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

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TUKARAM.



WE have been hearing much of Sir Rabindranath Tagore during recent years. To literary men in the West, Tagore's poems have gone as a revelation. Their simplicity and the strangeness of the spiritual atmosphere they breathe have, indeed, an irresistible appeal. Perhaps, their dominant note is one which has been seldom heard in Western literature since Wordsworth or Shelley, and rarely before them. But to those who have studied at all deeply the ancient literature of our country, more especially the vernacular literature, Tagore ceases to be a surprise. He is a descendant of a long line of poets who, from end to end of India, have sung for many centuries in a similar strain about their spiritual experiences. Sir Rabindranath Tagore has achieved nothing new—except, indeed, the translation into English of a wonderful music and flexibility of his Bengali poems—but he has nobly returned to the almost extinct literary and spiritual tradition of our fathers.

The Mahratta poet, Tukaram, is a typical example of the ancient kind of Indian poet of whom we have been speaking. His simplicity, earnestness and poetic power are extraordinary. His poetry is full of an innate mysticism, full of the brooding spirit of love and human kindness. There are in him also great and eager moods of devotion, of spiritual yearning and vision. But in him we do not meet with that deep sense of human life nor that richness of imagery which we find in the modern Bengali poet. Tukaram is essentially a religious poet and mystic.

THE RELIGIOUS AWAKENING IN MAHARASHTRA.

Before proceeding with the life and poetry of Tukaram, we propose to study, with some detail, the great religious and social awakening that had been going on in Maharashtra during the two centuries preceding his birth. From the end of the 13th century onward, a great movement of religious reform was spreading in the land. It established a new and reformed faith, and drew men together in religious and social comradeship. Tukaram came on the very top of the wave and is distinctly a child of that movement.

DNYANDEV, THE REFORMER.

The foundation of this religious movement

was first laid by an intrepid Brahmin youth, of Alandi (a town near Poona), by name Dnyandev (1271 to 1293 A. D.). He was one of four children whom an unjust society had branded as outcaste. Orphaned and alone, they lived for some time in the outskirts of their village, denied the privileges of caste and ceremony. Social opprobrium and poverty met them on every side. The eldest of the four, Nivrithi Dev by name, seemed to have been of a quiet and resigned disposition. The second, Dnyandev, was, however, made of stronger mettle. He resolved to approach the learned Brahmins, the pontiffs and rulers of the Hindu ecclesiastical system, and lay the case before them. They should surely point out some way out of the social opprobrium and misery in which he and his brothers and his little sister were involved. Led, therefore, by Dnyandev, the brothers and their sister wended their way to Prathishtani, (modern Paithan in the Nizam's Dominions) which in the middle ages was, to some extent, the Benares of the Deccan. The Brahmins of that town held supreme sway in religious and ecclesiastical matters over the whole of the Maharashtra. The Brahmins were soon convoked in assembly, and Dnyandev asked if they, the

children of a *sanyasi* who had come back to household life and had, therefore, been outcasted, could be admitted again to the privileges and rites of religion. The Brahmins looked into the hoary scriptures and gave their answer in the negative. Dnyandev gently but in all firmness rejoined : "The same *jivatma* lives in all, the house-holder and outcaste, the high and the low. How could, then, there be any difference between them?" One of the assembled Brahmins rose in wrath and, pointing to a passing buffalo, asked "if it also had the same *jivatma* and if Dnyandev would feel anything if the beast were beaten." So saying, the Brahmin flew to the side of the passing beast and gave it resounding blows on its back. Dnyandev turned and showed his own back to the audience, and there were red stripes and swelling thereon. Sympathetic suffering indeed ! Dnyandev, so the story says, followed up the advantage, and passing his hand over the head of the buffalo, made it recite the Vedas. A miracle surely ! If ever it had been performed, it should have gone to the very heart of the Brahmins, for they had long imposed on the world with their hollow faith and sounding lore.

The account that has come down to us of this

historic event that was to inaugurate the Reformation in Maharashtra is somewhat legendary. But there can be no doubt of the fact that, here at Paithan, Dnyandev boldly attacked the supremacy of the Brahmins, and declared that God is one and in His eyes all are equal. This event bears a striking resemblance to the famous protest and declaration made two centuries after in 1517 at the Diet of Worms by the German Reformer, Martin Luther. The caste of the four seems to have been recognised after this event. But the great heart of Dnyandev could not rest there. He saw that all classes of people—the Brahmins and Sudras alike—were immersed in ignorance and superstition, that they had forgotten their faith in “the One Great Hari;” and proceeded to write a commentary, an exposition, of the *Bhagavad Gita* in popular Marathi verse. The *Dnyaneswari*, as the commentary is called, with its denunciation of the follies and superstitions of the age, with its eloquent insistence on the unity of God and the equality and brotherhood of man, became a new gospel of reform. Dnyandev afterwards embodied his own spiritual longings and visions—for he was a poet as well as a reformer—in a book of poems entitled *Anubhavam-*

rita. But the intrepid and great-hearted reformer was fated to a premature death. Not yet twenty-one, having opened the gates of Heaven for others, he entered in early himself.

NAMADEV AND CHOKAMELA.

The movement inaugurated by Dnyandev spread with increasing influence during the succeeding centuries. The close of the 14th century saw the birth of the poet and mystic, Namadev (1390 to 1449 A. D.). Legends associate him with, and make him a contemporary of, Dnyandev; but this is unhistorical. The probable dates of his life are those given above. Namadev seems to have been aware of Dnyandev and his works, and his own faith might have been kindled by them. His poems are full of deep god-love and piety and are extremely popular throughout the Deccan. In Namadev, there becomes manifest a marked feature of the new religion—a passionate adoration of a personal god, an adoration in love and in faith—denominated in Indian literature as *Bhakthi*. Contemporaneously to Namadev, lived Chokamela, the *Mahar* saint of Pandharpur (1280 to 1332 A.D.). Though born in the lowest of castes, Chokamela early grew to faith and love of God.

Being a *Mahar*, he could not enter the temple nor even the sacred streets. But he worshipped his god from afar and prayed and meditated sitting on the banks of the Bhima in the outskirts of the city of Pandharpur. He was not, however, allowed to pursue his life of piety and worship uninterrupted; severe persecution befell him. His sanctity was recognised at last, and he was admitted into the temple and the privileges of worship by the Brahmins themselves. The rise of these two—one, a tailor, and the other, a *Mahar*,—to the rank of saints testifies to the liberalising and reforming tendencies of the new religion and revival inaugurated by Dnyandev.

PANDHARPUR.

The centre of the new movement was a small shrine and city on the banks of the Bhima river. Though not very ancient, Pandharpur became early famous in Maratha history. It became the resort and meeting-place of the mystics and reformers of this epoch. The image of Vithoba, said to be an avatar of Krishna, was to them the visible symbol of the Great God and Ruler. Year by year pilgrims poured in from all parts of the country to worship at the shrine, to witness the festivities and take part in the *kathas* and *bhajans*.

organised by preachers and holy men. Pandharpur still remains a holy place to the Marathas.

EKNATH.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are, however, the halcyon period of this movement. It was in this period that there flourished those three great men—Eknath, Ramdas and Tukaram—men typical in every way of this movement. Eknath (1549 to 1608 A. D.) a Desastha Brahmin, was born in the town of Paithan, the classic city, where Dnyandev had made the famous attack. Perhaps he was the very descendant of one of those Brahmins who sat in judgment on the intrepid youth and his brothers. Eknath is remarkable both as a poet and as a reformer. His reforms landed him into a life-long conflict with society, which was carried on the one side with acrimony and hatred and borne on the other with perfect courage and good-will. Eknath's early training was at the hands of Jayaram Swami, a scholar and contemplative, who served also as an officer of state. Eknath, having completed his education, married (for asceticism was no part of the new movement), settled as a house-holder and began a life of religious devotion and service to others. The chronicles

contain beautiful descriptions of Eknath's daily life and charity. Early morning saw him at prayer or study, and after dinner and a little rest, he sat and expounded some epic or scripture. Men poured in from far and near to hear him; and as night drew on, *bhajans* would be held, in which all sang hymns and danced. As the influence of Eknath increased, as his character and charity began to tell on men and women, he was drawn into conflict with society. A *Mahar*, who daily attended his expositions invited Eknath to come and dine in his house. Eknath, true to his principles and without the least hesitation, accepted the invitation and dined with the *Mahar*. Society rose against him and outcasted him. Again, on a day of *shradh*, three hungry *fakirs* came and begged at his door for food. Eknath went into his house, and, taking the food prepared for the Brahmins, came and gave it to the hungry *fakirs*. The Brahmins refused to attend the *shradh* and, it is said, the very *pitrus* themselves descended from their abodes and accepted the offerings.

There was yet another conflict—a conflict characteristic of the new movement—in which Eknath threw his weight on the popular side and

came out successful. Eknath, keen reformer as he was, was also a poet. Full of the new Vaishnavite religion, his thoughts turned to the translation of the *Bhagavata Purana*. A furious opposition from the learned and the orthodox broke out, even as it happened when the brilliant youth Dnyandev translated the *Gita*. The legend says that a certain Maratha Brahmin was reading Eknath's Marathi *Bhagavata* at Benares. The religious purists of the place who saw it fell foul upon him. They asked the pious Maratha how he dared to read, or show reverence to, a Marathi *Bhagavata*. Eknath himself was sent for, and he went and stood before the religious tribunal of Benares—the Mahant and his brethren. The sacredness of the translation was, however, established by a miracle and the orthodox were silenced. The story further adds that the Marathi script—pious product of Eknath's genius—was even set on an elephant and carried in procession through the streets of Benares. The whole story looks like pure legend; but it evidences the strong desire on the part of the orthodox and the learned to preserve the treasures of faith to themselves. Eknath and others like him, who wrote in the vernacular

were moved by the new popular and reforming impulses to bring the secrets and teachings of religion to the doors of all, the poor and the high alike.

RAMDAS THE PATRIOT-SAINT.

It was in the very year of the death of Eknath that the two great men, Ramdas and Tukaram, were born. Though the work and character of Ramdas, the Brahmin saint, differed considerably from that of the Sudra mystic, Tukaram, they were yet one in their life and ideals and children of the same movement. Ramdas was born in Nasik. Of a strong ascetic disposition of mind, he broke off from his family—the story says the crisis took place on the very day fixed for his marriage and when the marriage ceremonies were about to begin—and wandered for some time among the woods and mountains of his native land, exercising himself in religion and spiritual discipline. His solitary wanderings over, he returned to society and, going about from village to village, preached the new religion of Love and Devout worship. But Ramdas was not merely a religious reformer. He was a great patriot, and visions of a united Maharashtra, free from the yoke of the Mahomedan, flitted before

his mind. Ramdas, therefore, it is said, established schools for the physical and mental training of youth in every village he went to. At last, Ramdas came across Sivaji himself who found in him his destined *guru*. The meeting of Sivaji and Ramdas is one of the most remarkable episodes found in Indian history. The story is well-known how Sivaji made a gift of his whole kingdom to his *guru*, how the latter gave it back to Sivaji, asking him to rule it in his—the preceptor's—name. Sivaji, in token that the kingdom belonged to an ascetic, adopted the ascetic's orange banner as the national flag. Sivaji's patriotism and knowledge must have been greatly kindled and fortified at the hands of the great sage-patriot. Sayings of Ramdas are preserved in his works—*Dasbodh* and others—which show his great insight and practical wisdom. It was the labour of saints and patriots like him and Sivaji that built up the Maratha State and Empire. Sivaji died in the life-time of his *guru*. The latter did not outlive him long. In 1781, a year after Sivaji's death, he was lying on his death-bed ; and as he lay thus, the story says, the trampling of Aurangazib's invading army reached his ears, and the dying saint, moved to strange

fears, sent those famous lines to Sambaji, Sivaji's successor: "Establish a *united kingdom* and propagate the *religion of Maharashtra*."

TUKARAM.

The other great figure in the 17th century was Tukaram, the subject of this sketch. He was born in 1608 at a little village called Dehu, not far from Poona, on the banks of the river Indrayanī. By caste, he was a Sudra; his ancestors were *Wanis* or shop-keepers by trade. But they were all pious men, given to devout exercises and charity. They were also good servants of the Fatherland for which two of the family at least had devoted their lives in battle. They were devotees of God Vithoba.

HIS MISFORTUNES.

In 1629, when Tukaram was growing into manhood, the Deccan was swept bare by one of those great famines which have, from time immemorial, visited it at uncertain intervals. Tukaram's parents, wife and child died therein. His elder brother's wife—the husband having already taken the robe of a *sanyasi* and disappeared from the sight of his kin—also perished and the poet's cup of sorrow was well-nigh filled. To crown all, the little store of grain failed.

Grain was at high prices, and the villagers, starving and famine-stricken, no longer bought his goods. In despair at his ruined heart and shattered ties, Tukaram turned for consolation to religion. One of his songs tells the story:—

By caste I was a Sudra I became a trader; this God from the first had been worshipped by my family. I ought not to talk of this, but since you have asked the question, I respect your speech, O saints! When my father and mother had finished their course, I was grievously harassed by the world. A famine used up my money, and took away my good name; one wife of mine died crying for food. I grew ashamed and was tormented by this grief; I saw that I was losing by my business. The temple of God which we had was in ruins; I resolved to do what occurred to me. I began by preaching and singing on the eleventh day; but at first my mind was not in practice. So I learned by heart some speeches of the saints, being full of resource and faith in them. When others sang first, I took up the refrain, purifying my mind by faith. I counted holy the water wherein the feet of the saints had been washed; I suffered no shame to enter my mind. I served others when the chance was given me, wearying out my own body. I paid no heed to friends who loved me, I was heartily sick of the world. I bade my own mind testify to the true and the false, I paid no heed to the voice of the crowd. I honoured the instruction my teacher gave me in a dream, I believed firmly in God's name. After this the impulse of poetry came upon me; I embraced in my spirit the feet of Vithoba. A blow fell upon me; I was forbidden to write; thus for a while my spirit was grieved. My pages were sunk in the river; I sat down like a creditor; Narayana comforted me. If I told all the story, the tale would be long; it would grow too late, so enough of it now. You see now my present purpose; my future course God knows. God never

neglects his worshipper; I have learned that he is merciful. Tuka says, This is all my capital, I utter the verses which Panduranga bids me utter.

Tukaram continued steadfast in his devotions, washing the feet of holy men, singing at *kathas* and *bhajans* and above all things, "toiling hard to do good to others." He sings, "God, the merciful, despises not the believer. This I came to realise. All my riches are now the verses which God hath put into my heart."

NEGLECT OF THE WORLD.

Tukaram hereafter began to neglect his trade and even his family. With the passing away of the famine, the prosperity of the Deccan was in some measure restored and Tukaram married again. But as time went on, religion took a more and more absorbing hold on him. Day after day, rising at sunrise, and performing his morning devotions to Vithoba, he would make his way to a little hill called Bhandra and there remain in deep meditation. House and family were neglected, and his wife, who was a worldly-minded woman, was vastly irate at this. Tukaram, however, looked on his domestic worries with a quiet patience, not unmixed with humour. He even extracted some spiritual consolation from them :—

Now, my son, what will you eat? My husband is grown a devotee of the temple. He wears garlands on his head, he does not care to be a shop-keeper as he was. He has made arrangements to feed himself. He has no interest in us. He goes about with cymbals and open mouth, he sings before God in the temple. What are we to do now? He is gone off to the jungle. Tuka says, Show some patience now, if you never did before.

It is well, O God, that I became bankrupt, and was crushed by the famine; this is how I repented and turned to Thee, so that the world became odious to me. It is well that my wife was a scold, that I was dishonoured, and lost my good name, my wealth and my cattle; it is well that I did not fear people's opinion, but sought Thy protection, O God; it is well that I built up Thy temple, and neglected my wife and children. Tuka says, It is well that I fasted on the eleventh day, for so I kept myself awake.

COMPOSING POEMS.

It was about this time that Tukaram received in a dream the command to sing of God and his love for Him.

Namadeva came with Panduranga, and roused me in a dream. "I appoint you a task, write poetry, do not talk of vain affairs," Namadeva counted his own verses, Vithoba kept the tally; he told me the total he arrived at, a hundred crores. "What is left undone, you must finish, O Tuka."

In spite of this stanza, there is reason to think that he did not compose so great a number. The poems seem to number in all from six to eight thousand of which some four thousand and five hundred have been translated recently by Messrs. Nelson Fraser and K. B. Marathi.

HIS ENEMIES AND THEIR CONVERSION.

Tukaram was not allowed to pursue his life of religion and poetry uninterrupted. He had already a number of disciples, and the proud and priestly family of the Deos of Chinchwad, who traced their descent to Ganapathi himself, had actually dined with him. This incensed the Brahmins. One Mambaji seized Tukaram, threw him into a prickly pear hedge and beat him. Tukaram, it should be said, freely forgave his cruel foe who afterwards became his devoted follower. It is sad to think that, in spite of the martyrdom of the great saints that had gone before Tukaram—of Dnyandev, of Chokamela whom priestly persecution followed all his life,—society in Maharashtra still treated with cruelty men whose only sin was their devotion and love for all.

A more cruel blow was struck by one Rameshwara Bhatta who caused Tukaram to be arrested and brought before him. How did he, a Sudra, he asked, dare to expound the secrets of the Vedas to his audience? Tukaram replied that whatsoever he taught was put into his heart by Vithoba, but that he was willing to abide by the Brahmin's decision. Rameshwara bade him cast

his poems into the river. Tukaram did so, and then stricken with exceeding grief, he lay for days, without food or water, at the temple-door "like a creditor at the debtor's threshold." At last, says the legend, the God heard him, and the poems appeared floating on the waters of the Indrayani and were restored to the poet. Rameshwara was likewise converted and became Tukaram's disciple.

TUKARAM AND SIVAJI.

It was about this time that the great Sivaji, having freed the country from Mahomedan bondage, had made the Deccan once more a Hindu Kingdom. We have already spoken of his piety and his deep devotion to the saints of the land. Hearing of the poet and holy man, Tukaram, Sivaji, then at Lohagaon, sent an invitation to him and a deputation of his officers and soldiers to escort him in pomp to his court. Tukaram refused to visit the prince: Here is his reply:—

What would it profit me to enter your presence? The fatigue of the journey would be wasted. If I must need beg my food, there are many whom I may ask for alms; in the lanes are rags to furnish me with shelter. The rock is an excellent bed to sleep on; I have the sky above me for a cloak. With such a provision made, why need I fix my hopes on any one? It would be a waste of my days. Should I come to your palace seeking honour, what peace of mind should I find there? In a king's

palace the wealthy are respected ; the common herd meet with no respect. If I saw there fine apparel and men wearing jewels, it would at once be the death of me. If you are disgusted when you hear this, still, God will not scorn me. Let me tell you this surprising news, there is no happiness like the beggar's. Austerity and renunciation are the greatest things ; wealthy men fettered by desire live miserably. Tuka says, You are opulent and honoured : but the devotees of Hari are more fortunate.

Now there is one expedient you should make sure of ; do not grow disgusted with the good. Do not put forth efforts which will bring guilt on you. There may be censorious and evil persons round you, do not encourage their views. Search out carefully men who will protect the state, using all discrimination. There is nothing I need tell you, you know everything. O King, help the cause of the defenceless. On hearing this you should be satisfied ; there is no more to be gained by an interview. What pleasure would it give me to meet you ? The days of my life are spent. There are but one or two rules of life ; if we recognize their meaning, we shall not lose our self-respect. There is one that brings a blessing, and its purport is this, learn to see one spirit in all created things. Fix your thoughts on the joyous self, see yourself in Ramdas. Blessed is your birth on earth, O King, renowned is your name in the three worlds.

TUKARAM'S MODE OF LIFE.

His life was spent daily in prayer and meditation, in holding *bhajans* or performing *kathas* wherein were given short expositions of religious doctrine or story interspersed with devout songs and prayers. He often went about from village to village, but mostly his days were spent at Pandharpur, the holy city even as the other great holy men and women of the age did. The

following incident described by Mahipathi, the Marathi chronicler, is highly interesting for the light it throws on Tukaram's character and doings, and also for the light it throws on the character of the new movement and the men who took part in it. There was a large assemblage at Pandharpur. Sivaji had honoured the meeting with his august presence, and after the manner of the Hindu kings of old ministered to the comforts and convenience of the assembled *Sadhus* and *Sannyasis*. Some women saints also had joined in that memorable meeting. Aka Bai, a disciple of Ramdas Swami, was one of them. We have the authority of Mahipathi in stating that it was she who read out to the glorious assemblage the Swamiji's work styled *Dashbodh* (knowledge of man as servant of God). Benu Bai was another disciple of Ramdas. At the Parligarh assemblage also, which took place sometime after, these two women, along with some others of their sex, were present and took part in its proceedings. But in both these meetings Tukaram was the most prominent figure. In the hill-fort of the Parligarh Sivaji had built a temple and consecrated it to Ram Chandra. The aforesaid meeting had been called

by the king himself. Tukaram by his *Sankirtan* and *Katha* pleased all. Sivaji himself along with some others took active part in the religious observances. After the *Utsava* was over, he proceeded to do *puja* to the assembled Brahmins, Pandits and Sadhus, and made some presents to them. Similarly, gold coins and other valuables were brought in for the propitiation of Tukaram. But this saint of saints, understanding the Raja's intent and purpose, all of a sudden disappeared from the place much to the wonder of all present. Sivaji had also intended to make a gift of four villages to the saint, but, in consequence of his sudden disappearance, his intention could not be fulfilled. On Sivaji's expressing deep regret at the conduct of Tukaram, his *Guru*, Ramdas Swami, who very well knew the noble self-sacrificing character of the man, consoled him with the words :—"My son, to the truly religious, even the wealth of all the three worlds is but light as air. Tukaram having, as it were, kicked at *Mahasidhi* (accomplishment in excelsis) itself, is deeply engaged in the worship of Vithoba, free from all desires and aspirations. The four kinds of *Mukti* are of very little avail to him. That being so, can the common things of this world

have any value in his eyes?" Mahipathi says that Ramdas Swami was much impressed with this very striking instance of Tukaram's indifference to worldly concerns.

HIS DEATH.

The time for Tukaram's departure from the shows and unrealities of life was drawing near. Some of his poems seem to be prophetic of the approaching end. Full of strange forebodings, yet not without a deep spirit of hope and tender trust in God, these poems are so striking that we can hardly refrain from quoting them:—

¶ I will go now to my mother's house; the saints have sent for me. He has heard the story of my joys and sorrows; his mind is moved to pity. Some messenger, it seems, prepared with food and raiment, is coming to take me. My heart is drawn towards the road, I see continually the path to my mother's house. Tuka says, Now my mother and father will come themselves to take me back.

Patiently I am waiting, I cannot endure a wrangling uproar. My heart is drawn thither; I ask every new comer the way. I grind and pound like other people, but my thoughts are elsewhere. Tuka says, I have grown senseless here; perchance I shall be so there too.

Through experience in this world I am deeply convinced that there is one soul in both places, that he feels pity for me. Hunger is appeased by eating hunger; there is no appetite for food left. Tuka says, I am delighted; my heart is satisfied by this experience.

Yonder Hari is come, his hands adorned with the shell and the wheel. Garuda comes with whirring wings crying eagerly "Fear not, fear not." The splendour of Hari's crown and ear-rings hides the lustre of the

Sun ; his hue is that of the purple cloud, lovely is his form to see. Four arms has he ; a wreath of basil hangs swaying round his neck. The lustre of his yellow robe lights up the ten quarters of the sky. Tuka is fully satisfied ; the throne of Vaikuntha has come to visit his house.

Give me now a send-off ; return to your own homes all of you. Be happy in all your deeds and duties ; take my words for a blessing. You reared me up and gave me into the hands of one who frees me from all care. Now I shall go with the Lord of life, whom I follow with my whole heart. If I should cherish further my love for you I shall stay here too long ; let no one move beyond this point. I have put my hand in his ; we are one in duty, desire and purpose. Tuka says, Now that I have met him, other topics I have left for others to talk about.

Peace be to you, members of my house and others, salutation to the saints. The bee returns to the honey ; the torn rope cannot be mended. When the river-water has flowed into the ocean, it comes not back. Listen to my word ! Tukaram has gone, he returneth not again.

Of his end, we know no more than what is recorded in a note attached to the little old volume of his poems still worshipped at the village of Dehu. It is said to be the actual volume which Tukaram cast into the waters of the Indrayani at the Brahmin's bidding. The note runs thus ; " In the Saka year 1571 (1649 A. D.), the name of the year being *Virodhi*, on the second day of the dark half of the month of *Shinga*, the day being Monday, in the morning, *Tukaram started on his pilgrimage. Farewell.*" What this means, we shall perhaps never know.

The Marathas believe that Vithoba himself carried him to Vaikunta. Others hold that, taking the robe of a *sanyasi*, Tukaram wandered forth into the great world where, undisturbed even by the adoration of his disciples, he might snap the last ties which bound him to earth and remain utterly alone with God till death should take him.

HIS DESCENDANTS.

Tukaram died leaving some issue of his body. At the time when he disappeared from earth, his wife was in an interesting condition. Tukaram had directed her to name the child Bhagaban, as he would turn out a great devotee. The good man had left in all two sons and three daughters. All these children bore sacred names, *i. e.*, names of gods and goddesses. The two sons were called Mahadeva and Vithoba, respectively, while the three daughters were severally called Kasi, Bhagirathi and Ganga. All the daughters were married on the same day. The nuptials took place with three boys of his own caste, who were found playing on the public road. On this strange circumstance coming to the notice of the boys' parents the next day, the latter so far from being displeased, expressed great joy at having had alliances made with Tukaram's family.

Indeed, the saint was held in high esteem by all from the highest to the lowest. We have already noticed Sivaji's high regard for him on several occasions. This regard was so deep and sincere that it did not cease with his life, but was, after his demise, converted to favour towards his family. It is stated that a few years after Tukaram had left earth for good, the King came to Dehu, and on being informed that his children were not in a well-to-do condition, granted some villages as jagir for their maintenance and support. These villages are still in the possession and enjoyment of his descendants.

TUKARAM'S RELIGION AND POETRY.

It may be remarked at the outset that Tukaram was no philosopher or preacher. He set himself not to preach any new doctrine or to found any sect or school. On the other hand, he pours ridicule on philosophers and systems. He was a man trying to discern spiritual things, to live the life of the spirit. All his poetry and effort are directed to one end—to realise God, to live in God. And judging by his poetry, we cannot deny that his spiritual intuition was very high, that his efforts to live the life of the spirit were amply rewarded.

Though Tukaram is not in spirit a philosopher or preacher of doctrines, his poems show the influence of, and embody, the new Vaishnavite faith that was spreading over the whole of North India during these centuries. He imbibed it even as the kindred spirits of the age did. Tukaram was acquainted with the poetry and utterances of the saints and poets of his own land ; and these had liberated the new tendencies of thought, and, above all, made current the new Vaishnavite faith with its burden of Love and Brotherhood.

THE NEW RELIGION.

This new Vaishnavite creed had been propagated in South India by the great reformer Ramanuja. It was the outcome, partly of the severe intellectualism of Sankara's system and partly also of that religion of the heart, which makes itself felt at some stage or other of spiritual culture and which priests and systems are powerless to kill. It travelled to the North India through a number of monks and preachers. The new philosophy may be defined as one which effected a reconciliation of the finite and absolute conceptions of God. God is at once personal and impersonal. He is at once the great and Omnipotent.

tent Being and the friend and inhabitant of each soul. God is the fount of energy, the All-Pervading Spirit, the source of Love and Life and the unique end of all men's desires. He ought to be adored in all faith and love. Thus the merciful and protective aspects of the Divine were emphasised. Religion, it was declared, consisted not in the passionless mergence of the soul in the infinite but a devout and whole-hearted adoration of God.

This philosophy further implied the distinction of god and soul. Though essentially one, god and soul are yet distinct. This doctrine of union-in-separateness is the great feature of this mediæval faith. As an English critic of Kabir has said "For the thorough-going Monist, the soul, in so far as it is real, is substantially identical with God; and the true object of existence is the making patent of this latent identity, the realisation which finds expression in the Vedantist formula 'That art thou.' But Kabir says that Brahma and the creature are 'ever distinct yet ever united,' that the wise man knows the spiritual as well as the material world 'to be no more than His footstool.' The soul's union with Him is a Love-union, a

mutual inhabitation; that essentially dualistic relation which all mystical religion expresses, not a self-mergence which leaves no place for personality. This eternal distinction, the mysterious union-in-separateness of God and the soul, is a necessary doctrine of all sane mysticism; for no scheme which fails to find a place for it can represent more than a fragment of that soul's intercourse with the spiritual world. Its affirmation was one of the distinctive features of the Vaishnavite reformation preached by Ramanuja." This doctrine was shared not only by Kabir, but also by the other great mystics and poets of this epoch, among whom Tukaram was one. Having its basis in the longings of man's heart, its capacity for devotion, prayer, repentance, this doctrine fell in profoundly with the mysticism and yearning of the mediæval Indian mind. The heart of India, long pent up in the darkness and formalism of the Middle Ages, burst forth in streams of prayer, love and ecstasy. Nowhere do we see the workings of these new and mystic modes of thought, of these new visions of the Absolute, more beautifully expressed than in the poems of Tukaram.

Numerous are the poems of Tukaram, des-

criptive of the Nature of God—His All-Pervading nature, His Omnipotence and Love. Some of these poems are full of the old light reflected from the Sanskrit classics—the Puranas and the Scriptures; while others are more mystical and original in their thought and poetry.

I will extol Kesava, Mukunda, Murari, Rama, Krishna, mighty names that annihilate all sin. O Life at once and Death of the world, who art at once the Dwarf and the Universe of manifold glory; 'Thou who severest mortal ties, who bearest the disc and the mace. Strong Hero that didst overthrow the demons! O Warrior that weardest the jewelled Crown, O Generous Master, that givest the world to men, O Image of Madana, entrancing the spirit, in whom the cowherds and the damsels delighted. O Kanta, master of dramatic skill, endowed with every perfection, possessed of every attribute, beyond all attributes, who beholdest and knowest all things; Thou who hast created the sun and other lights, yet dost allow no sense of pride to approach Thee, how can I serve this God? What little can I offer Him? Without faith, He cannot be comprehended. Tuka suffers not his soul to quit His feet.

O Vasudeva, Lord of the humble, Lotus-eyed, Glorious Eternity! O Thou who givest happiness to Thy worshippers, there is nothing void of Thee! O Infinite One, Master of the world, most Noble form, Image of Vamana! creator of Brahma, Lord of Vaikunta, inaccessible to the Vedas and Shastras! O All-Pervading One, Whose arm is everywhere, unfathomable! Eye of the world, God of the World, Ancient Father of Brahma! O Panduranga, servant of Thy worshippers! Thou that dost crush their fears, O Best of Beings! Infinite one that dost fill the minds of all, that dwellest apart from association and solitude! O Lord of the senses, Thy noble form is unknown to Thy simple worshippers; assume Thy embodied shape and set them to adore Thee, says Tuka.

O God, Thou art a sea of compasssion ; Mother, Father and Brother to me ! Thou art an ocean of measures for attaining Life ; Thou dost sever the ties of the world, the snares of destruction. Thou art a wall of adamant to Thy refugee ; freedom from fear is Thy generous gift. It is beyond all Gods to perceive Thee ; Thou art unembodied, imperishable ; where the highest effort of praise is too feeble for the theme, what can I do with my uncultivated wit ? Do not make me wait to know Thy purposes. I know nothing of faith, but I call myself Thine ; I know nothing of devotion, but I offer Thee homage. For Thy own name's sake, O controller of the senses, it behoves Thee to run speedily. O Lord of Pandhari, I am filled with Thy joy ; I have vanquished pain ; I have laid all my burden on Thy head, I shall fear no more, says Tuka.

The following two poems are more mystical and subtle.—

If I speak of goodness, he satisfies every desire ; if of sweetness, how sweet is his name ! If of mercy, behold, he is altogether righteous ; of humility, he will not vex his servants. In generosity he is ready to give his spouse away ; he triumphs over Time and Death. Regarding wisdom, he is a heap of noble qualities ; but all to those who know him alone. He is as old as time ; his way of diversion cannot be fathomed. Among the cowherds, he was a rude cowherd, a subtle cheat among the weak women. We may call him a simpleton, for he is submissive to faith ; greedy, for he loves the morsels left by others ; ugly, for he fell in love with Kubja ; timorous, for he dreads sin. As to games he alone can play them ; in dancing he alone knows a dancer. He hides within our spirit yet, though we grasp thee, O God thou art not apprehended. If we call thee high, behold thou art highest of all ; or low, then thou art lowest. Tuka says, I have spoken the truth ; I have paid no false worship.

The Yogis gaze on the reflection of your splendour ; we see the original before our eyes. He stands upright with both hands on his hips ; from his body glances a purple lustre. He pervades the world, yet dwells far from

it; within all things he is hidden unmodified by all. He has neither shape, nor outline, nor name; we must approach him in our spirits. There is neither end nor limit to him, nor room for distinction of caste; he has neither family nor caste, head, hands or feet. The joy of faith enlightens the ignorant, through their own fond desire, says Tuka.

The doctrine of the soul's distinction from God—a cardinal doctrine of the mediæval mystics—often supplies a most beautiful theme to Tukaram.

Cursed be that knowledge which makes me one with thee; I love to have precepts from thee and prohibitions. I am thy servant; thou art my lord; let there be still between us the difference of high and low; let this wonderful truth be established, destroy it not. Water cannot taste itself, nor trees taste their own fruit; the worshipper must be separate, thus alone pleasure arises from distinction. The diamond looks beautiful in its setting; gold when it is fashioned into an ornament; if there were no difference, how could you contrast the one with the other? After heat one enjoys shade; at the sight of her child the milk comes into the mother's breast—what delight there is when 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.

Had I not been a sinner, how could there have been a Saviour? So my name is the source, and hence, O sea of mercy, comes thy purifying power. Iron is the glory of the Parisa, else had it been but an ordinary stone? Tuka says, Through the petitioner's faith comes the honour of the tree of wishes.

If you and I should become one and the same, how then could the service of My Lord exist as a graceful ornament for me to wear? There would be no room for love. If utterance should cease, how could this joy exist? Tuka says, As it is, we dance before thee with fond delight.

We know the secret of thy mind: whence comes the worshipper? Whence comes God? If there is no such thing as the seed, how can it bear fruit in the end? Thou

hast played many parts ; whence comes merit and whence comes guilt ? We were non-existent ; it is thou that hast beheld thyself. If within one house, unperceived, a theft took place, there is an end of coming and going elsewhere for the goods stolen. Tuka says, He has taken us by the hand, and thereafter he has made us distinct from himself ; in lonely and in crowded places there is a ceremony of comfort between God and his worshippers.

Of the new religion, the Love-Aspect appealed most to Tukaram. He figures the nature of the Absolute Love in a number of ways, most stirring and profound. Many are the metaphors he uses to describe this Supreme love—those of friend, of bride and bridegroom, but chiefly that of mother and child.

Who asks a mother to love her child ? It is her infant that creates love in her. It is the yearning of her heart that makes her protect him. O, thou that art dark as a cloud, we compare thee to mortal parents, but we see that it adds no grace to thee. The mother guards her child here on earth, but in the next world she is not near him ; not so is it with thee. O Infinite One, thou art master of Time ! Tuka says, O Narayana, thy compassion is greater than hers.

The yearnings of love are something that comes from the heart ; there is nothing like them. A mother will not let her child cry much ; when he is fretful, she is not slow to move. When her face breaks into smiles, the child understands it. Tuka, with all his ignorance, possesses this knowledge ; he is not like the run of men.

A child may be unkind to his mother, yet still she loves him. She forgets that she is weary : she lifts him on her hip and lays his body against hers. She weeps at his distress ; she is ready to give away her life for him. She jumps up when he calls her name, she flings away her life, says Tuka.

And such Love belongs to the very nature of the Absolute:—

If the Ganges went to the sea, and he refused to give her a place, where could she go? Is the water vexed with creatures that live in the water? Does a mother refuse to shelter her children? Tuka says, I have come to seek your protection; why are you silent?

A God, then, who is all love ought to be worshipped in love and faith alone. In a characteristic poem, he tells us:—

I practised neither meditation nor penance, I used no violence to my mind, I laid no restraints on it. Standing where I was, I cried to Thee to rescue me in my strait. I brought and offered Thee no water; by meditation alone I served Thee; what I spent was spent alone. Says Tuka, My generous master accepted it in all sincerity.

What do *we* know about divorce from the world? We know but the name of Vithoba; among the crowd of his worshippers we dance rejoicing and beat the cymbals. What do *I* know about peace and mercy and love?—except what I find in the name and praises of Govinda. Why should I practise neglect of the body, when I am immersed in the sea of nectar? Why should I serve him alone in the waste, when I have this joy among men? Tuka says, Right well I know; Vithoba goes by my side.

Let us offer the worship which is best, the worship of the heart; then what do we want with outward preparations? God ought to know the heart and he knows it; in the heart of the true worshipper is the truth which He accepts. In the last hour, the spirit shall reap gain or loss according to the seed it has sown. Tuka says, that worship which keeps us in peace secures its end.

Such a worship—a worship of the heart in love and in faith—is accessible to all, the high and the low, the learned and the ignorant. It could

know no distinctions of caste or birth. Says Tukaram :—

Our Lord knows nothing of high or lowly birth, He stops wherever He sees devotion and faith. He ate the pounded grain that Vidura, the slave's son, offered Him; He protected Prahlada in the demon's house. He worked with Rohidas in tanning hides; He wove scarfs on Kabir's loom. He sold goat's flesh with the butcher Sajana; He mowed the grass in Savata's field. He blew the fire with the goldsmith Narahari; with Chokamela He dragged away dead cows. With Nama's slave Jani, He lifted up cowdung; at Dharma's house He carried the water and swept the floors. He became a charioteer and drove the horses of Arjuna's car; He relished the cakes that Sudama's love presented Him. At the cowherd's house, He tended kine, He kept the door for Bali. For the sake of Mira Bai, He drained the poison cup; He became a *Mahar* in the service of Damaji. He carried clay for Gora the potter. He paid off the bills of Narsi Mehta. For Pundalika's sake He still stands there (at Pandharpur); blessed, says Tuka, is His story.

The king of generous princes dwells at Pandhari, with uplifted arms he beckons to all. He desires the ignorant more than the learned, it is they that he embraces fondly. He takes away anxious care and bestows love in return; he thinks not of his own gain or loss. Tuka says, We are feeble and helpless; Panduranga watches over us.

There are in Tukaram also great moods of ecstasy, of eager devotion, of profound, tender trust or sometimes of spiritual despair :—

They call you a sea of mercy; then why do you delay, O Panduranga? why have you no pity yet? I cry like the fawn for its mother, when it is wearied by thirst and hunger in the jungle. Suckle me, O mother, with the milk of love, run towards me with swollen breast. Tuka says, Who but you, O Panduranga, will drive away my pangs?

With what sweet notes can I implore you, with what melody of speech? Come, come, O mother Panduranga, give me the breast of your love. Like a nestling with open beak, I cry for mercy. Tuka says, We are like petted wayward self-willed children.

Wherever I go, I am a vendor of stale goods; I can see no prospect of gain. Were the lines drawn upon my forehead propitious, should I suffer this toil and care? Thou wilt not receive me as thy own and the worldly comforts I once had I have lost. My allotted portion has now once been given me to endure. Time is stealing from me my capital, life. When did I hear of thy fame! How is it I lose my life? says Tuka.

We are alone in a strange land, we have missed the road and lost all our bearings; now should any one take us by the hand and lead us home, what return can we make for his kindness? Even so I stood stark naked, O Keshiraja, I felt ashamed I could do thee no service. I was like a child whose mother cast him forth with a great throe, heedless even if the spot were fit for his birth: when heat and thirst and hunger set him screaming, she would put him to her breast—what shall I say of it? I was like a great criminal that goes forth to die with an iron pole on his shoulder. Yet, says Tuka, this is what happened: Some one snatched me away and set me in shelter behind him.

I turn no more to look behind me; I am thoroughly sick of the world. Come and meet me, O Generous One; I cannot bear the call of death; with Thy support I shall be at peace then, I shall be content with my part in the game of life. My throat, says Tuka, is choked with this earnest desire, how is it this comfort visits me not?

What indecision vexes my soul! Make me Thy own after any sort: be resolved upon this. Other gains seem vile to me; I have learned from experience their good and evil. Let me fall, says Tuka, into a trance unbroken; let me sink into Thy Loving spirit.

My words are not figures of rhetoric; I beseech Thee in accents of true misery. Let no delay intervene in our task; Thou art a self-made image of mercy. I have turned my face towards Thee, says Tuka; I will hug Thy feet when I see them.

I am much afraid of Learning ; may it never interfere with me, O Narayana. I will drink the milk of Love, wisely choosing the joy of devotion. There is nothing in the three worlds like it. There are homes for the liberated soul but the peace they give is a poor thing. Tuka says, Grant me this that I and Thou may never pass away ; I delight not in that loss of difference whereof I spoke.

I have called on Thee till my throat is parched ; my life is ebbing, my patience is gone. Why hast Thou not yet noticed this, O mother's home of the wretched ? I look on wealth as though it were a stone, on pleasures as poison. Pardon me my faults, embrace me and give me Thy love. A longing for Thy form lingers in my heart ; within and without I never cease to feel it. All I have to help me now is Thy feet, says Tuka.

Thou wilt help us of Thy own free will ; why should I entreat Thee in this way ? My prayer for mercy is still unanswered, my soul is still a soul apart from Thee. How can the seed sprout unbidden, without the warmth of parental love ?

The mind that hath once stepped forth before Narayana, here it pauses how dumb, how enfolded in Thee. They who once were whirled round from birth to birth, when they came to Thee, were fully satisfied. They were dyed, says Tuka, in the dye of Thy delight.

My death is dead ; I am grown immortal. I have swept clean the bed and the roots of the tree of bodily consciousness ; I have made a barren place where it grew. The flood which rose has fallen ; I have placed my confidence in the water of life. Tuka says, Truly I have purified my old life.

In thy love thou hast assumed a manifest form ; this is why thou hast created the wide-extended world. Accordingly, I rejoice to sing thy name ; I will not forget it for one moment. This is the secret to master, the essence of all religious duty ; all modes of worship are embraced in this. From various points of view, various faiths arise ; there is little reason to follow any of them, Tuka says, We shall cast him into the womb of desire, and grapple him to our soul as though he were a little unborn child.

There is a beautiful legend which tells us how Tukaram once being ill could not go on his usual pilgrimage to Pandharpur for the autumn festivals and, therefore, wrote a number of songs to form a message to the God of Pandharpur and sent them by the hand of the pilgrims entreating them to bring back to him the reply which the God was sure to give. The pilgrims went off carrying the message; and Tukaram, so the legend says, lay waiting on the spot by the roadside where he first met the pilgrims till they returned. This incident narrated by the Marathi biographer, Mahipathi, is probably true: it is in perfect keeping with the profoundly mystical and devotional temperament of Tukaram. The poems themselves which formed the message are extant and are full of deep poetry and pathos. The following are taken from them:—

I will be patient no more, I will send Him a message; if He resents it, He is welcome to do so. If He resents it, at least He will answer me; in some way or other He will send me the feather back. It matters not to him if He loses one child; I have no other parent's home.

It is not my lot to make a humble prayer, I approach Thy feet with a pressing request. In my love, I have written a bold letter. I cannot fathom Thy Nature, my intelligence is too weak. If I cannot fathom Thy Nature, how can my feebleness describe Thee? Accept my speech such as it is; I glorify Thee in faltering accents. Says Tukaram, I place my head where Thy feet stand on the brick.

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—immoveable, 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.

I cherish a desire but it bears no fruit, the time of accomplishment has not yet arrived. My heart is quivering like grain on a frying pan. I have no delight in the many shapes of this world; the future I know not and cannot control. I sink down and rise up again; I am caught in a whirling eddy. Tuka says, Much do I speculate, I climb one hill and descend another.

Hereafter, at least, whatever thoughts occur to Thee, send some one to tell them me; like a needy beggar I shall look for his coming. My soul is at my lips in flight; My mind is laid at thy feet. Tuka says, I am grievously in suspense.

Pray O ye saints, for me. What offence has Tuka committed? How is it he has lost the Feet? Not in one way alone should you implore pity and sympathy for me. Tuka cannot see Pandhari or the feet on the brick.

Lend an ear to my representations, let an answer be speedily given me. Shouldst Thou feel inclined to mercy, call this sinful one to Thee. Do not rake up any memories; root out my sinful acts. Tuka says, Have Thy feet no power to do this?

Whatever I have said now, willingly or in ignorance, pardon all my faults. O Panduranga, O Mother mine. Whether I have blamed or praised you, you must bear with what I have said. Tuka says, you have petted me like a child, you must satisfy my fond desire.

What message will come from my Parents' house? I cannot close my eyes for wondering. I am waiting hopefully with my arms clasped above my brow. I count the days on my fingers; I am restless and excited; I know not whether the saints will forget or my Father and

Mother will be attentive. The place will be crowded, says Tuka, who will think of me there ?

But He is a sea of mercy ; He will not let me fall away from him. He sees and hears with many eyes and ears, He suffices all and is not exhausted. Without our telling Him, He knows our thoughts, He fulfills our longings whatever they are. From many months I have heard His fame and I trust Him. Tuka says, the promise I spoke of He will keep, it will not be wasted.

Yet in spite of this, my merits and demerits may have drawn me away from him, how far I cannot say. They may stop him from sending a messenger ; or again they may cause him to send one speedily. Till I see the pilgrims returning, my heart is filled with fancies. Hope raises floods of ideas, the motions of my heart run wild. Tuka says, when I get the message, all my senses will grow calm.

Perchance the saints have now taken leave ; they have entered the temple precincts. They have eaten the dish of auspicious curds, they have started with good omens in a lucky hour. Their throats are choked with sobs ; their hearts are swelling with the sorrow of parting. They meet with loving embraces ; the saints have consoled each other. Tuka says, they cannot bear to think of departing, they turn back ever and anon to see the temple spire.

Thus perchance, they have left Pandharai, the pilgrims are now passing along the road. They recall the ceremonies they have seen, they talk of them as they go along. What they have heard or preached dwells in their minds, it will all be turned into love. Emblems of *garuda*, drums, cymbals, flags they have with them ; they tell each other of their bliss. Tuka says, now they are hurrying back, I shall embrace and cling to them.

Before concluding, we may quote two beautiful poems—anecdotes mystical and charming in their poetry—descriptive of God's love.

Here is a little secret of your love, O Lord of the world I remember the tale and will tell it to you. A deer and

two fawns were grazing blithely in the wood, when suddenly there came a hunter with two dogs. He spread his nets on one side, he stationed his dogs on the other he fired the grass on one side and waited himself on the other. The deer were beset on all sides; they began to remember your name. "O Ramkrishna, God of Gods, come at once! who will save us in this strait, but thou, O father, Lord of the world?" You heard their words and your pitiful heart was troubled; you ordered the rain to quench the firespeedily. You roused up a hare and the dogs pursued it; the deer joyfully bounded off, crying "Govinda has saved us!" Thou art thus full of mercy beloved of thy worshippers; they delight heartily in thy praise. O spouse of Rakhumai, says Tuka.

Weak as I am, how can I describe thy greatness? Thou art a mine of mercy, a sea of compassion. Some birds laid their eggs on the field of Kurukshetra; they built their nest in the grass. Suddenly there was a pillar of war raised thereon; the spot was chosen for a battle. The hosts of the Pandavas and the Kauravas came thither to meet in strife. In that hour the birds remembered thee; "Help us," they cried, "O husband of Lakshmi! Elephants, chariots and horses will run about here; the rocks will be crushed to dust. In such a peril how can we be saved? How can we forsake our little ones and flee?" In that hour thy heart was moved with pity. There was a bell on an elephant's neck; it fell upon them when they looked not for it. Eighteen days did the battle rage; neither wind nor heat did them any harm. When the battle was over they were pointed out to Arjuna; thou didst show him the birds, O Narayana! "Lo! I have saved my servants from death Else how could they have lived through the battle!" Such mercy dost thou show to thy worshippers; thou art indeed our mother, says Tuka.

An English critic and admirer of Tukaram has said "To those who have read Tukaram's *Abhangas*, it is useless to speak in praise of Christian Ethics." Tukaram's poems contain, as

all religious poetry should, a great deal of ethical and moral teaching.

What have the water creatures done, that the fisherman seeks to destroy them? This is a design born of human nature, enmity of kind against kind. The hunter slays the game without any fault of theirs. Tuka says, So likewise do rogues molest the saints.

The sinful man knows not that one is like another, he sits down to cut another's throat. God is present as the soul in all created beings; how is it he does not recognize him in the brutes? He sees a soul groaning and howling; yet how do his cruel hands conduct themselves? The villain will go down to hell, says Tuka.

We should not kill even a snake in the presence of the saints since they feel that their own souls pervade the universe. There is one thread that runs through the individual and the universal soul; both are indistinguishable: if you pluck forth a single hair, the whole body feels a shock. The saints cannot bear to see another is hurt; it is a sort of pain to themselves, they feel that the soul in all creatures is the same. Tuka says, This is the law of morality; this is what is meant by worship; it keeps the soul at peace.

It is well to speak one's true thoughts; a false heart suffers pain unending. Let a man's talk be his own, let him control his mind and make it his witness. A speech cannot be called back again; it may leave long pain behind it. Tuka says, I shrink from the troubles that follow falsehood; enough now, O God, of lying words.

Those who wield the weapon of forgiveness—what can the wicked do to them? If a forest fire breaks out where there is no grass, it must die out of its own accord. Tuka says, Forgiveness benefits all mankind; practise it continually and make yourself happy.

To revile any one is sinful; to grieve any man is to grieve God.

Mercy, forgiveness, peace—where these are, there is the dwelling-place of God. He comes running to that house and takes up His abode there.

Merit consists in service to others; sin is injury done to them; there is no other way to gain anything. Truth

is the true religion; observances are false, there is no other secret than this.

God is our friend; through Him all are our friends. We are truly blest; every place is filled with kindred of ours.

Through God, the whole world is related to us; when a rope is stretched, every fibre of it is tense. The world is not worthless or an object of scorn; see how each life is blended with the life of all. The joy and grief of others penetrate us, and ours then, by the same rule. Tuka says, When this pure principle dwells within the heart, the outward man is radiant with light.

If you greet men with the words, 'A blessing on you, all sense of hostility vanishes. Narayana has fully assured us of this, by the sense of love he has planted in our hearts. These words put to flight all anxious care.

Falsehood and wickedness are condemnable, not because of any fear of punishment but because they shut a man out from the vision of God. He is like a man diseased that cannot exercise or enjoy his functions properly.

When the body is heated by fever, milk tastes like poison; so it is with him who has banished God's truth, a raving fever fastens upon him. When jaundice affects a man's eyes, he sees the moon of a yellow colour. Tuka says, When a man loves spirituous drinks, he cannot taste the sweetness of butter.

Tukaram, it should be remembered, was no mere dreamer or composer of poems; he is above all a practical mystic. He everywhere insists upon individual experience as the true test of religious life. Poetry itself, he says, is "a thing

dry, fruitless and external" unless it is "moist with the moisture from the innermost being."

Mere professions lead to nothing; what we want is a running spring of truth within. As a last resource, a case is decided by fire; we see who can grasp a hot iron without injury. Tuka says, Swerve not from this rule; call that only genuine which is genuine.

What avails preaching? It is wasted unless our daily walk agree with it. The name of nectar on the lips is a mockery when a man is tortured by hunger.

If you love not Hari, all knowledge is vain, it is futile ostentation; you have merely opened a shop and cheated people to make a living. It is in vain you have studied the Vedas, unless you feel sobs of love rise in your heart when you hear God preched. Thus the Puranas proclaim, says Tuka, thus spoke the noble spirits of yore.

Fire does not summon any one through a determined purpose of its own; if a man is cold, he comes and warms himself. Does water say 'come, drink me up'? A thirsty man runs to quench his thirst. Do clothes say 'come and put us on'? Men wear them of their own accord. Does Tuka's Lord say, Remember Me'? You should remember Him to save yourselves.

You must *pass along the road* if you mean to reach the spot; it is no use listening to mere tales of it. Listen to me, I humbly entreat you; inactive faith will not carry you forward. A virgin and a matron alike have gained their knowledge from experience; it is not acquired by hearsay. Tuka says, Here is needed one immersed in the subject; when the source is cleared, light will proceed from it.

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[The above renderings of the poems are taken, with one or two exceptions, from the translation of Tukaram's poems by Messrs. J. Nelson Fraser and K. B. Marathe, published by the Christian Literature Society for India. We acknowledge our obligations to the same.]

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