tradition and modernity.

From the perspective of the Inchagiri Sampradaya, another important dimension of Gurudev Ranade's work was the nurturing and continuation of the Guru–disciple lineage. Following the passing of Shri Amburao Maharaj, Gurudev Ranade undertook the responsibility of initiating seekers into the spiritual path. According to the available records of the tradition, he initiated approximately four thousand seekers, including urban and educated individuals from Maharashtra and Karnataka, as well as some seekers from Christian, Muslim, and Jain backgrounds. Even when this record is viewed with due awareness of the nature of its traditional source, one point becomes clear: the scope of Gurudev Ranade's spiritual work extended well beyond narrow social boundaries.

Through this work, Gurudev Ranade opened up a new social and intellectual milieu for the Inchgeri Sampradaya. Bringing a spiritual path rooted in a rural and traditional devotional culture into dialogue with the educated urban class was by no means an easy task. Yet, because Gurudev's personality embodied a rare synthesis of scholarship and

spiritual practice, he was able to undertake this task with remarkable effectiveness. While explaining the meaning and significance of spirituality to those shaped by modern education, he drew upon reason, philosophy, psychological insight, and the literature of the Saints; while guiding spiritual aspirants, he emphasised the actual practice of *Nama*, meditation, devotion to the Sadguru, and inner enquiry into the Self. This dual role lends a distinctive significance to his contribution.

For Gurudev Ranade, **God-realisation** *(Deva-sakshatkara)* was the highest ideal of human life. Yet this realisation was not meant to be an escape from the world. In keeping with the Inchagiri tradition's emphasis on spiritual practice while living the life of a householder, his broader message was that one should fulfil one's worldly responsibilities while cultivating an inner life centred on God. Spiritual practice, therefore, does not mean a rejection of worldly life.

In this context, ethical purity is another important aspect of Gurudev Ranade's thought. As one undertakes the practice of *Nama-smarana* and meditation, there must be a corresponding transformation in one's conduct. If greed, sensual desire, selfishness, ego, and insensitivity towards others do not diminish, spiritual practice remains incomplete. The teachings of the Inchgeri tradition likewise emphasise, under the guidance of the Sadguru, that the practice of *Nama-dhyana* must be accompanied by freedom from greed and unethical attachments.

Another distinctive feature of Gurudev Ranade's work was that he did not create artificial distinctions between *Bhakti*, *Jnana*, and *Dhyana*. In the Indian spiritual tradition, the paths of devotion, knowledge, and Yoga are sometimes treated as distinct approaches. However, from Ranade's experience-based perspective, these paths share an underlying unity because their ultimate aim is *Atma-sakshatkara*, the realisation of the Self. *Bhakti* teaches the seeker surrender; *Nama* steadies and concentrates the mind; *Dhyana* turns it inward; *Jnana* cultivates discrimination and discernment; and *Atmanubhava*, direct experience of the Self, is the culmination of them all. He articulated this integrated approach to spiritual practice in the Inchagiri tradition within a broader philosophical framework.

The body of literature he created remains the most enduring legacy

of his contribution. Alongside works such as *'A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, Mysticism in Maharashtra,' 'The Bhagavad-Gita as a Philosophy of God-Realisation,' 'Pathway to God in Hindi Literature,' 'Pathway to God in Kannada Literature,'* and *'Vedanta: The Culmination of Indian Thought,'* he published numerous works on the literature of Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Tukaram, Ramdas, Eknath, Kabir, Nanak, and other saints.

His Marathi writings include works such as *'Dnyaneshwarvachanamrut', 'Tukaramvachanamrut,' 'Ramdasvachanamrut,' 'Santvachanamrut,'* and *'Paramartha-Sopan.'*

Through these writings, Gurudev Ranade's contribution became significant in two distinct ways. On the one hand, he gave philosophical and literary expression to the spiritual experiences embodied in the Inchgeri tradition; on the other, he created a broad framework of reference for subsequent scholars studying the literature of the Indian saints. Thus, his work is as significant for spiritual aspirants within the Sampradaya as it is for scholars engaged in the study of Indian philosophy, comparative religion, the literature of the saints, and Indian spiritual thought.

In the present age, the significance of his work becomes even more pronounced. Modern human beings have access to an abundance of information, yet there is often a felt lack of inner peace, mental stability, and a deeper understanding of the ultimate meaning of life. In such circumstances, Gurudev Ranade's message appears profoundly relevant to our times. The development of the outer world is necessary; yet, alongside it, the development of the inner self is equally essential.

Gurudev Ranade's legacy cannot be understood merely in terms of his books, his academic positions, or his Samadhi. His true legacy lies in the integration of spiritual practice and philosophical thought. He demonstrated that, if a great spiritual tradition is to remain alive, it is not enough to preserve its outward forms; one must also understand and preserve the inner experience at its heart. A Guru lineage is not merely a succession of names; it is the transmission of a living spiritual realisation from one generation to the next. In this sense, Ranade made a significant contribution at all three levels—preserving, elucidating,

and disseminating the spiritual essence of the Inchgeri tradition.

Shri Gurudev Ranade passed away in 1957, but his spiritual and intellectual work continued to exert a profound influence long after his passing. The spiritual activities associated with his Samadhi at Nimbal and with his memory continue to hold significance for seekers within the tradition. His legacy can be preserved in a more meaningful manner not merely through devotional remembrance, but through the study of his writings, a critical examination of his philosophical thought, and a deeper engagement with the experiential path of spiritual practice that he expounded.

The essence of Shri Gurudev Ranade's message may be expressed thus: knowledge should not remain confined to the intellect, devotion should not remain merely an emotion, and spiritual practice should not remain a mere ritual; all three must culminate in the direct realisation of the Self.

In conclusion, Shri Gurudev Ranade may be regarded as a remarkable bridge-builder within the Inchgeri Sampradaya—a bridge between tradition and modernity, spiritual practice and philosophy, devotion and discrimination, the literature of the Saints and modern academic scholarship, and individual spiritual realisation and universal spirituality. His contribution, therefore, cannot be summed up simply as the 'propagation of the Inchgeri Sampradaya.' He gave a living spiritual tradition philosophical depth, scholarly stature, literary expression, and the capacity to engage meaningfully with the modern intellectual world.

Jai Sadguru.





श्री निसर्गदत्त समाधी
चॅरीटेबल ट्रस्ट

Nisargavaani

निसर्गवाणी ನಿಸರ್ಗವಾಣಿ **निसर्गबानी**

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A Brief Biography of Professor Gurudev Ranade

Early Years and Meeting His Master

Not far from Umadi, Nimbargi or Kannur, almost in the middle of nowhere, stands the Nimbal ashram. Clean, renovated and pleasant, it has a large hall divided into two by brightly varnished wooden doors, which delimit access to a smaller area where the samadhi of Gurudev Ranade is located. He was a disciple of Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj and a gurubhandhu of Shri Siddharameshwar Maharaj.

Gurudev Ranade was born in 1886 in the town of Jamkhandi and passed away in 1957 in Nimbal. His mother was very religious, so he soon became interested in spiritual matters as well. A school friend, who had saved Gurudev from drowning while he was trying to learn to swim on his own, took him to his master.

This master was Shri Bhausaheb, who initiated him with the mantra in 1901, when he was fifteen years old. Gurudev Ranade was spiritually influenced by his guru Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj, but also by Shri Amburao Maharaj, a fellow student of Gurudev and the most senior of Shri Bhausaheb's disciples.

Amburao, despite his limited formal education, was able to resolve profound metaphysical questions posed by his disciples. For this

reason, he was highly respected by his fellow disciple Gurudev Renade, who treated him as if he were his own guru Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj.

Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj entrusted Professor Ranade with compiling the most suitable bhajans to be sung within the lineage. If anyone knew how to do it, it was he. As an anecdote, we can mention that on one occasion, while Gurudev Ranade was writing a line that said *"Pahile paha-ta shri-mukha,"* which means that "when you see the face of the master, desires disappear," Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj arrived at that very moment and told him to add the phrase he was writing.

Shri Bhausaheb had, at least, ten prominent disciples: Amburao, Venkatrao, Rajid Anjandra, Girimalleshwar, Sidalinga, Shivalingavva, Dattopant, Ramrao, Gurudev Renade and Siddharameshwar Maharaj. Pandurang Maharaj, about whom there is almost no information, should also be added. All of them came for one month each year, between July and August, to the hall where we were at that moment, to meditate, read the Dasbodh and receive teachings.

There, they devoted themselves to this from morning until night without doing anything else. The food permitted during the day was a glass of milk, a date and as much water as they wished. The more we meditate and the deeper the meditation, the more the diet is reduced. From three to four in the afternoon they meditated standing on a large stone ball, remaining balanced in order to exercise greater control over their concentration. From six in the evening until three in the morning, nine consecutive hours of meditation were undertaken, without leaning against the wall and without speaking to anyone. When you submit yourself to this kind of meditative ordeal, even though you hardly speak to anyone, a relationship is nevertheless established among the practitioners. Tears used to flow from the eyes of Shri Bhausaheb when his disciples left, both because of the good relationship they had had and because he knew that when the disciples returned to their homes, they would not be able to maintain that level of meditation.

Gurudev Ranade was a special, brilliant person who had won several student prizes in Maharashtra. He studied in Pune with English professors, at Fergusson College. He excelled in mathematics and Greek philosophy; he spoke more than ten languages, both European

and Indian. His extensive and scholarly body of work shows the interest he had in comparative philosophy and religion.

In 1919, when he was thirty-three years old, he lost his mother, his wife and his son. Professor Ranade married again to a woman named Sitabai, who in time would play an important role in preserving the figure of her husband.

Activity as a Guru

In 1921 he purchased forty hectares of land in Nimbal and built the first Nimbal ashram. His house in the ashram was later converted into his samadhi.

Gurudev Ranade began giving the *mantra* in 1936, after Shri Amburao Maharaj passed away, whom he regarded as the next in the lineage after their master, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj. He gave it to more than four thousand people, many of them educated people from the urban areas of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

At present, the Nimbal ashram has no guru; it is the senior students who teach and give the mantra, but not from guru to disciple. Instead, the initiate makes a random choice of a piece of paper containing a mantra. People continue to come to the temple not only for blessings, but because their lives are transformed.

The Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion

Gurudev Ranade was invited by political parties and associations to become a member of them, but he always declined because it took up too much of his time. Between 1948 and 1953 he taught at a university. At the same time, he maintained an intense academic activity that led him to travel constantly and hold representative positions in different institutions.

In a lecture he gave in 1924, Gurudev Ranade stated that for him spiritual life had been the most important thing and that people were mistaken in believing that he was only interested in intellectual and

philosophical enquiry, as well as that philosophy and religion should go hand in hand.

Gurudev Ranade founded the Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion in 1924, which was first established in Nimbal and was later transferred to the city of Belgaum. Its activities include the publication of books and texts by Gurudev Ranade and other scholars. A small meditation room contains photographs of the samadhis of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, Shri Amburao Maharaj, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj, Shri Shivalingavva and Prof. Gurudev Ranade himself.

Teachings

Here is an example of Gurudev Ranade's teachings concerning initiation by a sadguru, by a master of "superior calibre":

"Necessity of Initiation. — The Upanishads frequently insist on the necessity of initiation by a guru. Unless one is initiated by a guru into the path of Self-realization, one cannot reach the goal of mystical life. Unless the spiritual teacher is of a superior calibre, knowledge will be difficult to attain, and unless the initiation proceeds from a Spiritual Master who has realized his identity with the Self, there will be no knowledge of the subtle path that goes beyond the power of logic and argumentation."[1]

– Antonio Plana

1 Deshpande, M.A., Thus Spake Dr. Gurudeo Ranade (Selection from his writings), *Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion (1995), Belgaum (p. 44)* Source: Research on the field by Antonio Plana, published in a book titled "Sadguru"

If you want an invisible guide, why not take God?

– Swami Ramakrishnananda

Jean Dunn and the Discovery of Nisargadatta Maharaj

During the 1960s and the early 1970s, many foreigners had travelled to India. It was the heyday of the hippie generation, of journeys on the Magic Bus between London and Delhi, and of the *Hippie Trail*, along which young Europeans travelled by car or van to Nepal, Thailand, Afghanistan and India. Thanks to the books of Paul Brunton and Arthur Osborne, the Ramanashram had become one of the most sought-after spiritual destinations. The search for living gurus from whom to learn whatever it was one was seeking represented the ultimate that life had to offer. Ramana Maharshi and other great names had already disappeared. The conditions were ripe.

The next piece of the puzzle was *Mountain Path*, a magazine that was, and still is, devoted to disseminating the wisdom of Bhagvan Ramana Maharshi, that of other great sages, the spirituality of India, and the history of that spirituality. In 1978, an annual subscription cost ten rupees in India, four dollars abroad, or twenty-five dollars for a lifetime subscription. Edited and printed in India and written in English, it was sent to the rest of the world, particularly to English-speaking countries and Europe.

By 1973, ***I Am That*** was already in the hands of many seekers, and visits by foreigners to Nisargadatta's loft had begun to become frequent. At the end of 1978, Jean Dunn wrote an article entitled *Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj*, which drew the attention of people interested in the highest teachings that could be found being transmitted by a living

guru. Jean Dunn knew how to do it; she knew how to write, and she knew what needed to be said because she had been a journalist. Jean Dunn's contribution helped to spread interest in and the fame of the book beyond India.

Jean Dunn (1921–1996) was not simply someone who had read the Frydman-Nisargadatta book. She had been living in Tiruvannamalai for at least three years and was a devotee of Bhagvan Ramana Maharshi. Jean knew that many people from the Ramanashram had already gone to see Nisargadatta. In her case, someone invited her to go to Bombay to meet him because he was a hidden saint, someone who kept himself out of sight and attracted only a few visitors at a time, since his teachings were not intended for the general public. Who was the person who told her to go and see Nisargadatta? It was the Venerable Ganeshan, the great grandnephew of Ramana Maharshi. He gave her a copy of *I Am That* and repeatedly asked her to read it. Eventually, Jean Dunn took his advice and read it.

She went to Bombay and, in her own words, "I was caught in Maharaj's net of grace." She was fifty-seven when she met him. "I loved him at first sight," were also her words to describe that moment. Her cherished concepts were demolished and, somehow, she knew that the truth was there. She received the mantra, and her life came to revolve around Maharaj as a devotee. Her teacher did not want disciples: *"If they come, fine, and if they don't, that's fine too,"* he would tell her. When asked whether it was difficult to live so close to an enlightened person, Jean replied that it was not easy if one had an ego to let go of. Their relationship was very close and, after some time with her, Nisargadatta treated her as a realized person.

Jean Dunn wrote an article in *Mountain Path* magazine (October 1978) which, as mentioned above, was distributed throughout the world.(attached herewith)

Her article consists of two parts. One is the story surrounding Nisargadatta and the book; the other is the essential content of many of its chapters. The first part begins with biographical details taken from the only biography written up to that time, by Shrikant Gogate and P. T. Phadol. Here we reproduce part of the content:

"…In his own words: 'When I found my Guru, he told me: You are not what you take yourself to be. Find out what you are. Watch the sense "I am." Find your real Self… I did as he told me. All my spare time I spent looking at myself in silence. What a difference it made, and how quickly! I needed only three years to realize my true nature.'"

The small loft at 10th Kethwadi Lane, built for meditation many years ago, is crowded every day during the question-and-answer sessions. The walls of the room are covered with portraits of great saints from different religions. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. The noise of the street is forgotten. The small figure of Maharaj is the focus of attention. In appearance he is short, perhaps five feet tall, balding, wrinkled, with penetrating eyes and a contagious smile. Once someone remarked on his large nose and ears, and he replied with a smile, "Perhaps I am descended from Ganesh" (the elephant god), which shows his quick wit and his unconcern with appearances. For a very short time he seems to be an ordinary person, just like you and me. Then you understand that, incredible as it may seem, he is a living example that IT CAN BE DONE, IT MUST BE DONE! Courage is renewed, the mind becomes quiet, and there is a feeling of well-being and happiness.

He jokes, laughs, frowns, snaps his fingers, raises his fist to emphasize a point. Different expressions play across his face like sunlight or water. He is beautiful! One feels his vibrant energy, the pure joy of Being, flowing from him. He answers every question simply, clearly and concisely, without quoting scriptures or putting forward doctrines. He is kind and courteous as he suddenly pulls away all the supports beneath you. Cherished concepts are seen for what they are: mere words. Now one understands the value of satsang.

His message is simple and direct: "You ARE the Self, here and now. Stop imagining that you are this or that. Let go of your attachment to the unreal." The best examples of these teachings are to be found in I Am That.

Jean Dunn became the editor of Nisargadatta's books, and he made sure that the books were properly written and translated. He used to say that the talks contained in those books were the best. Like Frydman, Jean would take the notes or recordings and type them up at night. Nisargadatta was quite happy for her to do it this way. Jean edited and printed one hundred copies of the book *Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization*, and she was the editor of three of Nisargadatta's most celebrated books: *Consciousness and the Absolute, Seeds of Consciousness* and *Prior to Consciousness*.

Jean was completely devoted to him. She was happy in his presence, brought him garlands of flowers, tidied his room and contributed to the well-being of her guru. According to her diary, during *guru-poornima*, celebrated on March 31, 1980, Jean arrived at the ashram and Maya, Nisargadatta's daughter-in-law, took her to where he was so that she could bathe him. Jean soaped and rinsed him and also embraced him.

In 1980 Nisargadatta acknowledged that Jean Dunn had realized her true nature and told her that she had to continue the teachings.

As Nisargadatta became increasingly ill, she looked after him as much as she could, although she was unable to be with him during his final months.

Jean never missed the Western way of life, but she returned to the United States and lived the rest of her life quietly, teaching in Vacaville, California. She lived in a trailer, watched soap operas on television, and whenever she needed money, she would go to Las Vegas to play the slot machines. She smoked constantly and died of pulmonary emphysema in 1996. Sri Ganesan visited her in the United States, as he told me:

Before her death, Jean appointed one of her disciples as her successor. She called herself Ngeton (b. 1939), which in Tibetan means *Original Mind*. Ngeton devoted her entire life to Tibetan Buddhism until, in 1991, she met Jean Dunn, who became her definitive teacher.

Another successor of Jean Dunn, if the word successor can be used in both cases, is Ed Muzica (b. 1942). He holds a doctorate in clinical psychology, with a spiritual background in Zen, and had met the most prominent Zen teachers established in the United States. Before she died, Jean Dunn gave him the portrait of Nisargadatta that she had in

her trailer, together with a copy of *Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization*. Ed was still not satisfied and continued searching. The result was, as he himself puts it, that *"my final teacher was Robert Adams"*—but not entirely; he continued searching.

According to Ed Muzica: *"Jean Dunn had the appearance of an ordinary woman who barely emphasized the depth of Maharaj's teachings because she was integrated into them. Neither she nor Robert really had charisma. If they had anything, it was only emptiness."*

– Antonio Plana

(Source: My book Biografía alrededor de Nisargadatta Maharaj *(2017) Ed. Liebre de Marzo. Barcelona).*

Look here – we shall all die! Bear this in mind always,
and then the spirit within will wake up.
Then only, meanness will vanish from you,
practicality in work will come, you will get new
vigour in mind and body, and those who come
in contact with you will also feel that they have really
got something uplifting from you.

– Swami Vivekananda

Gurudev Dr R.D. Ranade : An Apostle Of God Realisation

Gurudev Ramchandra Dattatreya Ranade (1886–1957) was a renowned philosopher, scholar, mystic and most importantly Sadguru. He was not a whit less in his spiritual and philosophical greatness as compared to the old Rishis like *Yadnyavalkya* and *Vashistha* and saints like *Dnyaneshwar* and *Swami Ramdas*. In addition to this, Gurudev had to his credit the great work of reconciling the different views regarding the existence of God, the super-sensuous nature of Divine experience and the various methods of Meditation. He attached very great importance to meditation on the 'Divine Name', initiated by a spiritual master, who has attained to the acme of Self-Realisation. Gurudev proclaimed 'Theocentric Theory' to the world with a notion, **'One God, One Religion and One World'.** He carried out this through his profound literature with the central idea of God and God Realisation for each and everyone.

By divine grace, the creation of such extraordinary texts unfolded effortlessly and spontaneously through Gurudev for the propagation of the true path of self-realisation. In truth, the dissemination of authentic Self-Knowledge is the very desire and inspiration of the Supreme Being Himself. Among the one hundred sons of *Lord Rishabhadeva* — an incarnation of *Narayana* — who were well-versed in the Vedas and scriptures, nine sons embodied the Divine essence of Narayana. Matured through direct spiritual experience, they attained the state of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Truth-Consciousness-Bliss). It was these very sages who expounded the nature of ***Bhagavata Dharma*** to *King Janaka*.

Later, Lord Krishna commanded them to spread this sacred wisdom of the Self. Obeying His decree, the *Navanarayanas* descended in the era of *Kaliyuga* as the *Navanaths*. Among them, *Chamas Narayana* incarnated as *Revananath*, carrying forward the timeless teaching of Bhagavata Dharma and the realisation of the Divine. This sacred lineage flows uninterrupted from Lord Revananath down to the 22nd *Kadasiddha*, Shri Muppinmuni, continuing through Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj, and Shri Amburao Maharaj, ultimately reaching Gurudev. Through him, this ancient Indian path of Self-Realisation has been revealed to the entire world.

In a sense, Shri Gurudev himself can be regarded as the final, fully blossomed fruit of the tree of Self-knowledge within this spiritual lineage. Born specifically to attain the exalted state of a Sadguru and unfurl the banner of their lineage, Indian spirituality, and devotion across India and the world, it was through Gurudev that the resounding call of Self-realisation echoed globally. Indeed, this sacred mission had been entrusted to him by the Sadguru lineage long in advance—Gurudev's very birth was orchestrated through the divine plan of the Almighty and the founding sages of the tradition. By the supreme grace of the Sadguru, extraordinary literary works emerged through Gurudev effortlessly and organically, serving to illuminate and spread the authentic path of divine realisation, as Shri Dnyaneshwar Maharaj says,

म्हणोनि माझें नीच नवे । श्वासोश्वासही प्रबंध होआवे ।
श्रीगुरुकृपा काय नोहे । ज्ञानदेवो म्हणे ॥(१८.१७३५)

Here is the story of the prophetic words of Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj about this. In the Hindu month of *Kartik* in 1907, during a scripture-reading session at Jamkhandi, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj asked Gurudev to read the text. Turning to Shri Nagappa, the grandson of Nimbargi Maharaj who was seated nearby, Maharaj remarked: "Look here, do not mistake Ramraya for an ordinary seeker. His stature is immense. This Ramraya will compel the foreign souls from across the seven seas to bow before your grandfather's shrine. He is destined to carry your grandfather's glory beyond the ocean." These words of the Sadguru

proved prophetically true as Gurudev elevated the fame of their lineage to boundless heights.

Decades later, Dr. D. Marquez of France arrived in Nimbal with his wife. On the auspicious day of *Datta Jayanti*, December 22, 1954, Dr. Marquez received the sacred Name (Nama). Following Gurudev's guidance, he travelled to Nimbargi to pay his respects at the shrine of Nimbargi Maharaj. In this manner, the foresight expressed by Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj was realised, bringing to fruition the grace-filled blessing of Shri Muppinmuni Kadsiddhswami to Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, "If you practice spiritual discipline as instructed, your fame shall span the horizons."

But this event stands as a symbolic testament. The path of Name-remembrance (*Namasmarana*) and righteous living (*Acharanyoga*) prescribed by Shri Nimbargi Maharaj was carried across the globe through Gurudev's philosophical writings—fulfilling the vision of Nimbargi Maharaj's renown crossing the seven seas.

The profound wisdom contained within Shri Gurudev's incomparable works is, at its core, an expansion of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj's teachings found in the *Bodh-Sudha*. From these spiritual seeds, Gurudev cultivated majestic trees of superlative literature, carrying the spiritual wisdom (*Paramartha*) of Shri Nimbargi Maharaj across the seven seas and fulfilling the prophetic vision of his Sadguru, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj.

Essence of Gurudev's Philosophy

Gurudev played a crucial role in modernizing and revitalizing India's traditional spiritual philosophy. At a time when modern Indian thought was heavily influenced by Western intellectualism and dry academic idealism, Gurudev Ranade systematically re-established the Theocentric (God-Centered) framework of ancient Indian wisdom by synthesizing it with rigorous logic and modern science.

Theocentric or God-Centred theory is quite distinct from the Cosmocentric and the Homocentric theories. This forms the crux of Gurudev's philosophy. It states that everything lives and moves and

has its being in God. The realisation of such Divinity is the summum-bonum of human life. This basic reality of Divine presence and spiritual Realisation was a matter of personal attachment and devotion even in his early stage of life.

Gurudev began his spiritual career only when he was fifteen. As early as 1915, the young Gurudev was invited by the Sanskrit Academy in Bangalore to deliver a series of Lectures on Upanishads. This was a God-sent occasion for him to study the Upanishads most critically and thoroughly. This detailed and critical study of the Upanishads texts in the background of his deep and scholarly pursuit of Indian and Western Philosophy helped him a great deal to grasp the basic principles of Self-Realisation, its Philosophical justification and methods for its attainment and the effects following therefrom. Later on, these lectures were developed into his monumental work **'A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy'.** This was his first publication which brought him great reputation as a renowned scholar and philosopher of international repute all over India and also abroad.

Gurudev's study of philosophy offered him a sound support for his religious and spiritual beliefs. Gurudev's scholastic research for a rational interpretation of mysticism was crowned with unique success in his later life. His "Pathway to God" in Marathi, Hindi and Kannada literature are eloquent on this issue. Philosophy was not merely a process of thinking, but it was actually a way of living for Gurudev Ranade. Gurudev's philosophy is basically a philosophy of spirit! It moves around God as its centre.

Regarding his study of Indian and European Philosophy, Gurudev writes: 'I began my study of Vedanta 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…so my study of European Philosophy came to me as a rebound from my study of Indian philosophy. I began my study of European Philosophy in the year 1910 and when I had gone a long way with it, say till 1913; then I turned back and found that there were great treasures of thought 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'.

Objections against Indian philosophy and Shri Gurudev's solutions on it

In the essay, 'On The Study Of Indian Philosophy' Shri Gurudev addressed the various objections that have been brought against Indian philosophy. Some say that Indian Philosophers study 'Sophistics' and not 'Philosophy'. Another objection states that European philosophy can safely afford to neglect Indian Philosophy altogether, as it would, in no way, contribute to an illumination of the problems of the Philosophy of Europe. It has been variously damned as barren, dogmatic, *'a priori'*; its method has been called scholastic, its results have been estimated as unscientific; its mission has been said to be an evangel of idleness. From various standpoints, it has been dubbed pessimistic, rigoristic, deterministic — it looks upon the world as it would look upon darkness; it fosters a cloistered virtue; it preaches an entire mechanism of morals. Another reason why Indian Philosophy has fallen into neglect is the method of Sanskrit philosophy itself; the watch-word of Indian Philosophers is cumbrousness, not simplicity. These are some of the charges on Indian Philosophy which result in a conclusion that Indian Philosophy contributes the least to the relief of man's estate.

Addressing these objections, Shri Gurudev stated, 'It is an irony of fate that India should have been most known for her philosophy while her philosophy itself should have been more neglected.' Shri Gurudev did not deny *in toto* about these charges but only said that the charges which seem to have been made against Indian Philosophy as a whole are only partially true; and that too of particular systems of Indian Philosophy. There is yet another criticism against Indian Philosophy: that it is a "Block Philosophy" which does not allow of any differentiations; that it represents but one system of philosophy. Gurudev addressed this by saying, 'No greater injustice can be done to Indian Philosophy than making such an assertion about that Philosophy; and having made this, estimating the whole of Indian

Philosophy by that criterion, and grossly exaggerating that estimate. Though, therefore, there might be a grain of truth in the bushel of other unqualified criticism which has been passed upon Indian Philosophy, we beg to point out that the criticism is unqualified, mainly because it is founded upon ignorance, and that this ignorance itself is the necessary outcome of a general neglect in which the study of that Philosophy has unfortunately fallen.' Gurudev extensively examined and discussed these instances of neglect. Gurudev pointed out the cause of this neglect to be the fact that Indian Philosophy has been merely translated, whereas there is a need for its 'interpretations', 'correlations' and 'constructions'. He said, 'When an interpretation and a correlation have been made possible, it is then time for a new 'construction'. Philosophy lives only when it constructs; it dies away when it lives in stagnant water. And, a European philosopher would not think it below his dignity to give attention to any new construction that might be forthcoming even from an Indian scholar. But these three latter processes—interpretation, correlation, construction—require a thorough understanding of European Philosophy; and a Sanskrit scholar would not ordinarily like to have an extra load put over him in that direction. And thus, we find the curious spectacle of European Philosophers not caring for Indian translations, and Indian scholars not caring for European Philosophy.' Therefore, a collaborative effort between European and Indian scholars is essential. He further said, 'Indian scholars who take an interest in Indian Philosophy should cease 'translating'- and commence 'interpreting' the Indian systems in terms of European thought. Without a complete history of Indian Philosophy, we are, as it were, on a chartless sea; and he who would first write a complete history of that Philosophy might thereby confer a great boon on the study of that subject. Nor need the absence of any definite chronology be a serious impediment in his way. For though chronology is a chief ingredient in any history, it need not be the most important one, at least so far as the history of philosophy concerned. It is entirely possible to write history of the problems of philosophy as for example, Janet and Seailles have done in the case of European philosophy. A 'Problem' history of Indian Philosophy might thus take

the place of a chronological one.'

Illustrating how a correlation could be achieved, Gurudev wrote: 'Indian Philosophy is as rich and varied as European Philosophy. It is not until we have shown that Indian Philosophy has such great similarities with European Philosophy, that we can understand the importance of our own Philosophy: it is not until then, that we can understand the significance of Deussen's words "Indians, keep to your Philosophy"'.

On answering the question of whether India can acquire its deserved place in the World's Thought, Shri Gurudev said, 'A correlation of Indian and European philosophies is possible. It is only when a philosophical Plutarch gives to the world a comparative estimate of Indian and European philosophy that the philosophy of India will come to have its deserved place in the world's philosophy. We have seen that **it is the duty of Sanskrit scholars to interpret the philosophies of India in terms of European thought. Then alone is it possible that the philosophers of Europe will begin to take interest in Indian Philosophy.'**

Also, a complete history of Indian philosophy is non-existent. Various attempts are necessary to represent Indian philosophy in its manifold aspects.

'We want people to pierce the rind and reach the kernel, to leave the method and reach the spirit of Indian Philosophy. Let not the dogmatism of method turn away the minds of men from reaching the inner meaning of Indian Philosophy. That meaning we assure them, they will find to be rich and varied: it will favourably compare with the meaning of any philosophy in the world. In this way alone is a true revival of Indian Philosophy possible.'

'We want anthropologists to take interest in Indian Philosophy as a chapter in the world's thought; we want comparative philosophers who will relate Indian Philosophy with European thought; we want lovers of truth who would value Indian Philosophy per se.'

Noting that Indian philosophy could thus reclaim its powerful standing,Gurudev further affirms that it is every bit as superior as any established philosophy in the world, proceeding to delineate its

pinnacle and true significance -

'Indian Philosophy need not be judged by the utility it may confer on man; the Sun may not be judged by the quantity of gas he saves us. Indian Philosophy may not bake any bread; but like its compeer philosophies, it will give man God, Freedom, Immortality. Even if we choose to look at it from the pragmatic point of view, it may be confidently asserted that it will give satisfaction no less than any other philosophy of the globe.'

All the points discussed above refuting the objections against Indian Philosophy to shed light upon its true and pristine nature are found in Shri Gurudev's literature.

It is now necessary to analyse how Shri Gurudev overcame all the false claims and revived the Theocentric germ of Indian Philosophy, which was pioneered by Shri Nimbargi Maharaj, the great master of Shri Gurudev's great master, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj.

Core Contributions to the Revival of Theocentric Thought

1. Formulation of "Rational Mysticism"

Bridging Faith and Reason: Traditional Indian Theocentrism often faced skepticism for relying purely on dogma or emotional devotion. Shri Gurudev introduced the concept of Rational Mysticism, arguing that direct experience of God (*Aparoksha Anubhuti*) is not an irrational or superstitious phenomena, but a higher state of consciousness verifiable by reason and intuitive experience. He stated epistemology through integrating all means in one.

Integral Epistemology: While traditional Indian philosophy recognizes multiple means of valid knowledge (*Pramanas*, such as perception, inference, and scripture), Shri Gurudev synthesized them into a single primary source: direct intuitive experience (*Anubhava*). He argued that all standard intellectual pathways derive their ultimate validity from direct contact with reality. He said,

'**Mysticism** denotes that attitude of mind which involves a direct, immediate, first-hand, intuitive apprehension of God. When Mysticism is understood in this sense, there is no reason why it should be taken to

signify any occult or **mysterious phenomena** as is occasionally done. Also, Mysticism implies a silent enjoyment of God…The ineffable character of mystical experience is closely linked with its intuitional character.'

("शांतपणे, समाधानाने, ईश्वरचिंतनाचा आनंद भोगणे, ही कल्पना साक्षात्कारवादात अंतर्भूत आहे. मनुष्याला धारण करता येण्यासारखी हीच उच्चतम वृत्ती, हेच उच्चतम ध्येय होय.")

2. Ethical System Based on "Theonomy"

From Autonomy to Theonomy: Gurudev restructured ethical thought around what he called Theonomy—the principle that moral values are rooted in divine law and realised through alignment with the divine will. He coined the new word beatification for the blissful state of the liberated and God intoxicated saint.

Beatificism: He argued that supreme virtue and moral perfection lead directly to divine bliss (Beatitude), showing that moral life and spiritual realisation are inseparable.

3. Valorization of the Bhakti Movement

Gurudev Ranade systematically elevated the medieval Bhakti saints (such as Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Basaveshwara, and Kabir) to the status of serious philosophical thinkers. In works like 'Mysticism in Maharashtra' and 'Pathway to God in Kannada Literature', he proved that the vernacular saints had operationalized the esoteric theocentrism of the ancient Vedas and Upanishads into an accessible, lived practice for all people.

He remarked, 'Mysticism is a way of spiritual life, which binds all humanity together. It is not enough for us merely to know what the different philosophers, and the Christians, the Muslims, the Jains, the Buddhists, the Vaishnavites or the Lingayats propound for the attainment of God; it is necessary to analyse what lies behind these philosophies and these religions. We can then discern that essentially the same kind of spiritual teaching pervades them all. I have made this clear in my works, 'Mysticism in Maharashtra' (1933), and 'Pathway to

God in Hindi Literature' (1954). I am going to confirm the same by a study of Karnataka Mysticism.'

4. Reconciliation of Eastern and Western Thought

Gurudev Ranade used his deep scholarship in Western thinkers (such as Kant, Hegel, Plotinus, and Spinoza) to engage with Western philosophy on equal terms. He showed that the ultimate destination of both Western metaphysics and modern scientific inquiries into physics and biology converges on the same spiritual reality identified by ancient Indian sages.

5. Re-interpreting Classical Scriptures through a God-Centered Lens

Shri Gurudev re-evaluated foundational Indian texts to highlight their ultimate goal: God-realisation (*Atma-Sakshatkara*).

1. The Upanishads: In 'A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy', he demonstrated that *Upanishadic* thought culminates not merely in abstract intellectual monism, but in a living, experiential union with the Divine. Explaining the origin of this he wrote, 'though I had begun my study of the Upanishads much earlier than 1915, it was in that year **that I first conceived the idea of a presentation of Upanishadic Philosophy in terms of modern thought**, It was not long before I could discover that the Upanishads contained not one system of philosophy, but systems of philosophy rising one over another like Alps over Alps, and culminating in a view of Absolute Reality **which was worthy of the fullest consideration of our contemporary Philosophers of the West.** With that end in view and in order that the Upanishadic philosophy might be made intelligible to the Western mind, **I boldly struck out the plan of presenting it according to the methods of Western thought, so as to make it understandable and appreciable by those who were trained to think according to those methods.'**

2. The Bhagavad Gita: In 'The Bhagavad-Gita as a Philosophy of God-Realisation', he elevated the Gita beyond a simple treatise on

moral duty (Karma Yoga) or intellectual debate, presenting it as a practical guide to theocentric devotion and beatific union.

We can see all his evolutionary thoughts and its development as seen in his own literature and in his own words.

In the preface to his monumental work, 'A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy', Gurudev explicitly articulates his rationale for presenting the wisdom of all Indian saints through the lens and language of Western philosophy. Within this exposition, he thoroughly refutes the prejudiced perspectives held by numerous Western philosophers regarding the Upanishads and Indian thought, while delivering an illustrated, profound explanation of the supreme bliss of divine realisation (*Sakshatkara*) inherent in Indian philosophy.

Furthermore, to present this wisdom to the world, he established an 'Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion' (Adhyatma Vidyapeeth) and clearly outlined its core objective as follows:

The academy must take all philosophical and religious knowledge for its province, irrespective of differences of creed, caste, nation, or race. The universal vision which must inspire the work of the Academy may be made apparent from the following quotation from the preamble of its Prospectus: "The problem of finding the universal in the midst of particulars, the unchanging in the midst of change, has attracted the attention of every man of vision, whether he be Philosopher or Prince…Knowledge has taken immense strides with the growth of time. Scientific inventions have enormously enriched the patrimony of man. The old order has changed, and a new one has taken its place. Nevertheless, the goal of human life as well as the means for its attainment have remained the same. Unquestionably, the search after God remains the highest problem even to-day, and a philosophical justification of our spiritual life is as necessary to-day as it was hundreds of years ago… "the main subject of study would be Philosophy and Religion", or giving "a philosophical foundation to the human search after the Ultimate". We must combine a philosophic view of reality with an empirical study of faiths, so as to be able to find a reasoned justification for our religious aspirations and attainments"

The Academy of Philosophy and Religion was founded just to

achieve this aim. He also started a quarterly, 'The Indian Philosophical Review'. Another objective of the Academy was publication of books, on both Indian and Western philosophy. Prof. Ranade lays stress on publication because, as he said, they are more durable. He laid emphasis on the clear and exact terminology and wanted Indian Philosophy to be interpreted in the language of Western thought so that gems in Indian Philosophy and Mysticism do not remain hidden. It is noteworthy that the importance of precise technical terminology which is widely acclaimed today was already recognised by Prof. Ranade more than half a century ago. At the beginning of the Prospectus, he observed : "The Academy will try to combine what is of value both in European and Indian philosophy and, let us hope, may offer thought-constructions for the future, in the originality of which and in the theopolitan foundations of which alone may lie the hope of India as a spiritual nation."

As a part of this motive, he prepared an exhaustive scheme of writing an encyclopaedic History of Indian Philosophy as early as 1918; thus accomplishing the long due act of writing of Indian philosophy by Indians. When we glance at the scheme of the work that was programmed, giving due regard both to philosophy and to religion, including in its scope, schools, both orthodox and heterodox, written in Sanskrit and modern Indian languages, we are convinced that it heralds a renaissance in the writing of a systematic History of Indian Philosophy. Another scheme of publishing sixteen volumes dealing with philosophical and religious problems both in East and West was also prepared. The titles of both the schemes are as below:

Eight Volume Scheme

1. The Origins 2. The Creative Period 3. The Synthetic Period
4. The Voice of Dissent 5. The Period of Reconstruction
6. The Crowning Phase 7. Mysticism 8. Modern Tendencies

Sixteen Volume Scheme

1.The Pathway to God
2. Recent Tendencies of European Thought

3. The Metaphysics of Aristotle
4. The Problems of Metaphysics
5. The Search of Religions for God
6. The Mystical Basis of Christianity
7. The Scientific Approach to God
8.The Principles of Theopolity
9. An Outline of Indian Philosophy
10. A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy
11. A Critical Survey of Buddhism
12. The Philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita
13. Vedanta in Relation to Western Thought
14. Indian Mysticism
15. Contemporary Tendencies of Indian Thought.
16. Essays and Reviews. (Some of these saw the light of publication.)

This scheme of an encyclopaedic History of Indian Philosophy was adequately welcomed and praised by Lokmanya Tilak. In September 1918, Gurudev, along with Dr. S. K. Belvalkar and Dr. N. G. Sardesai went to meet Lokmanya Tilak. At that time, Lokmanya was fully immersed in preparations for his trip to England. Yet, such was his passion for the writing of a comprehensive history of Indian philosophy that he spent six hours discussing its proposed outline. He urged them to see this task through to completion. Furthermore, he bestowed his blessings, stating, "Writing the history of Indian philosophy is a great national service, and you are well-equipped to accomplish it." He even remarked that had he not entered politics, he would have undertaken this monumental work himself.

Shri Gurudev mentioned the importance of this study very precisely as follows:

> 'In the twentieth century to-day, after the lapse of another twelve hundred years, under the impact of Western civilisation and Western culture, supported by the infinite progress of modern science and an all-round study of the philosophies and religions of the world, we in India, who are the inheritors of a great spiritual East that has been left to us by our Upanishadic

ancestors, stand face to face with a very difficult problem, namely, that of reconciling mysticism with intellectualism in such a way that any thought-construction that we might put forth on the basis of the eternal truths of *Atmanic* experience suggested to us by the Upanishads, might harmoniously synthesise the claims of Science and Philosophy and Religion, so that our philosophical view of reality may not be disturbed but may only be supported by the advance of modern science, and both our scientific and philosophic views be made to redound in such a way to the glory of God that "the highest link of Nature's chain may only be seen to be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair."

The present writer believes that the Upanishads are capable of giving us a view of reality which would satisfy the scientific, the philosophic, as well as the religious aspirations of man; because they give us a view which may be seen to be supported by a direct, first-hand, intuitive, mystical experience, which no science can impeach, which all philosophy may point to as the ultimate goal of its endeavour, and which may be seen at once to be the immanent truth in the various forms of religion which only quarrel because they cannot converge.'

In this manner, from the supreme vantage point of spreading divine love across the world, Shri Gurudev propounded the path of self-realisation against the backdrop of Western philosophy and language.

(अशाप्रकारे सर्व जगात ईश्वरी प्रेमाचा प्रसार करणे या अत्युच्च भूमिकेवरून श्री गुरुदेवांनी पाश्चात्य तत्त्वज्ञानाच्या व त्या भाषेच्या पार्श्वभूमीवर साक्षात्कार मार्ग प्रतिपादला आहे.)

Shri Gurudev is the greatest saint; he is best described in his own words:

'One has only to remember that it becomes the mission of such a realiser to spread the gospel of God whenever and wherever it becomes possible for him to do so. One God, One World, One Humanity should be his maxim, theo-polity his doctrine.

Whosoever realises the unity or the presence of God can never but direct his life in such a way that the greatness of God becomes not merely understood but also achievable.'

('जेथे जेथे व जेव्हा जेव्हा ईश्वराचा संदेश प्रसृत करणे शक्य आहे, तेथे तेथे व तेव्हा तेव्हा तो प्रसृत करणे, हेच अशा साक्षात्कारी पुरूषाचे कर्तव्य उरते व ठरते. 'एक ईश्वर, एक विश्व, एक मानवता', हाँ त्याच्या आचाराचा आधारभूत सिद्धांत असावा. **ईश्वराधिष्ठित विश्वबंधुत्व** हेच त्याचे ब्रीदवाक्य असले पाहिजे. ईश्वर एकच आहे, तो सर्वत्र भरलेला आहे, हाँ साक्षात्कार ज्याला झाला आहे, तो पुरूष, ईश्वराच्या ऐश्वर्याचे जगाला ज्ञान द्यावे, इतकेच नव्हे तर ईश्वराच्या ऐश्वर्याची जगाला प्राप्ती व्हावी, या एकाच कार्याला आपल्याला वाहून घेतल्याशिवाय राहणार नाही.')

|| राजाधिराज सद्गुरूनाथ महाराज की जय ||

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The knowledge which asks the question
"Who is God and how is He in appearance?"
is itself God ! The Power which is termed as God in
general is the Knowledge "You are" itself.
Knowledge is God. God is the Self.

– Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Shri Gurudev Dr. R. D. Ranade's Lectures and Public Engagements

SYNOPSIS:

By exploring a curated selection of Shri Gurudev's lectures, discourses, and philosophical dialogues, this article attempts to highlight his core themes, their impact, and how audiences responded. Shri Gurudev dedicated his life to spreading Paramartha. Here we try to track his journey between 1915 to 1956, across major cities including Bangalore, Ammalner, Poona, Hubbli, Alandi, Dharwad, Nagpur, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Belgavi, Sangli, New Delhi, Vijapur, Jamkhandi, Gadag. We witness how he possessed a genuine, heartfelt devotion to the spiritual topics he expounded upon, never speaking merely for the sake of talking. Because he always spoke with deep and earnest passion, his words resonated deeply within the hearts of his listeners. *Bhakti (devotion) completely occupied his thoughts, dreams, and very being, constantly finding expression particularly in some of his later speeches* – so much so that the audience could feel that devotion before he even uttered a single word. By slightly modifying Saint Jñāneśvar's words from the Jñāneśvari,

"शब्द पाठीं अवतरे। कृपा आधीं" ॥ 13.263
("Words manifest only after grace")

Gurudev's oratory can be beautifully described as:

"शब्द पाठीं अवतरे। भक्ति आधीं"
("Words manifest only after devotion")

The article concludes with some key take-aways.

A. July 1915, Bangalore:
Topic – 'Upanishadic Philosophy'

The lectures were delivered, under the Presidentship of His Highness the Maharaja of Gaekwar of Baroda at the time of the foundation of the Sanskrit Academy in Bangalore. They provide a brief, though in a very solid, compass all the chief points of Upanishadic thought in their full philosophical sequence. The lectures provided the source material for Gurudev's iconic Granth (Scripture) titled 'Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy'.

Shri Gurudev has once expressed to a close aide *'I have not written anything* in this Granth *whose truth I cannot verify through my own experience'*.

It seems that the lectures were much appreciated in Bangalore and the Maharaja advised that "the lectures be printed in English and the vernaculars, and distributed broadcast, so that the knowledge imparted might be made widely available".

B. December 1928, Nagpur & April 1954, Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi:
Topic – 'The Sublime and the Divine: A study in Comparative Thought'

Initially, three lectures were delivered under the auspices of Nagpur University (under the *Kinkhede* Lectures series). These were later extended to eight in Allahabad and Delhi. The final lecture was delivered at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 16 April 1954, with Dr. Rajendra Prasad presiding.

The lectures provided the source material for Gurudev's classic Granth on Bhagavadgītā titled 'The Bhagavadgītā as a Philosophy of God Realisation'. In this Granth he categorically states *"God-realization constitutes the Apūrvatā, the novelty or the supreme contribution of the Bhagavadgītā"*.

After Gurudev's lecture at Rashtrapati Bhavan, President Dr Rajendra Prasad paid a glowing tribute ending with: "We had the pleasure of hearing a very elevating speech". Shri. Shankarrao Deo, member of Constituent Assembly of India in 1949 was present in the audience and shared his observations in these words "Although my ears were listening to the lecture, my eyes were fixed on his face, and I enjoyed that more than the lecture itself. For by simply looking at his face, I knew that this was a man who was in unison with the Universal Self. By observing the countenance of such men – especially their eyes – we easily get the feeling that although they appear to lead ordinary lives in this world, in reality they dwell in an entirely different world".

C. December 1937, Nagpur:
Topic – Presidential address, 13th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress

Shri Gurudev began in a tone of deep humility. "The honour which has been bestowed upon me by the working committee of the Philosophical Congress is too much for me. I am a man humbly working in my own way. I am indeed very much indebted to the organisers of the Philosophical Congress for inviting me to preside at this XIIIth session of the Indian Philosophical Congress. The honour goes round, and I am a participant in that round for this year. It is only in that capacity that I stand before you to-day".

In this speech, Shri Gurudev propounded his 'philosophy of spirit' with references to recent scientific research, particularly in the fields of Physics, Biology and Neurology. He coined the term **'spiriton'**, which corresponds to the term 'Bindule' used by Jñāneśvara and other mystics. Shri Gurudev highlighted the necessity and value of perfect harmony and cooperation between intellect and emotion, Jnana and

Bhakti. In conclusion and in line with his vision of 'One God One World One Humanity/Religion', he observes that it is only when humanity recognizes the Spiritual Principle that peace and harmony in the world may be established.

D. Aug 1947, Ahmedabad:
Topic – Spiritual Awakening in Gandhi

These lectures were delivered on Aug 6,7,8, 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.

Shri Gurudev highlighted that "Mahatma Gandhi … 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'"

E. April 1947, Pune:
Topic – Jñāneśvara (Kaushik Lecture Series)

This text is an adapted extract from his biography, which was originally written in Marathi, referencing his lecture. "While speaking into the microphone, he began in a tone of deep devotion. He said, 'I am not accustomed to speaking through this scientific gadget, (but since science merely deals with the works of God), a message conveyed through it, is bound to reach out to the entire world'. With this opening, it is easy to imagine how quickly a sense of reverence must have filled the room".

F. December 1951, Sangli:
Topic – Response to a talk by Shri Gangadharrao Deshpande

"God-realisation does not depend merely upon prolonged Sadhana. We cannot be sure of having the vision of God after performing Nama-japa for 25 crores of times. God-realisation requires a tenderness of

heart and an intense hunger for it. When these are present, God is near. At this advanced stage, the tenderness and yearning of Gangadharrao, is really remarkable, unique. Such a softness is rarely to be found in old age. Where this exists, God is not far away".

G. July 1956, Jamkhandi:
Topic – Gurudev's response after various speeches by distinguished speakers on the occasion of his Amrutmahotsav (70th birthday)

श्री गुरुदेव : "जो देवाचे गुप्त रूप दाखवून देतो तो गुरु, अशी गुरु या शब्दाची व्याख्या माझे गुरु करीत. गुरु हाँ देवाच्या गुप्त रूपाशी ऐक्य पावलेला असतो".

(English adaptation based on extracts from his Granth Mysticism in Maharashtra) Only him should we call our Guru, who is able to show God directly to our sight. He who brings into unison the Individual and Universal Selves, he alone is entitled to be called a Guru.

H. December 1956, Gadag:
Topic: Name of God (Shri Gurudev's last public lecture)

This lecture was presided by Swami Sadashivananda. Gurudev expounded on the Kannada spiritual song composed by Saint Sharifsaheb, 'Ide Brahmajnana Nodiko' which roughly translates as *'The utterance of the Name of God is the knowledge of Brahman'.*

He had once expressed to one of his ardent disciple Dr N S Paripatyadar, "Record the song on phonograph and broadcast it everywhere. Even the rustic people should know the meaning of it".

Conclusion – key takeaways

In spreading Paramartha, Shri Gurudev mainly focused on:

- His personal experience.
- The ultimate goal of human life viz. to realise God for oneself and for others.

• The harmony of intellect and emotion – *Jnana* (knowledge) and *Bhakti* (devotion).
• Promoting his philosophy of "One God, One World, One Humanity."
• Prerequisites for God-realization: Developing an intense spiritual hunger paired with a tenderness of heart.
• Explaining the true role of a spiritual teacher.
• The spiritual significance of chanting the Name of God.

All of his actions can be aptly described by one of the most frequently quoted *ovis* from the *Jñāneśhvari* "तरि झडझडोनि वहिला निघ। इये भक्तीचिये वाटे लाग॥ जिया पावसी अव्यंग। निजधाम माझें ॥ (9.516)"

– Mr Bhushan Gokhale
(email: Gokhale.bhushan@gmail.com)

To see God is to be God. He alone is. When you see God in all, do you think of God or do you not? You must certainly 'think of God' for seeing God all round you. You see this and that. Why not see God? All are seeing God always ! But they do not 'Know' it. You find out what God is.

– Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Dnyanoba's Virāṇīs and the Vision of the Supreme Self

Among all the saints, Shri Dnyaneshwar is revered as one of the greatest saints, whose spiritual stature transcends all bounds. Dnyaneshwar composed the Dnyaneshwari, Amritanubhava, Changdev Pasashti, and Haripath. In the Dnyaneshwari, one finds a sublime and harmonious union of philosophy and Self-knowledge. The Amritanubhava is a work enriched with profound spiritual experience. It is a text of extraordinary sweetness and spiritual flavour. Shri Dnyandev says that the principal purpose of the Amritanubhava is to share with the world, and spread far and wide, the knowledge of the Self that he received through the boundless shower of his Guru's grace.

As mentioned above, Changdev Pasashti and Haripath are other original works composed by Dnyandev. The abhangas of the Haripath are immensely renowned among the followers of the Warkari tradition. The abhangas of Dnyaneshwar form an invaluable and inseparable part of ancient Marathi poetry. It is as though Marathi abhangas were born solely to give expression to the experience of love for the Supreme Being. The spontaneous and exquisite expression of a heart filled with divine love is what the Marathi abhangas truly embody. It appears that Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Namdev were the two saints who initiated the tradition of composing abhangas. According to traditional belief, Dnyaneshwar first composed the *Dnyaneshwari*, *Anubhavāmṛuta*, and *Changdev Pasashti*, and thereafter his *abhangas*. It is generally

believed that, in the company of the saints, and particularly through the close association of Sant Namdev, the love and devotion for the Divine within Dnyaneshwar overflowed, and the spontaneous stream of abhangas naturally sprang forth from his lips.

There are eleven hundred abhangas attributed to Dnyaneshwar. Among these, the abhangas that express states such as the company of the virtuous (satsang), remembrance of the Divine Name, an unceasing yearning for the Lord, a loving quarrel with Him, and contemplation of Him are renowned as Dnyaneshwar's Virāṇīs. In this article, we shall explore some of Dnyaneshwar's Virāṇīs.

While reflecting upon these Virahiṇīs, or Virāṇīs, the most contentious and debated issue concerns his amorous or śṛṅgāric abhangas. In the book Selected Abhangas of Dnyaneshwar, author P. N. Joshi expresses the view that many scholars have found it difficult to accept that Dnyaneshwar, a saint of intense renunciation, could have composed Gavaḷaṇīs and Virahiṇīs in the language of śṛṅgāra. He has discussed this subject extensively in his thesis and in several articles. In these writings, he has presented numerous evidences to establish that the Gavaḷaṇīs, particularly the Virāṇīs, are indeed compositions of Dnyaneshwar. P. N. Joshi further states that Vinobaji too has included these Virāṇīs in his book Bhajans of Dnyandev. A curious and earnest student of the subject should study the books mentioned above. Scholars such as K. V. Gajendragadkar, S. G. Tulpule, and S. D. Pendse, among others, find it improper, inexplicable, and impossible to accept that these śṛṅgāric abhangas could have been written by Dnyaneshwar, who was the very embodiment of renunciation.

In this article, without entering into that debate, we shall seek to understand some of his exquisite and profoundly poetic Virāṇīs.

Virāṇī No 1

Ghanu vaje ghunghana, vara vaje runjhuna, bhavataraku ha kanha, vegee bhetava kaa (1)
chandavo chandane, chapevo chandanu, devakinandanuvin, navade vo (2)
chandanachi choli, maajhe sarv ang poli, kanho vanamalivegi

bhetava ka(3)
sumanachi sage,sital vo niki,pole aagi sarkhi,vegi vizava ka.(4)
tumhi gatsa susware, aekoni dhave uttare,kokile var-jave,tumhi baiyanno (5)
darpani pahata ,rup n dise aapule bap rkhumadevivare vitthale, maj aise kele(6)

Explanation:

"Ghanu vaje ghunaghunā, vārā vaje ruṇjhuṇā" is a very popular *Virāṇī*, sung in the melodious voice of Lata Mangeshkar. In the opening lines, the clouds are thundering with a deep, solemn rumble, while the wind too is blowing with a soft, tinkling sound. The clouds are gathering in the sky, and the gentle drizzle of rain is about to begin. At such a moment, Dnyaneshwar's *virahiṇī* becomes intensely restless and yearns to meet Devakīnandana without delay. This dark-hued Kanhā is the One who delivers the soul from the ocean of worldly existence—the Bhavatāraka. Unable to contain the intensity of her longing to meet Him, she turns to her companions and pleads, "Come, take me swiftly to meet Him."

In the second stanza, she says: What is the use of the moon rising in the sky, of its gentle moonlight, of the blossoms of the fragrant *chāphā* flowers (frangipani blossoms), or even of the fragrance of sandalwood, if Devakīnandana is not there? Without Him, none of these delights her; nothing has any charm for her in His absence.

She goes on to say: "Now take me swiftly to meet that Vanamālī, for the sandalwood bodice brings me not the slightest coolness. On the contrary, it burns my entire body and intensifies the unbearable heat within me." The anguish of separation from the Supreme Being has set her whole body ablaze; this burning can be soothed only by meeting Him. Hence, she is filled with an intense longing to behold that dark-hued, beloved Lord. She pleads with her companions, "Take me to Him at once; let me meet Him without the slightest delay."

In the fourth stanza, she says: "Upon this cool and refreshing bed adorned with flowers, every part of my body has become scorched

like fire because of my separation from the Supreme Being. O my companions, come swiftly and quench this burning by taking me to Him without delay." The only remedy for the consuming fire of separation is the touch of the Divine Presence, and therefore her yearning to meet Him becomes all the more intense.

She says to her companions, "O dear ones, you are singing melodious songs and trying to entertain me. But please keep away the plaintive, yearning notes of the cuckoo from your singing; let them not find a place in your song. They only intensify my restlessness and make my longing all the more unbearable."

In the final stanza, this Rādhikā says: "Śrī Kṛiṣhṇa is about to come, and I have adorned myself to welcome Him. I went to the mirror to see how I looked, and what a wonder! I could no longer see my own reflection there. Instead, I beheld Viththala, the Supreme Being, in my own place in the mirror. The Lord, the beloved of Rakhumāī, has brought me to such a state of divine ecstasy that I have become almost mad with love. I have become so completely one with Him that His form alone is reflected in me."

The intensely restless state of this *Virahiṇī* has been portrayed by Dnyandev with exquisite poetic artistry, drawing upon the sights and sounds of nature—the clouds, wind, moon, moonlight, *chāphā* blossoms, sandalwood and the cuckoo—and upon the qualities of things such as sound, fragrance, heat and coolness. Through the language of *Madhurā Bhakti* and the profound sweetness of divine love, Dnyaneshwar gives an intense expression to the seeker's yearning for the vision and direct realisation of the Supreme Being.

Revered Shri Vinoba Bhave, while speaking of this *Virāṇī* in his book *Bhajans of Dnyandev*, says that a stage comes in the life of a spiritual seeker when the separation from God becomes overwhelmingly intense. Such an experience is impossible to describe in the language of the world. Yet, in order to convey something of it for the human mind to grasp, the experience is expressed through the language of longing and separation. In this state, everything that is cool and soothing in the world becomes a source of burning anguish to the devotee, while even sweetness begins to taste bitter. Dnyandev describes his own

experience thus: when one looks at the body, sometimes nothing at all is perceived; at other times, something entirely different appears; sometimes, in place of the body, the very form of God begins to reveal itself; sometimes there is emptiness, sometimes delusion, sometimes intense yearning... Such is this strange and extraordinary state.

(Reference: ***Bhajans of Dnyandev — Vinobaji Bhave****)*

Virāṇī No. 2

Paḍale dūra deshī, maj āṭhave mānasī, Nako nako hā viyog, kaṣṭa hotātī jīvāsī. (1)
Dinū taisī rajanī, maj jhālī vo māye, Avasthā lāvonī gelā, ajūna kā na ye? (2)
Garuḍavāhanā gambhīrā, yeī gā dātārā, Bāp Rakhumāīdevīvarā, Shrī Viṭhṭhalā. (3)

Explanation:

The abhang *"Paḍale dūra deshī"* was rendered immensely popular by the revered vocalist and *Gāna Saraswatī*, Kishori Tai, who sang it with an intense and poignant yearning. In this abhang, Shri Dnyandev portrays the state of the *Virahiṇī*—one who is physically separated from her beloved, who has gone to a distant land, yet whose heart remains constantly immersed in his remembrance, leaving her sorrowful and tormented by separation.

The *Virahiṇī* of Shri Krishna says, "I can no longer bear this separation from You. My mind has become restless with Your remembrance, and my very being is filled with anguish. Just as I cannot sleep during the day and remain awake, even at night sleep eludes me because of Your remembrance. I am wholly absorbed in the thought of You. Even the night passes in a state of wakefulness, just like the day. For me, day and night have become one and the same. You have left me with nothing but this constant remembrance of You. Your thoughts keep returning to me, yet You Yourself do not come. I remain completely absorbed in longing for You. You have left me in such a state—then why do You still not come?"

Your vehicle is the king of birds, Garuḍa, whose flight is swift as thought. Therefore, O Garuḍavāhana, O majestic and profound One, come swiftly across the distant land to meet me. O compassionate Giver, O Beloved Lord of Rakhumāī, O Viththala, come to me without delay!"

Thus, through the voice of the *Virahiṇī*, Dnyandev gives exquisite expression to the soul's intense yearning for the Divine. The physical separation from the beloved becomes a profound symbol of the seeker's longing for the Supreme Being, whose remembrance alone fills the heart, while His absence makes every moment unbearably difficult.

This abhang is composed in remarkably simple lucid language. While commenting on the similarity in language and thought between the *Dnyaneshwari* and the abhangas, Revered Gurudev Ranade observes that the language of the abhangas, which became popular after the *Dnyaneshwari*, appears much simpler. The reason for this is that these abhangas were memorised and passed down orally by people for many years, and were subsequently written down and published from memory. Consequently, the language of the abhangas appears more modern and easier to understand.

He further observes that a study of Dnyandev's abhang literature enables one to say, without hesitation, that the thoughts expressed in the abhangas are as rich in spiritual insight and poetic genius as those found in the *Dnyaneshwari*—indeed, they may be even more profoundly inspired. Shri Dnyaneshwar has poured his entire heart into his abhangas. While the *Dnyaneshwari* is predominantly intellectual in its expression, the abhangas are predominantly emotional and devotional. Gurudev Ranade feels that the profound inner feelings of Shri Dnyaneshwar, his diverse and exalted spiritual experiences, and his vision of the world find a fuller and more complete expression in his abhangas than in the *Dnyaneshwari*.

In the book *Selected Abhangas of Dnyaneshwar,* P. N. Joshi observes that, elsewhere too, Dnyaneshwar is seen employing the language of *śṛṅgāra*, as he does in the *Virāṇīs*, in order to express the intensity and anguish of the heart. Dnyaneshwar also portrays Shri Krishna of Gokul, with a vivid description of His divine form. In the *Dnyaneshwari* and

the *Amritanubhava*, while describing the unity of the individual soul (*jīva*) and Shiva (*Shiva*), Dnyaneshwar has, on several occasions, employed language imbued with the imagery of love. At the very heart of devotion to the Divine lies love itself. He further points out that, even in the *Narada Bhakti Sutra*, while describing the ideal of separation and union in divine love, it is explicitly stated, "Yathā vraja-gopikānām." It is for this very reason that the spiritual wisdom embodied in these *Virāṇīs* carries the devotion to the Divine to its highest plane.

The same thought finds expression in the abhang **"Paṇḍharapurīchā nīḷā, lāvaṇyāchā putḷā, Viṭhā dekhiyelā ḍoḷā, bāī ye vo!"** Let us now turn to this *Virāṇī*.

Virāṇī No. 3

Paṇḍharapurcā nīḷā, lāvaṇyāchā putḷā, Viṭhā dekhiyelā ḍoḷā, bāī ye vo! (1)
Vedhalē vo mana, tayāchiyā guṇī, kṣaṇabhar na visambē, Viṭhṭhala Rukmiṇī. (2)
Paurnimēche chāndaṇē, kṣaṇakṣaṇā hoye ūṇē, tasē mājhē jiṇē, ēkā Viṭhṭhalē viṇa. (3)
Bāp Rakhumādevīvaru, Viṭhṭhalūchī purē, chitta undara a murē, bāī ye vo! (4)

Explanation:

There is an immense, almost celestial joy in listening to the *Virāṇī "Paṇḍharapurcā nīḷā, lāvaṇyācā putḷā, Viṭhā dekhiyelā ḍoḷā"* in the voice of the eminent vocalist Rahul Deshpande. In this abhang, Dnyaneshwar's *virahiṇī* says, "I have beheld with my own eyes that dark-blue Viththala of Pandharpur. He is the very embodiment of beauty. I am enchanted by His divine form, but it is His virtues that have captured my heart even more deeply. My mind has been irresistibly drawn towards Shri Viththala. Having experienced the joy of beholding His dark-blue form, I cannot bring myself to forget Viththala, the Beloved of Rukmiṇī, even for a single moment."

She then offers a beautiful analogy. The *virahiṇī* says that the moon,

which shines in its full splendour with all its sixteen phases on the night of the full moon, gradually wanes, day after day, until it disappears altogether on the night of the new moon. In the same way, she says, my life too is becoming diminished. If I do not behold the form of that dark-hued, beloved Lord and do not experience His divine presence, my life too will gradually become like the moon that disappears into the darkness of the new-moon night. She suggests that separation from Viththala will slowly fill her with despair and sorrow. Therefore, Shri Viththala, the beloved Lord of Rakhumāī, is all that she needs. In Him alone she has found fulfilment; body, speech and mind have all dissolved completely in Him. In another abhang, *"Rūpe sundara sāvaḷā ge māy"*, Dnyaneshwar describes Vithoba of Pandharpur as *sāvaḷā*—dark-hued and beautiful. Here, however, He is described as *nīḷā*—the dark-blue One, the very embodiment of beauty

The spiritual experiences of Shri Dnyandev were varied and of an exalted nature. At times, he experienced the radiance of inner light; at times, the experience came as divine sound; at times, as bliss; sometimes as a manifest divine form, and at other times as an experience of colour. In this regard, Gurudev Ranade says that within a cavity of the brain lies the *Sahasrāra*, the thousand-petalled lotus, which is the abode of the Divine and the source from which the bliss of the Self arises. To the spiritual seeker, through purified inner vision, various colours and hues—red, white, blue and yellow—become perceptible.

In one of his abhangas, Dnyandev says that he beholds shades of black, blue and dove-grey; his eyes become absorbed in an invisible vision, and he longs for the blue hue to remain forever established within his mind. Even while abiding in this very body, the pure radiance of the Self becomes visible to his eyes.

He appeared in a form immeasurable and beyond all price; that dark-hued Beloved has filled my heart, within and without. Having beheld that dark-blue, supreme One, the very Lord of the universe, words fail to describe Him. He alone is the Self. I have seen Him with these very eyes, and He remains imperishable.

In other abhangas, Shri Dnyandev describes his experience of this divine blue in words such as these: "In the blue night, the dark-blue

One plays hide-and-seek; He reveals Himself and becomes visible in His dark-blue form. The blue hue has pervaded the entire universe. I have beheld the Blue Divine, and that blue has spread everywhere. The vast sky itself seems to have dissolved into the blue. The Blue Supreme Brahman, the very form of Krishna, abides within my heart." In these and other such expressions, Shri Dnyandev describes his profound experience of the divine blue.

Having beheld this blue form, the *virahiṇī* has experienced the bliss of Brahman—the bliss that transcends the senses. She does not wish to be deprived of the ecstasy of that transcendental vision. The joy she has found in the blue radiance of Vithoba of Pandharpur is itself complete and sufficient for her. Her *chitta*, her very mind and heart, has become completely immersed in that divine consciousness; it has dissolved and found its ultimate repose in that *Chaitanya*.

The mention of Krishna's divine blue in the many poems of the renowned Marathi poet B. B. Borkar also comes to mind here. In another abhang, Dnyaneshwar says that he too has become one with the blue-hued Supreme Being, immersed completely in that divine blue and coloured by its presence.

In essence, it becomes evident from these *Virāṇīs* that Dnyaneshwar is not singing of the pleasures of the senses, but of the bliss of oneness with the Supreme Being—the bliss of non-duality.

Virāṇī No. 4

Pāchā dāmāñchā ghoṅgaḍā nesēna, uralī moṭa tē mī jēvīna gē bāīyē. (1)
Kāmārī kāmārī kāmārī hōūna, yā Gōpāḷāchē ghara righēna gē bāīyē. (2)
Tyāchā uṃbarā uśīsā karīna, varī yērajhāra mī sārīna gē bāīyē. (3)
Nivṛttī Jñānadevā pusatīla varma, tyāsī kāmīna purēna gē bāī yē. (4)

Explanation:

Shri Balkrishna Dada Vasantgadkar has sung this *Virāṇī* of Dnyaneshwar with profound yearning and intensity. Let us now turn to its meaning.

In this *Virāṇī*, Dnyaneshwar's *virahiṇī* says to Viththala, "Give me only the vision of Your Divine Form; that vision alone will liberate me from the ceaseless cycle of birth and death." She asks for nothing else. In her utter longing, she tells Viththala, "Even if the only garment I have is a coarse, rough cloth worth a mere five coins, I shall gladly wear it. I do not desire rich or embroidered garments; I do not even desire sumptuous food. O Shri Hari, I shall be content to live on the four morsels left over from Your plate."

"I shall remain in the house of this Gopāla as the servant of His servant. I seek no power or position. To attain His vision, I am willing to endure anything. I shall live in His house, or simply lie at the threshold of Shri Hari's dwelling. By doing so, my endless wandering through the cycle of birth and death will come to an end."

Thus, this *virahiṇī*, consumed by longing for the vision of Viththala, yearns only for His presence and His Divine Darshan. Her sole desire is to bring the endless cycle of birth and death to an end. She longs for *Jīvanmukti*—liberation while still living—and knows that the direct, immediate vision of the Supreme Being will set her free.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj concludes by saying, "If my Sadguru, Shri Nivṛttināth, were to ask me the secret of this longing, then, through His grace, I would fulfil even this desire—to become the humble servant of Shri Krishna and give Him my answer."

All the Gopīs of Gokula regarded Shri Krishna as their beloved and surrendered their very hearts to Him. How could they remain bound without attaining liberation? Such was the intensity of their devotion. Their love for Shri Krishna was absolute; they were prepared to surrender everything they possessed to Him and to endure any hardship for His sake. Though their language may appear *amorous*, and their imagery too may be drawn from the language of love, at its heart was nothing but unwavering and pure devotion. For a great devotee and yogi such as Dnyaneshwar, such language becomes merely a means—used out of necessity—to express an experience of the highest order of devotion.

Shri P. N. Joshi, a scholar and student of Dnyaneshwar's abhangas, observes in his book that it is essential to understand Dnyaneshwar Maharaj's *Gāvaḷaṇīs* and *Virāṇīs* from this perspective. While

conveying, in essence, experiences such as the intensity of devotion, the heart's deep yearning, the anguish of the mind, and the immeasurable bliss of union with the Divine, great saints are sometimes compelled to employ the language of love. This is because Dnyandev has also employed such language elsewhere to express the intensity and anguish of the heart. There is, therefore, considerable scope for future scholars and researchers who wish to undertake a deeper study of Shri Dnyaneshwar's literature and philosophy, particularly in relation to these aspects of his work.

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Spirituality is not to be learned by flight from the world, or by running away from things, or by turning solitary and going apart from the world.
Rather, we must learn an inner solitude wherever or with whomsoever we may be.

– Meister Eckhart

The Spiritual Path of Pujya Shri Gurudev Ranade

The fundamental essence of the Nimbargi Sampradaya, whose foundation was laid by Shri Nimbargi Maharaj and upon which Shri Gurudev Ranade raised the pinnacle, is the direct vision of the Supreme Lord. Accordingly, Self-realisation is the ultimate goal of human life. The *'Soul'* means of attaining such direct realisation of the Divine is the *Sabija Nama* bestowed upon the disciple by the supremely compassionate Sadguru, and the spiritual discipline associated with it—that is, the uninterrupted remembrance of the Name with single-minded devotion.

Thus, the spiritual path begins with the Sadguru. The first step, therefore, is to understand the nature of the Sadguru, the characteristics that define the Sadguru, and the role of the Sadguru in the spiritual journey. The next consideration is the very heart of spiritual practice—the *Nama*—its significance and its power. The path to Self-realisation is meditation undertaken with the *Sabija Nama* received through the grace of the Sadguru. What, then, is this *Sabija Nama*? It is the Name received by the Sadguru at a very high spiritual level and transmitted by him to the disciple. The Name thus has its source in the Sadguru's transcendental spiritual experience. It is called *Sabija* because, when the practice reaches a certain stage of spiritual maturity, the Name becomes the means through which the seeker realises the other Names of the Supreme Lord. In the Nimbargi Sampradaya, this is expressed as ***'Nama becoming Nama.'*** Through the Sadguru's initiation and instruction, this Name is deeply established in the disciple's mind. The

next step, therefore, is to understand the process of meditation.

The Sadguru and the *Nama* mentioned above are both received effortlessly, by virtue of our accumulated merit from previous lives. The third and equally important element, however—the process of meditation—is not something that is simply received; it has to be cultivated through practice. Shri Gurudev has offered an excellent and detailed analysis of how this practice is to be cultivated in almost all of his works. Under the headings **"Pilgrimage"** and **"Methodology of Meditation,"** he has elucidated the process of meditation in *Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, Pathway to God in Kannada Literature,* and *The Bhagavad Gita as a Philosophy of God-Realisation*. It is this very process of meditation that we need to understand clearly.

The meditation process outlined by Shri Gurudev in his work *The Bhagavad Gita as a Philosophy of God-Realisation* has been taken as the primary framework here, and an attempt has been made to bring together, under the respective headings, the corresponding insights found in his other works as well. In this book, he presents the process of meditation under three distinct headings.

Methods of Meditation and Contemplation

A. Intellectual and Philosophical Contemplation

This is particularly useful for those inclined towards philosophy and intellectual enquiry.

B. Contemplation on Virtues

Ethical contemplation; this is particularly useful for those inclined towards moral and ethical values.

C. Spiritual Contemplation or Meditation

This practice is beneficial and accessible to everyone.

One may wonder whether the first two methods are relevant to everyone. However, this is not so. Every individual, to a greater or

lesser extent, has a philosophical, intellectual, or ethical orientation; therefore, these methods have their relevance and usefulness according to the individual's inclination.

Intellectual and Philosophical Contemplation — Ideational Meditation (Meditation on the Idea of God)

This was a method that emerged from Shri Gurudev's own spiritual insight and experience. It may be particularly helpful to those inclined towards philosophy and intellectual enquiry. In this method, one contemplates the attributes of God.

Shri Gurudev says that one may contemplate the following ten attributes of God:

1. **Purushottama** — the Supreme Being
2. **Sutra** — the unifying thread underlying all existence
3. **Vaishvanara** — the Universal Being or cosmic principle of life
4. **Ravi** — the Divine Light
5. **Mayi** — the Lord and Master of Maya
6. **Rasa** — the essence of Divine bliss
7. **Tajjalan** — That from which all arises, by which all is sustained, and into which all returns
8. **Atishthana** — the support or foundation of the universe
9. **Jneya** — that which is to be known
10. **Ashcharya** — the wondrous or marvellous

Thus, we have before us a vast field of contemplation on the attributes of the Supreme Lord. In *Dhyanopakarini Gita*, Shri Gurudev has included this very section as an aid to meditation. It would also be beneficial for spiritual aspirants to read this section before sitting down for meditation and contemplation. However, it cannot be said with certainty that such contemplation alone will lead to the realisation of God. Shri Gurudev has said that, nevertheless, it can at least help the seeker take a few steps forward on the path of spiritual realisation.

Ethical Contemplation (Contemplation on Virtues)

Those who do not have faith in a personal God or in God may

contemplate God through the virtues themselves. Such **'contemplation on virtues'** is also practised as a spiritual discipline in the Theosophical Society. Which virtues should one contemplate? These virtues are described in the first two verses of Chapter 16 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Abhayam sattva-samshuddhir jnana-yoga-vyavasthitih;
Danam damash cha yajnyash cha svadhyayas tapa arjavam.
Ahimsa satyam akrodhas tyagah shantir apaisunam;
Daya bhuteshv aloluptvam mardavam hrir achapalam.

These verses enumerate the divine qualities to be cultivated and contemplated upon: **fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, charity, self-restraint, sacrifice, self-study, austerity, straightforwardness, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, inner peace, absence of slander, compassion towards all beings, freedom from greed, gentleness, modesty, and steadiness.**

Among these, **non-violence, purity, self-restraint, equanimity, courage, compassion, humility, and forgiveness** are particularly important. But is merely meditating upon virtues sufficient? What purpose is served by merely contemplating the fearlessness and purity of heart described in the *Gita*? Aristotle holds that **"Virtue is action."** Dnyaneshwar teaches that knowledge must find expression in one's actions. It is through righteous action that one's character is transformed and virtuous qualities become part of one's nature. Shri Gurudev goes a step further and declares, **"Virtue is knowledge."** In his work *Dhyana Gita*, while presenting a list of virtues in the section *Sadguna Samuchchaya*, he aptly gives it the title **"Sadgunanam Jnanabhedah" — "Virtue and Knowledge bear no distinction."**

Overall, Shri Gurudev placed great emphasis on assimilating these virtues into one's character. This, by itself, may not lead to the realisation of God; yet, Gurudev says that it prepares the **"gunpowder."** Once the gunpowder is ready, only a single spark is needed to bring about a great spiritual explosion. In this way, contemplation on and assimilation of ethical virtues has its own important place on the spiritual path.

Spiritual Contemplation

The most important of all is **spiritual contemplation, or direct meditation.** Shri Gurudev says that this form of contemplation is beneficial to everyone. All great spiritual aspirants have followed this very discipline. What we need to understand is which aspects are primary and which are secondary. The points discussed here are relevant to all seekers—whether one is a beginner, an experienced practitioner, or one who has made significant progress on the spiritual path.

Shri Gurudev has identified four aspects in this process of contemplation:

1. The Physical Process
2. The Mental Process
3. The Devotional Aspect and
4. Divine Grace

When all four of these aspects reach their fulfilment, the method of spiritual contemplation may be said to have attained its purpose.

1. The Physical Process

In *The Bhagavad Gita as a Philosophy of God-Realisation*, Gurudev discusses three aspects of the physical process—**posture, breath, and gaze**. In the *Doha* section of *Hindi Paramartha-Sopan*, he also highlights the significance of **the moment, the breath, and meditation in silence**. We shall consider each of these aspects one by one.

1) Posture

Many people believe that mastering the posture is everything in meditation, and that once the posture has been perfected, the essential work is done. Shri Gurudev, however, makes it clear that this is not so. Even if one masters the posture, it does not by itself take the seeker very far on the spiritual path; nevertheless, it does have some definite value. The seeker should therefore make proper use of this benefit.

Patanjali says, **"Sthira-sukham asanam"**—the posture should be steady and comfortable. To steady the mind, the body must first be

brought to stillness. Merely repeating the Name while moving about may give the impression that one is practising with concentration, but true steadiness and one-pointedness do not arise in this way.

As for *Sukhasana*, Shri Gurudev says that any posture in which one can sit or recline comfortably for a considerable length of time and meditate on God with a joyful and peaceful mind is a useful posture. In his *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali likewise speaks of adopting a posture in which the seeker can remain for a long time in meditation, with the mind becoming filled with ease and contentment, without feeling the urge to move from that posture. Shri Gurudev did not favour the rigid, stiff posture often adopted by young people today. He preferred a posture that reflected humility and naturalness. In other words, even one's manner of sitting should convey a sense of humility.

2) Control of the Breath

Control of the breath brings about many beneficial effects. It improves the functioning and vitality of the lungs, strengthens the heart, enhances the supply of oxygen to the brain, and thereby brings freshness and vitality to all the cells of the body. Yet, through these physical benefits alone, one does not attain the Supreme Lord.

The Bhagavad Gita says, *"Pranapanau samau kritva"*—making the *prana* and *apana* equal. Ordinarily, *apana* is slightly stronger than *prana*. But when *prana* and *apana* become equal, it is said that the mind too attains a state of equanimity. Hence, one is advised to repeat the Name as many times while inhaling as while exhaling.

However, this practice must not become merely mechanical. Shri Gurudev's Sadguru, Shri Bhausaheb Maharaj, used to say, **"Bind it with love and affection."** The breath should be regulated with love, with devotion (*bhakti*). As this practice continues, the breath gradually and effortlessly comes to a standstill without the seeker consciously trying to stop it. This state is known as *Kevala Kumbhaka*. Shri Gurudev says that this state is certainly conducive to higher spiritual contemplation.

Shankaracharya too has regarded *Kevala Kumbhaka* as the highest form of *Kumbhaka*:

"Sahasrashah santu hatheṣu kumbhāḥ, sambhāvyate kevala-

kumbha eva."

Many forms of breath-retention (*kumbhaka*) may be practised in Haṭha Yoga, but *Kevala Kumbhaka* is regarded as the highest and most natural form.

Shri Gurudev further explains: "It is a sort of *Kumbhak* where no attempt at *Kumbhak* is made." In other words, this is a form of *Kumbhaka* that cannot be attained through deliberate effort. He further describes it as:

"It is a state of breath or breathlessness automatically induced."

It is, therefore, a state that arises spontaneously, without any conscious attempt to control or suspend the breath. In this state, the body and mind remain in a state of equilibrium.

I particularly prefer **"a state of equilibrium"** for "शरीर व मन समपातळीवर राहते" here, as it sounds more natural and philosophically appropriate than the literal "remain at the same level."

Here is a polished translation that keeps Gurudev's specific terminology and preserves the distinction he makes between the **physical position of the eyes** and the **true spiritual object of meditation.**

3) Gaze

The Bhagavad Gita advises the seeker to keep the gaze fixed on the tip of the nose. Shri Gurudev explains that *nasikagra drishti* can be understood in two ways: **"tip of the nose"** or **"top of the nose"**—that is, either the lower tip or the upper part of the nose.

Fixing the gaze in this manner can help withdraw the eyes from external objects of perception and direct them towards something internal. The gaze can then be fixed upon the form or object that one wishes to contemplate. However, Gurudev further clarifies:

"Our sight must be directed to the spiritual object of perception but not to the physiological tip of the nose, either up or down."

Fixing the gaze at the tip of the nose may help steady the mind to some extent and keep it withdrawn from external objects, but there is little purpose in attaching greater importance to it than this.

In the verse *"Moune hididu mudre balidu"*, while explaining the meaning of *mudra*, Gurudev says that Haṭha Yoga speaks of *Khechari*,

Bhuchari, and various other *mudras*, but these physical forms are not the true essence of *mudra*. Rather, **any position of the brain and eyes that enables one to concentrate the mind is the real mudra.**

For example, if you look straight ahead, perceive a particular form, and the mind becomes concentrated upon it, that state itself constitutes a true *mudra*. Similarly, the state in which the mind becomes concentrated while listening to *Nada*—the inner sound—is also a true *mudra*.

This section can be rendered naturally while preserving the important distinction between **Nāsikāgra-dṛṣṭi**, the appearance of the spiritual form, and the meanings of **nyāsa** and **dhyāsa**:

Until the form becomes visible, directing the gaze inward in this manner is useful. But once the form begins to appear, Shri Gurudev says that the gaze should be fixed upon it. Therefore, he advises that undue importance need not be attached to *Bhuchari* or *Khechari Mudra*.

Following this, two very important terms are **Nyāsa** and **Dhyāsa**. **Nyāsa** means mentally placing the syllables of one's mantra upon different parts of the body. **Dhyāsa**, on the other hand, means repeating the mantra with devotion and an intense sense of absorption.

This section can be translated in a dignified, flowing style while retaining Gurudev's emphasis on the value of the present moment:

We shall now consider three important points discussed in connection with the *Dohas*.

1. The Importance of the Present Moment

A spiritual aspirant must recognise the immense value of the present moment. As the well-known *Doha* says:

"Kaal karo so aaj kar, aaj karo so ab;
Pal mein pralaya hoyegi, bahuri karoge kab?"

What you have planned to do tomorrow should be done today, and what you intend to do today should be done immediately, without delay. A seeker should not waste even a single moment of life pursuing

trivial or unworthy pursuits. Death is ever ready to overtake you at any moment; it does not wait to see whether you have completed your work or not.

Shri Gurudev says:

"Every moment that is given to us in this life must be turned to the best spiritual account."

2. The Importance of the Breath

In the same way, a spiritual aspirant should not allow even a single breath to go to waste, for there is no certainty that the next breath will come. Shri Samarth says that even during a sneeze, yawn, cough, or hiccup, the seeker should not allow precious time to be wasted. Even the brief moment required for the eyelids to close is a moment lost.

"Shvaas shvaas par Hari bhajo"
With every breath, remember and worship the Lord.

Shri Kabir says that instead of using a rosary of beads, we should make a rosary of our breaths. Even when a *japa-mala* is made of wooden beads or coral, knots have to be tied at intervals to string the beads together, and the rosary also has a *Meru* bead. In the rosary of the breath, however, there are no such knots or *Meru* bead to interrupt the flow. These knots can create an interruption in meditation, while the *Meru* bead can turn the mind towards counting. **"God is numberless."** The Divine is beyond number. Realisation does not come merely from repeating the Name a greater number of times. What is required is **"the Quality and Intensity of the heart"**—the deep yearning and devotional feeling within the heart. Therefore, let the Name be repeated with the rosary of the breath, rather than with a rosary of beads. Meditate upon the Supreme Reality with intense yearning; then you will come to experience that **you yourself are that Reality**. In this way, you become one with the Divine.

3. Silence and Meditation

The third and final important point is **silence and meditation**.

Meditation should be practised in silence. There is little purpose in repeating the Name of God aloud. If the One who can hear even the footsteps of an ant can hear such subtle sounds, will He not hear the call arising from your innermost heart?

Kabir too places great emphasis on **internal meditation**. In the verse *"Ajar Amar Ik Naam Hai…"*, Kabir says: **"Binahin mukh se jap karo, nahi jeebh dulao."**

That is, repeat the Name without moving the lips or the tongue.

According to Vedanta, there are four levels of speech—**Para, Pashyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari.** One must go beyond these four levels of speech. While repeating the Name, a subtle vibration is naturally felt in the throat. The seeker must go beyond even this vibration. How this is to be done, however, cannot be expressed in words.

Summary of the Physical Process

The seeker should sit in a **steady and comfortable posture**, fix the gaze upon the spiritual form, and endeavour to bring *Prana* and *Apana* into equilibrium. In other words, the seeker should repeat the Name with love—repeating as many Names while inhaling as while exhaling—and remain mindful that not even a single breath should be allowed to go to waste.

It is preferable to make the **breath itself the rosary** rather than rely upon a rosary of beads. The seeker should recognise the value of every moment and ensure that not even the present moment is wasted. Meditation should be practised in *silence*.

2. The Mental Process

This is of great importance. Shri Gurudev says that without accomplishing this, even the slightest degree of spiritual realisation is impossible.

1. Yajna — (The Sacrifice)

Here, a particular form of *Yajna* is prescribed. What is this *Yajna*? The Bhagavad Gita says:

Śrotrādīnīndriyāṇyanye Saṁyamāgniṣu juhvati |

Śabdādīn viṣayān anye Indriyāgniṣu juhvati ||
Sarvāṇīndriyakarmāṇi Prāṇakarmāṇi chāpare |
Ātmasaṁyamayogāgnau Juhvati jñānadīpite ||
(Bhagavad Gita 4.26–27)

The Bhagavad Gita teaches that the objects of the senses, such as sound, are to be offered into the fire of the senses; the sense organs are then to be offered into *Prana*, *Prana* into the mind, and the mind into the Self.

This process of *Yajna* must continue at each successive stage. When all these stages have been traversed and the sovereignty of the Self alone prevails, one may say that an important milestone on the path to spiritual realisation has been reached.

2. Victory over Lust and Sensual Desire

Kamā—lust or sensual desire—must be regarded as one of our foremost enemies. Conquering *kāma*, or the desire for sense objects, is an extremely difficult task. Yet, for one who succeeds in overcoming it, progress on the spiritual path becomes considerably easier.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, *kāma* has three seats: The senses, the mind, and the intellect.

"Indriyāṇi mano buddhirasyādhiṣṭhānam uchyate."
(Bhagavad Gita 3.40)

The Gita also describes the chain of consequences arising from *kāma*:

"Dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate |
Saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate ||
Krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ |
Smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati ||"

Thus, *kāma* must be conquered first. Just as a mirror is covered by dust, fire by smoke, and an embryo by the womb, our spiritual life is veiled by sensual desire. This veil must be removed; only then can the Self truly manifest.

3. Concentration

When a seeker sits down to meditate, Shri Kabir humorously describes the state of the mind:

"Mālā to kar meṁ phire, jīh phire mukh māhī; manuvā to das disi phire, yah to sumiran nāhī."

The tongue keeps moving within the mouth, the hand keeps moving over the rosary, while the mind wanders in all ten directions. Kabir calls this **false meditation**.

The Bhagavad Gita likewise says:

"Karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya ya āste manasā smaran | Indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā mithyācāraḥ sa uchyate ||"

(Bhagavad Gita 3.6)

That is, even if one restrains the organs of action while allowing the mind to dwell upon sense objects, such practice is merely hypocrisy or self-deception. Nevertheless, at the initial stage, one must at least follow the principle: ***"Man gaya to jaane do, mat jaane do sharir."*** Let the mind wander if it must, but do not allow the body to wander. The physical discipline must come first. Thereafter, the seeker must gradually learn to bring the wandering mind back to the Self. The Bhagavad Gita says:

"Yato yato niścharati manaś chañchalam asthiram | Tatas tato niyamyaitadātmany eva vaśaṁ nayet ||"

(Bhagavad Gita 6.26)

Whenever the restless and unsteady mind wanders towards any object, the vigilant seeker should restrain it from that object and repeatedly bring it back, establishing it in the Supreme Self.

Shri Basaveshwara says: "Just as the *chakora* is solely concerned with receiving the light of the moon, the lotus with the rising of the sun, and the honeybee with obtaining nectar from the fragrant flower, so too I have but one concern: How shall I attain the vision of God?"

The third essential requirement for successful meditation is that the mind must be completely filled with **one single object—the**

Divine. The seeker must refuse entry to every other thought or object. The mind should have room only for God. Shri Gurudev says that it is only when this state is attained that spiritual meditation bears fruit. He also explains how this can be accomplished: **"The wandering mind must be continually drawn inward until it becomes steady within."**

The verse Shri Gurudev uses to illustrate the nature of such concentration is: ***"Yā vidhi mana ko lagāve, mana ko lagāve Prabhu-pad pāve"….*** The mind must become so completely one-pointed that the Divine appears to stand directly before the seeker. This verse gives three examples to illustrate the intensity of such concentration:

1. The acrobat walking on a tightrope.

2. The serpent that keeps its attention fixed upon the jewel on its head, even while extending its tongue to taste drops of dew.

3. The example of a *sati*.

Saint Kabir says that our concentration should be as unwavering as that of these three.

And after this, as stated in the verse ***'Guria Ogadeno Brahmake'*** in Kannada mysticism…. "We should shoot at Brahman with an unswerving mind." For this, the essential requirement is: "We should lose consciousness of our bodily existence." The body may be imagined as a gun, and the Name bestowed by the Sadguru as the gunpowder with which it is loaded. Once all the preparations have been made, the seeker should sit down for meditation in a state of alertness and stillness. Just as a gun must be held steady while taking aim, the mind too must be held absolutely steady and directed towards Brahman. In this way, the various desires and negative tendencies are gradually destroyed, and the process of spiritual realisation begins.

Finally, the Bhagavad Gita teaches that even when one gains mastery over the senses and the mind, the subtle attraction and longing for sense objects do not disappear entirely. The Gita further says that this residual taste for sense pleasures disappears only upon experiencing the Supreme:

"Viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ | Rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate ||"

(Bhagavad Gita 2.59)

Thus, the seeker should remain constantly attentive to and deeply contemplate the intuitive or illuminative experiences (prātibha anubhavas) that arise through concentrated meditation. In doing so, the lingering attraction towards sense objects gradually diminishes. This, indeed, is the very purpose and transformative function of such spiritual experiences.

Summary of the Mental Process

The senses must be kept withdrawn from their objects; they should not be allowed to wander here and there. Attention should be directed towards the breath, using it as a means of gathering and steadying the mind, and the mind should ultimately be centred upon God.

One must strive to overcome *kāma*—sensual desire. At the initial stage, one should follow the principle: ***"Man gaya to jaane do, mat jaane do sharir."*** *Let the mind wander if it must, but do not allow the body to wander.* Thereafter, the ever-wandering mind must be repeatedly drawn inward and firmly established in the Supreme Self. The mind should be kept peaceful, free from fear and from any overpowering disturbance. There should be but one concern: **When shall I behold God?** The mind should become completely filled with the single thought and object of God. The seeker should then sit for meditation in a state of alertness and stillness, ultimately losing even the awareness of the body.

3. The Ethical Process

The ethical process is as essential to the attainment of meditation as the mental process. Shri Gurudev identifies four important aspects of this process.

1. Active Search for the Object of Realisation

There can be no place for passivity here. The seeker must not be careless, nor should there be any complacency or mental self-satisfaction. One must not think, "Things will happen by themselves," or "Everything will happen when the right time comes." The seeker must remain alert and make a conscious and sustained effort. Kabir

says: ***"Jin khoja tin pāiyā, gahrē pānī paiṭh; hauṁ baurī būḍan ḍarī, rahī kinārē baiṭh."*** Those who truly seek are the ones who receive the fruit of their efforts. A door does not open unless it is knocked upon. The Upanishads too declare: ***"Nāyam Ātmā balahīnena labhyaḥ."*** *This Self cannot be attained by one who lacks strength and earnest effort.* The pearls lying at the bottom of the ocean cannot be obtained without diving deep into its depths. The Gujarati poet Pritam likewise says: ***"Hari no mārag chhe śūrāno, nahi kāyaranuṁ kāma joṇe."*** *The path to Hari is for the courageous; it is not a path for the faint-hearted.* Those who remain merely on the shore of the ocean may find shells, but they will not find pearls. If the seeker does not make vigilant and sustained effort, the goal will continue to elude him. God has extended His hand towards us; we too must hold it firmly. Otherwise, we may lose our hold and let that divine opportunity slip away.

2. Care Not for the Derision of the World

Another quality that a spiritual aspirant must cultivate is **"Care not for the derision of the world."** The seeker should remain indifferent to the ridicule, mockery, or jealousy of others. In the modern world, meditation undertaken for the sake of God may receive little recognition or appreciation. Nevertheless, the seeker must continue the inner search with steadfastness and determination.

3. Meditation on God in Every State of Mind

The third quality that Shri Gurudev says a spiritual aspirant must cultivate is the ability to meditate upon God **regardless of one's state of mind.** One should remember God both in happiness and in sorrow. Tulsidas says:

"Tulsi aise Naam ko, rījhi bhajo ya khījhi; khet paṛe bīyā jame, ulṭi paṛe ya sījhi."

Just as a seed sown in a field will germinate whether it falls one way or the other, so too the remembrance of the Divine bears fruit regardless of the state in which the Name is taken.

In another *Doha*, Shri Tulsidas says that even if the Name is taken with faith, without faith, out of laziness, or even with hostility,

it ultimately brings auspicious results. Thus, Shiva remembered the Name with faith, Valmiki without faith, Kumbhakarna out of laziness, and Ravana with hatred—yet all were ultimately successful. Shri Gurudev says: "Good things such as the repetition of the Name are registered in the brain, and when the appropriate time comes, they inevitably bear fruit."

4. Ego or God — Choose

The fourth quality required of a spiritual aspirant is the renunciation of **egoism and the desire for worldly recognition.** As Gurudev puts it, **"Egoism or God—choose."**

Rahim says:

"Rahiman gali hai sānki, dūjo na ṭharāhi; āpu ahai to Hari nahīṁ, Hari to āpu nahīṁ."

"Piyā chāhe prem-ras, rākhā chāhe mān; ek myān meṁ do khaḍag, dekhā sunā na kān."

The lane is narrow; there is no room for two. If the ego is present, God is not; and when God is present, the ego has no place. One may either desire the nectar of divine love or preserve one's pride and honour. Two swords cannot occupy the same sheath. Thus, unless we completely relinquish the ego, we cannot make genuine progress in the spiritual life.

5. Meditation in the Presence of God

The final quality is that the seeker should practise meditation **in the presence of God.** This is an especially important aspect of the spiritual path. Shri Kabir says in his Doha:

"Kabīrā dhārā agam kī, Sadguru dai lakhāya; Ulṭī tāhī sumiran karau, Swāmī sang milāya."

The *dhārā* refers to the **stream of light** that the Sadguru reveals to the disciple. One interpretation of the *Doha* is that the seeker should meditate with the help of this stream of light, taking the presence of the Lord as the support for meditation.

Sant Bahironi too says that meditation does not reach its culmination unless it is practised in the presence of God. (***"Sanmukh Sāṁvarā khaḍā ho…"***—the Lord stands directly before the seeker.) Just as meditation may be practised through **Rūpa-anusandhāna**, by

maintaining an inner awareness of the Divine Form, it may likewise be practised through **Nāda-anusandhāna**, by following the inner sound. Meditation through *Nāda-anusandhāna* is of great importance.

In his verse **"Apne Ghat Diyana Baru Re,"** Shri Kabir gives two disciplines for the spiritual aspirant—one positive and the other negative. As the negative discipline, he says that we should cultivate the habit of "forgetting the world from time to time." At intervals, we must consciously withdraw from the world and turn inward. As the positive discipline, he says that the goal must be kept constantly before our eyes, and that we must continue to move steadily towards it. What happens when this is practised? **"Jagmag jyot nihār mandir mein."**

The seeker begins to behold the radiance of the Divine. The presence and grace of God become perceptible, and this is an indication of further progress on the spiritual path. Once that Divine Light begins to reveal itself, we should offer our entire body, mind, and material resources—*tan, man, dhan* to it. In other words, every aspect of our being should be dedicated to nurturing and intensifying that Divine Light. It is for this reason that Shri Kabir says that the Name itself brings about the union of the Divine and the devotee.

In Kannada mysticism, the verse ***"Bilva Patrada Dharisi Bekanna"*** speaks of the *Bilva Patra* as symbolising the two eyes. By concentrating the eyes upon the tip of the nose and practising meditation, the seeker, through the grace of the Sadguru, may begin to perceive the inner Light or hear the inner *Nāda*. The seeker is then advised to remain absorbed in these experiences and continue the meditation. What happens then? "God might take into his head to make an appearance before you." That is, God may choose to reveal Himself before you.

But lest He might appear and run away – **We should look at Him gently and continuously. "Do not allow Him to run away."** *("Dharuni Keshava āṇā bhāvabaḷe")* In that way, we could get a glimpse of vision of God due to which all dreadful sins will be destroyed. And then what will happen – You will be enabled to move in this world as an embodiment of Eternal Purity You will be a great purifier yourself. purifying yourself and making also other people pure in this world of mortals. (K.M. 200)

We sing in the *Ārati* every day: ***"Sadguru-cheni sange aisi ārati keli, Nivṛtti ānandāt tethe vṛtti nimāli."*** Shri Gurudev has described the practice of repeating the Name with the breath alone as **Pre-realizational meditation**, while the kind of meditation described above as **Post-realizational meditation**.

Summary of the Ethical Process – Active search for God

The seeker must engage in an **active search for God**, remain indifferent to what people may say, practise meditation in every state of mind, renounce egoism and the desire for worldly recognition, and meditate in the presence of God.

The Devotional Aspect — The Place of Bhava and Bhakti in Meditation

This is of great importance. So far, we have considered all the principal stages of the spiritual path—the grace received from the Sadguru, meditation with the help of the Name, and the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of meditation. Crowning all these stages is the seeker's intense yearning for the realisation of God.

Shri Gurudev says in his book on the Bhagavad Gita: What is the use of merely looking at the tip of the nose or even controlling breath or trying to purge the mind of all sensual and sexual ideas? Unless we feel an earnest devotion to God, i.e. *Bhav* or *Bhakti*, nothing would be of any avail whatsoever. Unless an **exclusive and wholehearted devotion to God**, accompanied by a single-minded feeling of love and yearning, arises within the seeker, nothing else will be of any real value from the standpoint of God-realisation.

The essential requirements for successful meditation suffused with *bhava* are beautifully brought together in the following verse from the Bhagavad Gita:

"Ananya-chetāḥ satataṁ yo māṁ smarati nityaśaḥ | Tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ Pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ ||"

(Bhagavad Gita 8.8)

Three points are conveyed here:

1. Ananya-chetatsva — One-Pointed Devotion

An exclusive and single-minded devotion to God must arise

spontaneously within the heart. The mind should have no competing attraction or attachment to anything else.

2. Nityaśaḥ — Constant Remembrance

Spiritual practice should be pursued without allowing even a single moment to go to waste.

3. Nitya-yuktatva — Unbroken Continuity

The practice of meditation must continue day after day, month after month, and year after year, right up to the final moment of one's life.

Shri Patanjali too has expressed these same three principles in his *Yoga Sutras*:

"Sa tu dīrgha-kāla-nairantarya-satkārāsevito dṛḍha-bhūmiḥ."

Practice becomes firmly established when it is pursued **for a long period, without interruption, and with deep reverence and earnestness.**

When all these requirements are fulfilled, success on the spiritual path becomes assured. **Bhava, or devotion, is the most fundamental and indispensable requirement for Realisation.** Unless our devotion gives rise to a spirit of complete surrender, and unless we entrust ourselves entirely to God with the attitude, *"Let whatever happens by the will of God happen,"* we cannot attain any substantial success on the spiritual path.

All the stages of this meditative discipline may have been fulfilled; yet meditation will not attain its ultimate fruition without what Shri Gurudev calls **"Plus something"**—the grace of God.

5. The Three Stages of Divine Grace Described in the Bhagavad Gita

First Stage

God bestows *Buddhi-yoga* upon the seeker. In other words, the seeker's understanding gradually becomes oriented towards the conviction that one should devote oneself exclusively to the worship

of the Supreme Lord.

"Teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam |
Dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te ||"
(Bhagavad Gita 10.10)

Second Stage

God reveals the **Lamp of Knowledge** to the seeker. In other words, the seeker begins to have experiences that transcend the ordinary senses.

"Teṣām evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jaṁ tamaḥ |
Nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsavatā ||"
(Bhagavad Gita 10.11)

Third Stage

The seeker attains eternal and supreme peace.

"Tam eva śaraṇaṁ gaccha sarva-bhāvena Bhārata |
Tat-prasādāt parāṁ śāntiṁ sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam ||"
(Bhagavad Gita 18.62)

Shri Gurudev says:

"God must be moved and it is only when He is moved that He will move the world by His Grace." In other words, **our devotion must move the heart of God; once His heart is moved, He will move the entire universe through His Grace.**

॥ Rajadhiraj Sadgurunath Maharaj ki Jai ॥

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PATH OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Sadguru

Name

Meditation Process

Intellectual Contemplation	Ethical Contemplation	Spiritual Contemplation
For logicians and intellectuals Contemplation on the 10 attributes of God	"Gunpowder" For moralists	For everyone, seekers of all levels

PHYSICAL PROCESS	MENTAL PROCESS	ETHICAL PROCESS	DEVOTIONAL ASPECT	DIVINE GRACE
(The breath may be made use of to some extent.) 1. Posture 2. Breath 3. Gaze 4. Importance of Meditation 5. Importance of Breath 6. Meditation in Silence	(Very important; without accomplishing this, even the slightest realisation is impossible.) 1. Yajna 2. Victory over Desire 3. Concentration – mental peace, renunciation, no overpowering thought within 4. God-realisation to eliminate the taste for sense objects	1. Active Search for God 2. Disregard what people say 3. Meditation in every state of mind 4. Renunciation of Egoism 5. Meditation in the Presence of God	(As important as the mental process) 1. *Ananya-chetas* – one-pointed devotion 2. *Nityashah* – constant remembrance 3. *Nitya-yuktatvam* – uninterrupted continuity 4. *Namasmarana* with reverence 5. Surrender	1. *"Dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ-tam"* (I grant them that Buddhi-yoga) 2. *"Teṣām evānu-kampārtham"* (Out of compassion for them) 3. *"Tat-prasādāt parāṁ śāntim"* (By His grace, supreme peace)

‘Vachanamrute’: Jewels from the Ocean of Maharashtra’s Saint Literature

Taiseṁ adhyātmaśāstrīṁ yiye । Antaraṅgachi adhikāriye ।
Parī loku vākcāturyeṁ । Hoīla sukhiyā ॥ 1750 ॥

– Dnyaneshwari

In the realm of spiritual wisdom, it is the inner self that alone is the true authority; yet, through the eloquence of these sacred teachings, people shall find joy. *To discern whether a spiritual experience is true or false, one’s own inner being is the ultimate touchstone. Yet, equally significant is the fact that the study of the literature of the saints brings fulfilment and blessedness to the reader.*

This is the verse from the *Dnyaneshwari* that appears on the very first page of ***“Vachanamrut,”*** from the spiritual works of Param Pujya Dr. Gurudev Ranade.

This is precisely the purpose of the ***Adhyatma Granthamala*** initiated by Gurudev Ranade with the aim of bringing the literature of the saints to a wider readership. The essence of the prefaces to these books may, by and large, be expressed in his own words:

> *The principal purpose of this series of books is to reveal and elucidate, through the literature of Maharashtra, the sublime nature of the spiritual path. It is the sacred duty of the literature*

*of the saints to dispel the various misconceptions surrounding spiritual life and to unfold the true nature of the spiritual path in its purity. It will be seen that the experiences described in the works of the saints are of a nature that can satisfy the discerning intellect. Taking into consideration the thoughts and experiences of Western and Eastern philosophers and realised souls, there is a need to write a work that will be of spiritual value to the people of the modern age—**applying scientific criteria, testing them against one's own experience, and examining them with a critical and analytical intellect.**"*

Gurudev Ranade had, in fact, begun his study of the literature of the saints of Maharashtra as early as 1914–15. He compiled a selection of passages from the *Dnyaneshwari* and Tukaram's *Abhanga Gatha*. At that time, in 1918–19, he was serving as a college professor. Desiring to have his understanding examined by an acknowledged authority in the field, he sent the passages which he personally selected to Vishnubuva Jog Maharaj for his scrutiny.

Shri Jog Maharaj read the selections and, turning to Hon'ble Sonopant Dandekar, who was Gurudev's student as well as a disciple of Shri Jog Maharaj, exclaimed with admiration:..**"Ah! Just look at how beautifully your professor has selected and compiled these passages!"**

In 1919–20, Gurudev delivered a lecture at Alandi on **"Self-Realisation in the Upanishads."** The lecture was delivered in a calm and composed manner, following a clear and logical approach. At the conclusion of the gathering, Pujya Vishnubuva Jog Maharaj said to Gurudev, **"Rambhau, I have read the Upanishads many times and have heard them expounded by many people. But what you have shared today is something quite different. I am deeply delighted."**

The specific words ***"applying scientific criteria, testing them against one's own experience, and examining them with a critical intellect…"*** carry profound significance. After attaining Self-Realisation in 1920, Pujya Gurudev authored numerous works. The insights and interpretations presented throughout these writings rest firmly upon the foundation of his own direct spiritual experience.

Jaiseṁ ḍoḷyāṁ añjana bheṭe । Te veḷīṁ dṛṣṭīsī phāṇṭā fuṭe ।
Maga vāsa pāhije tetha pragaṭe । Mahānidhī ॥
– Jñāneśvarī: 1.23

When kohl is applied to the eyes, one is able to perceive even the treasures hidden deep within the earth.

Pujya Gurudev Ranade had himself been blessed with spiritual experiences for many years. Hence, he could discern with remarkable precision the value and authenticity of the experiences described by others. He could also perceive the inner standpoint and spiritual perspective underlying those descriptions. His analysis of spiritual experiences, therefore, was firmly grounded in the foundation of his own direct experience.

In **1926**, he published the following *Vachanamrutas*:

1. *Dnyaneshwar Vachanamrut*
2. *Sant Vachanamrut*
3. *Tukaram Vachanamrut*
4. *Ramdas Vachanamrut*

Later, in 1955, he published *Eknath Vachanamrut*.

Pujya Gurudev compiled all these *Vachanamrutas* with a specific purpose and from a particular perspective. Yet, the beauty and splendour of the literature of the saints have naturally found their expression in them. From the vast ocean of Sant literature, he brought forth these five precious jewels, gave each *abhanga* an apt and meaningful title, and placed them in the hands of the people.

When we read all these *Vachanamrutas*, one thing becomes abundantly clear: Pujya Gurudev Ranade did not merely tell us **how to study; he also showed us what to study.**

Abhangas, *Ovis*, and *shlokas* of the respective saints included in each of these four *Vachanamrutas*, have been arranged thematically and given apt and meaningful titles. This makes even a common reader develop a natural appreciation for and delight in these profound compositions. These *Vachanamrutas* are, in essence, the

freshly churned butter extracted from the vast body of Marathi Saint literature.

Just as they present the very essence of the utterances of the saints of Maharashtra, they also reveal how the fundamental characteristics of the spiritual path are common to all religions. They offer, in a sense, a **history of the rich saint tradition of Maharashtra**, a tradition that harmoniously integrates **Jñāna (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion), and Karma (selfless action).**

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Man is like an infinite spring coiled up in a small box,
and that spring is trying to unfold itself.

– Swami Vivekananda



यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत

परमार्थज्ञान यथार्थ कोणी सांगितले असेल तर कृष्णाने.

कृष्ण म्हणतात!

"माझ्या भक्तामुळे मी प्रगट झालो.

भक्ताच्या भक्तीविना मला प्रगट होता येत नाही.

ज्यांनी ज्यांनी भक्ती केली, त्यांना मी माझे सर्वस्व दिले.

जी माझी नांवे आहेत, ती माझ्या भक्तांची आहेत."

सद्‌गुरू श्री निसर्गदत्त महाराज