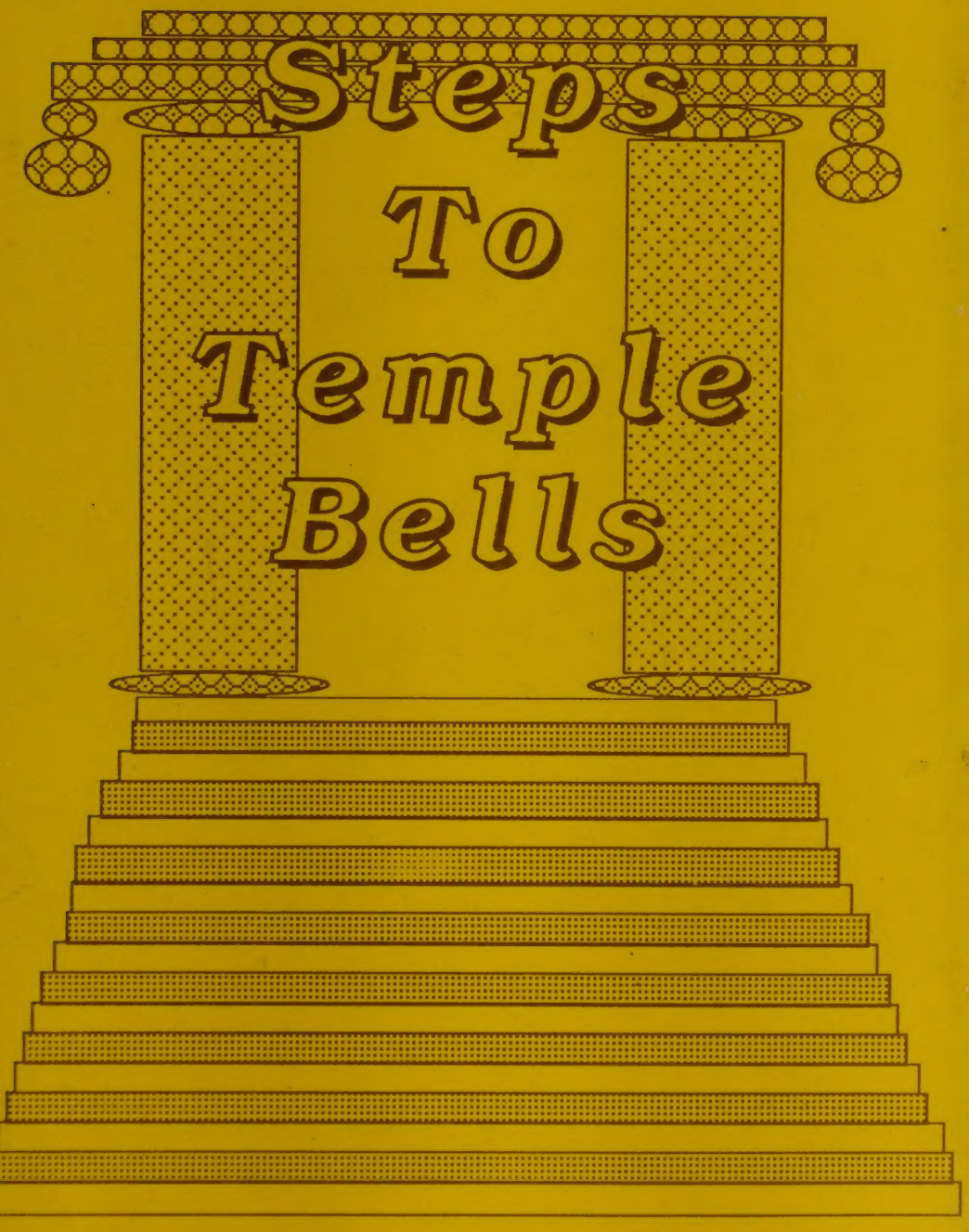
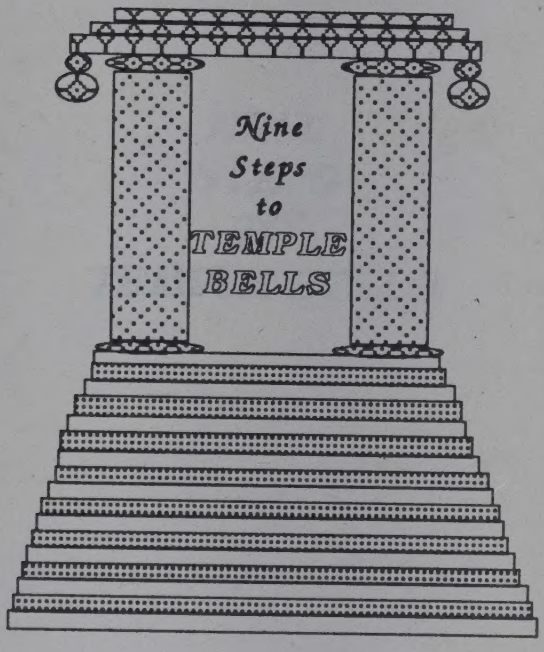
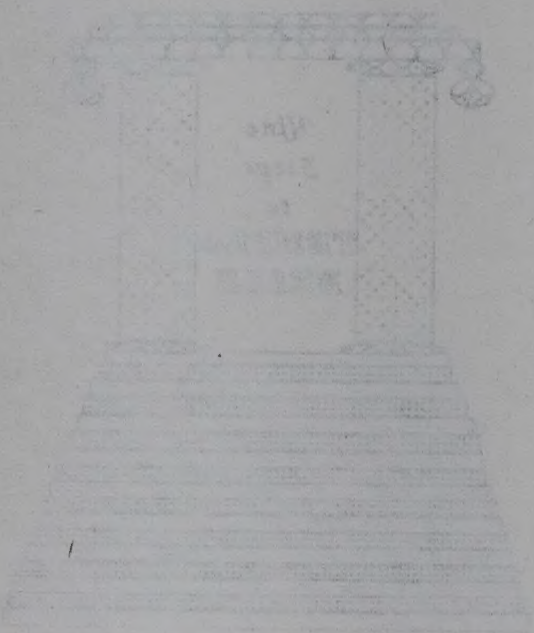
Nine Steps To Temple Bells




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Readings from Hindu Religious Literature

Edited by
A.J. APPASAMY

G T P
BANGALORE

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PREFACE

The suggestion has often been made that a book of selections from the religious literature of India should be made available to Christian readers in a handy form. This book is designed to meet the need.

What is the purpose of such a book? In the first place it will enable us in some measure to understand the heart of the religious experience of non-Christians in India. The deepest regions of man's spiritual experience are not always easy to reach. We cannot understand the essence of Hinduism merely by reading books about it, particularly in a critical spirit. The careful and analytic study of Hindu religious books may make us familiar with the general ideas which they contain. But it requires more than careful study to get at the intimate way in which these ideas influence life, from life. Ideas are of value only as they inspire experience. To separate theory from life, philosophy from experience, would be unwise. If the deeply religious impulses which lie behind the utterances in the sacred books of India are to be grasped by us, those books should be meditated on; they should be taken to the inner chamber in which we quietly face life's questions in the presence of God. It is not merely the mood in which we read these writings, but also the frequency with which we read them, that will help us. The great passages of any Scripture do not yield their inner meaning until they are brooded over slowly and patiently and for a long time. A perusal of them, or even a study of them, will not accomplish what prolonged familiarity with them alone will bring out. This book of selections will help the Christian to ponder on the vital passages.

Every Christian in India should be prepared to reckon carefully with the trend of religious thought in the country. Jesus came to fulfil, not to destroy. The life and teaching of Jesus gain immensely in significance when they are related to the problems and experiences of the people of India. No one in India should think that the whole religious life of the country has no meaning for him; for in his own being are impulses, instincts, questions, longings, aspirations, which

may or may not always be clear, but which are articulate in the sacred books of India. It is when the teaching of Christ is brought into direct relation to these instincts and questions that its full significance is realized by the Indian Christian. Further, Indian thought has developed a storehouse of terms, images, and metaphors, and these have a great charm for the Indian mind. When, therefore, we come across some thought with which we may be familiar in our Christian teaching, but which finds beautiful expression in language which is rich with historic association, our minds are stirred as in no other way. The vocabulary of our religious devotion is immensely enriched, particularly when we use a book of this sort in the vernacular, and read the selections not in translation but in the original, and we are attracted by a beauty and melody whose appeal is tremendous.

There is in the religious literature of India a loving, joyous 'abandon' to God. In the books of most Christian mystics also it is abundantly present. But in a great deal of ordinary Christian literature it is not present to the same extent. Whenever we come in contact with this loving and full 'abandon' to God, a new emotion of love and trust is generated in us.

Sometimes there may be ideas which are inherent in Christian thought, but which have not received emphasis. Christianity is Eastern in its origin: its sacred books written in the East and by people who were familiar with the East. It is when the Bible is placed in its old environment that it can be fully understood. A familiarity with the Scriptures of the East may help us to understand the Bible better. It may not necessarily give us new ideas, but it will certainly mean new points of emphasis. Ideas which are already present in the Christian Scripture will attain a new significance, and have a new power, when they are thus viewed in relation to their Eastern enviroment.

A word of explanation is necessary regarding the arrangement of the chapters. The opening chapter contains numerous exhortations to engage in the quest for God, the greatest of all human quests (i). Like a river in heavy flood, this stream of thought overflows its banks, and we are obliged to have another chapter to receive the overflow (ii). The passages contained in these two chapters are

representative of a great portion of India's religious literature. This overwhelming sense of the supremacy of religion and of the greatness of God awakens in the human soul a consciousness of its guilt and sin as over against the exalted purity and greatness of God (iii). A genuine turning to God brings in its wake the joy of salvation (iv). Such a joy is not mere emotion, but is accompanied by the soul's sincere and earnest endeavour to conform to the will of God (v). The steady religious life thus begun continues by the practice of praise and prayer. (vi,vii); and, in the case of ardent souls, uses the symbolism of human love, so rich and impassioned (viii).

Dr. Satyendra Roy has kindly collected and sent in most of the Bengali selections included here. Swami Shuddhanandha Bharati and Mr. V. Chakkarai have translated the Tamil hymns, and Mr. Cyril Modak the Hindi hymns in this book. I offer my hearty thanks to these friends for their valuable help. Both Swami Shuddhanandha Bharati and Mr. Cyril Modak have sought to render the spirit of the original without aiming at a literal version.

The selections from the Upanishads are taken from Dr. R.E. Hume's *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* published by the Oxford University Press. The passages from the Bhagavad Gita are taken from Dr. L.D. Barnett's translation in the Temple Classics, published by J.M. Dent & Co. To these authors and publishers we are grateful for their kind permission to reproduce the passages. Between 1909 and 1915 the Christian Literature Society, in Madras, published a translation of the poems of Tukaram in three volumes. As this book is now practically out of print we have included in this volume several selections from that translation, with the generous permission of the publishers. Some of the extracts from Tulsidas are from a translation by Sir George Grierson, which was published in the *Indian Antiquary.* We are thankful to Sir George Grierson and the Editors of the *Indian Antiquary* for their kind permission to quote these. I am indebted to Mr. J. A. Chapman, of the Imperial Library of Calcutta, for permission to quote from his *Bengali Religious* Lyrics (The Book Company, Calcutta); to Messrs, Macmillan & Co., to quote from *Gitanjali and Fruit Gathering ;* to the Association Press, for permission to quote

from Dr. Macnicol's *Psalms of Maratha Saints* and Macdonell's *Hymns from the Rig Veda;* to the Oriental Publishing House, Calcutta, for permission to quote from Ramakrishna's *Studies in Universal Religion ;* and to Dr. T. Isaac Tambyah, to quote from his *Psalms of a Saiva Saint* (Luzac & Co., London).

A new book, R.T. Gribble's *Mystic Lyrics from the Indian Middle Ages* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.) contains some fine hymns attractively, though freely, rendered. It is not possible to include them in this volume, for copy-right reasons.

Several friends have read this manuscript and made valuable suggestions. Special mention must be made of the encouragement given me by Dr. N. Macnicol, the Bishop of Madras, Rev. E.C. Dewick, Mr. K.T. Paul, and the Bishop of Dornakal. But for their help this Anthology would not have been published. My wife has helped me a great deal and I am very thankful to her.

I ought to add that, by request, some of these selections were published serially in advance in *The Young Men of India.*

The extracts from the vernacular literatures are confined to Marathi, Hindi, Bengali and Tamil, as these are the vernaculars of India which are richest in their devotional literature. There are several selections from Sanskrit sources, which are often the fountain-head of religious life in India. If this volume proves helpful, it is my desire to follow it up with selections from other vernacular literatures.

A. J. APPASAMY

Note:- (In the translations from which the following selections are taken, the transliteration of Indian names does not follow in single system, but many variations are found. In the present volume it has not been found possible to adhere to complete consistency : and for this the indulgence of the reader is requested.)

INTRODUCTORY SKETCHES OF AUTHORS AND BOOKS

Appar belonged to the seventh century. The dates of Appar and some of the earlier Tamil poets, like Manikka Vachakar and Nammalvar, whose poems are included in this Anthology, are shrouded in obscurity. There has been no consensus of opinion among historical scholars, and the dates given here are only approximate. Appar was born in a little village in the Cuddalore district. At that time Jainism was powerful in South India, and Appar, attracted by that faith, became a Jain and attained a mastery of the Jain scriptures. But a critical illness made him return to the Saiva faith, the faith of his fathers. For this relapse he was persecuted severly by the Jain prince Kadana. But so staunch was Appar's faith and courage that the prince himself gave up Jainism and became a Saivite. The greater part of Appar's life was spent in visiting different shrines, and in composing hymns in honour of the particular deities in the shrines.

There is a legend that Appar always carried with him a plough-shaped instrument. with which he removed the grass on the floors or on the walls of the temples he visited. This he apparently considered to be the service of his body, which was needed to complete the service he rendered with his heart and with his speech. Appar has left behind some three hundred poems. In these hymns, originally addressed to local gods, we find traces of a lofty conception of God, God, according to Appar, is, 'The Immeasurable First', 'The Lamp that shineth unkindled', 'The Great knowledge', 'The Love that great sages praise'. God is not merely transcendent, but also immanent. Some of his phrases are pregnant with beauty and flash forth his deep intuitions– 'The jewelled Lamp that shineth in the heart of the devout', 'The Teacher

that doth enter the soul', 'The inflowing Honey' and 'The indwelling Wealth'.

The *Bhagavad Gita.* Of all religious classics in India, none has exerted greater power over the life of the people than the *Bhagavad Gita.* Originally written in Sanskrit, it has been rendered into all the vernaculars, and its teaching has penetrated into every nook and corner of India. The date of the book has been variously assigned, some scholars putting it as early as the fourth century B.C. and others considering it as late as the second century A.D. It teaches the worship of God through *bhakti,* and sets forth detachments as a lofty ideal. The poem takes the form of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna on the field of battle. Arjuna heistates to engage in battle, seeing that he might thereby work havoc upon so many lives. Krishna exhorts him to perform his duty and teaches him that there is no slain and no slayer, for nothing is indestructible. That the value of concentration is an essential element in the quest for God, is clearly recognized.

The *Bhagavata Purana,* written probably about A.D. 900, is a great classic on *bhakti,* whose influence on religious thought in India through the centuries has been tremendous. In this book for the first time appears a new interpretation of *bhakti* as the quest for God characterized by ardent emotion. Some centuries earlier the *Bhagavad Gita* had taught a sober and restrained type of *bhakti.* Here we see *bhatki* described as an excessive emotion which enfolds the soul of the devotee in rapture. The attitude of man to God is described as similar to that of the utter love and adoration of Krishna by the *gopis.* The excessive emotion of the book has led to strange developments in India whereby religion has been equated with frenzy of feeling, and the bearing of religion on those two other great parts of man, thought and will, has been neglected. The erotic imagery of the poem has likewise given rise to all sorts of irregularities, in theory as well as in practice. In spite of all this, it must be recognized that genuine religious experience throbs behind this book, and that there are passages in it which, for their religious value, ought to be permanently treasured.

Bhai Vir Singh represents the finest traditions of Sikh poetry. He is the son of the Punjabi poet, Dr. Charan Singh, who has rendered into Punjabi that great Sanskrit play, *Sakuntala.* Bhai Vir Singh has a printing press at Amritsar, and edits a journal which has a large circulation in the Punjab. Bhai Vir Singh combines in himself the capacity to appeal to the man of culture with the capacity to reach the man in the street. He kindles deep emotion in those who listen to his poetry, and even illiterate men and women are profoundly stirred by the power of his words. He has a singular gift for dealing with common things and touching them with his imagination so that they glow with wonderful beauty. The selections in this anthology are taken from, Nargas a book of Sikh poems, which has been freely rendered into English by Puram Singh.

The *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad.* As with some of the main Upanishads, the discussions which gave rise to this 'forest-treatise' probably took place in the land of the Jumna and the Ganges. This and other treatises grew slowly; they were first committed to memory ', and at a later date were written down. When Buddha began to teach, about 525 B.C., the thought of this Upanishad was already exerting a widespread influence. It is likely, therefore, that it had been committed to writing at least some years before that date.

There is a great deal of vigorous thinking in this early Upanishad about the nature of God, the nature of the soul, and the nature of the release which the soul attains. Do this and other Upanishads teach theism or pantheism? The fact that Sankara, following some of the lines of thought in the Upanishads, has taught that the Reality of the Divine Soul is the one existing fact in the universe, has given the impression that the Upanishads are mainly pantheistic in their trend. It should, however, be remembered that the Upanishads are compilations of the thoughts of a great many thinkers, and that in them are found passages of a distinctly theistic character. The great theistic philosopher, Ramanuja, has found the authority for his beliefs in some of the texts of the Upanishads. It is, therefore, quite legitimate to find in the Upanishads passages of a theistic significance.

The *Chandogya Upanishad.* The main purpose of this Upanishad (about 500 B.C.) is to teach the nature of Reality. With parable and illustration it teaches that the Universal Self is not different from the individual self. The whole universe is God, and the individual is not different from God. The following may well be considered to be the vital passage of the Upanishad:

'He who consists of mind, whose body is life, whose form is light, whose conception is truth, whose soul is space, containing all works, containing all desires, containing all odours, containing all tastes, encompassing this whole world, the unspeaking, the unconcerned – this soul of mine within the heart is smaller than a grain of rice, or a barley corn, or a mustard seed, or a grain of millet, or the kernel of a grain of millet; this soul of mine within the heart is greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than these worlds.

'Containing all words, containing all desires, containing all odours, containing all tastes, encompassing this whole world, the unspeaking, the unconcerned – this is the soul of mine within the heart, this is Brahma. Into him I shall enter on departing hence.'

This occurs in the midst of a great deal of arid discussion and futile hair-splitting. But it is the glory of the Upanishads that, as early as 500 B.C., they should have flashed forth such truths as we have quoted, even though they have enveloped them in a mass of what every modern reader would consider useless matter.

Citta Ranjan Das was born in 1870. After receiving his high school education in the London Missionary College, Bhowanipore, he studied in the Presidency College, Calcutta and took his B.A. degree. He went to England with a view to entering the I.C.S., but was not taken into the service on account of his political views. When he returned to Calcutta he joined the High Court Bar, and soon became a leader there. He has published several volumes of Bengali lyrics. In these lyrics he shows himself a spiritual descendant of the Vaishnavites of the Chaitanya school. His poems are fresh

and possess considerable vigour and directness of expression. At the time of the Non-Co-operation Movement he sacrificed his lucrative practice and devoted himself heart and soul to the national work. He was a most generous man and gave away large sums of money.

Dadudayal is one of those interesting figures among Indian *bhakti* poets whose mind may be said to be "spontaneously Christian". Born in A.D. 1601, at Ahemedabad, in Gujerat, he wandered, at an early age, in search of truth far into the wilds of Rajputana. There is a tradition, held dear by Dadu-panthis, that tells of a strange person, in the role of a sadhu, who instructed him. Narna, a hermitage in the rocky interior of Rajputana, is considered as his place of spiritual education. According to Dadu-panthi traditions, he was a married man, and a Gujerati Brahman by caste. His original name has not come down to us, but it is said that he was so kind and respectful that the name "Dadu-dayal" was soon given him. There are fifty-two stations of his followers, scattered in Rajputana, Marwar, the Punjab and Gujerat. There are two kinds of sadhus in this panth–one the saffron–robed, who are pure hermits; and the other the *nagas*, wearing white, who are cultivators, money-lenders, physicians and servants. His poems–or rather his psalms–are simple and even in metre. For him mythology, incarnations and polytheism are futile. He dislikes iconology. After singing of true *bhakti* as the only means of salvation for fifty-nine years, he died in A.D. 1660.' –CYRIL MODAK.

'*Dharnidas* was born in A.D. 1656, in the village of Majhi, district Chhapra, in Bihar. He was Shrivastav Kayastha by caste. His religious teacher was Chandradas. There are two volumes of songs composed by Dharnidas, *Satyaprakash* and *Premprakash*, His poetry is fraught with a spirit of devotion. He was the manager of the estate of Majhi, but left his post because it did not allow him enough time for meditation. He did not accept any land which his master seemed disposed to give for his maintenance. He left his family and became a *sannayasi*. Two miracles are ascribed to him, but they do not seem credible. Nothing more

is known about him, not even the year of his death.' –CYRIL MODAK.

Kabir. 'Of the exact date of this poet's birth, and even o his true parentage, we must for ever remain in the dark. Bu it is admitted on all hands that he belonged to the fourteenth century A.D. He was brought up by a weaver called Niru an Nima his wife. But this is not sufficient proof that Kabir wa a born Muslim. He became, at an early age, the disciple o Ramananda, who had brought to Northern India the fire o Ramanuja's reform against Sankara's formalism an Vaishnavite ritualism. All through life Kabir seems to hav lived the life of a weaver, and, like Bunyan the tinker, combined vision with industry. He attacked the evils o Hindus and Muslims alike. He caricatured idolatry. He condemned external show. He worked for Hindu-Muslim unity. His puzzle-verses are famous.

'The fiery zeal of the weaver-poet, his profound spirituality, his lofty idealism, soon brought to him disciple eager to learn. Dharmadas is said to be the first, along with Raidas. But the former continued his *guru's* work, and even i Kabir's lifetime a Kabir panth was established; and i continues to day in the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and part of Bihar.' –CYRIL MODAK.

'*The Katha Upanishad* holds a very high place among the ancient scriptures of the Hindu religion. It owes its influence and popularity in part, no doubt, to its antiquity (i dates from the middle of the first millennium before Christ), but even more to its intrinsic merit. The charming story o the adventures of Nachiketas in the first *valli*,[1] the abiding human interest of its central topic, "What is there after death?" the sincerity and insight with which it faces the mysteries of the universe, and the vigour and beauty of its diction in many famous passages – these things are sufficien to secure for it an abiding place among the great relics of the past. No doubt to the non-Hindu mind there will seem

[1] *Valli* is a chapter; literally, a creeper. A chapter is called a *valli*, or, like a creeper; it holds many beautiful things.

another side to the picture. There is much that in the cold eyes of a non-believer appears unnecessarily obscure and irritatingly vague, and occasionally some things trivial and unworthy. Whether the unbeliever is blinded by his unbelief, or the believer by his love, is a question which can never be settled, because there are no unprejudiced judges.' –R. L. Pelly.

Keshub Chunder Sen was born, in 1838, in Calcutta. His parents were Vaishnavites, and all through his life he showed the fervency and the ecstatic piety of his Vaishnavite upbringing. His mother has been described as 'a most uncommon woman,' and seems to have imparted to her son a goodly measure of her great qualities. He did not take any university degree, but while in college read a good deal of mental and moral philosophy. Among the influences which moulded him in his early life were the writings of Sir William Hamilton, Victor Cousin, Carlyle, Emerson, and Shakespeare. When he was nineteen he came to know Devendranath Tagore, the father of the poet Rabindranath. He visited England in 1870, where his eloquence attracted considerable attention. He met such eminent people as Gladstone, John Stuart Mill, Martineau and Pusey. With Professor Max Muller and Dean Stanley he formed a life-long friendship. On his return from England he formed the Indian Reform Association, with several branches for the Improvement of Women, Working Men's Institute, Temperance and Cheap Literature. He helped to pass the Native Marriage Act. By this Act, bigamy and polygamy were made impossible in the Brahmo Samaj. Infant marriages were abolished. The husband was bound to have completed the age of eighteen years, and the wife the age of fourteen years. Idolatry was expunged. The two former evils were made penal by the new marriage law. Inter-marriages were formally recognized by the legislature, and widow re-marriages were sanctioned as a matter of course. Keshub died in the year 1883. He must be reckoned among the most powerful religious forces in India during the nineteenth century. The story of his life is still an inspiration to many. Through the Church of the New Dispensation, he still exerts a vigorous influence on the religious life of the country. He was greatly attracted by the personality of Christ, and sought to bring about a union of the East and West through Him. In

him we see the deeply religious spirit of India blossoming with a new beauty under new conditions.

Manikka Vachakar. Manikka Vachakar is believed to have lived in the tenth century. The lengthy biography of him in Tamil is full of legendary matter, and it requires considerable effort to discern, from among these heavy mists of traditional lore, the outlines of the actual historical figure. He seems to have been a Prime Minister, attended with much pomp and luxury. But, amidst all this external greatness, he pursued a strenuous search for a teacher who would initiate him in the highest experiences of religion. This he found, and forthwith a remarkable transformation of his life took place. He gave up his life as a courtier, with all its allurements, and became a wandering devotee of Siva. He engaged in controversy with the Buddhists, and with all the force of his strong nature sought to upset their negative beliefs that there is 'neither God, nor soul nor salvation.' The great Tamil book by which he has become immortal is *Tiru Vachakam.* From cover to cover, it breathes the joy and the rapture of a life lived in mystic union with God. While a great many myths and legends are alluded to, we can see that beneath them all lies a profound belief in God. His intense religious convictions, and the sweet and melodious verses in which he set them forth, did not a little to withstand the influence of Buddhism in his day. Not only for his own time, but for all time, his poetry has been a beacon light. From generation to generation devotees in the Tamil country have sung and wept over his hymns, and the depth of his piety has beckoned many thoughtless souls to high endeavour.

Mehar Das. ' Nothing is known about Mehar Das, save that he was a Deputy Inspector of schools in Lahore and his name was Suraj Narain. Rev. Ahmad Shah seems to have known him. He says, "Mehar shows a great deal of Christian influence. He was an English-educated person... and has written many books on Hindu religious thought of all schools. He was especially interested in *sadhus* and well acquainted with Christian literature". –CYRIL MODAK.

Namdev was born in a village near Karhad, in the Satara district. How it came about that Namdev's heart

turned with such passionate adoration to Vithoba is somewhat obscure. According to one account, he bore, like many other saints, from his infancy the marks of sainthood. The first word he spoke was "Sri Vitthal"; he learned nothing at school, for he cared for nothing but *kirtans* (services of song). That is one way in which saints are made, but another is the way of conversion, and there seems to be more authority for the story that Namdev was converted from an evil life to service of Vithoba. Several *abhangs*–among others, one said to be by his wife–refer to an early career of lawlessness, brought to a sudden end by his contrition at the tears shed by a woman, whom he had made a widow. In his remorse he would have taken his own life in the temple of Nagnath, but he found comfort and forgiveness when he sought instead the presence of the more gracious Vithoba, and from that day onward he gave himself with complete devotion to the worship of this god.

' The chief religious interest in Namdev's life lies in tracing a change or development in his thought, which his *abhangs* reveal. At first he is the purely emotional *bhakta*, all tears and cries and raptures. Later in his life, however, he seems to have passed through an experience which greatly altered his outlook on the world. In the first stage of his experience, Vithoba of Pandhari is the sole object of his devotion; he can scarcely tear himself away from the precincts of his temple. At a later period Vithoba has become for him no more than a symbol of the Supreme Soul that pervades the universe. He is still a *bhakta*, but he is no longer visited by the gusts of passion that had once shaken his soul. An attitude of spiritual indifference is now his supreme attainment. His faith rests upon a philosophical interpretation of the universe, which blunts the sensations which formerly harassed him, and brings him, if not peace, at least passivity. This change, or growth, is reflected in his *abhangs*, which have not, of course, come down to us in their historical setting or in the order of their composition.' –N. MACNICOL.

Nammalvar belonged to the period between A.D. 500 and 700, during which Buddhism and Brahmanism contended for supremacy in South India. He was born of

Vaishnavite parents, in a small village in Tinnevelly district. We have little reliable data about his life. A long and fruitful friendship seems to have sprung up between him and Madhurakavi, a Brahman scholar. Among the hundred and odd poems attributed to Nammalvar, some are addressed to the deities worshipped in some of the temples in South India. This probably means that he visited these shrines, for they show all the fervour and ecstasy of personal contact. The traditional accounts say nothing about his marriage. Nammalvar perhaps remained a ceilibate to the end of his life. He died when he was only thirty-five years old. His disciple, Madhurakavi, then published the poems of Nammalvar. We find in Nammalvar's hymns a passionate love of nature. His native home was on the banks of the Tamraparni, and from it he could view the blue hills of the Western Ghats on the one side and the rolling waters of the sea on the other. It was natural that in this environment of beauty he should have developed a love for Nature. His poems throb with intense mystic feeling, and he loves to describe his relation to God in the same terms of rich emotional content as a woman deeply in love would use towards her beloved. Among several Tamil poets, Saivite and Vaishnavite, of enduring significance, Nammalvar stands forth as a towering personality who has had ineffable glimpses of the Divine, and who seeks to impart to others, in words of glowing beauty, this vision splendid which his spiritual eyes have beheld.

' *Nanak* was born in the year A.D. 1469, in the district of Lahore. His father, Kalyana Chand, was the manager of Subarai. In his very childhood Nanak showed signs of his habit of meditation and his love of goodness. At nineteen years of age he was married to the daughter of Moolchand, named Sulkshani.

Two sons were born to them, six years after their marriage. There is a story told about Nanak's generosity. His father had given him a large sum of money, to go to Gujera and begin trade; but on the way he met mendicants and spent all the capital on them. It is said also that about this time he met Kabir, and devoted himself to the study of religious questions. It is a well-attested fact that Nanak met Kabir a

the age of twenty-seven years, and that Kabir's influence is unmistakably present in all Nanak's teachings. He is supposed to have made many missionary tours north, south, east and west, and established the Sikh religion. He composed a volume for daily meditation, the *Japji* which has songs of praise and entreaty. As a poet he is no match to Kabir, but as a social and religious reformer he did as much to cement an alliance between Hindus and Muslims as Kabir did. Nanak, Dr. Keay thinks, was nearer Hinduism than Kabir. But even then in his teachings there is the influence of Sufi thought, perhaps through Kabir. He died in A.D. 1538.' – CYRIL MODAK.

Pattinattar probably lived in the tenth century. He was a rich merchant and had several boats. Hearing the news that his boats had sunk, he was filled with grief. But contrary to the rumour, the boats came ashore, and, filled with great joy, he went to see them. When he was away from the house a mendicant knocked at his door and asked for alms. Pattinattar's wife told him to wait until her husband should come back. The mendicant was irritated by the delay, and left an eyeless needle, with the message that 'illgotten wealth, misers' hidden treasure, and even an eyeless needle will not serve one at the last.' The eyeless needle, tradition maintains, was the means of Pattinattar's conversion. It swiftly flashed across his mind that, just as a needle without an eye is of no value, though the eye itself be the tiniest of things, so the human soul which does not devote itself to God is lost. The little symbol brought home to him that great truth which has been set forth in memorable words by Jesus: ' What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ' From that moment Pattinattar renounced all his wealth, gave up his family, and became a wandering beggar. There is a strong vein of pessimism in his poetry. He despises the body as a thing altogether of evil, and heaps epithet upon epithet to bring out its degrading character. He has great repugnance for woman, and regards them as instruments of vice. In spite of these views, there is a deep strair of genuine religion in him, and many of his poems have sunk deep in the Tamil mind.

Princess Mira of Mewar, or *Mirabai*, as she is more commonly known to Hindi literature, belongs to the mystic school of poets. Her devotion seems to have been so intense that, as tradition says, it caused her persecution at the hands of her royal kinsfolk. Her poetry in the original Hindi and the Rajasthani dialect shows great abandon. Often the smoothness of metrical effect is broken by rugged outbursts of strong feeling. Her tone is candid. She has few cut and dried conventions, either of phrase or metre.

' She was a contemporary of Tulsidas, and belonged to the sixteenth century. After her husband's death while she was still in the prime of youth, she left the raja's house because of religious persecution. She spent much of her time in wandering along the banks of the Ganges. But the fame of her piety and devotion is said to have brought the Emperor Akbar from the glory of his imperial capital to the nunnery of this queenly devotee. Her teacher was Raidas, the " Boehme of India," whom she mentions in some of her songs.' –CYRIL MODAK.

Rabindranath Tagore comes of an ancient and well-known family in Bengal. As a boy, he found it hard to enter with real spirit into the life of the school, which was irksome to him. He was sent to England to study law, but that too, was not congenial to him. He has devoted his life to writing and educational and philanthropic work. A versatile genius, he has written novels, plays, love poems, religious lyrics and philosophical essays. He is one of the foremost figures in the renaissance in Bengal. Later in life he began to translate some of his Bengali books into English. The poems quoted in this Anthology are from *Gitanjali* and *Fruit-Gathering*. They set forth in beautiful form the true spirit of India's religious life, quickened into new activity and moulded into new forms of expression by Western influence. Dissatisfied with the education given in India, he started a school at Bolpur, where boys and girls are brought into direct contact with Nature, and where, in an atmosphere of great freedom, they are taught to develop their whole personality, not merely under the influence of the exact sciences, but also with the help of the fine arts like music and drama. After the Great War the need for international understanding gripped

mind of the poet, and he devoted with selfless zeal the last years of his life to bringing about a mutual understanding between the different nations of the world.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was born, of brahman parents, in the village of Kamarpukur, in Bengal, on the 20th of February, 1834. He was not sent to any school. Early in life he began to show extraordinary religious zeal, and would even pass into ecstasy, remaining unconscious for hours. When he was twenty-five his people got him married, with the idea that this would make him lead a normal life. But his earnestness took on a different form, and he passed through twelve years of storm and stress. His great passion during these years was to see Kali and to realize her. In this period he was initiated by a *guru* into Sankara's monistic *Vedanta*. When his wife came to see him he took her as his disciple, teaching her religion and sharing with her his deepest experiences. He strove to conquer his pride of Brahman ancestry by doing the work of the street cleaner and scavenger. Anxious to know and understand other religions, he became the disciple of a Muhammadan saint, and put himself under his tuition. He saw Jesus in a vision, and for three days could think and speak of nothing but Jesus. Among those who came under his influence were Keshub Chunder Sen and Swami Vivekananda. He gathered about him a band of disciples who were profoundly infuenced by his life and teaching. They have continued to be a great factor in modern India, quickening the religious impulses of the people and carrying on excellent social work of a noble and unselfish type. He wrote nothing, but his sayings in Bengali have been collected from time to time. The sayings quoted in this Anthology are taken from *Studies in Universal Religion*, 'compiled from various authenticated sources, and done into English by Manmanthanath Chatterji.'

Ramalinga Swami was born, in 1823, near Chidambaram, S. India. His father was the village Revenue Officer and the village teacher. The poet was born of his father's sixth wife. The father dying when the child was only six months old, the family moved in course of time to Madras. Ramalinga's eldest brother was now the head of the

family, and earned his living by expounding the Puranas. The boy received his education first from his eldest brother, and then from a teacher in Conjeevaram. Even in his youth he began singing songs in honour of the local deity. He was married, but it is recorded that he spent the first night of his wedded life in reading *Tiru Vachakam*, and it is also said that he never lived the life of a family man. After visiting several shrines, he reached the village of Karunguli, where he resided for fourteen years under the hospitable roof of a friend. He engaged in controversy with the members of the Brahmo Samaj about idolatry. It was his contention that idolatry was necessary. By this time a great many disciples gathered round him, and with their help he built a Home of Charity. This home is being maintained even now. He also built a Hall of Wisdom, designed with eight corners. He died in 1872. His poems are extremely melodious, and are instinct with deep religion and wide charity for all living beings. Though of recent date, he has been given a permanant and exalted niche in Tamil literature.

The *Rig-Veda* is the earliest religious classic of India, and has influenced the religion and poetry of India for over 3,000 years. The hymns composing the Veda were first handed on from generation to generation by memory, and then written down. The collection was transmitted with great fidelity, and unusual precautions were taken to preserve the text intact. There are 1,017 hymns in the book. The powers of Nature are conceived of as gods, and the hymns in the collection are prayers addressed to them. These hymns are used along with the offering of *soma* juice and the fire-sacrifice of melted butter. The predominant characteristic of these Gods is their power. Ruling over creation, they defeat the great forces of Evil. We gain from *Rig-Veda* valuable glimpses of the social life of the Indo-Aryans of these early times. The style of the hymns is mostly clear and unaffected, and though, being composed by a priestly class, they are full of sacrificial allusions, there is a great deal of fine poetry in them.

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* was probably written somewhere between 500 and 300 B.C. There is considerable advance here over the earlier Upanishads, like the

Chandogya Upanishad. The course of thought proceeds in a more orderly fashion, and a growing importance is attached to self-discipline. Here the idea of God becomes personal. But the tendency to Monism is still strong, and leaves its impress on the whole treatise. In this Upanishad we have the beginning of the doctrine of *bhakti*, and we are as interested in this earliest of all references to *bhakti* as in coming across, on some remote hill, the feeble beginnings of a mighty river. God is here considered as directing the whole cycle of *karma* and transmigration. The world of matter is regarded as unreal, so that the reality of *Brahman* may stand forth all the more clearly. He always exists; the world is but transitory.

Surdas. ' It is admitted that Surdas was born of Saraswat Brahman stock, in A.D. 1484, in the village of Sihe, near modern Delhi. His father was Ramdas, a man of broken fortunes with a large family. To relieve his father of one burden, the sensitive child, Surdas, left home at eight years of age, and after long and weary wandering, came to Mathura, where he lived to the end of his days. He became a disciple of Vallabhacharya, and thus imbibed the characteristics of the Vaishnavite *Bhakti* cult. His best known works are *Sursagar, Sursavali, Sahitya Laihri,* and *Sur Pachese* (which was only recently discovered to be his work). *Sursavali* is the essence of *Sursagar,* the latter being a collection of a lakh of lines describing the sports of Krishna. *Sahitya Laihri* has a collection of "gems from Surdas".

' Modern critics have pronounced him to be a *bhakti* poet. He uses the Vraga dialect, and is often found playing on words. He uses his similes and metaphors, and he has a vast store, to enhance the beauty and richness of his expression. As a creative artist, no Hindi poet rivals him. He discards standard interpretations and creates pictures of Krishna's childhood, boyhood, youth and manhood, so as to interpret some theory of his mystical theology. Some critics think he was born blind, while others say he became blind later in life. But his creations are often so full of vivid colour that I feel he could not have been born blind. His songs show that he was a strict manotheist, and took Rama, Krishna and Vishnu to be one deity. He has often felt the burden of sin,

and some of his finest poems are written in such moods.' – CYRIL MODAK.

Tayumanavar belongs to the eithteenth century. He was the steward and manager of the royal estates of the Chola prince of Trichinopoly. He had already begun an earnest study of religious books, and found time to continue these studies along with his official duties. He was anxiously looking for a *guru*, and found one in a man of great learning and piety who had taken the name of 'the teacher of the Silence.' The young disciple wanted to leave his secular work, but the teacher told him 'to be still.' This teaching left a great impression on the poet, and he sought to carry on his work, keeping his mind undisturbed 'like the waveless sea.' His master died, and the royal widow made advances towards him. He left the court and spent a short time in retirement near Ramnad. Probably during this period he practised different kinds of mortification. His people persuaded him to marry, and he had a happy married life. After the death of his wife, he cut off all connection with the world and lived a life wholly devoted to God. His exquisite and melodious verses have sung themselves into the deepest heart of the Tamil people.

Tirumular was a Saiva *yogi*, and probably lived some time about A.D. 800. His poems have become a part of the Tamil Saivite canon. He has a tendency to wrap profound truths in apparently simple and alliterative language, often using the same word in a number of different senses. His main interest is practical religion. Probably because of the abstruse and clusive character of his style, he has not become a people's poet. But his influence on the religious poets and thinkers of the Tamil country through the centuries has been great.

' *Tukaram* was a Sudra grain-seller, and was born in 1608, at Dehu, a village about eighteen miles north-west of Poona. He had an inherited interest in the god, Vithoba, for his family for at least seven generations had been devout worshippers of the god, and regularly visited his shrine at Pandharpur. One of his *abhangs* gives an account of the process by which he was drawn from occupation with the

word to "lay hold, in his heart, of the feet of Vithoba." It gives us a glimpse of one of those periods of famine that must have been frequent and terrible in those days. It brought him, he says, to poverty and shame and sorrow. One of his two wives perished, and he lets us hear her dying cry, "Food, food." This experience appears to have been what made him give himself with complete devotion to the service of God. In another *abhang* he tells us how and king of *gurus*" came to him in a dream, and, giving him the *mantra*, or sacred formula, "Ram, Krishna, Hari," pointed him to "the ship of Pandurang." This mysterious teacher is called Babuji, and he was of the spiritual line of Raghav Chaitanya and Kesav Chaitanya. This may possibly indicate that Tukaram came at some time under the influence of teachers belonging to the Vaishnavite sect, founded by Chaitanya in Bengal at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

' The story of Tukaram shows us a man possessing much unworldly charm of character. His occupation with religion is, indeed, as in the case of Namdev, a cause of bitter complaint by his wife. His children can get nothing to eat, for their father lives at the temple. There are many tales of his unworldliness, such as how the compassion of the saint–in this respect one of the kin of St. Francis of Assisi–for "his little sisters, the birds," made him allow them to have their fill of the grain in the cornfields that he was placed in charge of by the farmer who owned them. Another story tells how the birds, recognizing him as "a friend of all the world", perched fearlessly upon him in the temple court. He does not appear to have gone on pilgrimage, reckoning such religious practices as of no value for the making of men better . . . . According to a familiar story, Tukaram refused to travel to Benares, but gave those who were going there and would have him join them an unripe gourd, bidding them dip it in the sacred waters of the Ganges and see if thereby it would become sweet to the taste.

' Tukaram is said to have suffered much persecution from Brahmans, who saw in this Sudra's popularity as a religious teacher an infringement of their prerogative. Their opposition is said to have culminated in a command to him to cast his poems into the river Indrayani, on the bank of

which Dehu stands. He obeyed, but his god himself intervened and saved them from destruction. Another story, which appears to be of doubtful authenticity and may have been invented to exalt the poet, represents Sivaji as in vain inviting the humble saint to visit his court, and even, under the spell of Tukaram, as proposing himself to quit his kingdom and give himself up to a life of contemplation. Tukaram is believed to have been miraculously translated to Vaikuntha–the heaven of Vishnu–in the year 1649. Several early manuscripts of his poems, however, have simply the statement noted on them that on a certain day he "disappeared," or, according to one of them, "he set out for a holy place".' –N. MACNICOL.

Tulsidas. ' According to Hindi authority, Tulsidas was born in the year A.D. 1536; but there are people, like Rev. Ahmad Shah of Cawnpore, who place him about A.D. 1589; which seems a little incorrect. He was born of Kanagubj Brahman stock. His father's name was Atmaram Dube, and his mother's Hulsi. It is believed that Tulsidas was born at a village called Rajapur, in the district of Banda, in the United Provinces, though he spent most of his time at Banares sitting at the feet of Mahatma Narhardas, of Ramananda's school. There is a tradition which says the Mahatma found the child Tulsidas afloat on the river Ganges, and adopted him, giving him the name "Tulsidas", his former name being "Ram Bal". For thirty-one years Tulsidas was a contemporary of Surdas. Nabhaji, the author of *Bhaktamala,* was a close friend of his.

' A word might be said about his poetry. He cannot be called a mystic, in the strict sense of the word. His poetry is devotional. His Hindi is pure. His choice of words shows a musical ear. Sir George Grierson says of him, "Tulsidas is the brightest star in the firmament of Hindi literature". His Hindi *Ramayana* is not a translation of Valmiki's Sanskirit but sets forth in his own elaborate style the doings of the great hero Ramachandra of Ayodhya. *The Vinaya Patrika* or Letter of Request, is full of poems addressed to Rama whom the poet considers the true Incarnation, where he asks for grace, prays for mercy, and entreats for help. They are fraught with the fragrance of devotion. But they are not the

utterances of mystic ecstasy nor the expressions of mystic visions. Tulsidas is greatly overwhelmed with the doctrines of *Maya* and *Karma*. Unlike Kabir, he was no reformer, nor does he go out of his way to denounce social or religious evils or correct theological errors. For him "that Name is as water is to the fish". He insists, "Remember His Name : that is the royal road to salvation"! He died in A.D. 1623, although here again there is a difference of opinion. Most of the Hindi writers including modern ones, agree that he died in A.D. 1623; while European scholars think that he lived up to A.D. 1630. The *Ramayana* is read by every virtuous Hindu who knows Hindi. The *Vairagya Sandipini*, like Polain's *Graces of Interior Prayer*, is read only in *ashrams*. The *Vinaya Patrika* is for the scholar.'–CYRIL MODAK.

'*Vidyapati Thakur* was born in or about A.D. 1382. Nothing definite is known about his birth, but he was present in the darbar of Raja Shiva Sinha, and it is said that the raja gave the poet a village, called Vispa, in the year 1402. He was a Maithili Brahman, and a reputed scholar of Sanskrit. His father's name was Ganpati Thakur. It seems probable that Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* had a profound influence on the mind of Vidyapati, as he has sung many a passionate lyric in praise of Krishna and also written a drama called *Rukmani Parinaya*. Five Sanskrit works are ascribed to him. but he is remembered more by his poems than anything else. It is not customary to include Vidyapati among *bhakti* poets, and his poetry is said to contain more of *sringara rasa* [1] than *bhakti rasa* [2] ; but if one observes closely and compares Vidyapati's poetry with that of Rabindranath, it becomes clear that there is that subtle vein of *bhakti* which is too delicate to catch the eye of the ordinary reader. Chaitanya, himself a great *bhakta*, has expressed appreciation of Vidyapati's poetry. Vidyapati wrote in the Maithili dialect, and is claimed by the Hindi, Maithili, and Bengali literatures in turn. It seems plausible to consider him a poet of Hindi because his language is more akin to old Purbi than to Bengali, and today there is no language with a recorded literature in Maithili.

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[1] *Sringara rasa*, the sentiment of love.

[2] *Bhakti rasa*, the sentiment of devotion.

Dr. F. E. Keay has included him in his *History of Hind Literature*, which shows that it does not seem uncritical to do so. Apart from the depth of thought and ardour of feeling, Vidyapati's songs are mellifluously melodious.'–CYRIL MODAK.

The *Vishnu-Purana* was probably written about A.D. 400. Its outstanding contribution to the religious thought o India is its account of the life of Krishna, in particular of his youthful sports. Popular legends about the youth of Krishna are here narrated with considerable humour of a coarse character, and the vivid narrative, with its picture of th lively Krishna and his brother, has appealed to the heart o the people. The young god is here shown as exercising immense fascination over the young wives of the cowherds and revels and dances all through the night. This story o Krishna may be regarded as the heart of the *Purana*, and occurs in the fifth book. There are five other books in th *Purana*–dealing with the creation of the world, the philosophy of the soul, the ages of the world, the genealogy o some ancient kings, and the devolution of the world. As will be seen from this rapid summary, the major portion of thi *Purana* is cosmic in character. The greatness of Vishnu i extolled. Maitreya asks the question, Who causes th universe, protects it, and dissolves it ? The whole *Purana* i an answer to this question. Vishnu is set forth as the god wh carries on these mighty operations, the operation themselves being discussed at great length.

Note.– The notes on namdev and Tukaram are taken from Macnicol *Psalms of Maratha Saints* (Introduction). The note on *Katka Upanishad* from R. L. Pelly's *Katha Upanishad* (Introduction). The notes on Dadudaya Kabir, Mirabai, Surdas and Tulsidas are taken from Mr. Cyril Modak's articl on 'Psalms of the Saints of Hindusthan,' which appeared in the *Guardia* Calcutta, in 1928. The notes on Dharnidas, Mehar Das, Nanak, and Vidyapa were specially written for this volume by Mr. Cyril Modak. The other not have been prepared by the Editor.

I

The Adoration of God

GOD – VISION

It is one thing to think of attributes, and cognize separate and abstract qualities, and quite another thing to perceive an object. Your knowledge of divine attributes may be thoroughly correct. But in thought you abstract those qualities and take them piecemeal. What are these divine attributes, wisdom and power, love and holiness, but broken lights? They are the results of a severe and crucial analysis– the fragments of a divided substance. You have broken the nature of the true God into small bits, for the sake of convenient apprehension. . . . Synthesis is essential to perception. In order that you may see God face to face, you must concentrate in a focus all these scattered and broken lights, and apprehend them in synthetic unity. Not fragments of abstract notions flitting before the student of philosophy, but the perception of the Living God, the Personal One, Centre and Substance of the highest conceivable attributes, that is God–Vision. In it humanity sees the indivisible and undivided Deity as a whole.

–Keshub Chunder Sen.[1]

HEAR GOD'S PRAISES

When a hungry man sees food, then it is hard to abstain from eating.

So keep your mind in an expectant frame to hear God's praises.

Tuka says, No one is satisfied till he has eaten his food.

–Tukaram.[2]

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1. Quoted in T. E. Slater, *Keshab Chandra Sen and the Brahmo Samaj.*
2. J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p. 170

GLORY UNTO THEE

Glory unto Thee, O Source of all ! O Omniscient !

Glory unto Thee, O Origin of Scriptures, O Pure Lord !

Glory unto Thee, O King ! O Nectar, Glory unto Thee !

Glory unto Thee, O Ocean of Eternal Bliss ! Glory unto Thee !

O Lord, Thou art beyond birth and death, Glory unto Thee !

O Lord of all countries, Glory unto Thee !

Thou ever givest us redemption, Glory unto Thee !

–Manikka Vachakar.

LORD OF ALL

The cry of all the creeds is this,
'The Lord, Our God, who knows ?'
All–Soul whose love in rivers
Of bliss unbounded flows,
Lord of all !

Thou art the flame of glory
In hearts silent to Thee,
And of the soul's unending
Bliss Thou the boundless sea,
Lord of all !

O Pearl of pearls, most precious,
O burning Gold, most bright,

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. Selected from *Porri Tiru Akaval.*

O Wisdom, Understanding,
My inmost being's Light,
Lord of all !

The treasure–chest of Silence
The heaven within it hides,
Thou art the jewelled glory
That in its heart abides,
Lord of all !

To boast that by book–learning
Thy footsteps I have known
'Tis wrong, O God, vain–glory,
With contrite heart I own,
Lord of all !

The life of all that liveth
As my own life to love,
Or great or small unharming,
Grant me grace from above,
Lord of all !

They are like little children,
The simple, the unsound,
In all they do, Thy servants,
Who wisdom's goal have found,
Lord of all !

There was a day Thou tookest
Goods, body, being, three–
Thy booty. Now, let nothing
Be lacking unto me,
Lord of all !

–Tayumanavar.[1]

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[1] Tr. Isaac Tambyan, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, selected from p. 31-38.

GOD AS LIGHT

Light that has been kindled within me to spread abroad the light of Thy grace and to dispel the darkness of my self life.

Light that has been kindled within me to dispel my illusion and to give the immortal life more and more.

Light of wisdom, Thou dost illumine the lofty crown of the holy Scriptures.

–Ramalinga Swami.[1]

O LORD OF ABSOLUTE MERCY !

I will not worship Thee in a form.

Thou art inconceivable !

Thou Thyself art in a flower ! My heart does not venture to pluck that dewy blossom.

As I join my palms to worship Thee, my heart blushes to see Thee within.

O Lord, my salute is only half done. How can I worship Thee?

–Tayumanavar.[2]

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[1]Tr. for this volume by V. Chakkarai.

[2]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in tamil is : *Pannen Unakkana pusai.*

GOD AS TRUTH

Thou ever fulfillest Thy truth ;
With Thee truth is supreme ;
Truth Thou art in past, present and future ;
The origin of truth art Thou ;
In truth art Thou seated ;
Thou art the Truth of truth ;
Thou hast justice and truth as Thine eyes ;
Truth is Thy very image ;
To Thee we surrender ourselves in refuge.

–*Bhagavata Purana.*[1]

HE LEADETH ME

Holding my hand Thou leadest me,
My comrade everywhere.
As I go on and lean on Thee,
My burden Thou dost bear.

If, as I go, in my distress
I frantic words should say,
Thou settest right my foolishness
And tak'st my shame away.

Thus Thou to me new hope dost send,
A new world bringest in ;
Now know I every man a friend
And all I meet my kin.

So like a happy child I play
In Thy dear world, O God,
And everywhere–I, Tuka, say–
Thy bliss is spread abroad !

–*Tukaram.*[2]

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[1] X. 2-26. Tr. by A. J. Appasamy.
[2] N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 71.

II

The Burden of Sin

I AM POOR AND NEEDY

No deeds I've done nor thoughts I've thought ;

Save as Thy servant, I am nought.

Guard me, O God, and O, control

The tumult of my restless soul.

Ah, do not, do not cast on me

The guilt of mine iniquity.

My countless sins, I, Tuka, say,

Upon Thy loving heart I lay.

–Tukaram.[1]

THE HYPOCRITE

Tears from mine eyes flow down in torrents
But not because love melts my heart,

Lo ! all I do is false, is faithless,
I am untrue, I play a part.

I dance with hands held up adoring,
I sing, and ceaseth not the flow

Of tears. I, hypocrite, unceasing
Cry, feelings unfelt feign to show,

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1 N Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 76.

'O Brother, Light Divine, O Father,
Behold in me Thy willing slave !'

Thus in lip-service never lacking
I danced and words for praises gave.

All know this. Then much more Thou knowest
Within Thy graciousness benign.

In sweet compassion help me Homeward
To where is endless Bliss divine.

–Tayumanavar.

I STAND NOT BY THE SIDE OF MEN

I know Thee as my God and stand apart – I do not kno Thee as my own and come closer. I know Thee as my fath and bow before Thy feet – I do not grasp Thy hand as m friend's.

I stand not where Thou comest down and ownest Thyse as mine, there to clasp Thee to my heart and take Thee as m comrade.

Thou art the Brother amongst my brothers, but I hee them not, divide not my earnings with them, thus sharin my all with Thee.

In pleasure and in pain I stand not by the side of men, ar thus stand by Thee. I shrink to give up my life, and thus not plunge into the great waters of life.

– Rabindranath Tagore

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[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms* of a Saiva Saint p. 57.
[2] *Gitanjali, p. 51.*

BEAR WITH ME

Homage before and after Thee, homage be to Thee on all sides, O All-being ! Thou art of boundless potency and immeasurable prowess; Thou fillest all, therefore art Thou the All being.

Whatever rude word I have spoken, thinking of Thee as a friend, and hailing Thee as 'comrade' in ignorance of this Thy majesty, through heedlessness or affection.

And whatever deed of unkindness for the sake of mirth has been done to Thee, whether alone or in sight of men, in ranging abroad, lying, sitting or eating– for these, O Never Falling, I crave mercy of Thee, who art immeasurable.

Thou art the Father of this world, moving and unmoving, and its worshipful and most reverend Teacher. There is no peer to Thee ; how should there be a greater in all the three worlds, O Being of power beyond likeness ?

Therefore with obeisance and prostration of body I crave grace of Thee, the adorable Lord: as father with son, as comrade with comrade, as lover with mistress, mayst Thou bear with me, O God !

–Bhagavad Gita.[1]

WHERE SHALL I PURIFY MYSELF ?

The body given us by God is excellent for His service ; yet it has become a field fruitful in error and confusion.

When a man stiffens and straightens his neck through self conceit, there is no bending it.

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[1] *XI, 40-44. L.D. Barnett, Bhagavad Gita, p.141.*

Such a man cannot frame his tongue to call himself a servant of God, but he opens wide his throat for wanton speech.

Tuka says, Where shall I go to leave this filth behind me, and purify myself by ablution ?

–Tukaram.[1]

MY DEFEAT I OWN

Thou didst ask of me love, purity and truth ; but I was envious, sinful and untrue.

Show me mercy, Merciful ! for if Thou refuse, no hope o deliverance have I !

Nay, my defeat I own : do with me according to Thy own good pleasure.

Pardon if Thou wilt ; or if Thou wilt, seize and scourge Thy erring bride.

Alas ! for Thy worship I offered not my head : what have done ?

I have not even quaffed the nectar of Thy love ; nor with Thy colour dyed my heart ; nor sung Thy praises with my lips:

I have achieved nothing for Thy service ; regrets alone remain to mock my woe.

I followed in the wake of my desires, because I had no found my Love, my Lord : and O ! there is no health in me.

My hope is stayed on Thee alone. No other can my troubled soul relieve.

–Dadudayal.[2]

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[1]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. III, p. 231

[2]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Tumko bhawo aur kuchak*,

ROBBED IN MY OWN HOUSE

I cannot reach him, I feel distressed.
There are many who rule over me.
I am fast bound and I cannot loose myself ;
I am fallen into the power of my past.
A grievous load lies upon my head, the claims of 'I' and 'mine.
I am robbed by bold thieves' in my own house, though I know it all the time.

–Tukaram.[1]

O HASTE AND COME !

Dost Thou behold me perishing ?
O haste and come, my God and King !

I die unless Thou succour bring,
O haste and come, my God and King !

To help me is a trifling thing ;
Yet Thou must haste, my God and King !

O come (how Nama's clamours ring)
O haste and come, my God and King !

–Namdev.[2]

HOW THEN CAN'ST THOU LEAVE ME ?

O Mother ! O Father ! O Unequalled Light !
O Sweet Nectar born of love !
I have heaped untruth and shortened my life:

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1. J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p.129.
2. N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 43.

I am a rotten-minded wretch !
O my Treasure ! O Lord ! O Eternal Bliss !
Upon me too Thou haste bestowed eternal bliss !
In this life I hold Thee in firm grip !
How then can'st Thou leave me ?

–Manikka Vachakar

FREE FROM FEAR

We are free from fear, where there is no cause fo
repentance in the soul.

Where there is an eager desire for God, what taint ca
make that heart impure ?

As soon as you confess your sin, He lets not a particle of
remain.

Tuka says, Our souls are penetrated by His love.

–Tukaram

BE GRACIOUS

I am unreal ! My heart is unreal ! My devotion is unreal !

Sinner as I am, I can attain Thee if I but cry for Thee !

O Sweet Lord ! O Honey ! O Clear Juice of the Sugar Cane

Be gracious, that I may reach Thee !

–Manikka Vachaka

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is
Ammaiye appa oppila oliye.

[2]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, The Poems of Tukarama Vol. III, p. 224.

[3]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is
Nanum poy en nenjamum pay en enbum poy.

FORGIVE, O LORD!

The wrong of ignorance the wrong of thoughtlessness,
The wrong of not having followed Thee with a melting heart
The wrong of not having meditated upon Thee,
The wrong of not having prayed and worshipped Thee,
O Supreme Almighty, forgive me of all, all my wrongs !

–Pattinattar.[1]

CONFESSION

Like the bounding stag I have sought sensual pleasures and fallen into the lake.

I am the greatest sinner among sinners, unwilling to part with even a grain of rice to the noisy crow.

Like the fly buzzing about without any rest, I seek. O, Father, tell me what to do that I may not die, and grant me Thy grace to support me.

Like the bull bearing heavy burdens, I have toiled carrying the load of my own grief.

Not knowing anything, I have roamed like the unclean animal feeding upon the refuse of the streets.

I am lower than the dog, which tires itself out with barking in utter thoughtlessness.

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[1] Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is : *Kallap pilaiyum karutha pilaiyum.*

Holy One, what can I do to obtain Thy grace to support me in my distress ?

I have taken pride in regarding my darkness as light and my desire as the great goal.

I have wandered with the monkey of my mind in the darkness of the jungle, mistaking it for my kindred.

Oh, Thou who dwellest in the hearts of Thy saints, I have not the mind to seek the great object of life.

Father, what can I do to get Thy grace ? Rule me with Thy grace.

I do not know the medicine, the jewel, the *mantra*,[1] the knowledge, the rule and the conduct of life.

I do not know the way of repentance, the power of Thy grace and the path of righteousness.

I do not know the place where I can live the controlled life, nor how to enter into the society of the wise, nor how to approach the holy place where the Lord resides.

I do not know the direction in which to go. How can I enter ? Whom can I speak to ? What can I do ? I know no anything.

I have not abandoned the toils of caste, creed and sect.

I have not abandoned plunging into the mire of theological wrangling.

I do not know the beginning nor the end, nor how to abide in the waveless sea of Thy bliss.

I have not walked in the way of holiness, nor do I know the inward will of Him who abides in the assembly of the holy ones.

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[1] Mantra, sacred formula.

How can I enter the world of my foes ? To whom can I eak ? What can I do ? I know not.

–Ramalinga Swami.[1]

PENITENCE

Before Thee I am guilty in every nerve and vein ; a sinner n I every moment : Master, forgive me !

In the wide world I stand trembling and alone, chief of all nners, the black cloud of my errors is impenetrable and vers the whole horizon of my life.

Evils without number, countless vices are within me : any stains are without :

Not a single good deed have I done ; no virtue is there in e ; no merit is mine ;

Yet forsake not Thy sinful child, for without Thee where my refuge ?

Desire, pride, anger and falsehood have misled me since y birth : O miserable man that I am !

Thou only art my help : Father, wash me with the nectar Thy rich forgiveness and heal the mind that is sore.

–Dadudayal.[2]

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r. for this volume by V. Chakkarai.

r. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line Hindi is: *Til til ka aradhe tera.*

MY SINS !

The sins of words, the sins of thought,
The deadly sins of my acts, the sins of sight,
The sins of questions against the Scriptures,
Forgive, O Supreme Lord, all my sins !

–Pattinatta

THE RESTLESS HEART

As on the bank the poor fish lies
And gasps and writhes in pain,
Or as a man with anxious eyes
Seeks hidden gold in vain,—
So is my heart distressed and cries
To come to Thee again.

Thou knowest, Lord, the agony
Of the lost infant's wail,
Yearning his mother's face to see.
(How oft I tell this tale !)
O, at Thy feet the mystery
Of the dark world unveil !
The fire of this harassing thought
Upon my bosom preys.
Why is it I am thus forgot ?
(O, who can know Thy ways ?)
Nay, Lord, Thou seest my hapless lot ;
Have mercy, Tuka says.

–Tukaram

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhananda Bharati. The first line in Tamil is : *Sollal varum kurram sintanaiyalvarum todam.*

[2]N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 63.

ALL – KNOWER

Bare is all I am, Lord, to Thy seeing eyes :
Where is thought of mind that I dare hide from Thee ?
Long the tale else I should tell of woes, my God :
Strong one, holding me captive, O keep me so !

–Tayumanavar.[1]

GOD KNOWS THE SMALLEST THING

We cannot reach this God by hypocritical words, you must ell Him in all sincerity your secret thoughts.

He, the source of joy, whom you must approach, knows the mallest thing that keeps you from Him.

Tuka says, If you seek your own profit, purify your mind.

–Tukaram.[2]

T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, p. 72.
J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukaram*. Vol. II, p. 295.

III

The Greatness of God

I SEEK WHOM I KNOW NOT

I seek whom I know not !
He draws my soul ;
I go and know not that I go !

Through the shoreless dark
A still small voice calls me ;
I grope my way unseeing, unthinking ;
I know only that God is.

Who shall tell me
By what name to call Him,
Where to find Him ?

I have neither knowledge
Nor have I *yoga* ;[1]
I only follow the scent.

Ah, where shall I find Him
To whom I have given my heart ?

–Bengali Hymn.[2]

GOD IS OURS

God is ours, yea, ours is He,
Soul of all the souls that be.

God is nigh without a doubt,
Nigh to all, within, without.

God is gracious, gracious still ;
Every longing He'll fulfil.

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[1] *Yoga* is the technique of concentration.
[2] Tr. by L. M. Chatterji.

God protects, protects His own ;
Strife and death He casteth down.
Kind is God, ah, kind indeed ;
Tuka He will guard and lead.

–Tukaram

THE IMMANENT GOD

He who, dwelling in the earth, yet is other than the earth whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, who controls the earth from within – He is your soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the waters, yet is other than the waters, whom the waters do not know, whose body the waters are, who controls the waters from within – He is your Soul the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the fire, yet is other than the fire whom the fire does not know, whose body the fire is who controls the fire from within – He is your Soul, the Inner controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the atmosphere, yet is other than the atmosphere, whom the atmosphere does not know, whose body the atmosphere is, who controls the atmosphere from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the wind, yet is other than the wind whom the wind does not know, whose body the wind is, who controls the wind from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the sky, yet is other than the sky whom the sky does not know, whose body the sky is who controls the sky from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the sun, yet is other than the sun whom the sun does not know, whose body the sun is, who

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[1] N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 73.

controls the sun from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the quarters of heaven, yet is other than the quarters of heaven, whom the quarters of heaven do not know, whose body the quarters of heaven are, who controls the quarters of heaven from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in breath, yet is other than breath, whom the breath does not know, whose body the breath is, who controls the breath from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in speech, yet is other than speech, whom the speech does not know, whose body the speech is, who controls the speech from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the eye, yet is other than the eye, whom the eye does not know, whose body the eye is, who controls the eye from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who dwelling in the ear, yet is other than the ear, whom the ear does not know, whose body the ear is, who controls the ear from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who,dwelling in the mind, yet is other than the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body the mind is, who controls the mind from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

He who, dwelling in the understanding, yet is other than the understanding, whom the understanding does not know, whose body the understanding is, who controls the understanding from within – He is your Soul, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

– *Brihad–Aranyaka Upanishad.*[1]

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[1] 3. 8. 3-10, 16-20, 22. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, pp. 115-17.

THE GOODNESS AND POWER OF GOD

Father of this universe am I, Mother, Ordainer, Grandsire, the Thing that is known and the being that makes clean, . . . the Way, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Dwelling, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the Dissolution,

I give heat ; I arrest and let loose the rain ; I am likewise power of immortality and death.

–*Bhagavad Gita.*[1]

THE NATURE OF REALITY

'Place this salt in the water. In the morning come unto me.'

Then he did so.

Then he said to him : 'That salt you placed in the water last evening – please, bring it hither.'

Then he grasped for it, but did not find it, as it was completely dissolved.

' Please take a sip of it from this end, ' said he. ' How is it ?

' Salt.'

' Take a sip from the middle,' said he. ' How is it ?'

' Salt.'

' Take sip from that end, ' said he. ' How is it ?'

' Salt.'

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[1] IX. 17-19. L. D. Barnett, *Bhagavad Gita*, p. 128.

' Set it aside. Then come unto me.'

He did so, saying, ' It is always the same.'

Then he said to him : ' Verily, indeed, my dear, you do not perceive Being here. Verily, indeed, it is here.

' That which is the finest essence – this whole world has that as its soul. That is Reality.'

–Chandogya Upanishad.[1]

NO DISTINCTION WITH THEE

Let my purpose now be firm, to think on Thee without ceasing.

None who did this ever fell into despair ; none despaired of mercy to beggars such as he.

With Thee, says Tuka, there are no distinctions ; king and clown are equal at the feet of God

–Tukaram.[2]

GOD IN EVERYTHING

There is naught higher than I, O Wealth–Winner ; all this universe is strung upon Me, as rows of gems upon a thread.

I am the taste in water, O son of Kunti ; I am the light in moon and sun, . . . sound in the ether, manhood in men.

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[1] 6. 13. 3. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 248. This is a conversation between a father and his son.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. II, p. 89.

The pure scent in earth am I, and the light in fire ; the life in all born beings am I, and the mortification of them that mortify the flesh.

Know Me to be the ancient Seed of all born beings, O son of Pritha ; I am the understanding of them that understand, the splendour of the splendid.

–Bhagavad Gita. [1]

GOD THE LIFE

Of this great tree, my dear, if someone should strike at the root, it would bleed, but still live. If someone should strike at its middle, it would bleed, but still live. If someone should strike at its top, it would bleed, but still live. Being pervaded by *Atman,* [2] it continues to stand, eagerly drinking in moisture and rejoicing.

If the life leaves one branch of it, then it dries up. It leaves a second ; then that dries up. It leaves a third, then that dries up. It leaves the whole ; the whole dries up. Even so, indeed, my dear, understand, said he.

Verily, indeed, when life has left it, this body dies. The life does not die.

That which is the finest essence–this whole world has that as its soul. That is Reality.

–Chandogya Upanishad.[3]

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[1] vii. 7-10. L. D. Barnett, Bhagavad Gita, p. 119.

[2] *Atman* here refers to God.

[3] 6. 11. 3. R. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 247.

THE LORD IS UNSPEAKABLE

A certain father hath two sons, and both of them he naketh over to the Master to be taught of the Lord :

And after a number of years the boys return home and alute their father with due reverence and affection.

And the father enquireth of the elder son, ' Tell me, my oy, what hast thou learnt of God ?'

And the son reciteth many verses, and quoteth from the Scriptures, to show the extent of his knowledge concerning he Lord, and the father heareth him in silence.

And he sayeth unto the younger son, ' What dost *thou* now of the Lord ?'

And the younger son hangeth down his head and emaineth silent. And the father sayeth unto him, 'Verily, ny boy, thou *knowest* !

' For the Lord truly, is Unspeakable' !
' Mayest thou be in Him always ! Amen.'

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[1]

THE BODY IS GOD'S TEMPLE

While God is all the time in his body, the ill–starred vretch goes wandering idly in search of Him.

While God is all the time within him, he goes idly from one sacred place to another.

The musk is in the navel of the musk–deer, but the deer oes idly wandering about the forest.

M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 505.

As the sugar-cane is the very source of sugar, so does Go
show Himself in all creatures.

Butter is concealed in milk, but there are men who kno
not how to churn it out.

Tuka says to foolish mankind, How is it you cannot se
God in your own bodies ?

–Tukaram

GOD THE SOURCE OF EVERYTHING

The seed of all born beings likewise am I, O Arjuna : the
is naught that can be in existence, moving or unmovin
without Me.

There is no bound to My divine powers, O affrighter of t
foe ; but in part have declared this fullness of my power.

Whatsoever thing is potent, prosperous, or forceful, kn
that this name springs from a portion of My splendour.

But wherefore this long lesson for thee, Arjuna ? It i
that with one portion of Me have established this wh
universe.

–Bhagavad Gita

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[1]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. III, p. 74.
[2]X. 39-42. L. D. Barnett, *Bhagavad Gita*, p. 135.

THOU ART MY LORD

Cursed be that knowledge which makes me one with Thee; love to have precepts from Thee and prohibitions.

I am thy servant; Thou art my Lord; let there be still etween us such difference of high and low; let this wonderful ruth be established, destroy it not.

Water cannot taste itself, nor trees taste their own fruit; he worshipper must be separate, thus alone pleasure arises rom distinction.

The diamond looks beautiful in its setting; gold, when it is ashioned into an ornament; if there were no difference, how ould you contrast the one with the other?

After heat one enjoys shade; at the sight of her child the nilk comes into the mother's breast–what delight there is vhen they meet each other !

Tuka says, This is a great thing gained and so I view it; I am thoroughly resolved to desire liberation no more.

–Tukaram.[1]

THE ALL–FILLING GOD

Place has no power to prison His presence;
No one can say, 'He is here, He is there;
Not in this place, not in that, is the Godhead,
Unbounded by places, He bides everywhere.

He is the infinite, all–filling splendour,
He is the bountiful fullness of grace
That, in its allness, the worlds that are foldeth;
Within it creation encompassed stays.

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[1] J.N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p. 76.]

His is the grace that in graciousness willeth
In Him the Life of life all life to be;
He is the life of all lives, and life's essence;
But for Him nothing lives, life's fullness He.
Mind of no mortal God's greatness can measure;
He is the claim and content of all creeds;
Ways which bewilder the warring religions
Are His, and unsearchable are all His deeds.

Who can His greatness guess? Who claims to kn
Him?
Mind cannot measure, nor speech reach the height
Where the Eternal One, Almighty Lord, is,
Being all-blessed Bliss, Light of all lights.

-Tayumanava

THE MERCIFUL LORD

How merciful He is! in those who are helpless He fills H
chief delight.

He bears their burden on His head; He undertakes the ca
of acquiring and keeping for them.

He suffers them not to stray from the path, He takes the
by the hand and leads them.

Tuka says, This is the reward if you follow Him wi
absolute devotion.

-Tukaram

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[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, p. 4.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p. 102

O, ALL-PERVADING ESSENCE TRUE!

Thee, some religions call 'Mother! Mother!'
Some call aloud, 'O Father, Father! Hail!'
Some other faiths with empty raving, ignorant of aught else,
Hold to this and that.

Some besides these hail Thee 'The ineffable Light,
The boundless Space, the Sound, the Goal,
The peerless One and the Triune Time!'
Thou art all these and beyond!

Thou art eternal blissful wisdom!
O Soul of souls! Here and in other worlds,
O Thou all-pervading Essence true!
Can our poor self scan Thy glory?

-Tayumanavar.[1]

GOD IS GREATER THAN HIS GLORIES

Why do ye recite the glories of God, saying, 'O Lord, Thou hast made the sun, the moon and the stars?'

Yea, what is the use of all this recounting, all this narration?

And many there are that praise and glorify the garden, and few that wish to see the owner and master of the garden.

But I say unto you, 'Is the garden greater than its Lord and Master?'

-Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[2]

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[1] Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. Selected from *Engum nirainda porule.*

[2] M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 67.

GOD'S SMILE

Behold God's smile in the opening of a flower!
The beauty! the glory of colour!
It is the shadow of the unseen
And sets the mind musing.
Its sight maddens the heart,
Its touch soothes the triple fever of the world:
Is it God's smile that so wins the soul?
The saints, in the flowering grove,
Behold God's holy smile
And catch it in their meditation.

–T. N. Sanyal

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

I cannot tell the priceless bliss my poverty desires, no without telling it can I rest.

The greatness, Lord, beggars all description; and my littleness is beyond words:

Thou art holy; I am foul with many sins:

Ashamed, I dare not raise my eyes to meet Thy swee familiar face; and yet without adoring Thee I am not at peac

With bowed head and folded hands, then, let me sing th story of Thy greatness:

Thou wilt not turn away from the loving prayer of th lowliest of Thy lowly servants.

For in Thy realm pride cannot strut; humility alone gain Thy benedictions.

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[1] Tr. by L. M. Chatterji.

Uttering Thy name satisfies my longings: remembering Thy deeds gives me strength.

King of kings! let me but be a fish in the hallowed stream of Thy love and praise!

–Tulsidas. [1]

THE INEXHAUSTIBLE GOD

The yon is fullness, fullness, this.
From fulness, fullness doth proceed.
Withdrawing fullness's fullness off,
E'en fullness then itself remains.

–Brihad–Aranyaka Upanishad. [2]

THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

The One who rules over every single source,
In whom this whole world comes together and dissolves,
The Lord, the blessing–giver, God adorable–
By revering Him one goes for ever to this peace;

More minute than the minute, in the midst of confusion
The Creator of all, of manifold forms,
The One embracer of the universe–
By knowing Him as kindly one attains peace for ever.

By knowing as kindly Him who is hidden in all things,
Exceedingly fine, like the cream that is finer than butter,

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[1] Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Sri Ramachandra kripalu bhajuman.*

[2] 5. 1. R. E. Hume *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 149.

The One embracer of the universe–
By knowing God one is released from all fetters.

His form is not to be beheld.
No one soever sees Him with the eye.
They who thus know Him with heart and mind
As abiding in the heart, become immortal.

–Svetasvatara Upanishad.

HE IS!

Not by speech, not by mind,
Not by sight can He be apprehended.
How can He be comprehended
Otherwise than by one's saying 'He is"!

–Katha Upanishad.

GREAT GLORY

Not above, not across,
Nor in the middle has one grasped Him.
There is no likeness of Him
Whose name is Great Glory.

–Svetasvatara Upanishad.

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[1] 4. 11, 14, 16 and 20. Hume, op. cit., p. 404.
[2] 6, 12. Hume, op. cit., p. 360.
[3] 4, 19. Hume, op. cit., p. 405.

IV

'In Divers Manners'

HEIR OF GRACE

What can I say, my doubts so many?
Behold there stalketh to this day,

Behind me and before, the peril
Whose fear I have no faith to slay.

Is bliss where throbs the mind unresting
And throbbing melts like wax in flame?

Is bliss to long to still the senses
In agonies that rack the frame?

Thou knowest all, that art the knowing
Of all my knowing, Thou alone.

Why then, O God, as tho' Thou knowest
Nothing, when all to Thee is known,

Thou lettest me in sorrow flounder,
Thine own whom Thou hast made Thy slave?

While in the body weak, unlasting,
Let grace be mine to help me brave

The winds and waves of life's great ocean.

–Tayumanavar.[1]

GOD ONLY REVEALS

This Soul is not to be obtained by instruction,
Nor by intellect, nor by much learning.
He is to be obtained only by the one whom He chooses:
To such a one that Soul reveals His own person.

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[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, p. 47.

Not he who has not ceased from bad conduct,
Not he who is not tranquil, not he who is not composed,
Not he who is not of peaceful mind
Can obtain Him by intelligence.

–Katha Upanishad.[1]

CHOSEN BY GOD

This Supreme Soul cannot be attained by the teaching of others, nor by knowledge nor by much study. Only he who is elected by this One can attain Him. Only to him does He manifest His own form.

–Bhagavata Purana.[2]

HE HIMSELF COMES

I cannot say, I will approach Him and compel Him to dwell in me.

He Himself comes, with yearning for me,

And dwells in my body and mingles with my life.

Is it possible for Him now to leave me?

–Appar.[3]

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[1] 2. 24. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 350.
[2] XI. 2. Tr. by A. J. Appaswamy.
[3] Tr. by A. J. Appasamy. The first line in Tamil is : *Ennai etum.*

GOD WITH THE LOWLY

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and His garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like Him come down on the dusty soil!

Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found? Our Master Himself has joyfully taken upon Him the bonds of creation; He is bound with us all for ever.

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet Him and stand by Him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

–*Rabindranath Tagore.*[1]

DO GOOD TO OTHERS

Are you in need of God?
This is an easy means of attaining Him.
Utter such words as will keep you at peace,
Much or little; do good to others, says Tuka.

–Tukaram. [2]

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[1] *Gitanjali*, p. 6.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. II, p. 299.

IN PRAISE OF CHARITY

The gods inflict not hunger as a means to kill;
Death frequently befalls even satiated men.
The charitable giver's wealth melts not away;
The niggard never finds a man to pity him.

Who, of abundant food possessed, makes hard his heart
Towards a needy and decrepit suppliant
Whom once he courted, come to pray to him for bread;
A man like this as well finds none to pity him.

He is the liberal man who helps the beggar
That, craving food, emaciated wanders,
And coming to his aid, when asked to succour,
Immediately makes him a friend hereafter.

He is no friend who gives not of his substance
To his devoted, intimate companion:
This friend should turn from him – here is no haven –
And seek a stranger elsewhere as a helper.

The wealthier man should give unto the needy,
Considering the course of life hereafter;
For riches are like chariot wheels revolving:
Now to one man they come, now to another.

–*Rig Veda*

NOT RAPTURE BUT LOVE

Not for me is the love that knows no restraint, but like th
foaming wine that, having burst its vessel in a momen
would run to waste.

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[1]X. 117. A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from Rig Veda*, p. 92.

Send me the love which is cool and pure, like your rain hat blesses the thirsty earth and fills the homely earthen ars.

Send me the love that would soak down into the centre of eing, and from there would spread like the unseen sap hrough the branching tree of life, giving birth to fruits and lowers.

Send me the love that keeps the heart still with the ulness of peace.

–Rabindranath Tagore.[1]

THE GREATNESS OF THE HOLY

The lowest of the low is blessed, if he worship the Lord day and night; but what availeth the highest caste, if the Lord's name is not heard therein. Behold, how on very high mountains are the dwelling–places of snakes, but on the lowest lowlands grow sweet sugar–cane and corn and betel. Tulsi saith, I have seen the good men of all nations, but none is equal unto him who is the single–hearted servant of the Lord, and who night and day at every breath reiterateth His name.

–Tulsidas.[2]

THE NATURE OF THE HOLY

Simple are his syllables, simple his language. But though simple, know thou that they are full of meaning. Tulsi, simple is the holy man, and thus mayst thou recognize him.

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[1] *Fruit Gathering*, p. 87.

[2] Tr. by Sir George Grierson, from *Vairagya Sandipini*, in the *Indian Antiquary*.

Unimpassioned is he, but giving happiness to all. Jus
and self-restrained, ever singing the praises of the Lord, eve
enlightening the souls of the ignorant, and ever for thi
purpose wandering from place to place. Such men are onl
here and there.

Blessed is the land where many holy ones dwell. Eve
devoted to helping others, ever devoted to the supreme goa
in love working out their lives. Whether he shutteth the doo
of his mouth or whether he speaketh the truth, in this worl
is the holy man ever discreet. When he speaketh, it is wit
discretion, and full of his own sweet nature; nor ever placet
he his foot on the way which leadeth to pain or angry words
He showeth enmity to no man, to no man showeth he over
friendship. Tulsi, this is the religion of the holy, ever t
speak with even justice.

Very true is he to the One, ever keeping his members i
subjection. His thoughts dwell on no one but the Lord. For h
knoweth in his heart that this world is but a mirage. Tuls
by these marks dost thou know him, our trust, our strengt
our hope, our faith. As the *Chatak* bird longeth for a rai
cloud in the season of *Swati*,[1] so longeth he for the Lord. H
hath no anger nor fault, and is a ship wherein to cross th
ocean of existence. He hath abandoned desire and hat
betaken himself to humility and content. He betaket
himself to humility; he endureth all things; with heart an
mouth, he ever calleth on the name of the Lord. So dwellet
the holy man and so doeth he.

Those who dwell by him he maketh like unto himsel
while the wicked giveth his soul twofold sorrow. Saith Tuls
the holy man is like *Mount Malaya*, [2] but without its fault
Gentle are the words of the holy man, falling like nectar o
the ear. When the hard heart heareth them, it becometh wa
They beget the happiness of comprehending the Suprem

---

[1] *Chatak* is a kind of cuckoo described by Indian poets as living on drops of rain; *Swati* here refers to the rainy season.

[2] Mount Malaya is often referred to by Indian poets as abounding in sandalwood trees and serpents. It is spoken of as being on the west of Malab and may be one of the ranges of the Western Ghats.

they lift and carry away the errors of this world, and in the heart they are (sharp arrows) piercing sin. Cooling are they, like unto the beams of the moon.

–Tulsidas.[1]

MY SOUL'S COMRADE

Who thinks my thoughts
Who goes my way –
I count him as my own !
All ties of the flesh
Are brief and vain :
For the Hereafter will join
Only kindred spirits.

Alas, my earthly comrades
Do not understand me.
Ah, whither shall I turn
For my soul's comrade ?

To give ourselves each to each
In the service of the Lord ;
All three made one !

–T. N. Sanyal.[2]

THE REIGN OF PEACE

O altogether dear is He
And He alone,
For all my burden He will take
To be His own.
Lo, all the sorrow of the world

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[1]Sir G. Grierson, op. cit.
[2]Tr. by L. M. Chatterji.

Will straightway cease,
And all unending now shall be
The reign of peace.

–Namdev.[1]

SILENCE

Quiet the trees; quiet the creepers all.
In the sky's tranquil lap burns the sun's ray.

In my heart's temple doth the silence fall,
Worshipping Thee, Thou, Silent, Majestic. Thou

Replenishest this tranquil heart. O Thou
Eternal, Absolute, with silence fill

Me and with song, in secret, silent, still.

– C. R. Das.[2]

PERFECT PEACE

The adornment of the night is the moon, the adornmen
of the day is the sun. The adornment of the servant of th
Lord is faith, and the adornment of that faith is perfec
knowledge. The adornment of this knowledge is meditation
the adornment of meditation is total self–surrender to th
Lord, and the adornment of self–surrender is pure an
spotless peace.

This peace is altogether pure and spotless, and destroyeth
all the troubles mankind endureth. He who can maintai
such peace within his heart ever remaineth in an ocean o

---

[1] N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 47.
[2] J. A. Chapman, *Religious Lyrics of Bengal*, p. 81.

rapture. The sorrows which are born of the threefold sins, the intolerable hoard of grief begotten of faults committed, – all these are wiped away. Him who remaineth wrapt in perfect peace doth no woe e'er approach. O Tulsi, so cool is the holy man, that ever he remaineth free of earthly cares. The wicked are like serpents, but what can they do unto him, for his every limb hath become a sure medicine against their bite.

Very cool is he, and very pure, free from all taint of earthly desire. Count him as free, his whole existence is rapt in peace.

In this world, call thou him cool who never uttereth words of anger from his mouth, and who, when pierced in front by sharp arrows of words, never feeleth one trace of wrath. Search ye the seven regions, the nine continents, the three worlds, and ye will find no bliss equal to peace. Where peace hath been imparted by the true teacher, there the root of anger is consumed, as if by fire. Earthly lusts and desires fade away, and this is the mark of peace. Peace is a bliss–giving ocean, whose shining actions holy sages have sung. Him, whose body and soul are rapt in it, no fire of self can burn.

In the fire of self burneth the whole universe and only the holy escape, only because that they have peace. Peace is like unto a mighty river, which when a man toucheth he becometh peaceful and the fire of self consumeth him not, though (the wicked) try with countless efforts. His virtues become glorious as the sun, which when the world seeth it marvelleth; but he who hath at once becometh as water, becometh again not as fire. Albeit it is cool and gentle and pleasure–giving and preserving life, still count not peace as water, for as fire also are its virtues.

–Tulsidas.[1]

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[1] Tr. by Sir George Grierson, from *Vairagya Sandipini*, in the *Indian Antiquary*.

LIFE IS SONG

The songs that swell in my breast and fill my soul, from Thee

Their life get, Thou majestic, eternal; Thou great sea
Of life, as a ripple is in the surging billows, such
Am I. With Thy spirit float me; in the transport of Thy touch

Immerse me. In Thy song let petty songs be stilled.
Touch me, and be my soul with song eternal filled.
Her life, too, is song. All life is song.

–C. R. Das.[1]

EVERYTHING IN ITS OWN PLACE

Wood is weighed scrupulously in balances when it has fragrance; other kinds of wood are of little note.

Some timbers are turned on the lathe and palaces are built of them; other kinds become rafters and hovels.

Some are poor stuff, which people bring in as headloads others are good to build up storeys of.

They all come into one market; they are sold according to their value.

Quality is the chief thing; the shape is a matter of indifference; defects are ruinous.

Some stones excel others in quality; they are priceless and illustrious.

Some are found in the homes of rich and poor, but a few are highly valued.

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[1] J. A. Chapman, *Religious Lyrics of Bengal*, p. 85.

Some lie glittering on sand-banks, but no one would cast a glance at them.

Everything is blest and prosperous in its own place; the misery of poverty is an illusion.

–Tukaram.[1]

THE PARABLE OF THE DEWDROP

'What is there but the sky, O sun, that can hold thine image?'

'I dream of thee, but to serve thee I can never hope,' the dewdrop wept and said, 'I am too small to take thee unto me, great Lord, and my life is all tears.'

'I illumine the limitless sky, yet I can yield myself up to a tiny drop of dew,' thus the sun said; 'I shall become but a sparkle of light and fill you, and your little life will be a laughing orb.'

–Rabindranath Tagore.[2]

A PLEA FOR TOLERANCE

The cry is loud, the cry is long,
    The cry of creeds, 'Yea, this is He!'
The cry comes back, the cry as strong,
    The cry of creeds, 'Nay, this is He!'

Thus cry all creeds, all creeds as wrong,
    Which cry, 'Yea this, nay that, is He!'
The truth indeed all creeds proclaim
    That God in very sooth is He.

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[1] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. II, p. 325.
[2] *Fruit Gathering*, p. 86.

Who evermore remains the same,
Not this, not that, but One is He,
Held in the heart's own holy shrine,
Homed in the soul, the Guest Divine.

–Pattinattar.

THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY

'Maitreyi!' said Yajnavalkya, 'Lo, verily, I am about to g
forth from this state. Behold! let me make a final settleme
for you and that Katyayani!'

Then said Maitreyi: ' If now, Sir, this whole earth fille
with wealth were mine, would I be immortal thereby?'

'No,' said Yajnavalkya, 'As the life of the rich, even s
would your life be. Of immortality, however, there is no hop
through wealth.'

Then said Maitreyi: What should I do with that throug
which I may not be immortal? What you know, Sir – tha
indeed, tell me!'

Then said Yajnavalkya: 'Ah! Lo, dear as you are to u
dear is what you say! Come, sit down. I will explain to yo
But while I am expounding do you seek to ponder thereon.'

Then said he: 'Lo, verily not for love of the husband is
husband dear, but for love of the Soul a husband is dear.

Lo, verily, not for love of the wife is a wife dear, but f
love of the Soul a wife is dear.

Lo, verily, not for love of the sons are sons dear, but f
love of the Soul sons are dear.

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[1] Tr. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, p. 206.

Lo, verily, not for love of the wealth is wealth dear, but for love of the Soul wealth is dear.'

–Brihad–Aranyaka Upanishad. [1]

LONGINGS

The longer here we linger
    ' Tis only grief we gain.
There is a heavenly City,
    Where we shall have no pain –
                When will it be?

Here all is false and fleeting
    This land of vanity.
There is a land of vision
    Where grace our lot shall be –
                Oh! for that day!
Nowhere begins its vastness,
    Nor ends the sky–wide sea.
To reach that sea most spotless,
    Of grace, and in it be,
                When comes the day?

There is a stream whose waters
    Of grace run everywhere,
I fain would wash my body
    In it, that river rare –
                When will it be?

Nor sun nor moon there shineth,
    Nor star where God is light:
I long to reach that City
    Of glory, heavenly bright –
                When will it be?

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[1] 2, 4, 5. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 98.

As laughs with joy the lotus
Before the rising sun,
By grace shall I be gladdened
Grace of the Holy One –
When will it be?

–Tayumanavar.[1]

THE LIGHT OF MAN IS THE SOUL

Yajnavalkya came to Janaka, (king) of Videha. H thought to himself: 'I will not talk.'

But (once) when Janaka, (king) of Videha, and ajnavalky were discussing together at an *Agnihotra*,[2] Yajnavalky granted the former a boon. He chose asking whatev question he wished. He granted it to him. So (now) the king (speaking) first, asked him:

'Yajnavalkya, what light does a person here have?'

'He has the light of the sun, O king,' He said, 'for with th sun, indeed, as his light, one sits, moves around, does h work, and returns.'

'Quite so, Yajnavalkya.

'But when the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, what light does person here have?'

'The moon, indeed, is his light,' said he, 'for with th moon, indeed, as his light, one sits, moves around, does h work, and returns.'

'Quite so, Yajnavalkya.

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[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, selected from pp. 117-19.

[2] *Agnihotra*, the daily offering of oblation to the sacred fire, which those who have performed sacrifices have to keep alive continually.

'But when the sun has set, and the moon has set, what light does a person here have ?

'Fire, indeed, is his light,' said he, 'for with fire, indeed as his light, one sits, moves around, does his work, and returns.

'Quite so, Yajnavalkya.

'But when the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, what light does a person here have?'

'Speech, indeed, is his light,' said he, 'for with speech, indeed, as his light, one sits, moves around, does his work, and returns. Therefore, verily, O king, where one does not discern even his own hands, when a voice is raised, then one goes straight towards it.'

'Quite so Yajnavalkya.

'But when the sun has set, Yajnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, and speech is hushed, what light does a person here have?'

"The soul *(atman)*, indeed, is his light,' said he 'for with the soul, indeed, as his light, one sits, moves around, does his work, and returns.'

–Brihad–Aranyaka Upanishad.[1]

A MILLION EYES

A million eyes twinkle, high in heaven;
They pour down a soft sweet rain of nectar.
What a solace in life at last I obtain,
As my eyes look into the million eyes of heaven.

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[1] 3,1-6. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 132.

No smouldering fire burns in the sky,
No cheek is pale with passion;
No trembling with fear, no restlessness, no dual spirit divides!
No sense of keeping things for oneself!
No faithlessness resides in the sky.
No changing whims cause pain,
It is all God's face;
The night is wet with His love,
His grace fills all space,
The divine substance pours down in these wondrous showers of starry light.
One great illumination, one great beauteous twinkling of a million eyes!
One supreme repose! I see God.

–Bhai Vir Singh.[1]

HE SPEAKS NOT, NOR DOTH HE SMILE

He speaks not, nor doth He smile;
My love is like a statue made of spotless white marble!
He ravishes my soul – ah! the All–beautiful!
My heart aches and aches, but He unravels not the passion of my soul!
I desire, and He filleth me not.
I fain would turn away from Him, but ah! the All–beautiful!
Let my soul ache!
He speaketh not, nor doth He smile!
Enough for me is His presence!
Enough for me these eternal desires and their eternal unfulfilment.

–Bhai Vir Singh.[2]

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[1]Tr. by Puran Singh, *Nargas*, p. 96.
[2]Tr. by Puran Singh, *Nargas*, p. 64.

I MADE MY MIND A BEGGAR'S BOWL

I made my mind a beggar's bowl.

I wandered, and begged the bread of learning from door to door;

I filled it with crumbs that fell to me from every house of learning.

I crammed it very full; I made it heavy, and I was proud;
I thought I was a *pandit,*

I wished to walk far above the earth in my pride,
My steps hardly touched the ground.

One day I went to my saint.

I placed my bowl before him, and I gave it as an offering;
'Dirt, dirt!' he said, and turned it upside down.

He threw the crumbs away,
He rubbed it with sand, he washed it with water, clean of all the dirt of learning.

–Bhai Vir Sing.[1]

I ALWAYS THINK OF HIM

I always think of Him!

Deeper than thought, unseen and unknown, in me lives this unending thought of Him.

A thousand quivering melodies shake my depths.

This thought of Him is celestial music.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 70.

My soul is now the heaven of song.

A million strings vibrate in me; every moment new an newer, more and more the symphonies roll!

The strings of my soul are strung and tuned to new an newer strains of love; and every moment I give forth swe joy;

I am an unending song in the thought of Him.

I always think of Him.

Deeper than thought, unseen and unknown, in me liv the unending thought of Him.

–Bhai Vir Sing

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[1] Op. cit., p. 65.

V

The Joy of Salvation

VISION OF GOD AND MAN

The grace of God came unto me
And slew delusion's might.
Thereafter I obtained
The longing for high wisdom's holy light;
Obtaining, I beheld Thy Deity;
Beholding, gained
The vision of my very soul,
And lo! the moment I attained
To such high knowing, I began to see
All men, all things, as truly they should be,
And saw Thee in Thy fullness, no part but whole.

–*Pattinattar.*[1]

A DAY OF GLADNESS

I would caress this day! It is dearer to me than all other for my Beloved is a guest in my house today.

My chamber is radiant with His Presence; my courtyard is blessed.

Lost in admiring His great Beauty, my longings sing His name and are glad:

I wash His feet with my tears; I gaze into His face; I offer my body and soul, and all I have to my Lord.

My Beloved, my Treasure has honoured my house. What a day of joy is this!

At the sight of my Lord all evils flee from me, and my heart feels the bouyancy of delight.

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[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, p. 209.

Yea, to-day my Beloved is a Guest in my house: and this day is dear to me above all others.

–Kabir.[1]

I HAVE ATTAINED HIM

I have found a sea of love, an inexhaustible flood; I have opened a treasure of spiritual knowledge, it diffuses the lustre of a million suns, arisen in thy worshipper's soul.

Unexpectedly, without an effort, I have heard the eternal secret, I have learned to know God.

The seed of the high reunion has been enfolded in my own destiny.

I have now beheld Him in whose sight is all goodness, a sea of happy augury, the supreme power of mystic words.

I have attained Him, whose name is nectar, whose nature is pure, intellect free from passion.

The very joy of peace and compassion is found in this joy, that accompanies the knowledge of the being and knowing God.

–Tukaram.[2]

THE GLEAMS OF GOD'S GLORY

Master! the rapture of a vision of Thee has been mine;

Like pleasant arrows the gleams of Thy glory have pierced through my eyes, making me blind to everything save Thee:

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi: *Naine salone shyam Hari Kab awhinge.*

[2]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p. 193.

Thy sweet Presence dwells in my breast, spreading the brightness of joy.

How shall I ever live without Thee, Beloved? Thou art the root of my life–herb.

How can the bond between Thee and me sever? As sad pervades the stem of a lotus, so is Thy love immanent in me:

As the Moon–bird, *Chakar*, is bound in love to the moon, so my soul to Thee.

My Lord! Thou hast bought me with the price of Thy love: long will I stand at Thy door waiting for Thee:

Let the world think I have gone astray, if it must!

–Mirabai[1]

STRONG BY SUPPLICATION

We have made ourselves strong by falling before Thee in supplication; we have made our way into the house and seized the store.

We have planned things so as to gain possession of the treasure.

We have embraced His feet, says Tuka, and thus we have set ourselves free.

–Tukaram[2]

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Naina more ban pare.*

[2]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukaram*, Vol. III, p. 174.

MOMENTS OF DEEP SILENCE

Behold the bee buzzing and circling round and round ne the blown lotus, how it buzzeth and circleth again and agair

But anon it goeth inside the flower, and then it settle down and drinketh of the honey in silence:

Even so, disciple, man talketh and argueth before he ha found his joy in the Lord, before he hath tasted of faith:

But when he findeth the nectar at last in the opened lotu of his heart, at once he settleth down to drink it, ar babbleth and talketh no more.

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa

WHAT IF ?

What if the sky falls,
The earth quakes,
The mountain turns upside down,
The swelling sea dries up,
And the sun comes down,
To one who has attained the perfect Lord?

–Appar

SPEECH TO THE DUMB

This is the glory of Thy feet that Thou givest the blir man sight to examine jewels: Thou givest speech to the dum

Thou hast set in motion, says Tuka, this dense an clownish brain of mine.

–Tukaram

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[1] M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p.422.

[2] Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is: *Vanam tulangilen man kambamakilen*

[3] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol.II, p. 197.

FREE WE ARE!

Subjects are we to none!
Death we fear not!
In hell we shall not suffer!
Weaklings we are not!
We rejoice!
We know no disease!
We bow to none!
There is ever bliss and never misery for us.
By none is He ruled: to such a supreme Sovereign alone are we subject.
We shall not relax from that faith.
We have dedicated ourselves to His feet.

–Appar.[1]

SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

In the deep sea of bliss the waves are of bliss; in the body of bliss every member is of bliss.

How can I describe what has happened?

It is something extraordinary; the course of delight can go no further.

The desires of the unborn child show themselves in the longings of the mother, his wishes are reflected there.

Tuka says, There is an impression printed on me, and the words that come to my lips are cast in the same mould.

–Tukaram.[2]

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is: *Namarkkum kudiyallom namanai anjam.*

[2]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, vol. III, p. 29.

WHO CAN?

I was ignorant of the way of redemption:
I was living in the company of ruffians.

The great Lord who possessed me hath showed me the path of redemption.

He hath cleansed my mind of all its foul dirt.
He hath made me bliss eternal!

O Heaven, who can attain the grace that He hath bestowed upon me?

–Manikka Vachakar.

ONLY A STEWARD

The treasure belongs to God; I am merely appointed to receive and disburse.

My own hands and feet are untainted; I know not how much there was in it before I came.

God has taken my cares on Himself; it is He who accomplishes everything.

Tuka says, The Master has the responsibility of supplying everything.

–Tukaram.

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is: *Mutti neri ariyata.*

[2]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. III, p. 18.

AM I TO QUESTION THEE?

That day Thou owned me,
That very day, O Lord, firm as rock!
Hast Thou not made Thine own, my life, body and all?
Is there any misery for me to-day, my Lord?
Thou might cause pleasure or pain!
Am I to question Thee?

–Manikka Vachakar.[1]

NONE LIKE GOD FOR US

Master! for us there is no one like Thee!

For Thy devotees Thou dost choose the best: and though we ask for brass Thou givest gold.

The hungry Thou dost feed with good things; the thirsty go to Thee for nectar; and to the naked Thou dost give shining robes of love.

There is no one, Master, like Thee for us!

As the cow keeps by her calf, so art Thou ever with Thine own:

Thou, O gracious Lord, dost honour even humble offerings Thy loving hand is outstretched to receive a straw, if only true love doth offer it!

All-generous! All-wise! according to Thy riches Thou dost satisfy our needs:

In the day of affliction Thou dost hasten to help us, to make suffering pleasant.

Thou art ever faithful to Thy promises.

There is no one like Thee for us, my Master!

–Surdas[2]

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[1] Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is: *Anre enran aviyum udalum udamaiellam*

[2] Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Hari son thakur aur na jan ko.*

POOR RETURN

'I am coming!' cries one to a drowning man. How t
words increase his strength!

When a hungry man sees some hope of food, what patien
and strength and peace of mind he feels!

Tuka says, I have laid my body at Thy feet. I have giv
Thee, as it were, a bit of glass for the jewel of desires.

–Tukaram

NEVER CAN I FORGET HIM

Serve the Lord who has entered this temple of your life!

Act not the role of a madman, for the night is drawing nig

He has awaited me for ages; He has lost His heart for m
love:

Yet, my slumbering soul knew not the bliss so near at han

Now my Lord Himself has made known to me the meani
of the melody that struck my ear long ago;

I will offer my body and soul to my Lord; I will lay down m
life for Him: but O! never can I forget Him!

For, behold my good fortune! I have received the eter
caress of my undying Beloved!

–Kabi

FRUITS OF JOY

More of such happiness I ask in future; a gift of service
Thee bears fruits of joy.

–Tukaram

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[1]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. II, p. 292

[2]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Jiva Mahal men shiva panhunwa.*

[3]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. III, p. 153.

VI

The Moral Path

EARNESTNESS

Thou hast first to churn the milk, O disciple, if thou desirest to taste of the butter:

And it serveth not thy purpose if, sitting in idleness, thou sayest, 'Lo, the butter is in the milk, yea, the butter is in the milk.'

Even so, how canst thou find the Lord, my son, by merely uttering the words, 'God is, God is?'

Be thou, therefore, up and doing in right earnest, and ply thy task.

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[1]

KEEP ME FROM GREED

None can the limits set
To longings of the mind,
Ways of Desire are wide,
Their windings none can find.

Kings whose possessions are numberless,
Conquerors of many lands,
Seek the sea also to subjugate,
Gain for the greed of their hands.

Rich men unsatisfied, tho' they own
Riches, as *Kwera's*[2] untold,
Fain would learn alchemic means to turn
Gross things and base into gold.

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[1] M.N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 140.

[2] *Kwera*, the god of wealth, who is fabulously rich.

Long-living men, full of longings are
  Longer and longer to live,
Seek in all secrets that nature hides
  One that might deathlessness give.

Considering all things, this I know,
  The body needs but bread,
Appeasing hunger, soothing sleep,
  Somewhere to rest the head.

These I have, and for this pray–
  Pure, unattached keep me,
Lest I, by longings driven, rush
  Into Desire's deep sea.

O God, without a void
  Whose presence all-where is,
All things pervading fills,
  O all-embracing Bliss!

–Tayumanavar.[1]

THE KING BEGS

I had gone a-begging from door to door in the village path, when Thy golden chariot appeared in the distance like a gorgeous dream and I wondered who was this King of all kings!

My hopes rose high and methought my evil days were at an end, and I stood waiting for alms to be given unasked and for wealth scattered on all sides in the dust.

The chariot stopped where I stood. Thy glance fell on me and Thou camest down with a smile. I felt that the luck of my

[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, Psalms of a Saiva Saint, p. 12.

life had come at last. Then of a sudden Thou didst hold out Thy right hand and say, 'What hast thou to give to Me?'

Ah, what a kingly jest was it to open Thy palm to a beggar to beg! I was confused and stood undecided, and then from my wallet I slowly took out the least little grain of corn and gave it to Thee.

But how great my surprise, when at the day's end I emptied my bag on the floor, to find a least little grain of gold among the poor heap. I bitterly wept, and wished that I had had the heart to give Thee my all.

–Rabindranath Tagore.[1]

UNION WITH THE LORD

There be those, disciple, that train and torture the flesh, and thereby seek to gain union with the Lord.

And they, verily, take care of the body only, and they train the breath and cleanse the garment of flesh in various ways.

And they, no doubt, are able to do what appeareth unto the ignorant as wonderful and mysterious.

But such practices enable them not to come nearer unto God.

And I say unto thee, seek not union with the Lord by means of the body:

But seek union with Him with the entire mind, the entire soul,–

Yea, by loving Him, by worshipping Him, by adoring Him ever,

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[1] *Gitanjali*, p. 31.

By discerning the True and the False, and by holding on
the Truth always with all thy might.

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa

BOUND IN OUR OWN CHAINS

'Prisoner, tell me, who was it that bound you?'

'It was my master,' said the prisoner. 'I thought I cou
outdo everybody in the world in wealth and power, and
amassed in my own treasure–house the money due to r
king. When sleep overcame me I lay upon the bed that was
my Lord, and on waking up I found I was a prisoner in r
own treasure–house.'

'Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought th
unbreakable chain?'

'It was I,' said the prisoner, 'who forged this chain ve
carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold t
world captive, leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Th
night and day I worked at the chain, with huge fires and cr
hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the lin
were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in
grip.'

–Rabindranath Tagor

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[1] M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 72.
[2] *Gitanjali*, p. 18.

THE TWO BEST THINGS

If I see any manner of injustice or meet with ill-treatment, I sit down alone by the Father and burst into tears like a girl. To say anything about these matters to friends I regard as meanness.

This attitude strikes me as very sweet. I really feel most happy in times of trial like these.

Is it not true that so long as the worm remains alive inside a thing, it does some amount of harm? Love is very delicate, and, therefore, if great care is not taken it does not thrive in human nature.

Is it mere word of mouth, that you get Religion by simply repeating the word 'Religion'? I have made many experiments in my life, and have found out that one needs a great deal of faith, that there is not the remotest chance of access to Religion if you do not become as lowly as even the dust of the earth.

That is why these two things seem to me as the best of all-to dive deep into the ocean of God's fellowship and to master the senses.

–Aghorenath.

LESS THAN THE LEAST

Dost thou wish, disciple, to find in the Lord thy sole consolation and rest?

Then be thou humbler than the humblest, lowlier than the lowliest, yea, less than the least!

For, if thou wishest the thread to enter into the eye of the needle, hast not thou to make it fine and smooth?

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[1]

A SERMON UNTO THEE, O HEART

Believe the One above.
Believe that God is.
Know that all other wealth is naught.
Feed the hungry.
Know that righteousness and good company are beneficial:
Be content that God's will be done.
A sermon this is unto thee, O Heart!

–Pattinattar.

THE BATTLE OF THE SPIRIT

Fight, O my brother, fight to the end!

Lay hold on the sword of His name and join in the fight!

In the field of the body a great war is raging against greed, against anger, against passion and pride:

It is for the Kingdom of truth that this battle is raging and the sword that rings most loud is the sword of His Name!

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[1] M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 477.

[2] Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is : *Onrenriru teyvam undenriru.*

It is a grim fight and a weary one, this fight of the seeker of truth: for the vow of the truth–seeker is harder to keep than that of the warrior or the widow.

For a few hours does the warrior fight; the flames soon end the widow's struggle with death:

But the Battle of the Knight of Truth goes on without ceasing:

Thus, lay hold on the sword of His name, O my brother, and fight as long as life lasts!

–Kabir.[1]

INNER QUALITIES

The shell of the cocoanut is hard, but the inside is excellent.

In accordance with this, remember, that purity inside is what we aim at.

The jack–fruit has a thorny rind, but it is sweet within.

The sugar–cane is hard and black without, but it is wellflavoured within.

Our food owes its flavour to salt.
Tuka says, The value of a thing depends on its inner qualities; what do its faults outside matter?

–Tukaram.[2]

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[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Sur prakash, tanhrain kahan paeye.*

[2]J. N. Fraser and K.B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukaramsa* Vol. III, p. 197.

THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Our body is the shrine and the firm mind the devotee.
We have cleansed the shrine with truth, and erected God, the jewel of our minds, as the image.
With love as ghee and milk made into a dainty dish,
We have worshipped Him.

–Appar.

THE THREEFOLD DISCIPLINE

Reverence to elders, and sages, purity, uprightness, chastity, and harmlessness are called the Mortification of the Body.

Speech that gives no pain, true, pleasant and wholesome, likewise practice of Scripture–reading, are called the Mortification of Speech.

Clearness of the mind, pleasantness, silence, suppression of self and cleanness of spirit, these are called the Mortification of the Mind.
This triple mortification fulfilled in supreme faith by men under the Rule, who desire not fruit, they declare to be o the Goodness–Mood.[2]

–Bhagavad Gita.[3]

BE MODEST AND HUMBLE

Metal melts in the fire, but still continues within it; it i purified, and survives as threads survive in a cloth.

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[1]Tr. by A. J. Appasamy, The first line in Tamil is: *Kayame koyil.*
[2]*Sattvaguna*, or the quality of goodness.
[3]XVII, 14-17. L.D. Barnett, Bhagavad Gita, p. 163.

All false speech affects the outside alone; pride and arrogance accompany the ignorant man to his death.

When the river overflows its banks, the grass that yields to the stream rejoices; the tree is uprooted and riven, but that weed is never crushed.

The elephant's foot crushes a hostile army, but the ant lives beneath it; who would venture to accompany the insect?

You may hammer a diamond as you will, but it enters either the hammer or anvil; will flint stones hold out like this, though they be far larger?

Be modest and humble; this is the secret that will take you over the sea of life.

Tuka says, It is the burden men carry that makes them sink.

–Tukaram.[1]

ALL RAIN IS PURE THAT FALLETH FROM ABOVE

Verily, O disciple, all rain is pure that falleth from above,

And pure it remaineth or becometh foul, according as the spot on which it falleth is clean or foul:

Even so, all ideas, all thoughts descend from the Lord in glistening purity into man's mind,

And pure they remain, or become soiled and dirty, according as the mind is pure or unclean.

–Ramakrishna Psamahamsa.[2]

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[1]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p. 230

[2]M. N. Chatterji, *Studies Universal Religion*, p. 402.

HOW GOD IS APPREHENDED

As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream,
As water in river-beds, and as fire in the friction-sticks
So is the Soul apprehended in one's own soul,
If one looks for Him with true austerity.

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad*

THE DANGER OF THE SENSES

In the man whose thoughts dwell on the ranges of sen
arises attachment to them; from attachment is born lov
from love springs wrath.

From wrath is confusion born; from confusion wanderi
of memory; from breaking of memory wreck
understanding; from wreck of understanding a man is lost.

But he who walks through the ranges of sense with sens
instruments severed from passion and hatred and obedie
to the Self, and possesses his self in due order, comes
clearness.

In clearness it comes about that all pains in him vani
away: for in them whose minds are clear the understandi
is utterly steadfast.

In him who is not under the Rule is no understanding;
him who is not under the Rule is no inspiration; in him w
feels no inspiration peace is not; in him who has not pea
whence can there be joy?

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[1]. 15. R. E. Hume, *the Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 396.

For if a man's mind move under the sway of errant sense-instruments, it sweeps away his enlightenment, as the wind a ship on the waters.

Therefore he only who utterly holds back his sense-instruments from sense-objects, O mighty-armed one, has wisdom abidingly set.

–Bhagavad Gita.[1]

CONFORMITY TO THE NATURE OF GOD

If a man is conformed to the nature of God, so are his actions: his actions are free from the thought of self, they pass away from him as they take place.

Wherever a crystal is placed, it assumes the colour of its background, it contracts no influence, its lustre is clear.

We may flatter an infant by imagining it talks and thinks, but the mother is the source of all that seems to confirm it.

Tuka says, I bow to Him who knows all, I fall at His feet from hour to hour.

–Tukaram.[2]

THE INDWELLING LORD

Who is sinless in mind, without jealousy, calm, pure in action the friend of all, whose words are pleasant and profitable, devoid of pride and fraud, the Lord always dwells in his heart. When He, who is the Eternal, dwells in the heart, a man possesses a form which is pleasant to the world, just as a young Sala tree by its very beauty tells of the excellence of the sap hidden in the soil.

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[1] II. 62-68. L. D. Barnett, *Bhagavad Gita*, p. 95.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. II, p. 309.

Whoever cannot bear the riches of others, whose mind i
muddy, who is wicked, who reproaches good men, who doe
not worship, who does not give anything he has, the Lord
not in the mind of such a mean one.

–Vishnu Purana.

THE WEALTH I DESIRE

Let me not wander in vain.
Let me not labour in vain.
Let me not mingle with the prejudiced.
Let me not leave the company of the virtuous.
Let me not fly into anger.
Let me not stray off the path of goodness.
Let me not seek for this day or for the morrow.
Give me such a wealth, O Almighty!

–Pattinattar.

UNCEASING EXERTION

If thou wishest to get at a pot of gold buried deep unde
ground, thou must dig for it and labour hard, O disciple,–

Yea, thou must sweat and strain every nerve and muscle.

And thou must go on digging, digging, till thy pickax
striketh the pot.

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[1]II. 7. 23, 24, 28. Tr. by A. J. Appasamy.

[2]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is: *Odamal palukkulaiyamal.*

And then, verily, joy and gladness come unto thee with the clinking sound, and thy happiness increaseth as the sound becometh more and more distinct.

Therefore I say unto thee, thou must make unceasing exertion if thou desirest attainment.

Go on preparing and qualifying thyself, and, by and by, thou shalt attain Bliss.

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[1]

THE TRIUMPH OF PIETY

Look into the world unseen and behold Evil overcome and Truth triumphant.

Know that every prayer that you have offered has borne fruit; that every truth that you have uttered will surely win.

In proportion as you have shed tears for God and Religion will your sorrow be turned into tears of joy, for there can be no injustice in God's Kingdom.

–Keshub Chunder Sen.

THE PARABLE OF THE CHARIOT

Know thou the soul as riding in a chariot,
The body as the chariot.
Know thou the intellect as the chariot–driver,
And the mind as the reins.

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[1] M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 160.

The senses, they say, are the horses;
The objects of sense, what they range over.
The self combined with senses and mind
Wise men call 'the enjoyer.'

He who has not understanding,
Whose mind is not constantly held firm–
His senses are uncontrolled,
Like the vicious horses of a chariot–driver.

He, however, who has understanding,
Whose mind is constantly held firm–
His senses are under control,
Like the good horses of a chariot–driver.

–*Katha Upanishad.*

[1]III. 3-6. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 351.

VII

The Practice of Prayer

TEACH ME TO PRAY

How can I see or meditate on Thee!

Show me the secret,–beggar that I am!

Tell me how I can worship or serve Thee, what faith, O God, will bring Thee to me.

How can I praise Thee or conceive Thee, or know whose or what Thou art?

How can I sing Thee or meditate on Thee!

Show me what are Thy thoughts, and Thy ideas.

Tuka says, As Thou hast made Thy servant, so, O God, teach me this by experience.

–Tukaram.[1]

I CAME TO THE KING–NOT TO A BEGGAR LIKE MYSELF

During the reign on a certain king there lived a hermit in a forest close to the city.

And people flocked to him in thousands to hear him speak of God.

And one day he thinketh in his mind, Lo, so many guests daily come to my hut.

And I have not wherewithal to feed them, I have no houses to lodge them.

And he goeth to the palace to ask money of thinking.

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[1] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p. 84.

And the king welcomed him, saying, Lucky indeed are we O father, that thou hast graced us with thy holy visit!

I pray thee, wait for a little while, while I say my prayers and presently I shall be at thy disposal.

And the king sayeth his prayers, and the hermit heareth what he sayeth unto the Lord:

Give unto us, I pray Thee, O Heavenly Father, grant unto us health and wealth and power, give unto us ever more and more riches, ever more and more money!

And the hermit, hearing this, riseth to depart.

But the king hath now finished his prayers, and he stoppeth him, saying, Why dost thou go away, holy father without saying that which thou didst come to me to say?

Verily, O king, sayeth the hermit, I came to the king, and not to a beggar like myself!

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[1]

I COME TO TALK TO YOU

Being limbs of Thy body, we know Thee completely; others find Thee a riddle hard to penetrate.

Thieves familiar with a house know where to lurk and whence to attack it.

Tuka syas, I have pierced a way in, and I come to talk to Thee.

–Tukaram.[2]

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[1] M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 171.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol.III, p. 191.

NO GIFT BUT YOURSELF

The wishing-tree despises not those who apply to it; but You are better than all wishing-trees, for You require no application.

O listen! if You bestow a gift, it awakens one to a notion of pride; thus Tuka, with complaints like these, cries out for no gift but Yourself.

–Tukaram.[1]

THE BARE INFINITY OF GOD'S UNCROWDED PRESENCE

Time after time I came to Your gate with raised hands, asking for more and yet more.

You gave and gave, now in slow measure, now in sudden excess.

I took some, and some things I let drop; some lay heavy on my hands: some I made into playthings and broke them when tired; till the wrecks and the hoard of Your gifts grew immense, hiding You, and the ceaseless expectation wore my heart out.

Take, oh take–has now become my cry,

Shatter all from this beggar's bowl: put out this lamp of the importunate watcher: hold my hands, raise me from the still-gathering heap of Your gifts into the bare infinity of Your uncrowded presence.

–Rabindranath Tagore.[2]

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[1] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, The Poems of Tukarama, Vol. I, p 106.
[2] *Fruit Gathering*, p. 35.

THE LIGHT OF DAY AND THE DARK OF NIGHT

Thou art the life of the Universe; to me
The light of day art, and the dark of night:
Activity's field when I do wake and see;
In sleep my dream. Oh, Life of Life, the light
Thou art to me of day, the dark of night.

Relieve me of my vice and virtue; make
My heart void, and this heart made empty fill
With thy entirety. Thy excelling take
And make me great with it. Enfold me still,
Within thee: cover me, Protector bright,
My light of day who art, and dark of night.

–C. R. Das

A BEGGAR FOR LOVE

A beggar at thy door,
Pleading I stand;

Give me an alms, O God,
Love from Thy loving hand.

Spare me the barren task,
To come, and come for nought,

A gift poor Tuka craves,
Unmerited, unbought.

–Tukaram

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[1] A. Chapman, *Religious Lyrics of Bengal*, p. 80.
[2] N. Macnicol, Psalms of Maratha Saints, p. 57.

THE JOY OF COMMUNION

Come, let us be one with Thee.

Here we are–Thy Self and mine own! Thou in me and I in Thee,–the water in the vessel ans the vessel in the water!

The leaven of communion has started working,–a little of Thine own own self pouring into mine; thus only by persistent practice man becomes godly.

God is in the home, in the world, in money.

God comes accompanied by the sages on the chariot of Power.

Comes He to plunge India again in the sea of communion, of truth and bliss.

Lo! the ripples of communion in the ocean of bliss rising into a mighty swell!

O Lord of communion, plunge us into the ocean of communion!

We can no more suffer separation.

–Keshub Chunder Sen.

THE HEAVEN OF FREEDOM

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action–

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

–Rabindranath Tagore.[1]

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[1] *Gitanjali*, p. 27.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

From the unreal lead me to the real!

From darkness lead me to light!

From death lead me to immortality!

–Brihad–Aranyaka Upanishad.[1]

SAVE THY SERVANT

Forgive my evils, heal my pain.

Lord, none is grieved like me: and O! there is no Comfort like Thee;

Thy pledge is with the poor, the destitute, the sorrowfu fulfil Thy promise, come to give me peace in this my miser None is as poor as I, no, not in all the world:

Lord of the poor! only Thou canst succour not to forget n vices, think only of Thy great infinite Love.

Where hast Thou concealed Thyself?

The Vedas say Thou art the Saviour of sinners;

To redeem the sinful Thou dost deem Thy mission:

None is sunk so deep in sin as I, not one of all mankind.

Save Thy servant, Saviour of all the world!

Thread me as a bead upon Thy cord; take me, make m Thine, my Lord! and ransom me from the vicious bonds sin and death.

–Dharnidas

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[1] 1, 3, 28. R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishad.* p. 80.

[2] Tr. for this volume Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is : *Moson Prabhu nahin dukhit.*

LIKE MOTHER AND CHILD

When I meet Thee, I will tell Thee the secret of my love; together we will eat a sweet meal of joy.

This is how a mother and her child behave.

–Tukaram.[1]

FORGET ME NOT!

Forget me not, O lord! this is my prayer: forget me not.

In this day of trouble save me, Lord, this is my prayer!

The world is like a deluding mirage, boundless and unending, that bewitches man from Thee:

Yea, I am its sad victim, helpless and forlorn, forget me not: this is my prayer.

All who seek the shelter of Thy feet, preserve their honour, Lord most merciful! Forget them not!

Thou art Mercy, Grace and Love supreme; hold me by Thy hand and help me, or I faint, I fall:

Forget me not, O Lord, this is my prayer.

Save me from the snare of egoism, greed, infatuation and desire, wherein the world has fallen.

The beatific vision give me, Lord, to save me: this is my prayer, forget me not!

–Mehar Das.[2]

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[1]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. III, p. 190.

[2]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Prabhu Mori binat hai nahen bisaro.*

HARD REFUSALS

My desires are many and my cry is pitiful, but ever did Thou save me by hard refusals; and this strong mercy ha been wrought into my life through and through.

Day by day Thou art making me worthy of the simp great gifts that Thou gavest to me unasked–this sky and t light, this body and the life and the mind–saving me fro perils of overmuch desire.

There are times when I languidly linger and times whe awaken and hurry in search of my goal; but cruelly Th hidest Thyself from before me.

Day by day Thou art making me worthy of Thy fu acceptance by refusing me ever and anon, saving me fr perils of weak, uncertain desire.

–Rabindranath Tagor

NEAR YET FAR

There is no place, small as a sesamum,
But Thou, they say, art there.

That deep in all this universe Thou dwell'st
Sages and saints declare.

So, I, of Thy child, in faith of this
Come seeking help from Thee.

Thou overflow'st the world, and yet, and yet,
Thy face I cannot see.

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[1] *Gitanjali*, p. 12.

Why should I meet this abject–I to whom
There is nor bound nor end?

Is it with such a thought Thou comest not.
My Father and my Friend?

Ah, what shall Tuka do, that he Thy feet
May touch and tend?

–*Tukaram.*[1]

WE SHOULD GO TO GOD

What messenger need go to the ant's house? At the sight of sugar they come running to it.

Does the giver stand waiting when no beggar is near?

It is the beggar who runs to better himself.

Do food and water say, 'Come, eat us up!'

It is the hungry man who goes in quest of them.

The patient runs to the physician to get rid of his sufferings.

One who means to better himself, says Tuka, he listens to God's praises, he cultivates a pleasure in this.

–*Tukaram.*[2]

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[1] N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 66.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. II, p. 364.

A PRAYER FOR STRENGTH

This is my prayer to Thee, my Lord, Strike, strike at th root of penury in my heart.

Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows

Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service.

Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend m knees before insolent might.

Give me the strength to raise my mind high above dai trifles.

And give me the strength to surrender my strength to Th will with love.

–Rabindranath Tagore

THE SACRIFICE TO GOD

We offer Thee for incense our faults of ignorance an passion; we dedicate to Thee every power of our souls.

We will slay Thee our own hearts for a victim; we w offer Thee the thirst of desire and passion.

We have prepared our loving faith as a portion for Thee eat; we have filled the dish and called loudly upon Thee.

For drums Thou shalt have the sounds of the heart in ho rapture; come Thyself and enter among us.

Take the presents that are offered Thee; heal Tuka an make him whole.

–Tukaram

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[1] *Gitanjali*, p. 28.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I, p. 361.

VIII

The Speech of Love

YOUR CHILDREN

I proclaim these tidings, since I have power to do so; we are Thy children by loving service; we speak the language of close affection.

By dwelling close to Thee we shall do away with doubt and fear.

Tuka says, There is a genuine taste here: how can we go away?

–Tukaram.[1]

THE TRUE GURU

O True Guru! my heart is yearning for you!

You fill the cup of true Love, drink of it Yourself and offer it then to me:

From my eyes You lift the veil of ignorance and give me the true vision of God:

You make me hear the unstruck music and reveal the worlds being told like beads in you:

You show joy and sorrow to be alike: for You Yourself bring me words of sorrow and joy and wipe the tears of my pain:

All utterance You fill with love: lo! the love–form is Your body!

I long to be united with You, my Guru and my Lord; verily he has no fear, no doubt, who has You to lead him to the shelter of Your Home!

–Kabir.[2]

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[1] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. I. p. 175.

[2] Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Sadho so satgur mohe bhawai.*

MELT WITH LOVE

The bones may be used as firewood, and the flesh cut u
and roasted on fire until it becomes aglow like gold.

Yet except for those who melt with love and are stirred
the depths of their soul, the Jewel, resplendent like the sun,
impossible of attainment.

–Tirumular

I AM YOURS FOR EVER

I am thirsting for Your love, my Beloved!

I shall make this body a lamp, and my tender heart sha
be its wick;

I shall fill it with the scented oil of my young love an
burn it night and day at Your shrine, O Beloved!

For Your love I shall sacrifice all the wealth of my youth

Your name shall be the crown of my head.

I am longing for You, O my Lord: for the season of th
swing has come; but You are not beside me.

Clouds gather on my brows and my eyes shed heav
showers.

My parents gave me to You, I have become Yours for eve
who but You can be my Lord?

This separation troubles my breast; make me Your own
make me perfect like You, O Lord of Perfection!

–Mirabai

---

[1]Tr. by A. J. Appasamy. The first line in Tamil is: *Enbe virakay.*

[2]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Syam teri ara
lage ho.*

THE BELOVED

He who is first, and none afore Him,
Lord of the Silence, came to me,
And in the hush of softest whispers
Spake to my heart in secrecy.

'Cut thyself off from all attachments,
And cling to me,' said softly He.
In His embrace beyond all telling
Was bliss, and in His words to me.

In ways of woe long had I wandered
Till He, my Lord, deliverance gave;
And now, Desire the demon driven,
Love holdeth me God's willing slave.

–Tayamanavar.[1]

O SURGEON!

The surgeon cuts with the knife and burns.
Yet the patient loves him!
Even so, my Lord, though endless pains afflict me,
I will not cease to look for Thy mercy!

–Nammalvar.[2]

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[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint.* p. 100.

[2] Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati. The first line in Tamil is : *Valal aruttu sudinum maruttuvanpal.*

THE COMPASSION OF GOD

Thy compassion, Mother, goes a-weeping from door to door,
Thy tears, at sight of man's woes, in hundred streamlets flow
Cleaving the *sadhu's* heart, issues love overflowing,
Leading him to sacrifice self for the other's sake.

Freighted with infinite love, how wilt Thou restrain Thysel

That is why, Mother, Thou, like one possessed
Dost keep calling on us all, again and again.

–T. N. Sanyal

LOVE'S SURGING SEA

Do not let it daunt thee, brother,
Sight of love's surging sea.

The look of fury is all a show, there is no death e'en in bei
drowned!

Who can take heart, and in love's deep sea
Himself can but once immerse,
Shall never turn back, but in ecstasy
Gather gems and priceless pearls
In utter forgetfulness of world.

–T. N. Sanyal

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[1]Tr. by T. K. Koar.
[2]Tr. by Satyendra Roy.

DYING FOR SIGHT, MY LORD!

My spirit is sore grieved in Thy absence; come to me, O my Beloved!

I am ashamed in my inmost being when people say I am Thy bride, for have I touched Thy heart with mine?

Vain is my life! I have no taste for food: my eyes get no slumber. I am restless within doors and without.

As water to the thirsty, so is the sight of the Lover to the bride:

Who will tell my Beloved that I am wasting away in His absence, I am pining for the assurance that He is mine?

I am dying for sight of my Lord!

–Kabir.[1]

WHY THE MOTHER COMETH NOT

Behold how the babe is well pleased and content with a red and glittering sucker:

How he toyeth with it and smileth, how he eyeth it and sucketh it, and smileth again and again,

While the mother tarrieth away, seeing that the little child disporteth peaceful and content.

And so, after a while, the baby throweth the glittering sucker away, and crieth:

---

[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Balam awo hamre ghare.*

And the mother cometh anon, leaving all other work aside, and taketh up her fondling to her breast:

Even so, O disciple, as long as thou choosest to remain content with the gewgaws of the world, the Mother cometh not unto thee.

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[1]

A RIVER OF TEARS

When will my Lotus–eyed come back to me?

At a single glance of His this creeper of my life blossomed into joy. But He has left me; without Him these blossoms are turned to embers of fire.

When He is away, who will open the buds of bliss into flowers?

In this separation each bud doth pierce me like a lance; it pains me.

Come, O my Beautiful–Eyed Beloved! with one glance turn my sorrow to rapture.

Memory makes a river of tears gush from my eyes; my couch floats thereon:

Could I but sail up the stream of my sorrowful tears to the banks of my Lord, how happy would I be!

My life is fast ebbing: hasten, O my Lord! hasten, to give me the last rapture of meeting;

And in peace I shall die.

–Surdas.[2]

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[1]M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 153.

[2]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Naine salone shyam Hari kab awhinge.*

WILL GOD FORGET?

Why are you not patient, my heart? He who ever watches over frail birds, senseless beasts and tiny insects;

He who cared for you when you were yet unborn, my heart,

Shall He forget you now that you are come to birth?

Nay, you have turned away from the face of your Lord; how have you strayed so far, my heart?

You have left the Beloved; you are thinking of others: thus all your work remains unfinished my heart!

Why are you impatient? Drink the divine nectar of His name. Empty the bowl of His love and be drunken, my heart!

–Kabir.[1]

THOU CALLEST, O MOTHER!

How great is Thy love, O Mother, for Thy children!
The thought of it makes my eyes overflow with tears of love, O Mother!
How often I have sinned against Thee from my birth,
Yet Thou castest Thy loving eyes on me,
And ever callest me in sweet accents.

The thought of it makes my eyes overflow with tears of love, O Mother!
Fondly Thou callest me again and again, O Mother!
With arms outstretched Thou callest, O Mother!

---

[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Are man dheraj kahe na dharai.*

Overflowing with affection Thou callest, O Mother!
'Come unto me, Come unto me,' Thou callest, O Mother!
Forgiving all my transgressions Thou Callest, O Mother!
Seeing the sorrows of men Thou callest, O Mother!
Thy face beaming with joy Thou callest, O Mother!
For us, O Mother, Thou hast vouchsafed in Heaven
Such happiness, peace, and endless blessings:
Fondly Thou dispensest them all
With Thine own hands in diverse ways.

The burden of Thy infinite mercy
I can no longer bear,
Seeing Thy love, my heart bursts with gratitude
And a cry goes forth from my soul.

To Thy saving feet do I betake myself, O Mother.

GOD AND LOVE ARE ONE

The ignorant say that love and God are two.

No one knows that love itself is God.

Whoever knows that love itself is God shall rest in lov
one with God.

–Tirumular

THE LIGHT OF THE GLORY OF GOD'S GRACE

Unique love, Thou hast risen in my heart and spre
abroad, embracing all the unfolding life of the world.

---

[1]Tr. by A. J. Appasamy. The first line Tamil is: *Anbum Sivamum.*

My love, Thou hast risen within me in order that I might behold Thy golden feet and enjoy the ambrosia of Thy grace.

My unique love, Thou hast given Thyself to me and by the light of Thy grace Thou hast transmuted the base metal of my life.

My love, Thou hast blossomed within and flowered and spread abroad Thy fragrant petals.

My love, Thou hast shone within me and ripened into tender fruit.

My unique love, Thou hast granted me the full measure of Thy grace, Thou hast filled me with Thyself.

My love, Thou hast destroyed all the grief of my life and transformed my image into that of bliss.

My unique love, Thou hast joined Thyself unto me to give unto me all Thy heavenly glory.

My love, Thou hast captured me and Thy love hast brimmed over the cup of my life.

My unique love, Thy grace overflowed Thine heart in order that I may partake of it, springing from within me.

–Ramalinga Swami.[1]

THE PAIN OF SEPARATION

Where shall I meet You, O Lord of my soul? I am thirsting for a glance of You: I am dying, though I live!

My bed lies over the gallows, death stalks me, how can I sleep?

---

[1] Tr. for this volume by V. Chakkarai. The Tamil poem is entitled, *Arut Perunjothi Akaval.*

Your throne, my Beloved, is in the sky, the space of my sins is betwixt us, how can I meet You?

Only the wounded knows the ache of wounds; he alone who has suffered can know a sufferer's pain.

Driven by the ache of desire throbbing within me, I wander in search of one who can allay my anguish:

But the pain grows intenser; none can I find.

Only when You touch my forehead will this love-pain be soothed, O my Beloved, O Lord of the Poor!

–Mirabai.

A CHILD CARES FOR HIS MOTHER ONLY

Though many strangers may try to interest a child, yet, in his heart, he is only fond of his mother.

He does not care to hear other men talking; he dances with delight when he sees her.

–Tukaram.

MY LORD IS EVERLASTING

In the deep colour of my Lover's love, my heart is dyed, O my friend!

---

[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *He re main to prem diwane.'*

[2]J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol. III, p. 190.

Dip my garment in the hues of the sunset, for I am going to His bowers to meet Him, to sing to Him songs of adoration!

Sun and moon, earth and sky, air and water, all will vanish; human creatures die;

But my Lord! everlasting; I shall have Him for ever and for ever!

In the golden lamp of devotion the perfumed oil of my life I shall pour:

Its flickering light will be for the service of the Lord.

Yea, my Beloved dwells in me, now am I happy as few can be:

In my Lord's love my heart is deeply dyed, O my friend!

–Mirabai.[1]

[1] Ibid. Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Main Giradhar sang rate gunsanya.*

IX

The Supremacy of Religion

THE DEDICATED LIFE

Ah, wherefore fast or wherefore go
To solitude apart?
Whether thou joy or sorrow know,
Have God within thy heart.

If in his mother's arms he be,
The child knows nought amiss.
Cast out, yea, cast out utterly,
All other thought than this.

Love not the world nor yet forsake
Its gifts in fear and hate.
Thy life to God an offering make,
And to Him dedicate.

Nay, Tuka says, ask not again,
Waking old doubts anew.
Whatever else is taught by men,
None other word is true.

–*Tukaram.*[1]

WORSHIP OF GOD

He that knows in verity My power and rule is assuredly ruled by unwavering Rule.[2]

I am the origin of the All; from Me the All proceeds; with this belief the enlightened, possessed of the spirit, pay worship to Me.

---

[1] N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 84.

[2] The word *yoga* in Sanskrit is translated as 'Rule' because *yoga* literally means union, and has come to indicate the method or rule by which the union with the Highest is attained.

With mind on Me, with life-breath in Me, instructing on another and telling of Me, they are in everlasting delight and content.

On these, who are ever under the Rule, worshipping Me with love, I bestow the Rule of understanding, whereby they come to me.

Present in their spirit's mood, I for pity's sake dissipate with the radiant lamp of knowledge the darkness born in them of ignorance.

–Bhagavad Gita.[1]

THOU ART NOTHING WITHOUT GOD

Love the Lord, O my soul!

Alas! thy life is drawing to its close without His knowledge: so beware!

As a bird without wings, an elephant without tusks, a courtesan's fatherless son,

Thou art nothing without love for thy Lord!

A body without eyes, a moonless night, a barren waste without rain,

So art thou worthless without devotion to Him!
As a *pundit* without Vedic lore,

Art thou without His name!

A well without water, a cow without milk, a shrine in darkness,

---

[1] X. 7-11. L. D. Barnett, *Bhagavad Gita*, p. 131.

So art thou without Him, O my soul!

Renounce anger and passion; forsake illusion and pride:

The Lord alone is thy salvation; love Him with adoration!

–*Nanak.*[1]

LOVE ALONE MATTERS

They that worship Me with devotion dwell in Me, and I in them.

Even though he should be a doer of exceeding evil that worships Me with undivided worship, he shall be deemed good; for he is of right purpose.

Speedily he becomes righteous of soul, and comes to lasting peace. O son of Kunti, be assured that none who is devoted to Me is lost.

–*Bhagavad Gita.*[2]

OF UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES

An indistinct hum is the only sound that reacheth ones ears at a distance from the market–place;

But when one goeth within, one heareth distinctly the exact words uttered by the buyers and sellers, understanding them fully:

---

[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Tu sumiran Kar le mere mana.*

[2]IX. 29-31 L. D. Barnett, *Bhagavad Gita*, p. 130.

Even so, disciple, one obtaineth but a faint and indistin idea of the Lord so long as one confineth himself to the me reading of the scriptures:

But when one reacheth near unto Him, one getteth a cle and distinct idea of Him as conveyed by each word that written concerning Him in the scriptures.

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa

HE CALLETH FOR YOU!

Under the shade of the *Kadam*[2] of the world the flute of Lo is sounding.

Awaken, my soul, He calleth for you. Hasten to meet Him
With eager expectation He waiteth for you.

He, at each tread of whose feet blooms a lotus; at eac movement of whose limbsflashes a lightning:

He, whose smile spreads perfume in the air, and makes the festival od spring:
He is calling for you, O my Soul!

Then why this dallying? Hasten to meet Him to fall befo Him n worship; to leave in His bosom the weight of your ca

The flute of the Lord is sounding a melody of Love: under t *Kadam* of mercy He waiteth for you, O my Soul!

–Vidyapati Thaku

---

[1]M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 314.

[2]*Kadam* is the name of a tree often referred to in Indian literature, and famo for its orange-coloured blossoms.

[3]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Nanda Nand Kadamberi taru.*

EAGERNESS

Behold the little child, how eager he is, ever unto distraction, to go to his mother!

Even such an eagerness must there be in thine heart, O aspirant, if thou seekest to reach unto the Lord.

And such an eagerness, such a yearning and breathless impatience, verily, cometh but as a harbinger of the Lord, as the ruddy dawn enkindleth the east but to proclaim the coming of the day.

–Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.[1]

OFFER EVERYTHING TO GOD

If one of earnest spirit set before Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I enjoy this offering of devotion.

Whatever be thy work, thine eating, thy sacrifice, thy gift, thy mortification, make thou of it an offering to Me.

–Bhagavad Gita.[2]

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[1] M. N. Chatterji, *Studies in Universal Religion*, p. 78.

[2] IX 26, 27. L. D. Barnett, *Bhagavad Gita*, p. 129.

DEVOTION DEFIES EVEN DEATH

He who loves must only believe; he can never be happy: h
joy is in faith.

For even death cannot end his longing for Thee,
Beloved.

As the moth for devotion of the flame defies death; so am
Thy devotee.

As the beetle for love of the lotus loses itself in the flow
and yet is happy; so am I Thy devotee, my Lord!

As the stag for delight of a tune stands unconcerned
near the axe of the huntsman; so am I Thy devotee.

As the pigeon for desire of the sky soars higher thoug
only to be dashed to the ground; so am I Thy devotee, Belove

As the rain-bird in its utter loneliness calls its lov
untiringly, so I wait for a vision of Thee, my Lord!

For I feel forsaken and lonely and sad.

–Surdas

A BIRD OF THE SEA

I am like a bird of the sea.

Has that bird any shelter but the ship's mast?
Where else can it find a shore?
Even so, my Lord, except at Thy sacred feet,
Where shall I find Redemption?

–Kulasekhara Alva

---

[1]Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Pret kari kal sukh na laihyo*

[2]Tr. for this volume by Shuddhanandha Bharati, *Perumal Tirumoli* 5,5.

THE HEART'S DESIRE

As chiming anklets sweetly ring
So rings Thy name abroad;
To human spirits hungering
Thou givest peace with God.

Thou on Thy shoulders carrying
All the world's load of care,–
To Thee 'tis such a little thing
My trouble, too, to bear!

–*Namdev.*[1]

A PASSION FOR GOD

I have not known myself the joys of devotion, how then can I understand philosophy, O God?

Do not, I pray, look on me unmoved, when I speak of union with You.

The mind alone will not bestow peace upon us, unless we have seen the feet of God.

Tuka says, My speech has conceived a passion for Your qualities; it cannot be still, though You say nothing to me.

–*Tukaram.* [2]

DEVOTION TO GOD

In Him seek refuge with thy whole soul, O thou of Bharata's race; by His grace thou shalt win supreme peace, the everlasting realm.

Thus have I set forth to thee deepest of deep knowledge; ponder upon it in its fullness, and do as thou wilt.

---

[1] N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints* p. 43.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe. *The Poems of Tukarama*, Vol.I, p. 189.

Hear again My supreme word, deepest of all; for that thou art exceedingly beloved of Me, therefore I will say what is fo thy weal.

Have thy mind on Me, thy devotion toward Me, thy sacrifice to Me, do homage to Me. To Me shalt thou come. make thee a truthful promise; thou art dear to Me.

Surrendering all the Laws, come for refuge to Me alone. will deliver thee from all sins; grieve not.

This thou mayest never tell to one doing no mortification, to one without devotion, to one that obeys not or to one that murmurs against Me.

He who in supreme devotion toward Me shall recite this supreme secret among My worshippers shall assuredly come to me.

None of men shall be to Me more acceptable of words than he; none shall be dearer to Me on earth than he.

–Bhagavad Gita.[1]

AT ALL TIMES, O LORD!

What time the fragrance falls on me
Of full and fresh-blown flowers
Which make the shady bowers
Wherein I rest;

What time of waters cool and clear
Delicious draughts I drink
And in them float and swim and sink
In pleasing sport;

What time scent-laden breezes blow,
Soft as the tread of feet

[1] XVIII, 62-69. L. D. Barnett, *Bhagavad Gita*, p. 173.

Of damsels fair, all sweet
To listening ears;

What time the moon most gladdens me,
Full-orbed and silver white,
In splendour of the light
That makes night day;

At all times, Lord, grant me to be
Most mindful of Thy grace,
Most mindful all my days,-
And so save me.

-Tayumanavar.[1]

A PARENT'S HOUSE

Fatigue and trouble will vanish at a message from Thee; when we have seen Thy form we shall have nothing left to wish for.

The straying impulse of the senses will be stopped; the spirit will attain to peace.

Spread abroad the news that we have a parent's house; immovable, excellent, giving a comfort not of this world.

I have no earthly desires, but I am glad the one longing is left me, to see myself my own.

Tuka says, This is an undying delight; I shall not let it be rudely interrupted.

-Tukaram.[2]

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[1] T. Isaac Tambyah, *Psalms of a Saiva Saint*, p. 145.

[2] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukaram*, Vol. II, p. 103.

GOD FIRST, MIDMOST, AND LAST

We shall speak with a view to being useful, as opportunit arises, according to the case.

We shall lay the foundations deep and build a wall tha will not sink, wherein God is first, midmost, and last.

What we have to do, we shall do at once; if we rely on th future, the growth of the present will be stunted.

Tuka says, We shall obey His orders; we shall carry the out at a single stroke.

–Tukaram.

NO REFRESHING EXCEPT IN THEE

Round Thy lotus feet, O let my love be wrapt; and matters naught where my body lie,

In city residence or forest hermitage, in rags of pover robes of wealth:

Teach me but to be faithful unto Thee.

Like the serpent of his gem deprived, so am I in agon without a vision of Thee, O Lord.

Let me not by praise of blame be moved: within the depth of my soul let me enshrine Thee:

And Thou wilt hold me dear, my Lord!

–Tulsidas.

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[1] J. N. Fraser and K. B. Marathe, *The Poems of Tukaram*, Vol. III, p. 27.

[2] Tr. for this volume by Cyril Modak. The first line in Hindi is: *Chaturae chulheparat.*

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