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EDITOR

KAIKHUSHRU JAMSHEDJI DASTUR, M.A., LL.B.,

THE DISCIPLE OF HIS DIVINE MAJESTY,

SADGURU MEHER BABA

ANNAS FIVE

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SAYINGS OF HIS DIVINE MAJESTY SADGURU MEHER BABA

(26) The realization of the Supreme Being as our own 'self' is the realization of Truth. The universe is the outcome of imagination. Then why try to acquire knowledge of the imaginative universe and not of the Self (Truth) ?

(27) It is only in the superconscious state that the mind is conscious of the Real Self.

(28) You surrender your head to a barber, when you want to get your hair cut, till the work is done; similarly you must surrender yourself to a Sadguru, if you want God-realization.

(29) The so-called religious leaders, who ever and anon quarrel over customs and dogmas can lead their followers only to the deep pit of ignorance. The blind only will follow the blind. What light can be thrown by him who is himself in the dark? What knowledge can he impart who knows not what real religion is?

(30) He who talks much is not necessarily wise. A rapid outpouring of words is not necessarily an indication of great intelligence. Do not mistake verbosity for wisdom.

(To be Continued.)

GOD, CREATOR AND CREATION

III

(By the Divine Lord, Shri Sadguru Meher Baba)

Innumerable waves, countless drops and numberless bubbles together with foam manifest themselves, when the still shoreless Ocean of Parmatman comes into motion. Consider that each wave has a big bubble, and each drop has a small bubble. This signifies that there are two kinds of bubbles—wave-bubbles and drop-bubbles. As the waves are not separate from the waves, both kinds of bubbles contain the indivisible Ocean Itself, i. e. the waves are in the Ocean and the drops are in the waves. Needless to say that each wave, besides having its own bubble, has countless drops, each of which again has a bubble of its own. Each wave-bubble is a world in itself and its drop-bubbles are the numberless forms, such as electrons, stones, metals, plants, trees, animals and human beings.

It follows from the above that there are a number of worlds, in each of which there are billions of various forms. What a plurality of creation! What an infinitude of forms! The creation, having millions of billions of forms, appears to be infinite. But the infinitude of creation is almost nothing compared to the infinitude of God, Parmatman, the Almighty, though He is only one -- one without a second. Millions talk about the unity of God, but let it be noted that the unity of God is beyond not only intellect but also imagination.

As bubbles are unsubstantial and empty and hollow, does it not follow that the characteristics of our world and all the worlds are nothingness and hollowness? The answer is certainly in the affirmative. Our proposition is too plain to need argument; but [those to whom it is obscure; the following points will serve to clarify it:-

(1) As God is everything, it follows that there is nothing but God; and this implies that *nothing* is. It is out of this *nothing* that all the creation has come. But even this *nothing* is God, as God is in the *nothing* too. Therefore it may be concluded that in everything there is nothing, in nothing there is everything; God is everything, the creation is nothing.

(2) When we say that the still Ocean of God begins rolling, we necessarily mean that both the movement and emptiness between every two waves come out of the Ocean Itself. The emptiness and movement were latent in the Ocean, and they simply manifest themselves when It begins rolling. In other words, the movement is neither separate from the Ocean nor is the outcome of any external force, but it manifests itself out of the Ocean. The manifestation of emptiness between every two waves synchronizes with the manifestation of the movement; and so it comes to this that both the emptiness and movement are one and yet two and both are always existing in the one Ocean, whether latent or manifested.

(3) Consider Parmatman as Infinite Knowledge. As he is latently conscious, it follows that He neither knows Himself nor, before the creation manifested itself, He knew the creation. This implies that knowledge is ignorant, i. e. ignorance is in knowledge. When the creation manifested itself He became conscious of it, but not of Himself. That is to say, Knowledge knows that it does

not know. Now where does this knowing of 'not knowing' come from? From knowledge, of course. And this goes to prove that 'knowing' as well as 'not knowing' (ignorance) is latent in Knowledge.

Just as there are movement and emptiness in the Ocean, 'knowing' and 'not knowing' in Knowledge, so there are *Prana* and *Akasha* in the Parmatman. And just as movement brings out the most finite emptiness out of the infinite Ocean and the 'knowing' brings out the most finite ignorance out of the infinite Knowledge, so the *Prana* brings out the *Akasha* from the latently conscious Parmatman when He becomes conscious of the creation.

Before proceeding further, the readers would do well to remember the following table of terms.

Movement =	Universal energy =	Prana =	Knowing
		o p	
		p o s i t e	
		t o	
Emptiness =	Latent Universe =	Akasha =	Ignorance

We have said above that when the still ocean begins rolling, movement and emptiness are manifested simultaneously; that when knowledge *knows*, 'knowing' and 'not-knowing' come out; and that when Paramatman becomes conscious of the creation *Prana* and *Akasha* manifest themselves. But side by side with the manifestation of these three pairs of opposites which were one when they were latent in the one Paratman, a clash between the opposites of each pair takes place; and the outcome of the clash is a flash of divine lightning or spiritual electricity. The flash denotes several happenings at one and the same time, including the following:

(1) The states of energy=*Prana* and emptiness=*Akasha* are manifested.

(2) The *Akasha*-state remains one whole, but the

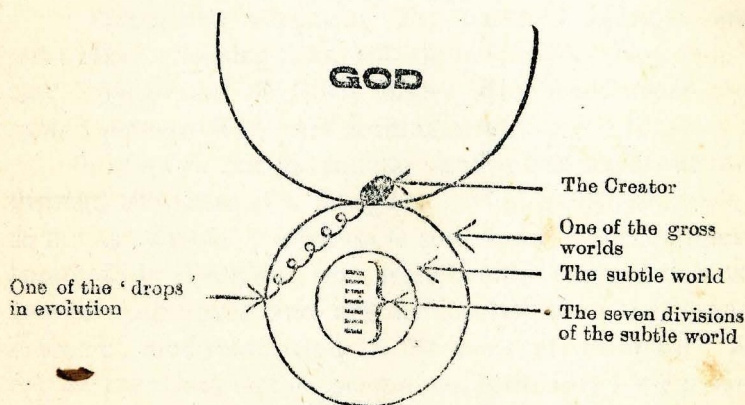
Prana-state becomes divided into seven parts which are formed at one and the same time.

(3) Out of the *prana* state the subtle world comes into being and out of the *akasha*-state the gross worlds (wave-bubbles) become manifested.

(4) The manifestations of the most finite drop-bubbles, the electrons, take place.

(5) With the movement in the Ocean, the Ocean becomes divided into countless numberless drops, but each drop is still the indivisible Ocean but does not know it. So we call it Ocean—Paramatman—Atman. Simultaneously with the movement referred to above, the Atman comes to know that it does not know; and along with the flash referred to above, the Atman begins to know the universe, i. e. ignorance = nothingness, most finitely through the most finite first gross form, the electron.

The following diagram shows the above details at glance.



Before proceeding further it is necessary to state once again that in the true sense of the word there is nothing like creation, and that what is called creation is maya. The Paramatman has been and will ever remain the only one Reality. He is the unchangeable and indivisible Ocean of infinite powers, eternal existence, ineffable bliss and universal knowledge.

(To be continued)

SPIRITUAL SPEECHES OF HIS DIVINE MAJESTY SADGURU MEHER BABA

(6) MAYA AND GOD-REALIZATION

A swine generally lives on refuse-matter. Give it dainty edibles; but it will not even look at them, much less eat them, if it has sufficient refuse-matter to partake of. That is why it is said, 'Cast not pearls before swine.' Materialistic persons are like swines, for they prefer the filth of world to the pearl of liberation from the chain of births and deaths.

If you, who keep company with Me, are sometimes attracted to worldly maya, do not get disappointed. I, too, was once like you, but the grace of Baba Jan descended upon Me, and She, the Perfect Saint, presented Me with the pearl (of God-realization).

"Constantly repeating Thy name, I became one with Thee. Nothing was left of 'me' (self). How can I sing Thy praise, O Guru Mine? Wherever I cast my eyes, I perceive Thee and nothing else!"

Only a few out of millions realize God and that too through the grace of a Sadguru. The Sadguru's grace, so far as spiritual perfection is concerned, descends upon those of his disciples, who were deeply connected with him in past lives and are fit for it. Once the grace descends, God-realization is the work of a minute. A tap on the head of the person concerned by his Master and the work is done. Bliss, Eternal Bliss the person then begins enjoying. You cannot get even an idea of

that Bliss, and even if I were to explain it to you, but cannot be understood without experience (realization). You cannot give a proper idea of a big city like Bombay to a villager, who has never in his life gone into a city. In order that he might know what a city is, you will have to take him to a city. Similarly if one wants to know what Nirvikalpa Samadhi is, one must enjoy it and one cannot enjoy it unless and until one makes one's self fit for it or earns the grace of a Sadguru.

The first duty of a Sadguru is to free his disciples, especially those of his *inner circle*, from the clutches of *maya*. If you have completely surrendered yourself to a Sadguru, he has to do his duty by you—he cannot escape that. Needless to say that your love to him and your faith in him will encourage him in his duties towards you.

Not to know Thee is misery,
 To know Thee is bliss;
 In stars, winds and flowers I hug Thee and kiss,
 I know Thee, I know Thee, O Love!—

Swami Ram Tirtha.

EDITORIAL

PLANES AND SAINTS.

III

As the fourth plane is so very dangerous, it may justly be said of him who has spanned it that he has cut the Gordian knot or that he has crossed the Rubicon. The fifth plane is called in Persian *Alem-e-Israr* and in Sanskrit *Atman-Dnyan*, for he who attains to it acquires substantial divine knowledge. The man in the fifth plane does not see God, but he can grasp a portion at a time of the limitless Truth, of the knowledge about God. The man in the fifth plane, to use the words of our Divine Master, is the knower of Knowledge, but not one with Knowledge. He does not merely believe but knows and feels that there is God and that there is nothing but God. As he knows the laws of God, he will never break them and so he will never perform miracles. In the entire hagiology not one instance of the performance of a single miracle by a saint in the fifth plane has been recorded. According to Shri Meher Baba, a Jain in the fifth plane exhibited his vanity in trying to establish a new creed, but even he did not make use of thaumaturgical powers. The fifth plane man sees with his own eyes that all is according to the laws of God, and so, as a rule, he never tries to change or influence or interfere with God's work. He enjoys great bliss, which is called in

Sanskrit *Atmanand*. His mind is engrossed in the light of God and his soul is day and night in ineffable bliss. He is possessed of what the occultists call the Desire World Sight, so that he sees any object not only through and through, but from all sides at one and the same time, and thereby becomes acquainted with its ins and outs in the flash of a moment. It is noteworthy that his physical eyes are generally found to be in a drooping state and he intensely dislikes to put on clothes. The term, *Wali*, may justly be applied to him, for has he not intimate relationship with God? It goes without saying that if he shuffles off his mortal coil without making further progress, he will reincarnate with his mind in the same plane—no matter how his progress was effected. It is to him that Shri Sad-guru Kabir has referred in the couplet which means, "The seed of the saint never changes, even if ages pass. Wherever he goes and takes birth, he ever remains a saint."

He who attains to the sixth plane may be called by the Sufi term, Pir. He enjoys such bliss that it has been called by Hindu sages *Purnanand*. He sees God at all times and in all places, in everything and in everybody. But though he sees God, he is not still one with Him. Seeing God, let it be borne in mind, is not God-realization, just as seeing water is not tasting it. Realization is achieved only by the union with the Almighty, just as thirst is quenched only by the drinking of water. The saint in the sixth plane is still in a state of duality, for he is the 'seer' and the God is the 'seen.' Duality disappears only when God is realized. The difference between the saint in the sixth plane and the saint in the seventh is that while the former

sees God in every place and in every form, the latter sees 'Self' in every place and in every form. None can realize God, unless and until he goes into the heart of the seventh plane, and none, with his dense body, can reach this goal without the grace and guidance of a Sadguru. Even if a person has attained to the sixth state of cosmic spiritual consciousness by self-help, he cannot, with his dense body, cross it and reach the goal without the active help of a perfect Master. But let it be noted that as soon as he lays aside his corporeal habitation or becomes free from the dense body, he becomes one with God or realizes the Self. It follows, therefore, that none who has reached the sixth plane will ever reincarnate after throwing off his tabernacle. The eyes of the sixth plane saint are generally found to be staring at a particular thing, but in reality he looks at a number of things at one and the same time. A spiritually ordinary mortal should have no hesitation in worshipping him. One's sanskaras stand a good chance of being gradually wiped out by regularly worshipping him.

As God is realized by entering upon the seventh plane, it follows that only the seventh plane is real. The first six states of cosmic consciousness are certainly less illusory than the gross world; but they *are* illusory in comparison with the seventh plane, which is the spiritual *ne plus ultra*. He who attains to it reaches the goal and becomes spiritually perfect. It transcends the realm of thought, recognizes no duality, knows no delusions. It is above time, space and causality, and knows no dual thron. It is Truth, the Absolute, the Reality. It is Sat-chit-Ananda, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. There is no more birth, no more death

for him who has attained to it. Its bliss is such that it has rightly been termed the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, for none can describe it. They only know it who have experienced it.

“I focussed the mind to take His portrait.

Adjusted the eyes to take His portrait;

The camera of heart to take His portrait;

The apparatus all did melt away;

His flood of light was too much, too much.

O how could I get my Love's likeness

Then I'll have Him as I could not have likeness.”

No sooner does a person begin enjoying the Nirvikalpa Samadhi than he loses all consciousness of the universe. He is conscious only of his Divine Self and of nothing else. In other words he is only God-conscious. Totally unconscious of his body and mind, he is immersed in ineffable bliss, so much so that of his own accord he does not and, as a matter of fact, cannot come down from the dizzy spiritual height he has reached. The divine bliss is so intense and the divine light so dazzling that some of those who realize God give up their corporeal frames almost immediately. Such are called Videh-Muktas or Fana-Fillahs. Those whose body does not fall off after realizing God and who do not regain the consciousness of the universe are called in Persian Mujzubs and in Sanskrit Paramahamsas. Being absolutely super-conscious Mujzubs or Paramahamsas are unable to render any service to humanity but those who keep company with them and serve them are certainly benefitted spiritually.

Only a few out of millions realize God, and fewer regain their gross and subtle consciousness after becoming perfect.

“Well, my boy, what do you want?” asked Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, one day, of him who afterwards became renowned as the Swami Vivekananda. “Sir,” replied the disciple, “I wish to remain immersed in Samadhi like Sukadeva, for five or six days at a time, and then to return to the sense-plane for a short while in order to maintain the body, and then revert to that state of blessedness.” The Master became displeased at this reply and observed, “Fie! shame on you! You are such a big receptacle, and you talk like that! I thought you were like a huge banyan-tree and would give shelter to thousands of weary souls. Instead of that you are speaking of your own salvation! Do not think of such things, my boy! How can you be satisfied with such a one-sided ideal?” When a Sadguru knows that his disciple, after Self-Realization, will render great service to humanity, he is sure to bring him down from that state of unimaginable bliss to the consciousness of the gross world.

(To be continued)

TO SHRI MEHER BABA

(By Sister Margaret Ross)

O Lord, within mine inmost heart I sought
A gift for Thee; rarest of what is mine—
But came with empty hands, for I have nought:
All that I have or ever had is Thine.

THE SANNYASIN

(*By Sadhu C. Leik*)

We need no better explanation as to what a Sannyasin should be, than that given in Swami Vivekananda's famous 'Song of the Sannyasin.' He takes us first to the lonely caves and the calm of the Himalayan jungles, where the Rishis of old sat in silent meditation, till they realized the Truth within themselves and then boldly declared it to the world in the Vedas.

The first condition of Sannayasa is renunciation. We must give up all that is unreal and to which our little self clings so tenaciously. We must renounce all the joys of heaven and all the terrors of hell, all our hopes and fears, because they are a mere illusion, a creation of the mind. Whether the things we cling to are of a good and beautiful nature or present themselves to us in ugly appearance, they are bondage just the same. Even the good Sanskaras and Parabdhhs, caused by a longing and search after Truth must be disposed of, ere Realization can be attained. One remains a slave just the same, whether he is treated with kindness or illtreatment is meted out to him, as long as he is not on an equal footing with his other 'selves.' We must conquer the little 'I' in us to become the Real Self. To achieve it we must make up our mind never to yield to the promptings of the lower self by always being guided by the light from above within us. There is a saying, that to fight the self is

the hardest struggle, but to conquer the self is the greatest victory to be won.

Our greatest enemies are passion, greed and anger. Sri Ramakrishna always warned his male disciples against woman and wealth. By this he meant lust and worldliness. Greed forces us to accumulate more and more of worldly treasures and enchains the soul. Anger destroys much of what we had spiritually gained. As long as we look upon woman as wife, we are bound by the sex-idea of the male and female. The sex exists only in the body and when we rise to the spiritual state of sexlessness, then the masculine principle and feminine principle of wisdom and love become united in one and the same being. There is no sex in the soul.

We must give up all worldly passession. They come and go. One moment we are a millionaire and the next a pauper. We see it happening everyday. Where our treasure is, there is also our heart. We have many beautiful examples of such, who could freely part with all the things they possessed. It is for the Sannyasin to set a living example of non-attachment.

Most of us are enshrouded in spiritual ignorance and darkness. We think this body to be our self and often become enamoured of it. In reality it is a mere shadow of the true Self within. We hear of society ladies who are undergoing all kinds of tortures for the sake of beautifying their features or bodily form. They do not know that such beauty is only skin deep. Beneath it is the same raw mass of human flesh.

We are living in the small compass of family life. We look to our parents as those whom we owe our existence to. We consider our children as our off-

spring. We call our helpmate our wife. We have so many friends and some we feel to be our enemies. But what is the Truth? They all belong to the same Ocean of Divinity or Paramatman, put into these vessels of various shapes and forms and given a separate name to. The same Atman dwells in them all.

We seek the Truth in books. We swallow their contents one by one. But the intellect is never satisfied; craves for more and more knowledge. There are millions upon millions of volumes and more are added every day. This goes on from age to age. Can we read them all and keep pace with the ever-productive mind? We go on pilgrimage, visit holy shrines and temples and feel ourselves spiritually uplifted. We search all the three worlds for freedom, acquire great Yogi powers and internal knowledge of Maya. But we remain slaves of Maya just the same. Only by the grace of a realized one are we able to cross over to the other shore and attain Mukti. There can be no liberation as long as the least of worldly desires remains unfulfilled.

We must attain to that Peace, which passeth understanding and which the world can neither give nor take from us. Once we are firmly established in that inward composure, our heart is filled with love towards all beings and we see no longer the distinction of high and low, as all beings have become alike dear to us.

The law of Karma is immutable and as one sows so he also must reap. Where there is a cause, there must be also the effect. This is as sure as night follows the day. If our actions are good, the result must be the same. We cannot expect to become spiritually-

minded as long as we are engrossed in sensuality. The two are the opposing poles and when the one is dominating, the other of necessity must be absent for that period.

We cling so much to this phenomenal world on the life in it. Self-defence is the first law of Nature. Instinctively we want to preserve life and often have such a horror of death. We do not know that this thirst of life is the very cause of the turning round and round of the wheel of births and deaths.

The self knows no sex. The sex-idea exists only in the lower states of consciousness. Like every thing else it is the creation of the mind. Sex-difference exists for the propagation of the race in the gross world, as liberation can be obtained only in the physical, human form. The Atman is above all sex-differentiation. He is the witness, the mere onlooker to this kaleidoscopic panorama of life—unaffected by the ever-shifting scenes. In Him Maya dreams all these dreams of illusionary world. Only the Atman as a drop of the ocean of Paramatman is real and ever free during His journey through the Maya-world.

No name or form can bind this Atman in us. No stain can touch Him, as He is beyond all the pairs of opposites, a self-conscious drop of the one great ocean of Reality. The Upanishads describe that Highest in us. But alas, can language connected with, and limited by, the blind and ignorant intellect, exhaust that, which surpasses the boundaries of intellect and reason? It is the self in all and reveals Itself to the self as the self of all. It is the one without a second, the true and only Teacher within us. It is beyond all imagination, indescribable. It must be realized to be understood.

The Sannyasin should have no home and in olden days it was enjoined upon him, not to remain in one place more than three days so as not to fall into the meshes of attachment. Having no worldly passions whatever he was expected to pass the nights in the open with the limitless sky as his roof. The real Sannyasin should not trouble himself about tomorrow and should take as nourishment for the body whatever is offered to him while going from door to door for his bhiksha. Whether it is tasty or otherwise should make no difference to him. He does not live to eat, but to eat so as to live. And if nothing is offered, he must not grumble, but look upon it as a day of fasting, imposed upon him by the Lord of all for some spiritual reason for his own advancement.

Thus he wanders from place to place, today in this town and house, tomorrow in another, distant or near, just as he is prompted by the Self within for his emancipation. In this homeless state he learns to look upon all homes as his own, and comes to know that all the worlds exist in himself as a mere dream, without any reality whatsoever. As he grows in light and understanding, so he feels it as a duty imposed upon him to lead his other 'selves' in other bodies out of this spiritual darkness, which the veil of Maya has enshrouded them in.

Pain and pleasure are of the senses and in Maya. The Bliss of Brahmananda is beyond them all and undergoes no change. Once attained it always remains the same. Pain and pleasure depend upon the law of polarity and one cannot exist without the other as its opposite. They change one after the other. There is nothing permanent in them. Only by going beyond

them both can we enter the State of Bliss everlasting. Why seek then, and cling to, what is but of temporary duration?

To attain liberation a human body is required. Only in the gross body Realization can be had. The body is a mere means to Mukti. Otherwise it must leave the Sannyasin indifferent as to whether that body is garlanded by the devotee or maltreated by the one who has an imaginary grievance against it. So many bodies have come and gone. They are but the outermost covering of the Self within. What value has it to the knowing one, whether this one coat is decorated and the other one tossed about? Some may praise and many are ready to blame and find fault with the Sannyasin. Some may hate him and others even ridicule him, when he tells them of things, which are opposed to their cherished view and crystallized convictions. All this must be expected. Wars have been waged, blood has flown freely on account of such bitter opposition to truth. But it is all in the great Cosmic Plan and after all nothing but 'Lila,' a mere play in the dream-world. What effect can praise or blame have upon the one, who knows both to be the same and his own Self, the Self of all? So we find all Saints, who know this Truth and live in It, to be always calm and unruffled by the rush and crush of the world around them. They are well established in that, which know no change.

Well can the Sannyasin's life be compared with a rolling river, that runs its course to the Ocean and eventually become one with it. He has within him that freedom, which no powers of Maya can obstruct. He knows the Truth, that is revealed but to a very

few fortunate ones. Nay, he becomes one with It. His egoism, intellect and Sanskaras have been destroyed for ever and no new Sanskaras are formed. The immutable law of Karma has no effect upon him, as he has become the Lord of Maya and Karma rules only within the limitations of Maya or Ignorance.

Having gone beyond Maya, with all desires fulfilled and the goal of Self-Realization attained, the individual soul has been freed from the endless chain of birth and death, being merged in the One, embracing the whole. There is no 'I' or 'thou,' since there is no egoism or 'I' consciousness, which had to go with the intellect, the source of all this differentiation and sense of separateness. Ideas of God, man and the like have no further meaning to the One that has become the all in all.

From the latently conscious state of Paramatman the long and perilous journey through Maya or the world of Space, Time and Causation took its beginning. The drop separated itself so to speak from the Infinite Ocean with a desire of becoming Self-conscious and after countless ages of weary wanderings tossed hither and thither by the waves of insatiable desires it has now returned to its eternal home—not as the unconscious Atman as which it set out, but as the conscious Self, that knows Itself to be the Paramatman, the source of All, the only Reality, the One without a second.

Very, very few, out of crores, after countless ages and incessant struggles, come into this Self-Knowledge. And out of those few fortunate ones very, very few are those, who after Realization come down into Maya for duty. They have voluntarily left their eter-

nal Brahmananda state and returned into the filth of Maya, so as to lead their other 'Selves' out of Maya unto Realization, which means liberation. They and they alone are the real benefactors of erring and struggling humanity, as their power is the divine Power of Satchitananda and their Knowledge the Dnyan Knowledge gained in Realization. May all become recipients of their divine blessings!

Has the (Christian) missionary any right to be fanatical like the religionist without being ascetic like him? To be wanting in common sense and accuracy like the poet without contributing any joy and beauty? To be in receipt of regular pay and live a comfortable life like the professional man, without any regard for the professional man's honour?—

Sister Nivedita.

THE EDITOR'S DIARY

OR

THE NEWS ABOUT THE MASTER, SHRI SADGURU MEHER BABA

(*15th April to 27th May, 1929*)

15th and 16th April. The Holy Master devoted most of His time to the Premashram boys.

17th April. I received an interesting letter dated 13th April, 1929 from Sadhu C. Leik, in which among other things he writes about his activities in Madras as follows: "A follower of Swami Vivekananda (Swami Murugesu Balasunderam), who has practised Raja Yoga for twenty years, generally takes me in the morning to the houses of people he knows, where I am offered drink and food. Some are business men, others are pandits or ayurvedic doctors. . . . A graduate of Madras University wants me to lecture next week at their Graduate Society on the Spiritual Path. It will be a test for me, that Baba actually does the speaking. And the test increases the faith as far as speaking is concerned. Just now a collegian left me. He had been here last night and wants me to go to his fellow students' places. Tomorrow I am to visit some ashrama and other places. And thus my days are passed here.

I am generally tired in the evening. But the sense of grim duty keeps me going."

The Holy Master imparted instruction to the Premashram boys in the morning. In the evening He went to the city and came back after a couple of hours.

18th April. The Master explained some spiritual points to a few grown-ups in the morning. In the evening He fed the Premashram boys on spiritual knowledge.

19th April. I received another letter, dated 17th April, from Sadhu C. Leik. Writes Sadhuji, "This morning came a reporter. He will review your Booklet and will write to you for Meher Message. He came here for an interview and informed me that he saw an advertisement about the lecture I have to deliver today at 5 p. m. The advertisement was given by the enthusiastic graduates, who have made arrangements for the lecture, without my knowledge. . . . People prostrate daily before me and I bless them in Baba's name. Swami Balasunderam wants to accompany me throughout India and looks upon Baba as his Sadguru. He is a great help to me."

The Holy Master went to the city in the morning at 6 a. m. Just before he left His place, a Hindu gentleman rushed towards Him and took darshana of Him. He came here in the evening yesterday to worship the Master. He was informed that since twenty-first February the Master did not allow any outsider to take *darshana* of Him, and was requested to go away. But he refused to leave the place, saying that he had come to worship the Master and until he was successful in taking darshana of Him, he would not go away. True to his word, He stayed throughout the night near the

sacred *dhuni* of the Master, and when in the morning he caught sight of the Master, he rushed towards Him, and before the Master knew it, prostrated himself before Him with a view to worship Him. Who would not say that this devotee of the Master was lucky and that his patience was amply rewarded?

The Master returned to His place at 10 a. m. In the evening He imparted instruction to the Premashram boys.

20th and 21st April. On both these days the Premashram lambs took a lion's share of the time at the disposal of the Master.

22nd April. I received an interesting letter from England written by Mr. E. A. Mitchell, who is a journalist and who is connected with what is called the Sufi movement. In the course of it Mr. Mitchell writes, "What I want to say in this note is how much I sympathize with you in your work on behalf of your Master and His cause. I am myself a member of what is known in the West as the Sufi Movement. This was found by and formed to spread the teachings of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, who died two years ago at Delhi. He taught us to believe in the unity of all life, in the brotherhood of all men, irrespective of differences and distinctions of race, nation, caste, class or creed, and to recognize the Divine Wisdom in all Its Holy Names and Forms; and He especially desired to see a better understanding between the East and the West. It is, therefore, with great joy that I learn that your own distinguished Master is spreading the Divine Love and Wisdom. I would esteem it a very great favour if, when you next write to Him or see Him, you would be so kind as to offer Him an ex-

pression of my deepest respect."

The Holy Master left Arangaon in the evening with a view to go to Nasik.

25th April. The Holy Master returned today in the afternoon from Nasik. In the evening He imparted spiritual instruction to the Premashram boys.

I received a letter from the worthy editor of '*Kalyan*' which is a high-class spiritual periodical published in the Hindi language. In the letter he draws my attention to his intention of publishing a special number of *Kalyan* named *Shrimad Bhagawat Gitank*, and writes, "I would be much obliged if you can send me a message pertaining to the Bhagawad Gita from Shri Sadguru Meher Baba for publication in the special number of *Kalyan*. I request you also to contribute an article to it and to send me a photo of Shri Sadguru Meher Baba." In accordance with the above requests, an article on Gita from my pen, a photo of and a message from the Holy Master will be sent in due course to the editor of *Kalyan*.

I received today an interesting letter from a Madras gentleman, Mr. K. S. Srinivasan. Writes Mr. Srinivasan, "I am now a staunch disciple of our beloved Master, His Divine Majesty Shri Meher Baba Whom I adore in my heart of hearts. I earnestly mentally repeat His Divine Lordship's name praying that our Master would show me the path to Self-Knowledge. Last Friday I accidentally hit my head against a counter-desk at my office and immediately I repeated mentally our Lordship's name, and never felt any pang of pain. It produced a *miraculous effect*."

26th to 29th April. On all these days the Master devoted most of his time to the Premashram boys.

30th April. In the morning the Master with a couple of His disciples went to the city and returned in the evening.

1st May. The Master devoted most of His time to the Premashram boys.

4th to 7th May. I was in Bombay.

8th May. The Master with half a dozen disciples—one boy and five grown-ups—left His durbar today with a view to go to Nasik. In Nasik He will stay for a couple of days and then will proceed to Hardwar in the United Provinces. The boy whom he has taken with him is a Mogul and bears the name of Ali Akbar. Wherever the Master goes, He generally takes this boy with Him. The celestial fire of divine Love burns in the heart of this boy so much that he is generally in spiritual agony and so it is not possible for him to bear his Beloved's absence. His Beloved's absence would make him suffer from *tedium vite*. It is for this reason that the Master generally takes this boy with Him, whenever He goes on a tour. Needless to say that the Divine Lord will return after several days.

27th May. The Holy Master returned today in the morning.

THE DOCTRINE OF RE-INCARNATION

(*By His Holiness Chhota Baba (Abdulla Ruknudddin Avazi)*)

The beauties of nature captivated the attention of man and forced him to sense the external world—causing the eyes to see, the nose to smell, the tongue to taste and the ears to hear, the things without—from the beginning. The mind of man strived to peer out of the body, and the solution of external problems wholly engaged his attention at first. It was only when the external phenomena or the physical manifestations failed to satisfy his mind that his energy drew inward and questions were reflected back from the macrocosm to the microcosm, from the external to the internal. By analyzing the external phenomena man was led to analyze the internal nature. In all ages man has asked himself questions pertaining to life and death and has tried to find out their mysteries and realities.

What is man? What becomes of him when he dies? Is there not something permanent and eternal in him? Is there nothing which goes on living after the death of his body? Such questions have been asked at all times and in all places, and will always be asked till this projection of creation lasts. This does not imply that the questions remain unanswered, and the problems of life and death have not been solved. But as in the past, so in the future questions will be asked in different ways, and answers, too, will be given in different ways.

Of all the theories held by man about his nature, the theory of a soul entity, distinct from the body, has been the most widespread and those who believe in such a soul generally believe in the theory of pre-existence also.

The reason why the ancient Egyptians did not believe in re-incarnation was their peculiar belief about the soul. They believed that after the death of a person his soul lived only so long as his body remained safe and uncorrupted. In other words, they were of the opinion that injury to the corpse made the soul suffer, and if the body was destroyed, the soul was naturally annihilated. Thus believing they tried to preserve the corpses for as many years as they could. The Greeks, unlike the Egyptians, believed in the doctrine of re-incarnation. The ancient Persians came near to it, but, with the exceptions of a few enlightened persons, did not definitely believe in it, for Zoroaster did not teach it to the masses. There is evidence that Jesus tried to inculcate it upon his followers, but He did not care to make it popular among the masses. He stated that John Baptist was Elias who had returned again. "And if ye will receive it this, is Elias, which was for to come."

The Mahomedans believe in the immortality of the soul, and there is no reason why they should not believe in re-incarnation, even if they take the Koran as their sole guide. When a Mahomedan dies, various ceremonies are performed and the Mullan reads the Talquiena, i. e. 'Warning to the dead.' After praying to God to forgive the sins and mistakes of omission and commission of the dead person, the Mullan, as if talking to the dead person, says to him or her, "Now is the

time when the two holy angels—Munkur and Nakeer—shall come to thee.” Mussalmans believe that the angels come to the dead person in different forms at different times. They come, they say, in a form most beautiful, gentle and loving to the virtuous person, and in a form most dreadful and unpleasant, in rage and anger, to the wicked person. The Mullan, proceeding further, says, “The two angels certainly will come to thee presently, and first of all they shall receive thee and then ask thee about thy faith and actions. They will ask, ‘Whom didst thou take as thy God and worship? Whom didst thou recognize as thy Saviour and prophet of God? What was thy religion, thy holy book or guide in all thy life?’ Thou shouldst answer the holy angels’ questions fully. Say to them in reply, “Allah I have believed as the only God (La elaha illa Allah) and worshipped Him. His messenger Mahomet I took as my Saviour and prophet of God. Islam was my religion, and I acted in harmony with all its laws and commands. My holy book was the Koran which was revealed unto the Saviour and while praying I turned my face towards Ka’aba.”

The Mussalmans believe that the dead person, if virtuous, answers the two angels satisfactorily after he is revived, and so he is allowed to remain happy there, and he gets light and happiness in abundance from the open window of heaven; if wicked, he fails to reply them correctly or sits still, and so the angels strike him on the head with a heavy instrument and revive him again and again to answer the same questions; but as all the times he fails to reply properly he is made to suffer. The former enjoys his good karma and that is heaven; the latter suffers owing to his bad karma and

that is hell. But whether the karma is good or bad every man has to return to earth again and again till its effects are completely wiped out.

It is clear to one, who reads between the lines in the Koran, that reincarnation and the law of karma have been defined in Islam. It is true that most Mahomedans are terrified by the very idea of rebirth; but there is no gainsaying that Islam has recognized it. In the holy Koran we read, "*Enna Nahhnn nuhheyel mouwta wa naktubu ma kaddamoo wa asarahoun*," i. e. "Certainly we revive the dead persons, inserting what they sent beforehand and noting their footprints." In other worlds, the Koran declares that dead men are revived, their past impressions (what the Hindus call *sanskaras*) are brought into play, and they are directed once more to live on earth. Sufis, Auelya and Saliks do not merely believe in reincarnation, but they *know* it. The God-realized Jalaluddin Rumi taught it explicitly to His followers.

Now to come to the Hindus. The credit of popularizing the doctrine of reincarnation goes to them. Reincarnation is indeed the central doctrine of Hinduism. No nation has so firmly believed in it as the Hindus. Thousands of years ago Hindu sages and saints found out the truth that what leaves the body in due course is the real man, that the body is merely so to speak a coat, that the real man has to clothe himself with it again and again until freedom is attained or the Self is realized. The Hindus were the first to find out the great secret that the soul is quite independent of both mind and body, and so they annihilated the corpse by burning it as soon as the soul took leave of it.

(To be continued)

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

(By T. L. Vaswani)

If I were asked what is the lodestar of my life, my answer would be, in one word,—God!

Something better, broader, nobler, richer, something more true to the spirit of Indian history and the genius of Indian life, something much bigger and more vital than Karl Marx's socialism is the nation's need.

India has believed, from the beginning of her days, in the deeper values of religion.

But religion must not be confounded with creeds and forms. Sectarianism is the very negation of religion.

The truly spiritual vision recognises the one *Atman* in all.

To recognise the Spirit in all religions is to reconcile, unify, and renovate the life of humanity.

Creeds have created distempers, disunion.

Affirm all religions as true if you will rise above the creeds which separate and divide.

For to affirm all religions as true is to lift them all up into the Divine Essence and so to transform them.

This *affirmation* which is *transformation* of all religions and this synthesis of various *sadhnas* of karma, gnan and bhakti, which by slow degrees spiritualise mind, will and heart, will, I believe, be the ideal in the New Age that is dawning of an increasing number of men and women aspiring towards life in the Spirit.

This Ideal is at work already in many groups in the East as in the West.

All those groups are helping, I feel sure, in the building of that New Temple, which is the vision of the mystic and the dream of the God-intoxicated sage.

I believe profoundly that our activities—intellectual, social, economic, political—are truly helpful only in the measure in which they are moved by an inner attraction of the Divine.

I believe because I know that the nations' greatest need is—God!

As from a blazing fire come out thousands of sparks of the same nature as the fire itself, thus, O Beloved, come out the different existences from that eternal unchangeable Being and enter Him again.

The Upanishads.

IN THE HOUR OF MEDITATION

(*By Miss Mary Treemann (of Esthonia)*)

In the hour of meditation an inward Voice seems to speak and say: O Soul, what do you seek in the world? If you want to see Me, leave all things. Whilst doing this you will know, that I alone am every thing. I alone am. I alone do really exist; all else is unreal. And whilst I alone in reality do exist, strive to attain solely Me. Try to realize, that I alone am. Say, is not all this like a mist that disappears? Why do you want then to remain in the mist and allow yourself to be covered by the veil of illusion? Open your heart unto Me. I am the Sun, that scatters the mists of illusion. Why do you still seek without happiness and friendship. Know that I alone am the only happiness that is and never ceases to be. I alone am every thing. When you attain Me, you will see that there is neither friend nor foe. You will see, that I am the blissful sole back ground to all. O Soul, realize only Me and you have no further need for anything else. I am the one Reality.

By cup is meant the wine of eternity,
And by this wine we mean self-annihilation.

Hafiz.

AN ODE TO LOVE

(*By Meredith Starr*)

O Love that lifts the very stars
As winds in autumn lift the leaves,
Or harvesters lift golden sheaves
And toss them into waiting cars;
O love that breaks all bonds and bars
And frees the soul that groans and grieves.

O love that flings the Stars and Suns
Like coins of silver and of gold
Into his treasure-chest. Behold,
He heedeth not your orisons
Unless your hearts are brave and bold
As the red blood therein that runs!

O Love that lives in flame and cloud,
In burning bliss and blinding tears;
Whose eyes pierce through the mist of years,
Beyond the cradle and the shroud,
Beyond all follies, hopes and fears,
To fields no son of man has ploughed.

O love nor life nor death can flee!

O love that walks upon the waves
That rise above a myriad graves,
And sinks beneath the lowest sea,
Wherein the pallid Spectre raves
That whelms the world in agony.

O love that laughs at space and time!
That sings and leaps from pole to pole
Of mind and body, sense and soul,
Even as that golden Swan sublime
Which sings and wings above the Whole
In flowery fields of fragrant rhyme.

AN ODE TO LOVE

O love that toys with gods and men!
That builds and breaks the bridge of dreams
Which rolls above a thousand streams
That flow from heaven to Earth again
Wherein Illusion basks and beams
And only thou canst write Amen!

O love that links the world and worm,
Mount Zion and a grain of sand!
Within the hollow of thy hand
I place my life, even as a germ
Of wheat that falls on fertile land,
And grows until the appointed term.

O love that links the louse to God
And binds the beaver to Orion
And feeds the cherub and the lion
And rains its life on star and clod!
There are Jerusalem and Zion,
The cross, the crown, the rose, the rod!

I leave my life in thine—a seed
For thee to tend as seems thee best,
Until it blossoms in thy breast
Wherein ten thousand lilies feed;
And shares in thine eternal rest,
And lives—for thou art life indeed.

WHAT MAN ATTAINS

(*By Miss Mary Treemann (of Esthonia)*)

There is so much work done in the world. All are working. What does man want to attain by his activity? What really does he accomplish? It is the goal of Realization, which all, consciously or unconsciously, strive to attain. By work or activity man wants to attain something. He has a wish for something 'more.' But what it is that he pursues, this in the beginning he as yet does not know. He simply feels the impulse of carrying on, to attain more and grow in consciousness. A something drags him further, a dim feeling of that, what is to be attained. What it is, he does not know yet.

Within man is the possibility to attain this something and to know it. It is God. Man has within himself the capacity to realize the Highest, but too often he does not know it yet and wanders therefore to the left and right, seeking something quite different. He wanders about in this world as in a maze, not finding the exit. At times he has not even the right kind of longing to get out of it, because this maze is so beautifully tempting.

This is the reason then, why so many sacrifice themselves for the sake of things so worthless. Man is dazzled by the luster of the things about him and there is the prospect of seeing still more things and to attain them. And thus he wanders from one thing to

another in this world of illusion. At first he is attracted by the things of the gross world. He seeks then wealth and pleasures. Later on he finds that these are unable to give him permanent satisfaction and his wants grow correspondingly. He sees now the treasures of human knowledge revealed before his gaze. And now arises the desire for these treasures, which belong to the intellectual realm. He finds himself now in a far more beautiful maze. Here he realizes that knowledge extends itself into the Infinite. He can see no end or limit to it. He feels that his consciousness expands through this human knowledge. And yet he goes on, diving into this knowledge. The more he knows, the more does he realize, that he really knows nothing. But the longing for the goal grows more intense and so he dives still deeper into the knowledge, hoping thus to come nearer to the goal. Immeasurable space spreads itself out in his consciousness. How will man explore this space? Even if he spends ever so many lives in the pursuit of his task, still he will not fully succeed, until he has reached the source of all things. Then he will know every thing.

But to reach this source of all things, man must give up his own ego and knowledge. He must have no wish to know anything more, except God Himself. As long as one has not become as simple as a child, one cannot attain to divine illumination. Forget worldly knowledge, that you have attained and become as ignorant of it as a child and then will you attain to the Knowledge of Truth, as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said.

When the individual soul renounces external knowledge and only seeks the kernel of all knowledge,

then one day he will meet the Perfect Master or Sadguru, who then will help him to the realization of the Highest. Knowledge will then have become Love and no longer exist separately. All has then become Love and the only motive to all activity will then be Love alone.

(Sister Mary Treamann is an Esthonian and lives in Esthonia. Though she has not come into contact with the Divine Lord, Shri Meher Baba, she seems to have been attracted to His sublime teachings. As her knowledge of English is imperfect, she writes in German, but as we cannot publish her articles in German, our affectionate brother disciple, Sadhu C. Leik, who is a good linguist and who is ever ready to serve this humble Magazine as much as he can, translates them into English for the benefit of our readers.

Editor, The Meher Message.)

SOMEWHAT SHOCKING, BUT QUITE TRUE

So that leaving aside things some people consider as additions to the chief dogmas of this religion—things such as various relics, icons of various Mothers of God, prayers asking for favours and addressed to saints each of whom has his own speciality—and not to speak also of the Protestant doctrine of predestination—the very foundations of Church-Christianity, admitted by all and formulated in the Nicene Creed, are so absurd and immoral, and run so counter to right feeling and to common sense, that men cannot believe in them. Men may repeat any form of words with their lips but they cannot believe things that have no meaning. It is possible to say with one's lips, 'I believe the world was created six thousand years ago,' or 'I believe Jesus flew up into the sky and sat down next to his Father,' or 'God is One and at the same time Three'—but no one can believe these things, for the words have no sense. And therefore men of our modern world who profess this perverted form of Christianity really believe in nothing at all. And that is the peculiar characteristic of our time.

Leo Tolstoy.

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The High Priests (of the Parsis), who in the long, long past commanded and laid down that such and such portions of the Avesta should be recited at certain ceremonies, had no right desire to carefully find out

what sentences were appropriate for each occasion, how much of the lugubrious remaining writing was irrelevant and unmeaning, and how the recitals or *Bhantars*, as they are called, should be short and thoroughly appropriate. On the contrary they entertained a very wrong desire, that whatever may be the substance and meaning of the Avesta paragraphs and however inappropriate they may be for a particular occasion, the mere vociferating of the words of our ancient language would draw the blessings of heavenly angels and at the same time would annihilate the imaginary Ahriman, and the mythical Daevas. Mind and heart they left out of consideration altogether, and vainly sought for superstitious magical effects by the utterance of strange words.

N. D. Khandalavala.

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We are getting further and further from the old religious standard. Meanwhile the Church of England apparently blind to the layman's defection of loyalty, becomes ever more arrogant and aggressive. The Bishops ridicule the decision of the House of Commons. They organise and almost militarise their Dioceses. Though the number of clergy decreases, the number of Bishops increases. . . . Bishops are like authors; only a recluse can avoid meeting them. . . . Men who believe sincerely in the Christian life do not need to play with dumb-bells and boxing gloves or sing comic songs with others who have an unmannerly cheerfulness and raucous voices and whose company sober men cannot possibly endure. Yet these are the standards fixed by innumerable guilds, missions of help and Christian clubs. It is called 'good fellowship of friends. . . .

Statistics are misleading We do not really know whether the number of genuinely religious people has decreased; we only know that the social habit of Church going is on the wane. That is another matter; and we want not more Christians, but better Christians.

The Times of India.

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Absolution is the remission of the sins we have committed against God. The priests of the Romish Church grant it to sinners in virtue of a blank from the divinity itself; a most happy invention, well calculated to reassure certain timorous rogues who might be inclined to feel remorse for their shortcomings, did not the Mother Church thus take the trouble to set them entirely at their ease on that score.

Voltaire.

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The altar, in a figurative sense, is always opposed to the throne, which means that priests are often more cunning than potentates. In the meantime it is the custom, whenever the Church is attacked, to proclaim with a loud voice that both the altar and the throne are in danger. In this manner the Church is rendered interesting, and potentates are led to interest themselves in her affairs, even to the detriment of their own interests.

Voltaire.

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Roman Catholic sovereigns wisely allow a foreign priest to fleece the priests of their own estates. Otherwise the latter could not, in their turn, exercise the divine right of fleecing their fellow-citizens.

Voltaire.

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The world has come to acknowledge that it is sick. In many places it has taken another step forward. It has reached a fair amount of unanimity about the cause of its disease. Probably the chief thing that is wrong is selfishness . . . We are all out to seek our lives, and we have begun to realize that it was a true prophecy which said, 'whosoever seeketh his life shall lose it.'

The Times of India.

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The reduction of armaments will never put a stop to war so long as nations are left with the power to use what armaments they have had left them.

Prof. Garner.

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Christianity has yet its conquests to make. It has not yet abolished war racialism, arrogance and assumption of superiority from the world, and till it has accomplished these tasks, it cannot be said to have done that for which it was intended.

Rt. Hon. Shrinivasa Shastri.

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THOUGHTS SUBLIME

The human soul, enlightened by religion, no longer lives merely by the life of this world as irreligious people live, but lives by the eternal, infinite life, for which sufferings and death in this life are as insignificant as the corns on his hand and the fatigue of his limbs are insignificant to a labourer ploughing a field.

Leo Tolstoy.

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Men are taught from childhood that they are weak and sinners. Teach them that they are all glorious children of immortality, even those who are the weakest in manifestation. Let positive, strong, helpful thoughts enter into their brains from very childhood. Lay yourselves open to these thoughts, and not to weakening and paralysing ones.

Swami Vivekananda.

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Aims of a higher order, even though they be not fulfilled, are in themselves more valuable than lower ones entirely fulfilled.

Goethe.

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If a man wants to read good books, he must make a point of avoiding bad ones, for life is short, and time and energy limited.

Schopenhauer.

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Ambition is but avarice on stilts and masked.

Walter S. Landor.

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
 I shall not live in vain ;
 If I can ease one life the aching,
 Or cool one pain,
 Or help one fainting robin
 Into his nest again,
 I shall not live in vain.

Emily Dickinson.

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Mark how fortune brings endless misfortune by the miseries of winning it, guarding it, and losing it, men's thoughts cling altogether to their riches, so that they have not a moment to free themselves from the sorrows of life. Thus they who are possessed by desire suffer much and enjoy little, as the ox that drags a cart gets but a morsel of grass.

Santi-deva.

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There is an unseen and unsensed universe, a universe of life and mind and spirit, which indicates that it dominates the material, and which, though it makes no direct appeal to the senses, is equally real.

Sir Oliver Lodge.

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Diverting the thoughts from objects of sense,
 Like horses whipped when going astray ;
 Controlling the thoughts with Wisdom's reins,
 The sages bring them home to OM ;
 That Home or OM art thou,

no doubt the same.

Swami Ram Tirtha.

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Pushing, marching Labour and no stagnant

Indolence ;

Enjoyment of work as against tedious drudgery ;
 Peace of mind and no canker Suspicion ;

Organization and no disaggregation ;
 Appropriate reform and no conservative custom ;
 Solid real feeling as against flowery talk ;
 The poetry of facts as against the Speculative
 fiction ;
 The logic of events as against the authority of
 departed authors ;
 Living realization and no mere dead quotations ;
 Constitute Practical Vedanta.

Swami Ram Tirtha.

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God of the granite and the rose,
 Soul of the sparrow and the bee,
 The mighty tide of being flows,
 Through all its channels, Love, from Thee.

Lizzie Doben.

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O then, fair Truth, for thee alone I seek,
 Friend to the wise, supporter to the weak ;
 From thee we learn whate'er is right and just,
 Creeds to reject, professions to distrust,
 Forms to despise, pretensions to deride,
 And following thee, to follow naught beside.

Cabbe.

SPIRITUAL ANECDOTES

Once, when Buddha was residing at Jetavana, a heavenly being approached Him and said, "Many gods and men, aspiring after good, have held diverse things to be blessings; kindly declare the things that are excellent." Buddha declared, "To serve the wise and not the foolish, and to honour those worthy of honour : these are excellencies.

To dwell in the neighbourhood of the good and to bear the remembrance of good deeds : these are excellencies.

To have knowledge of truth, to be instructed in science, to have a disciplined mind and pleasant speech : these are excellencies.

To be charitable, to act virtuously, and to lead an innocent life : these are excellencies.

To be pure, temperate, and persevering in good deeds : these are excellencies.

Humility, reverence, contentment, gratitude, attentiveness to religious instruction : these are excellencies.

To be gentle, to be patient under reproof, at due seasons to converse with the religious : these are excellencies.

Self-restraint and chastity, the knowledge of the great principles and the hope of the eternal repose : these are excellencies.

They that do these things are the invincible, on every side they walk in safety: they attain the perfect good.

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On one occasion Confucius scaled a mountain, and looking below from its summit, he heaved a heavy sigh as of pain. His disciples inquired of its cause and he said, "My children, looking from this height of people below, I find they are continually running after worldly pursuits and trying to get ahead of each other. There is scarcely one who is not thinking how he can best gain advantage over and if necessary destroy his neighbour. Sadder still it is to be incapable and helpless to remedy the evil. You have probably thought this matter over. Tell me in turn what you would do if you had the power." One of them replied, "I would defend the weak and the oppressed and, if necessary, would conquer and execute the oppressor and thus establish right and order." "You speak as a soldier," Confucius quietly commented. Another disciple observed, "I would throw myself between the contending parties and dilate on the horrors of war and blessings of peace, the ignominy of defeat and the miseries brought on the bereaved widows and orphans and thus establish peace." "You are an orator," said Confucius. The third and the last disciple opined, "I would, if possible, educate and elevate these people by my life and example." "You speak like a sage," was the master's remark.

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A disciple asked Confucius, "Master, is there not one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" Confucius replied, "Yes, it is 'reciprocity.' What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others."

OUR SERIAL STORY

FROM DEGRADATION TO REALIZATION

(*By the Editor*)

CHAPTER I

A SADGURU AND HIS SERMON

“My children, one of the greatest causes which go to hinder a person’s spiritual advancement is selfishness. Selfishness is indeed the chief bane of the human society. It is responsible for a great deal of the misery of this world. So great is its power that it easily cracks the sinews of love and nobility. Where it prevails, there darkness reigns. It is burdensome and it defeats its own object. Its root lies in meanness, its weight is galling and its fruits are bitter. The selfish man believes that he promotes his own good, serves his own end. But in reality he unconsciously allows himself to be lashed by the scorpions of egoism, and puts a spoke in the wheel of his spiritual salvation.

“I heartily pity the selfish man, for he is essentially a miserable man. Nothing can produce in his heart the peace which passeth understanding. He has never tasted the pleasure of giving and serving, for he is always bent upon getting and grasping. It is beneath his so-called dignity to deny himself any gratification. He cares not two straws for those who do not minister to his selfishness. Virtue is vice to him, if it does not respect his wishes; and vice is virtue to him, if it serves him in any way. He will say, ‘Thank you,’

to you, if you do him a favour; but the spirit of those words goes not beyond his lips, for he is incapable of showing genuine gratitude. His passion is to grasp everything he can. He is always on the alert to take anything he can. He thinks only about himself and those who gratify his greed. He will not sacrifice for nothing any pleasure for anybody's sake. He will willingly allow others to be harmed or destroyed, if that is going to serve any purpose of his. He knows not what mercy is, what charity is, what largeness of heart is. Greedy and grasping as he is, his own wants, whether legitimate or not, are of cardinal importance to him, and those concerned must gratify them at any cost. It is said that a fool must now and then be right by chance. That may be true, but the selfish man is never unselfish by chance. On occasions you may see him exercising unselfishness, but at once take it for granted that he has an axe to grind.

"This world is maya, my children. I am never tired of instilling into your minds the solemn fact that God is real and everything else is unreal. Think as little as possible about your low self, and as much about God as possible. Believe, my children, believe with all your heart and soul that there is nothing but God. There is but one Self, and all things, all persons are forms of that Self. Consider others as forms of your own Self, and seek happiness and promote your own spiritual welfare by serving others unselfishly. Nothing gives me so much pleasure as when I see a thoroughly unselfish person. If you are selfish, the sooner you inoculate yourself against the virus of selfishness, the better for you and others. Love and selfishness can never be on speaking terms. When selfishness steps

in, love steps out. If you are wedded to selfishness, how can you love others, love God or a God-realized man? You may firmly believe that I am a Sadguru, a God-incarnate; but still, if you are selfish, you cannot love Me and serve Me, and so you cannot be My true devotee. To be good is to be happy; to be unselfish is to take the first step along the path that leads to Nirvana.

“Love all, my children, make it a point to love all. Selfishness repels, but love attracts. It is the duty of every man and every woman to show active sympathy to the distressed, but he, who is devoid of love in his heart, cannot show genuine sympathy to any one. Remember that mere pity is not enough, for pity does not imply any degree of equality as sympathy does. The man who suffers is the man who is in need of sympathy. Even if his suffering is due to his own faults or to his own wickedness, it is your duty to extend your sympathy to him, without sitting in judgment upon him. Don't narrow your heart and say, 'It serves the fellow right.' Sympathy shown to anyone can never be wasted. Sympathy has reclaimed many a man from his wickedness. It has been known to overcome the worst evil and melt the hardest heart.

“It is far better to have a handsome heart than a handsome face. A man may be possessed of attractive features, but what is his handsome face worth, if there is no spark of mercy in his heart? A woman may be a paragon of beauty, but cursed be her beauty, if her heart is as hard as a stone! The really handsome man is he who does handsome things. The really beautiful woman is she, whose heart is full of the milk of human kindness. The world wants men and women who are

willing to extend their sympathy to the suffering—to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to slake the thirst of the thirsty, to educate the children of the poor, to cheer up the broken-hearted, to infuse hope into the hopeless, to reclaim the wretched from their lives of degradation, and to propagate the knowledge of the Vedanta. The world is in dearth of men, whose joy lies in ministering others, not in being ministered unto.

“My children, I need not say that the person whose heart is full of love lets bygones be bygones. Magnanimity is one of the characteristics of the loving person. You must always readily forget and forgive the injury done to you by anyone. Soft words, of course, butter no parsnips, and soft speeches mend no bones; but you will only be revealing your littleness of mind and narrowness of heart, if you do not forgive the injury done to you by the person who apologizes for it. What’s the use of treasuring up grievances and injuries like precious stones? Even when no apology is forthcoming, it is a mark of wisdom to forget and forgive. Conquer hatred by love. Revenge is so mean, so blind so wretched; forgiveness is so noble, so far-sighted, so blissful. Put your enemies to shame by forgiveness, and turn them into friends.”

One morning in the first week of the last month of 1869—the year in which General Grant became the President of the U. S. A. and Serrano became the regent of Spain, Hudson Bay Territory was added to British America and the Irish Church Disestablishment Act was passed, the first Governor of Ulster (Duke of Abercorn) was born and the eccentric but the highly gifted French musical composer (Hector

Berlioz) breathed his last, the Suez Canal was formally opened and that magnificent building surmounted by a high square tower and a flagstaff, Government House at Ganeshkhind, Poona, was completed—in a sweet, steady, modulating voice of bell-like clearness, with His arms folded across His breast, bringing His auditors one after another under His mysterious gaze, squatted on a cushioned mat in His hut at the Bapat Ashram, situated in the village of Bhamburda near Poona, Shri Sadguru Madhavrao Maharaj delivered the above sermon, which chained the attention of the entire audience, in simple Marathi before about one hundred persons, thirty-five of whom belonged to the fair sex, and almost all of whom were sincere devotees of His.

The Sadguru possessed a magnetic personality—so magnetic indeed that the poet could not describe it, the sculptor could not chisel it, and the painter could scarcely do justice to it. He was of little more than medium height and inhabited a frame that was on the whole slender. His features might justly be said to be handsome and well-proportioned, despite his fairly aquiline nose and somewhat protruded chin. His hazel penetrating eyes which sparkled under his large and a bit projecting forehead, and His silvery hair, which was hanging about His shoulders, lent considerable dignity to His features. His skin, which was fairly white, added attractiveness to His personality. On account of the colour of His hair, one might jump to the conclusion that he was over fifty years of age, but as a matter of fact he had scarcely seen forty winters. His habits of life were very simple. For days He would simply live on water and the cup that is said to cheer but not to

inebriate. A strict vegetarian, He never partook of, nor allowed anyone in His Ashram to partake of any animal food except milk. Regarded as He did His corporeal habitation as a mere coat, for throwing away which he had already fixed a day, He put on in summer nothing except a lion-cloth, to which he added a cotton shirt in winter.

Though not possessed of abundant physical strength which one would expect a man of His age to have, His voice, which was as thrilling to His devotees as the sound of the ruffling of the cool waters of a spring is to the thirsty, was almost stentorian. In a voice ringing as a bell, in a silvery tone, He almost daily imparted spiritual instruction to His devotees. In simple but eloquent Marathi He gave vent to His feelings and expression to His ideas. He spoke as one having authority. His spiritual *ipse dixit* were replete with truth. Dived deep as He had into the ocean of Divinity, none had more right to teach others than He. Many a person was benefitted by His spirit-stirring sermons. Those who came to scoff Him remained to pray—with such sway did Truth prevail from His lips.

The life-story of Shri Madhavrao Maharaj is not germane to our story, but certain facts concerning His life and concerning the lives of His parents are so interesting that they simply drive me to venture on a digression.

Mudgalbhat and Kashibai, the parents of Shri Madhavrao, entered into wedlock in their native city, Poona, when they were scarcely out of their teens, according to orthodox Hindu custom. The first ten years of their married life the couple passed comparatively in happiness, though they were not blessed with

any child. But after the lapse of that period calamity after calamity befell them. They lost one after another almost all those who were near and dear to them. Mudgalbhat inherited a large property from his father, but it melted away in discharging the debts which his prodigal paternal uncles, who joined the majority soon after their brother, had incurred. It never rains, but it pours. A couple of years after the death of his father, Mudgalbhat found himself failing in the business of jewellery which he was carrying on in the supposed partnership with an unscrupulous Marwadi named Mulchand, in the business heart of the city, which goes by the name of Aditwar Ward, but which in the eighteenth century bore the name of Malkampura. The Marwadi Mulchand belonged to that class of featherless bipeds whose chief characteristic is avarice and who would without the least compunction cheat and rob anyone in order to gratify their lust for wealth. Mudgalbhat who, owing to his simple-mindedness, regarded the Marwadi as a perfectly honest gentleman and who considered every man virtuous until he proved to be vicious, reposed full confidence in his supposed partner and allowed him to manage the business as he liked. The cunning Marwadi got just what he wanted, and unhesitatingly wound the poor Mudgalbhat round his fingers. Mudgalbhat naturally got a shock of his life, when he learned how his pseudo-partner had abused his trust and had cleverly loaded him with debts, to the tune of five thousand rupees. He dissolved the mocking partnership and wound up the business; but he allowed the debts to stick to him, for he did not like to become a legal bankrupt, nor did he like to take any legal steps against the rascally Marwadi. His creditors

who knew him to be an unfortunate but honest man, were willing to wait, and he resolved to wipe out his debts to a pie. But how to tide over his difficulties became a burning question with him. Without any capital and deep in debt, how was he to wind himself up to establish himself again? Beset with difficulties on all sides, it was by no means easy to bear up, patient though he was.

Fortunately his helpmate, Kashibai, had heard of the Sadguru Bapat Baba Who, my readers must have already guessed, was staying at the village of Bhamburda. Kashibai was a typical Maratha lady—pious, modest, patient and hard-working. Firmly believing that the misfortunes, which had befallen her and her husband, were owing to their past *karma* and that it was foolish to rebel against fate, she creditably bore up under all misfortunes. She was dutiful and loving to her husband, and though their financial troubles were obviously owing to the simple-mindedness of her husband, she never allowed herself even once to reproach him with it. Seeing her husband one day, in the slough of despair, she persuaded him to call upon Shri Bapat Baba not only to worship Him but also to seek His advice as to how he should act under his present difficulties. Mudgalbhat acted upon the suggestion of his *sahadharmini*, which is the noble Sanskrit term for wife and which means spiritual helpmate. On that very day, in company with Kashibai, he went to Bapat Baba and, after worshipping Him, acquainted Him with all his difficulties. The Sadguru heard him patiently and asked him to see Him on the following day.

The goodness and greatness of a God-realized per-

sonage know no bounds. Though every Sadguru's only duties are to give a spiritual push to humanity and to effect the spiritual salvation of those devotees of his who belong to his inner circle, he more often than never condescends to hear the tales of woe of worldly persons, to give suitable advice to them and even to extricate them from their difficulties. When, on the following day, Mudgalbhat called upon Shri Bapat Baba, the Sadguru asked one of His well-to-do devotees to help him with five hundred rupees, and asked him to open a grocery business and to devote a large part of his earnings to wiping out his debts. Mudgalbhat did as he was told. Feeling his way, he fairly prospered in his business and within ten years he was out of debt. A proverb says that to be out of debt is to be out of danger. Mudgalbhat was indeed out of the danger of losing his honour, but he was out of health just as much as he was out of debt. Hard work coupled with intense worry undermined his constitution, and he gave up the ghost a couple of months prior to the birth of his son, Madhavrao. Kashibai took the departure of her husband from this dense world calmly. She was prepared for it, or rather, Shri Bapat Baba had prepared her for it. Just one year before he shuffled off his mortal coil, Mudgalbhat asked Kashibai to beg of Bapat Baba to bless them with a son.

With tears in her eyes Kashibai entreated Bapat Baba to give her a son, saying: "Maharaj, as you know, I have the misfortune of being childless. I am ashamed to ask of you a worldly favour, but since I am married, it is but natural that I should crave for a child. Maharaj, pray give me a son who would be the source of all

my joy and who would be an ornament of the world."

On hearing the above request the Sadguru seemed to have been lost in reverie, but he soon recovered from it and replied, "I am ready to grant your boon on one condition."

"Any condition will be acceptable to me, Maharaj. Are you not Paramatman-incarnate?"

"My condition is simply this that you must consider the son that shall be born to you not so much yours as Mine."

Seeing that the condition was acceptable to Kashibai, the Sadguru added: "One person who had deep connection with me in past lives has not still met me. And no wonder! For since giving up his last body, he has not still reincarnated. But the time for his reincarnating is drawing nigh. Since you agree that your would-be child should be more mine than yours and consequently you will allow me to turn him into a spiritual jewel, I shall see to it that he is born to you."

Kashibai's joy, on hearing this, can better be imagined than described. It knew no bounds, but she concealed it on noticing that the Sadguru had all of a sudden put on an air of sorrow. To the surprise of Kashibai, Bapat Baba, all the while gazing at her, began speaking on the grim subject of death. "As the body is but a garment which the soul puts on and takes off," observed the Sadguru, "is it not childish to fall into paroxysms of grief on the so-called death of someone who was related to you? It is natural that a person should feel sorrow at the time when he loses one who was near and dear to him; but he should free himself from it as early as possible, for it is quite un-

natural to cling to it, to shed copious tears and to make an exhibition of grief in other ways. The man who allows himself to be submerged in grief either does not believe in the immortality of the soul or is given to horrible self-pitying." The Sadguru went on in this strain and took all the joy out of Kashibai, for though he did not say *totidem verbis* that the candle of her husband's life was soon to be put out, she nevertheless felt instinctively that she was soon destined to be a widow. Thanks to this preparation, she did not much take to heart her husband's passing away. No doubt she felt sorrow, but her sorrow was counterbalanced by the joy that she was shortly to be the mother of a child who had great connection in past incarnations with Shri Bapat Baba.

A month after the birth of her posthumous child, Kashibai, with her sweet little darling, repaired to the Bapat Ashram. She put her child at the feet of the Sadguru, saying, "Regard him, Maharaj, as Your spiritual son." She then put a large sum of money, the proceeds of the sale of her husband's business with good-will, saying, "I dedicate this to You, Maharaj." Shri Bapat Baba accepted the money, which He devoted to establishing a free school for the children of the submerged tenth. As Kashibai with her darling desired thenceforth to stay in His Ashram, the Sadguru assigned to her a separate dwelling, which was a small but comfortable-looking tin-roofed mat-hut, near ladies' quarters.

The posthumous child was named Madhavrao by Shri Bapat Baba. He was the darling not only of his mother, but of almost all who resided in the Bapat Ashram. Some called him Madhav, some others called

him Madhoo, and a few called him simply but significantly *Madh*, which is the Marathi word for honey. The child seemed to have been born with cheerfulness and a great sense of humour. He seldom cried, and oft bubbled over with laughter. He learned to play before he was five months old, learned to walk three months later, and learned to speak before his first birthday was celebrated. He was as mischievous as gay—mischievous as a monkey and gay as a lark—but there was such innocence in his mischief that nobody ever really became angry with him. In intelligence the child was more than a match for a grown-up schoolboy. The child was indeed a prodigy. Before he was three summers, he began thirsting for knowledge. It was a wonderful sight—a sight fit even for angels to wonder at—to see him displaying his intelligence and asking various hard-to-reply questions. It seemed that the child had almost full remembrance of his last incarnation on earth, for he not infrequently narrated events which those who heard him knew nothing about but which seemed to have happened. On his fifth birthday the child appeared to be lost in reverie, in the afternoon. When he was asked the cause of it, he said, “I was thinking of some events in my past life. In our last lives on earth, Bapat Baba and I lived in the time of the Moghul King, Akbar. Bapat Baba was a Hindu and I was a Mahometan, but we were intimate friends and loved each other more than we loved our parents. For several years we carried on a jewellery business, but owing to a serious mistake of Bapat Baba, we failed in it and became insolvent. Bapat Baba so much took it to heart that he resolved to take his own life. But I prevented him from committing suicide,

and took him to the then great Mahometan Saint, Hazarat Salim Chisti. Failure in business had made us disgusted with the world, and so we dedicated our lives to the Saint, and served Him with great devotion till He entered into Mahasamadhi. Just an hour before He laid aside His corporeal frame, He summoned us and said to us gently, "Don't think, my children, that you have gained nothing by serving Me. Oh, you have gained much, my children, though you are not conscious of it. However both of you will know it full well in your next birth, which will be your very last."

As the years rolled on, the child, Madhav, went on becoming physically as well as intellectually stronger and stronger. When he was six, Bapat Baba engaged a learned tutor for him whose duty was to give him secular education. Needless to say that the Sadguru daily devoted some time to imparting spiritual instruction to him. As the boy daily came into contact with Him, his mind rested on a higher plane of consciousness than the one to which the common run of human beings are accustomed. His intellect was powerful, but his heart was even more so. He was possessed of the divine love before he was ten, and he understood thoroughly the Advaita philosophy before he was sixteen. When he came of age, at the command of his Master, he himself began imparting spiritual instruction to his *gurubandhus*, and the Master ever and anon sent him to various places in India to deliver lectures on subjects spiritual.

In 1860 Shri Bapat Baba, seeing His disciple fit for spiritual perfection, drowned him into the ocean of Divinity. He allowed Madhavrao to enjoy Nirvikalpa

Samadhi for full five days, and then brought Him down a little from that dizzy height. But it was after four years that He restored His full consciousness of the gross universe. In 1865 Bapat Baba entered into Mahasamadhi, and Madhavrao Maharaj, as He was already begun to be called, succeeded Him to the spiritual throne. He was acknowledged by all the disciples of the late Sadguru as the chargeman or spiritual heir of Bapat Baba.

At the time when our story opens the Bapat Ashram, which name Shri Madhavrao Maharaj retained as a token of His reverence for His Master, was almost the same as when Bapat Baba gave up His body. The village of Bhamburda has had a *genius loci* of its own, but its residents had no hesitation in regarding the Bapat Ashram as the chief pride of their village, for was it not replete with sanctity, and did not Madhavrao Maharaj radiate spirituality? The Ashram was not far from the Panchaleswar Cave, the shrine of which is said to have been excavated by the five Pandu princes, the heroes of the Mahabharata and the founders of Indraprastha, and overlooked not only the monolithic pavilion which is hewn out of solid rock and the ponderous roof of which is supported by twelve square pillars, but also the red-coloured gateway which is at the eastern foot of the tree-covered hillock behind the College of Science and which leads to the shrine of the Jangli Maharaj Sadhu. The Ashram consisted of a small building, in which secular education was imparted to poor village boys, and fifteen tin-roofed mat-huts, five of which were fairly big and the rest were ridiculously small. Of the five fairly big huts, one, that was opposite to a nim tree, was occupied by Madhavrao Maha-

raj, and it was in this hut that He generally imparted spiritual instruction or delivered sermons. The members of both the sexes were allowed to be present in His hut, at the time when He wished to feed His devotees on spiritual knowledge. I shall have to introduce to my readers some of the members of the fair sex in the second chapter, and some of those of the sterner sex in the third chapter, who attended His sermon given in the beginning of this chapter.

(*To be continued*)

An Article In Marathi On Shri Meher Baba.

We draw the attention of our Marathi knowing readers to a brilliant article in the Marathi language on the Holy Master, entitled "Shri Meher Baba yanchay Darshan" and published in the "Sholapur Samachar" of 7th May. The article is written by its able Editor, Mr. Vithal Narsappa Jakkal, who recently came to Arangaon with a view to worship the Holy Master and to see the Meherashram.

REVIEWS

NOTES ON THE SUBJECTS OF SHIVAJI'S SWORD, SHIVAJI'S PORTRAIT AND SHIVAJI'S RESIDENCE CALLED 'JAVHAIRKHANA' ON SINHGHAD HILL. (2nd edition considerably enlarged: pp. 50) by Khan Bahadur Bomanji D. Pudumjee. Can be had of the author, Charni Road, Bombay.

This booklet will certainly be read with great interest by all who are interested in Shivaji, one of the greatest and noblest heroes of India. The objects on which these notes have been written are of great historical importance and are in the possession of Khan Bahadur B. D. Pudumjee. It may be doubted whether the sword in the possession of the Khan Bahadur is really the famous 'Bhawani Talwar,' but on seeing the sword or on reading this booklet one cannot help being convinced thoroughly that it is certainly one of the swords which Shivaji possessed and used.

Beautiful illustrations of the above-mentioned objects and also a round brass tray, which depicts an interesting episode in the life of Shivaji and which also is in the possession of Khan Bahadur Pudumjee, are given in this instructive booklet. We heartily commend it to all who are interested in Shivaji.

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PHEROZE GAYAN SANGRAH (A book of devotional songs in the Gujarati language pp. 50) by Pheroze Rustamji Kapadia. Published by the author, Kashinath Bldg., Parsi Bazar Street, Fort, Bombay. *Price* Rs. 1-8

The author of this booklet, which contains one hundred and thirty-ones songs, is well-known among musicians and students of music in Bombay. Many of the songs are charming and almost all breathe genuine religious devotion. Mr. Kapadia deserves to be

congratulated on composing them, and all Gujarati-knowing readers may be requested to peruse and study them. Considering the value of this booklet, its price is by no means high.

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PHEROZE MUSIC GUIDE (in the Gujarati language. pp. 44) by Pheroze Rustamji Kapadia. Published by the author, Kashinath Bldg., Parsi Bazar Street, Fort, Bombay. Price Re. 1.

This booklet promises to be of much use to all who are interested in music and are acquainted with the Gujarati language. It contains thirty-one charming and instructive songs with full instructions pertaining to the scientific singing of them.

CORRESPONDENCE

Parsis and their Beliefs

To

The Editor,

The Meher Message.

Dear Sir,

I am glad that you replied in trenchant language to those hollow-hearted and worldly-minded Parsis who had the baseness to criticize adversely Bhagwan Shri Meher Baba. The average Parsi is quite materialistic and he is as narrow-minded as materialistic. He is incapable of understanding saintliness and spiritual position of a Sadguru. You have rightly remarked in your February editorial that by *good* the average pleasure-hunting Parsi means good to eat, good to drink, and good pay for the bad work he does. Is it because of this that Bhagwan Shri Meher Baba has taken birth as a Parsi?

A Parsi high priest recently babbled about the superstition in believing in sadhus and Sadgurus. It is clear that he knows not what superstition is. What an irony of fate it is that those who themselves are imbued with superstitions and silly beliefs should have the impudence to criticize those who follow living perfect Masters like Bhagwan Shri Meher Baba! The average orthodox Parsi believes that God is omnipresent, but at the same time he believes that there is an evil spirit, named Angra Mainyush, which occupies a large space, that there is hell which is ruled by Satan who is independant of God. He believes that God is omnipotent, but at the same time he believes that the

above-mentioned evil spirit constantly fights against the good spirit, named Spento Mainyush and that God does not see it right to defeat the evil spirit. Fire, Sir, is nothing but one of the five elements. It is a gross element at that, and has nothing to do with spirituality. But foolish orthodox Parsis regard fire as the son of God and believe that God is pleased with them when they feed it with sandalwood. The so-called religion, which the orthodox Parsis practise, is said to be founded by Zoroaster. Sir, a sane spiritually-minded man must go mad before he can believe that Bhagwan Zoroaster taught such foolish doctrines.

The Parsi priests and high priests are absolutely worldly. They know nothing whatsoever about the spiritual path, and their duty consists only in the performance of ceremonies, some of which are not only meaningless but absurd. Most of them do not know the meaning of a single word of Avesta and cannot properly pronounce a single word of it. Priests are said to be the custodians of religion, but the chief object of thought of the Parsi priests is money and not God. Most of them do not believe in the efficacy of a single ceremony which they perform, but, as they get large sums of money for performing ceremonies, they invariably exhort ignorant Parsi women to get a number of ceremonies performed in honour of their dead relatives.

A couple of Parsi scribes recently expressed horror when they came to know that on great occasions devotees and disciples of Sadgurus wash their holy feet with milk or water, and then drink a little of such purified milk or water. It is a mark of both devotion and humility to wash the feet of a perfect Master, and

there is nothing strange if devotees drink such purified water or milk. It is an entirely reasonable custom as old as the hills, and it goes without saying that because the devotees are spiritually benefitted by so doing that Sadgurus allow it to practise. Orthodox Parsis regard cow's urine as holy, they wash their hands and feet with it; they compel children, at the time of the Navjot ceremony to drink it; and Parsi priests while performing certain ceremonies have to drink it or have to make a pretence of drinking it. Sir, I am of the opinion that this belief about the wonderful power of cow's urine is idiotic; but I see nothing objectionable in the custom of washing the feet of a perfect Saint with milk or water and drinking such holy milk or water by way of *prasad*.

Objection has also been taken to the shampooing of feet of Sadgurus by their devotees. It is not often that a perfect Master allows his devotees to shampoo his feet, but even if he allows them often to do so, what objection there can be to this a sane man does not understand. It is considered by the devotees a privilege to touch the holy feet of a perfect Saint. It does not matter if the Saint possesses a male body and devotees are female. Of course the Saint will allow—on occasions just to please them—his female devotees to shampoo his holy feet only if they believe in his saintliness and if their minds are pure.

With apologies for troubling you,

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours in the Lord,

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