

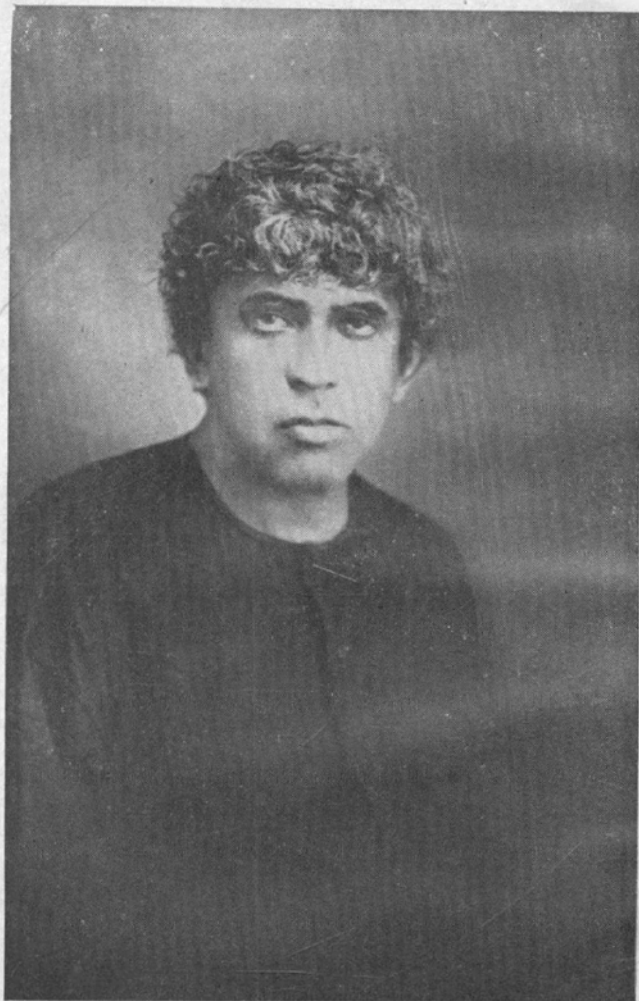
SAINT MIRA

T. L. VASWANI

SAINT MIRA

Also by T. L. Vaswani

KRISHNA : THE SAVIOUR
 KRISHNA'S FLUTE
 THE ANCIENT MURLI
 MY MASTER
 THE DIVINE SPARK
 RELIGION AND CULTURE
 WISDOM OF THE RISHIS
 DIARY OF THE RISHIS
 DIARY OF A DISCIPLE
 GLIMPSES
 THE VISION OF INDIA
 ATMAGNAN OR LIFE IN THE SPIRIT
 THE SECRET OF ASIA
 A PILGRIM'S FAITH
 THUS HAVE I LEARNT
 BUILDERS OF TOMORROW
 MY MOTHERLAND
 APOSTLES OF FREEDOM
 VOICES
 SPIRIT OF HINDU CULTURE
 BODHI DHARMA
 YOUTH AND THE COMING RENAISSANCE
 IN THE SIKH SANCTUARY
 QUEST (*Poems*)
 YOUTH AND THE NATION
 WITNESS OF THE ANCIENT
 AWAKE! YOUNG INDIA!
 THE ARYAN IDEAL
 MESSAGE OF THE BIRDS
 IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUDDHA
 TUKARAM : POET & PROPHET
 THE VOICE OF VASWANI
 ALL LIFE IS SACRED
 DESERT VOICES
 INDIA'S ADVENTURE
 KRISHNA : STORIES AND PARABLES
 GITA: MEDITATIONS
 A PROPHET OF THE PEOPLE
 THE FACE OF BUDDHA
 LIFE IS ENDLESS



BELOVED DADAJI

[Sri T. L. Vaswani]

SAINT MIRA

By
T. L. VASWANI

[Second Edition]

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DEDICATED TO

RĀBIA

The Sufi Singer of Iran

[8th century A. D.]

*Her life was a poem of peace serene,—
A song of infinite sweetness.
And she prayed the true mystic's prayer :—*

*“ If, indeed, I worship Thee,
O God! for Thyself alone!
Withhold Thou not from me
The Eternal Beauty of Thy Face!”*

T. L. VASWANI

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Introduction

[1]

THERE is unrest in East and West. India, the world's ancestral home of religious consciousness, is coming, more and more, under the influence of the "Time-Spirit." Many deny, many doubt, and many cry for hope and strength to their troubled hearts.

Religion is being challenged, more and more, in all the five continents. India was hardly declared a "free" nation, when there was an outbreak of hatred between Hindus and Muslims in different parts of beloved Bharata. And in the West, the Jew and the Negro have been the victims of hatred. What terrible conflicts have broken out, again and again, between classes and creeds and nations !

It is a relief to know that in the midst of the confusion in which East and West have been thrown, there are a few thoughtful men and women who turn to a new moral affirmation of life and a new spiritual integration, as the hope of the coming days.

Sometime ago, an eminent psycho-analyst,—Carl Jung,—made the following significant statement :—

I have treated hundreds of patients, the larger number being Protestants, a smaller number Jews, and not more than five or six believing Catholics. Among all my patients in the second half of my life, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that everyone of them fell ill, because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given their followers; and none of them has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook.

And a statement, equally significant, was made by an eminent scientist,—Sir James Jeans. He said :—

To-day there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality :

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the universe begins to look more like a Great Thought than like a Great Machine.

History bears witness to the fact that there have been men and women who lived their lives in contact with the Great Mystery, bearing witness to the Divine Life by their serenity and their spirit of compassion. One of them was that spiritual genius,—the great singer of the love of God whom India reveres as Saint Mira.

Four centuries and a half ago, she was born in a village in Mewar. She lives in the heart of India. Her songs are so unspeakably rich in the wisdom of the Spirit. Her life was so simple and so sublime! "God's saints are shining lights," said a mystic. From the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Karachi to Calcutta, Mira is to many a "shining light": the secret of her "light" is devotion (*bhakti*) to Krishna.

In the Rajasthan, in Gujerat and in North India, her songs are still sung in many homes, the central note of the songs being :—"I abandon all to Thee, O Lord! To Thee I surrender all I am!"

The songs are so sweet : they inspire and uplift the heart. Not without reason is Mira called "the sweet singer of Rajputana." Again and again, have I read the following songs of Mira enshrined in the "Adi Granth" of the Sikhs :—

*With the twine of His mercy hath He,
 O Mother! entwined my heart!
 The sharp arrow of His Love,
 O Mother! hath pierced me, through and through!
 When did the arrow strike me?
 I know not! I only know
 I cannot endure it now.*

*O Mother! drugs and charms have I with me,
 But pain departeth not!
 Who will treat me? Who?
 O, the agony of the arrow!*

*Come quick, my Master!
 Come! Be Thou not far!
 Come quick to meet me, Lord!
 Mighty art Thou, O mountain-mover!
 And ever compassionate art Thou!
 With the twine of Thy mercy
 Hath Thou entwined my heart,
 O Thou of the Lotus-Eyes!*

The fame of her songs spread far and wide : and there is a tradition, not supported by history, which says that they ravished the heart of the great Emperor, Akbar. He was a great lover and patron of music. He came in disguise, we are told, and paid homage to Mira. Listening to her songs, I have sometimes said to myself :—"Mira sings from the heights : she sings as one in whose heart burns the flame Divine!"

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[2]

MANY years have passed since I went to Chitor to see the Mira Mandir (Temple), built by Rana Bhoj Raj for his well-beloved Queen,—Mira. In that Temple she sang, she worshipped Krishna, she did *Nam-kirtan* in the company of her devoted *sakhis*,—the devotees of Krishna.

Outside the Mandir, I saw a small shaded place where, they told me, Mira had met her Guru, named Raidas : his footprints are still there. He has been well called the “Boehme of India.” He was born in Kasi, in the house of a *chamar*, a cobbler. Raidas’ father earned well : he had a shop where he made leather-goods. And Raidas spent his father’s money freely in service of the poor. This offended the father : he turned Raidas out of doors ! With his devoted wife he went out and sat in a street and did the cobbler’s work. In his heart was a vision of the One in all. What joy he poured in the words :—

*Wheresoever I turn,
I see Thy worshippers rapt
In Thy worship, Lord !*

He was happy to live as a poor man : and out of his earning he still served the poor. And to all who met him, at his shop or outside, he gave this one message :—

*He, the Lord of all,
 Never doth ask of thee
 What is thy caste!
 He who sings of Him
 And serves His creatures,—
 He belongs to the Holy Band
 Of His worshippers, indeed !*

Sri Rama was to him a symbol of the Lord of Creation, whom men worship in many ways. Raidas sings :—

*Break not Thou with me, O Rama !
 I shall never break with Thee!
 If, indeed, I break with Thee,
 Who else is there
 To whom I can cling?*

Raidas called "God" by the name of "Madhava",—the "Sweet One." Raidas taught that the best "caste" was "devotion" to God,—*bhakti*. Madhava, the Sweet One, he, also, called "Swami", the "Master". And he spoke of himself as a *das*, a "servant of the Master". What humility sings in the following little song of this "servant" of the Lord, this Guru beloved of Mira!

*My caste is low, O Lord!
 My actions, too, are soiled with sin!
 But Thou, O Lord! hast exalted high*

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*This unclean man.
So singeth Raidas
The cobbler, at Thy Door!*

Tulsi Das, too, was Mira's contemporary. Mira, ever a servant of the Holy Ones, rejoiced in revering Tulsi, too, as a Guru. Tulsi was revered by thousands, in North India, as a saint of God. And Mira did not leave her palace in Chitor for Brindaban without the permission of Tulsi Das.

I believe that Mira, while a disciple of Raidas, was, also, a Vaishnavin of Sri Chaitanya's Faith. In one at least of her songs, there is a reference to her deep devotion to Sri Chaitanya and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's supreme *mantra*, *Hari Nama*. In this Song, Mira says that Krishna, "Shyama Kishore", became radiant again as "Gaur", bearing the name of "Chaitanya" : and she speaks of herself as "Gaur Kishore ki dasi Mira", "a servant of Gaur Kishore",—"Gaur" being another name of Chaitanya.

Raidas, Tulsidas and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were dear to Mira as singers of the Holy Name. Listen to what Tulsi says :—

*The lowliest of the low is blessed,
If he worship the Lord,
By day and night.*

*O ye of the highest caste,
What gain ye in life,
If ye sing not the Holy Name?*

And again :—

*I have seen the rich and the great
Of the nations of the Earth.
Not one of them, I say,
Is equal unto him
Who is a bhakta,
A servant of the Beloved,
And who each night and day
With every breath doth say :—
“Holy, holy is Thy Name !”*

Mira and Sur were the two greatest Hindi Vaisnava poets of their day,—poets who were *bhakta*-singers of Krishna, the Beloved.

What is *bhakti*? Love. And Mira's *bhakti* is the *gopi*-love for Krishna. As the sunflower turns to the sun, so turns Mira to her Beloved. *Karma*, it is true, has its place in life : but what is *karma* without *bhakti*? I read of a farmer, who watered his field the whole day long, but not a drop entered the field : all the water flowed out through the holes. So is your work, your “*seva*” or “service” of little avail, if you have not love in your heart. The root of sin,

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Tulsi rightly says, is pride : and the cure of pride is love. The root of spiritual life is *bhakti* or love-

[3]

THE key to Mira's life, as I understand it, is love for Krishna. And the key to her love is "renunciation". Listen to what she says in one of her beautiful, little poems :—

*Thou art my Lord, Beloved!
For Thee I leave my all!
To Thee I give myself :
For I love not maya !*

Yes,—we must renounce *maya* if, indeed, we are to win God. Sri Ramakrishna was asked :—"What does the Gita teach?" The Saint said :—"Utter the word Gita twelve times, and listen for the answer!" If, indeed, you utter the word, "Gita", twelve times, you will hear, again and again, the word, "tagi" : and "taga," the Saint said, is *tyaga*, renunciation. In that one word, *taga* or *tyaga* or renunciation, is the entire teaching of the Gita. Renounce! Renounce ! And take refuge at the Lotus-feet of the Lord.

There are three aspects of renunciation :—

1. Renunciation of worldly riches,—*kanchan* (gold).

2. Renunciation of unspiritual habits, etc. : renunciation, therefore, of passion, *kama*.

3. Renunciation of honours, of "I", "self".

The source of our restlessness is "I", egoistic will : it must go. Jesus asked his disciples to buy the "Pearl of Great Price" : and he pointed out that if you would buy the Pearl, you must "sell all you have". All attachment must go,—attachment to money, to woman, and to the "ego". True renunciation is detachment. Dethrone the "I"! Empty yourself of the "ego". Be stripped of the little "self". Be free of all that is other than God, if you will, indeed, love God and rejoice in Him!

[4]

Not a few of us come to God through a *murti*, a form of Nature or a human Face divine,—an image, a portrait. Mira greets her God in the Image Divine, Krishna : and God is not to her a far-off entity or a distant being seated in a star but a Brother and a Friend, the "Beloved" who blesses His *bhaktas*, the "Master" who like the Sun sends out His rays of love to all.

Millions in India are devotees, *bhaktas* of Krishna : their souls rest in Krishna and His Divine Word. I am not unaware of the fact that there

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are not a few in modern India who call themselves "atheists" or "agnostics". But India's soul is athirst for God and the Word Divine, reflected in the *sant-bani* and the *gur-bani* and, indeed, the Scriptures of all religions and in the Teachings of all mystics and *rishis*, all poets and prophets. I believe that India's people, inspired by India's soul, will, one day, influence our brothers who have, today, torn themselves from their Traditions and the Mother of Traditions,—India.

The Krishna of the Scriptures illumines the life of the *bhakta* who communes with the Krishna in the Heart. The scriptures tell us of Krishna wiping the tears of the sinner, the fallen and the forlorn : and in the heart within we see the Inner Krishna of Love and Compassion. So we attain to a realisation of the God who loves us inspite of our sins, our faults and failures, our transgressions of the Moral Law. In this realisation, too, we grow wings on which we soar high to Heaven and cry :—"Our Father which art in Heaven ! Hallowed be Thy Name !"

In Mira's songs is the cry of her heart for communion with Krishna. "O! I thirst," she sings, "for Thy Love, Beloved!"

*I long to meet Thee, Beloved !
When wilt Thou meet
Thy humble maid, Mira !*

*As the dawn in beauty breaks,
 I move out, every day, to seek Thee !
 Ages have I spent
 In quest of Thee, Beloved !
 Mine eyes do ache
 For a single sight of Thee !
 When, O when wilt thou come,
 Beloved ?*

Again :—

*'Tis night :
 I cannot sleep !
 The moon doth give me
 Joy no more !
 Restless am I, alas !
 And in my Dreams I lose the world
 And cry :—"Where, O where
 Art Thou, Beloved ?"
 In my Dream, the other night,
 I thought my body was nought
 And I was "mad" !
 Ah! Who understands?
 He alone doth know
 Who suffers pain !
 Life and Death are in the Holy Hands
 Of the One Beloved !*

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And again :—

*Where shall I meet Thee,
O Spouse of my soul ?
My heart is athirst
For a glimpse of Thy Lotus-face.
Behold! Each day I pine for Thee:
I live in Death!
I know my bed
Doth over the gallows lie:
How can I sleep ?*

*Beloved! Thy throne is in yon sky !
Betwixt Thee and me
Lie stretched the spaces of many sins:
How, then, can I meet Thee ?*

*The ache of wounds
Is to the wounded known !
The pain of him who suffers
Is known alone to the suffering ones !*

*Within me throbs the ache
Of longing and love for Thee !
And I wander far and wide !
I cry :—Who will cure
My wounded heart ?
My anguish, alas ! doth greater grow
Each day : my longing grows :
I cry for Him who my heart may heal !*

In a poem of wondrous beauty, the great mystic-poet of Iran sounds this note of yearning, which Mira sounds in song after song :—

He Said :—Who is at the Door?

Said I :—Thy humble servant.

He said :—What business have you?

Said I :—Lord! to love Thee!

He said :—How long will you stand at the Gate?

Said I :—Till Thou dost call me.

He said :—What proof do you offer of your love?

Said I :—For love of Thee

I renounced my all,—

Sovereignty and power,

Wealth of the world,

Honours of the earth,

Beauty and every blessing of my life!

He said :—What witness have you?

Said I :—Tears in my eyes.

He said :—What do you want of Me?

Said I :—Thy compassion and love.

He said :—Who called you here?

Said I :—The fragrance of Thy Name.

[5]

THE story of Mira's wanderings in quest of Krishna is a moving one. Her soul is athirst for God and the

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Word of God. Krishna is to her the Word, the Divine Word.

She now understands that to commune with Krishna, she must forsake the vanity of the world. Mira has learnt the supreme lesson of spiritual life,—the lesson of renunciation. She renounces (1) her palace and material things; (2) all earthly honours; and (3) the “ego”. She moves on, from place to place, *detached* from the things of the world : she moves on *devoted* to Sri Krishna. In detachment is the strength of true life. Practical was the saint who said, if he had a dozen really *detached* men, he should be able to *transform* the world. Detachment is born of the perception that the world and its things are passing, that He abides, and that “works” have no value but only “devotion” to him and “deeds” of compassion and love.

Listen to Mira’s words :—

*Yes, brief is life.
So be not vain of thy passing works :
But sing, sing, and ever sing
The Nama, the Name of Rama,
The Name of Shyama,
The Name of Hari,—
The Three are one !
This body thou wilt leave behind
Reduced to ashes and dust :*

*But thy devotion and thy deeds of love
Will me : with thee, O man !
On the pilgrim-path to thy Home
And bless thee in the Land of Light !*

Samsara, the phenomenal world, has no longer any attraction for Mira. *Samsara* is a "veil", which separates the individual from the Life Divine. The "veil" has now become for Mira a "mirror" in which she sees reflected the light of the Beloved. She has renounced : she has attained to the highest renunciation,—that of the self, the ego. She has emptied herself : she is "purified" through renunciation, and is filled with Krishna's love. She shines in the Divine Light : she lives in it. She has entered into the Kingdom of Krishna, the Kingdom of the "little ones", the Kingdom of the *gopis* who are children of the Spirit and who commune with Him for ever. Mira now sees the *samsara* in Krishna,—sees that He, her Beloved, is everywhere. *Jidher dekhata hus oodher Tuhi Tun hai !* "Wherever I turn, I see Thy Lotus-face !" Mira sings in joy supreme :—

*Mira hath Thou accepted
As Thy bride, Beloved !*

And Mira wanders no more : Mira hath attained !

In the Songs, which Mira sings in the rapture of her richest realisation, I hear the music and joy

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of Sufi *dervishes* and singers. One of them, Baba Kuhl, has a song which I am tempted to quote, as it is filled with the vision and melody of Mira :—

*In the market and the cloister,
 Only God I see!
 In the valley and on the mountain,
 Only God I see!
 I behold Him beside me :
 In favour and in fortune,
 Only God I see!
 In prayer and in fasting,
 In praise and contemplation,
 Only God I see!
 Neither soul nor body,
 Neither qualities nor causes,
 Only God I see!
 Like a candle I melt in His Fire!
 Amid the flames out-flashing,
 Only God I see!
 I look with God's Eyes
 And only God I see!
 I pass away into nothingness,
 I vanish in the Beloved :
 And lo! and behold!
 Only God I see!*

[6]

MIRA's "adventure" has now become an "attainment".
 She has entered into communion with the Inner

s.m....2

Krishna, the "Beloved" of the Heart. She need no longer wander from shrine to shrine. "The Way," she says, "is still to sing the Holy Name in love at Krishna's Lotus-feet." Mira realises that the world and its vanities pass, but the Beloved abides.

"The One remains, the many change and pass :
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows
fly!"

There is a song of Mira which, like many others which Mira sang, has thrilled me, again and again. I have rendered it thus :—

*Yes,—I know
The sun, the moon, the earth, the sky,
And air and water,—all will vanish,
And men and birds and beasts
Will one day die :*

*All will be ashes and dust!
But my Beloved will not die!
And He is mine
For ever and evermore!*

*I have poured the perfumed oil
Of my Life in bhakti's golden lamp :
The Light of the lamp will radiant be
And I shall serve the Lord for evermore!*

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*Behold! My Beloved doth dwell
In me : and I am happy
In my heart as few can be !
My heart is deeply dyed
In the love of the Beloved!*

Mira is happy “as few can be”, for Mira now knows that this transient world, too, is Krishna-filled. She hath renounced her jewels, her silver and gold, but as she looks at the stars she well may say :—
“The stars are my jewels!” Mira’s face is filled with joy : for she hath seen His Face and His Name is on her forehead! Filled with joy, Mira sings, again and again :—

*One I know,
One I see,
One I serve!*

And the Way of her “service” is not the way of tumult and noise, of scramble and quarrel, but the way of *kirtan*, the way of singing the Holy Name ! Her *kirtan* is centred round Krishna, not a creed or a dogma. Her *kirtan* rings with the call :—“Follow Krishna!” In *kirtan*, she goes within and she humbles herself before God. Her *kirtan* becomes a healer of broken homes. In *kirtan*, this enchanting singer touches many hearts and becomes a “life-changer” : she transforms the lives of many women and many men. The economists and politicians, the education-

ists and philosophers of our day do but aim at an external reform of society : Mira aims at regeneration of the individual. They work at the "circumference" : Mira touches the "centre" of life. Not systems but *transformation* is Mira's aim. *Kirtan* releases spiritual forces : in *kirtan*, Krishna touches the heart of individual lives.

Jalalu'l-Din, the great mystic of Iran, interpreted the teaching of his *murshid* (guru), Shams-i-Tabriz, in a few luminous words thus :—

*He (God) is the First,
He is the Last :
He is the Outward,
He is the Inward :
I know none other,
Except "Ya Hu"
And "Ya Man Hu".*

"Ya Hu" is the *dervish* cry :—"O He!" and "Ya Man Hu" is the cry :—"O He who is."

And I cannot sum up the meaning of Mira's life and the message of Mira's songs better than in similar words :—

*Krishna is the First,
Krishna is the Last :
Krishna is the Outward,*

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*Krishna is the Inward :
And He is the Beloved!
None other do I know :
O He the Beloved is !
Krishna is He who Is!
Ya Hu !
Ya Hu !*

T. L. VASWANI

Of the Race of Heroes

How rich is India's heritage! From the civilisation of the Sindhu,—the Indus Valley,—to the India of the twentieth century is a period which covers about six thousand years. During these centuries, India has thrown up men and women who have lived consecrated lives as servants of God and Man. Prophets and saints have, century after century, appeared in this Ancient Land. One of them was Mira.

Gujerat, Rajasthan and Hindusthan alike claim her as their poet and saint. They salute her as a singer of Sri Krishna. Her life was one white flame of *bhakti*, devotion to the Lord. The deepest cry of her heart,—was it not the every cry of him who said:—
“As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O Lord”?

OF THE RACE OF HEROES

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Nabhaji, the great chronicler and interpreter of the devotees of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna, has some beautiful lines which indicate the very secret of the hold of Mira on the hearts of the Indian people. Nabhaji writes :—

*The trumpet of bhakti (love) she did blow,
And of none was she afraid!
The thought :—"What will they say?"
She flung aside :
She lost herself in devotion to the Lord!*

The dates of her birth, marriage and death continue to be subjects of controversy among scholars.

Among the well-known poets and singers of God in India are (1) Namdev, in the tenth century, in the Maharashtra; (2) Chandidas, in the fourteenth century, in Bengal; (3) Lala, in the fourteenth century, in Kashmir; (4) Vidyapati, in the fifteenth century, in Mithila; (5) Kabir, in the fifteenth century, in the U. P.; (6) Narsing Mehta, in the fifteenth century, in Gujarat; (7) Mira, in the sixteenth century, in Rajasthan; (8) Sur Das, in the sixteenth century, in the U. P.; and (9) Tukaram, in the seventeenth century, in the Maharashtra.

The "Guru Granth Saheb", the "Sikh Bible", belongs to the sixteenth-seventeenth century, and the "Ramayana" of Tulsi Das, described as the

“Bible of Modern India”, belongs, too, to the sixteenth-seventeenth century.

To the eighteenth century belongs Ramprasad Sen, the great Bengali singer of Kali, whom he invokes, as did Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in the twentieth century, as the “Mother”. Ramprasad Sen is a *bhakti*-poet like Mira. There is not a village in Bengal where his songs are not sung. In the following little song, Ramprasad Sen sings with deep *bhakti* and spiritual insight :—

Mother!

*This day, too, will pass,
And only rumour remain!
I came to the market of the world,
I sat by its bathing-ghat,
I sat down to sell my wares.*

Mother!

*The sun is seated on high,
And the Ferryman has come :
The load of many doth fill the Boat :
Alas! none thinketh of this unhappy one :
I am left behind,
For they ask for a coin from this poor man :
Where shall I get it?*

Mother!

O Mother!

OF THE RACE OF HEROES

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*Give me, too, a place in the Boat!
Thy glory shall I sing!
And with Thy Name
And Thy Song on my lips
I shall plunge into the sea of life!*

In the sixteenth century, India listened to the songs of a number of Hindi poets, who all worshipped at the one shrine of the love of God and man. One of these was this great woman-singer, Mira. Yet another great poet associated with the same century was Tulsi.

Sur Das and Mira Bai are the greatest Krishna-poets in Hindi, Namdev and Tukaram are the greatest in Marathi, and Narsinh Mehta is a master-singer of Krishna in Gujarati.

Sur Das is often referred to as "the blind bard of Agra". Was he born blind? Or did he become blind at a later period? Or does he call himself "blind" figuratively? I do not know. He himself said that Krishna's vision came to him and, thereafter, all was "darkness" to him. Yes,—the vision of the Lord so filled him, that *samsara* (the world) lost all attraction for him. The world became to him a vale of "darkness."

Tulsi is, indeed, a very great name in Hindi literature : he sang of Rama, as Mira sang of Krishna.

There are some who regard Tulsi as the prince of Hindi poets. Sir George Grierson, a great student of Indian languages, says that "Tulsi Das is the brightest star in the firmament of Hindi literature."

One thing Tulsi and Mira had in common. They both put emphasis on the value of *Nama*, the Name Divine. The Name, to Tulsi, was Rama. The Name, to Mira, was Shyama. Yet Mira, too, refers, in some of her lyrics, to Rama as the Name Divine.

"Remember His Name," says Tulsi. "This," he adds, "is the royal road to salvation". As Mira is never tired of singing the Name of Krishna or Shyama, so is Tulsi tireless in singing of *Rama-Nama*. "*Rama-Nama*," he says, "is to my heart as water is to the fish." And both Tulsi and Mira use in their Hindi many words which are taken from Brij-bhasha, —the language which Sri Krishna used, in the long ago.

All the three,—Sur, Tulsi and Mira,—are *bhakti*-poets of a very high order. The holy man, according to Tulsi, is he who sings *Nama*, the Name Divine. "He ever sings," Tulsi says, "the Holy Name". And

*From place to place
He wandereth still,
To give to men the knowledge
That illumines and purifies!*

OF THE RACE OF HEROES

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*Blessed, indeed, is the land
 Where dwell such holy ones.
 Love is the law of their life :
 Helpers are they,—and healers.
 Their senses are subdued,
 Their thoughts do dwell
 On none but the Lord.
 To the One are they devoted, ever true!
 And in their hearts they know
 The world is but a dream.
 And as the cuckoo
 Doth in rainy season long
 For a drop of rain,
 So long they for the Lord!*

In these words of Tulsi is enshrined the very soul of *bhakti* which Mira sings in words no less enchanting. Mira places the flute on her lips and wears the *pitambar* (yellow cloth), which Krishna wore in Brindaban. And, with a smile on her lips, Mira places her heart at the Lotus-feet of Shyama. Then, with the little silver-bells on her feet and cymbals in her hands, she stands up in the presence of Shyama to sing :—

*I have heard the Voice :
 It saith :—"I come!"
 I move from house to house
 In quest, ye pilgrims on the Path!
 When will He come,—*

*The King of my Heart?
When? O when?*

Centuries have passed since these words were sung by Mira. Yet, even today, as we listen to them, they find an echo in our hearts.

MIRA was famous for her beauty and her *bhakti* (devotion to Sri Krishna). "Her history," writes the English historian of Rajasthan, "is a romance." As brave as she was beautiful, she wandered far and wide, from the Ganga to Dwarka, visiting shrines of Sri Krishna and singing her songs filled with intense longing.

Mira is not merely a singer : she is one of the great heroines of Rajasthan. Persecuted by her brother-in-law, after the departure of her husband, Bhoj Raj, who loved her intensely, Mira flinches not an inch in her devotion to Sri Krishna. She is full of the Rajput spirit of heroic resistance to injustice and oppression.

Count Keyserling was a world-traveller and a great thinker. And this is what he wrote about Chitor :—"No place on earth has been the scene of equal heroism or knightliness or an equally noble readiness to die."

To a race of heroes and heroines belongs Mira.

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She renounces her all and leaves her palace in quest of her Beloved,—Sri Krishna. The words of Will Durant, the great interpreter of the history of civilisation, are so significant that I am tempted to quote them. The military spirit of the Rajputs enabled them, says Durant, “to defend themselves against the Moslems with historic valour.” The story of the fall of Chitor, one of the Rajput capitals, Durant says, “is as romantic as any legend of Arthur or Charlemagne.” The Mohammedan invader, Alau-d-din, Durant points out, “wanted not Chitor but the princess Pudmini,—‘a title bestowed only on the superlatively fair’. The Moslem chieftain proposed to raise the siege if the regent of Chitor would surrender the princess. Being refused, Alau-d-din agreed to withdraw if he were allowed to see Pudmini. Finally he consented to depart if he might see Pudmini in a mirror ; but this too was denied him. Instead, the women of Chitor joined in defending their city; and when the Rajputs saw their wives and daughters dying beside them they fought until every man of them were dead. When Alau-d-din entered the capital he found no sign of human life within its gates; all the males had died in battle and their wives had burned themselves to death.”

In a later period, when Akbar was the emperor of India, many a Rajput state surrendered to him, but the Rajput kingdom of Mewar remained independent. Mewar never compromised her honour,

her independence or her religion. Mewar stood erect in the face of Islamic invasion. And Mewar remained, as Col. Tod admits, "the sacred bulwark of religion."

“Where is my Bridegroom?”

MIRA comes to Sri Krishna through her mother. Standing on the roof of her house, one day, Mira sees a marriage-procession and the bridegroom in the procession. The bridegroom is called “*dulaha*”. Deeply impressed with the sight, Mira runs to her mother and asks :—“Mother! where is my *dulaha*?”

And Mira’s mother says off-hand :—“Gridhara Gopal.”

The word “*dulaha*” means not only “bridegroom” but, also, the “beloved”.

From this day onward, Mira never forgets that her *dulaha*, the “Beloved”, is Gridhara Gopal, Krishna! From this day onward, Mira regards herself as the

bride of Sri Krishna! And, every day, she thinks of Him : she builds an Image of Shyama from the dust of the earth and, sitting in silence, looks at the Image, again and again. Absorbed in the one thought, the one vision of Shyama, is Mira everyday.

Some days after this arrives in Mira's village a *sadhu*. He has with him a small Image of Gridhara Gopal. Mira sees that the *sadhu* worships this Image. And she runs to her mother, saying :—"Mother ! get me that Image of Shyama."

The mother requests the *sadhu* if he would give the Image to Mira.

The *sadhu* says :—"Mother! Shyama is my *Ishta*, my Lord, to whom I offer daily worship. And wherever I go, I take this Image with me. Not for a single moment am I away from the Image. How can I give It to Mira?"

And Mira's mother reports to Mira what the *sadhu* has told her. At night, the *sadhu* has a vision of Sri Krishna in his sleep. Sri Krishna says to him :—"My devotee art thou : wilt thou not pass on My Image to Mira?"

And early in the morning, the *sadhu* comes to Mira's house and gives the Image to Mira's mother,



ST. MIRA

Listening to her songs, I have sometimes said to myself:—
“Mira sings from the heights : she sings as one in whose
heart burns the Flame Divine !”

T. L. Vaswani



With tear-filled eyes, Mira does *arati* (worship) to Krishna,—tears flowing from her eyes profusely. And even when her eyes are shut, she sees the Beloved and cries, again and again :—
“ My Master ! ”

T. L. Vaswani

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saying :—“To Mira I give this Image,—my richest treasure,—for the Lord hath so ordered me.”

Krishna now is to Mira a living Holy Presence. Krishna is not to her a far-off God, sitting somewhere in the clouds or a star. Krishna is become to Mira her Spouse, *dulaha*, her Beloved. The longing in her heart becomes deeper every day for union with Krishna. And she takes joy in renouncing her earthly things for the sake of her “Beloved”.

At a very early age, Sri Krishna puts His song in her mouth. She becomes a flute of the Lord. The orientation of her soul is every day towards Sri Krishna. So is her life gradually transformed into an Image of the “Beloved”. She is persecuted for her devotion to Shyama : but she remains calm. Persecuted by members of her own house, Mira becomes, more and more, a reflection of the beauty and love of Sri Krishna. Is not this a mark of the true *bhakta* of the Lord? The Gita calls it “*sthitapragna*”. The wise man, though persecuted, remains calm : he is in communion with God.

A deep longing for the Lord inspires many of her lyrics. Some of them I have listened to, again and again, with tear-touched eyes. What a cry pierces the heart as you listen to the following song of Mira !

s.m....3

*Beloved!
I wander still
In quest of Thee!
I am athirst
For Thy Eternal Love!*

*I long to make
My body a lamp,—
The wick whereof will be
My tender heart.
And I would fill the lamp
With the scented oil
Of my love for Thee!
Then let it burn,
Day and night,
At thy shrine,
Beloved!*

*I can no longer bear
To be away from Thee.
Make me Thine own!
Make me like Thee!
And make me pure
As Thou art pure,
Beloved!*

Through Darkness to Light

Mira was the only daughter of Ratan Sing, a brave Rajput prince, who fought the Moghul invader and, at last, died on the battle-field. After Ratan Sing's death, Mira lived in Merta with her grand-father, Dudaji.

The dominant faith of Rajputana was devotion to Shiva : but Rana Dudaji was a devout Vaishnava. So was Mira brought up in the Vaishnava atmosphere.

The ruler of Mewar was Rana Sanga. His eldest son was Prince (Kanwar) Bhoj Raj. To him was Mira married. So great was Mira's *bhakti* for Krishna, that she took with her the Image of Sri Krishna which the *sadhu* had given her. Before this

Image Mira would often sit and sing songs of thanksgiving to Sri Krishna. She did not neglect her household duties. Her devotion to her husband was as keen as her *bhakti* for Krishna.

Soon after her marriage, Prince Bhoj Raj died. And Mira was filled with the spirit of *vairagya* (detachment, renunciation). Day and night, she would sit at Krishna's Feet and sing songs dedicated to the Lord. The one word on her lips was "Gopala". This word means "Guardian" of the Earth as, also, "Protector" of the Cow. Gradually, Mira grew, also, in the love of *sadhus* (servants of God). She served them with singular devotion.

The ruler of Mewar,—Mira's father-in-law, Rana Sanga,—died. He was succeeded by Rana Ratan Sing, who was succeeded by Rana Vikramajit : it was he who subjected Mira to many hardships. He had a bad temper, and he was not well-disposed to Mira. Day after day, was Mira persecuted. She bore it all in patience : she was dauntless in her devotion to Sri Krishna : in every difficult situation she found consolation in remembering the Lord.

The Rana asks her to give up *bhakti* for the Lord. Gentle yet firm, Mira continues to sing her songs of devotion. The Rana tells her to think of what the people will say. Mira's answer is :—"Let them say!" The Rana asks her to keep away from the

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company of the *sadhus*. She tells the Rana to sit at their feet and purify himself.

Mira spends much of her time now in the Temple, specially built for her by her husband, Prince Bhoj Raj. Mira sings in the Temple : Mira dances before the Image of Sri Krishna. The Rana gets more and more annoyed : he sends to Mira her two lady-friends who ask her to give up singing and dancing and be obedient to the Rana. Mira's answer is :—

*O friends!
Dyed deep am I
In the colour of Him
To whom I am consecrated,—
The colour of Krishna.*

The two ladies are so deeply impressed with what Mira says that they themselves begin to sing and dance in Mira's company. They came to convert Mira : they stayed to sing and dance!

The Rana sends his sister, Uda Bai, to bring her round. Uda Bai, too, is converted and joins in the worship of Krishna, singing with Mira the Name of the Lord.

This irritates the Rana. He sends a cup of poison to Mira through a messenger who says to her :—
“Mira! this is *amrita* (nectar) : drink it!” The story has it, that she accepts the cup.

Uda Bai tells her :—"This is a cup of poison, Mira! Don't drink it!"

Mira says :—"I accept it as a cup of *amrita*."

She places the cup at the Feet of Krishna, then drinks it. Mira remains unaffected!

The Rana is surprised, but does not yet understand. He declares :—"Mira shall not live! Mira shall not live!"

He sends her a basket, placing in it a serpent. "Mira!" says the Rana's messenger to her, "this basket is sent you by the Rana as a gift."

Once again, Mira accepts it. She opens the basket. Where is the serpent? She sees in the basket a picture of Sri Krishna! Not yet does the Rana understand. He continues to persecute Mira!

She now feels she should not stay in the palace. She should be in a place where she may worship her Lord, unobstructed. She sends a letter to the great Saint, Tulsi Das. She asks him if, indeed, she would not be justified in leaving the palace for some place where her mind may be at peace and where she may worship her Lord, undisturbed. Mira, in her letter to the Saint, writes :—

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“They, of my own household, have combined against me and my difficulties are multiplied.

“Great is the trouble they give me in my endeavour to serve the *sadhus*,—the pure ones,—and to do *kirtan*, singing Krishna’s Name.

“O Saint of God! Thou art like my mother, my father : and thou art the giver of joy to *Hari-bhaktas*, devotees of Krishna.

“O tell me, what is right for me to do. Write to me that I may understand.”

In answer to this, Saint Tulsi Das writes thus to Mira:—

“This be my conviction that He, Rama, is the dearest of all, worthy of all worship, the Breath of all breath, the one Beloved. To His Lotus-feet let me be devoted for ever!”

On reading this letter, Mira rejoices and is now prepared to start for Brindaban. Her *sakhis* (sister-friends) feel very sorry. Uda Bai tries her best to persuade her not to go. To her and others Mira answers in a few words, filled with tenderness towards all and with longing for her Lord. The central note of her answer is :—“I shall be now a *vairagi* (homeless wanderer), singing the Name of Him who is the one Beloved,—who is my All.”

Mira listens not to Uda Bai nor to any of her other friends. She quickly leaves the palace, singing the Name of the Beloved. The true *bhakta* never turns back. The true *bhakta's* watchword is, "onward!" Mira, devoted to her one Lord, runs fast, leaving her palace and all worldly comforts behind. The midnight stars shine on her as she descends, step by step, and then wanders along the bank of the Ganges, crying :— "Shyama! Shyama!" The beauty of murmuring waters passes into her face, making it all the more beautiful.

Mira leaves Chitor, in the darkness of the night. Alone, she moves out. Such, indeed, is ever the fate of those who would meet the Lord. They must tread the path alone!

This period is a difficult one in Mira's life. A difficult period, yes,—and a blessed one. In this period it is that she passes through her destined "darkness of the soul".

Mira is a Rajput girl. Heroically, she moves out with love and longing in her heart. Heroically, she travels on the road alone. She passes through village after village. She blesses all who meet her. Boys and girls of cowherds come from many places to greet her, to serve her and be blessed by her. She moves on! In her heart is the Image of her Beloved alone.

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A little prince said to some friends :—"Men cultivate thousands of roses in one garden. Yet they do not find what they seek, though they can find all they seek in a single rose or a single drop of water. They seek, but they find not. Their eyes are blind! They truly seek who seek with the *heart*."

Mira moves out alone on the path of quest, seeking with the *heart*, crying again and again :—"Where art Thou, Beloved?"

TO UNDERSTAND the true import of Mira's songs, to enter into the depths of their meaning, is to note five stages in the path of Mira's quest :—

1. The awakening of the Self marked definitely by her question as a little girl :—"Where is my *dulaha* (Beloved)?"
2. Realisation of the transitory nature of the world. Mira says :—"The world is passing : my Beloved is All."
3. In the next stage, Mira passes through a period of "purification". It is, also, a period of intense mortification,—a period when sometimes she thinks the very heavens are falling. But she stands firm. "Nothing short," she says, "nothing short of Thee, Beloved! I want not the world. Thou art

my All!" This *mantra* she repeats, again and again :—
 "Thou, Beloved! art my All!"

4. Then comes to Mira illumination, vision of the Lord,—the vision of Shyama in His beauty and His glory.

5. All these stages lead on to the final one,—the goal of the true *bhakta's* life,—the stage of union. Her *trishna* (desire) vanishes. She no longer has a desire for any earthly thing. The "pilgrim" is spiritually blended with the "Beloved".

Is there not another stage, too, which comes after that of union ? Is there not, in the case of some at any rate, the stage which we call the stage of "return to life"? In this stage, the self-realised person, the *bhakta*, rejoices in the service of the Lord on this earth-plane of suffering and pain. The *bhakta* says :—
 "His grace has lifted me unto Him. Now must I return to them who are His, my Beloved's : they are in suffering and pain : I must serve them, and take up the cross that they may be sanctified."

After her rich "realisation" in her heart, Mira moves out among men to work for the Lord and be outpoured as an offering in the Flame of Sacrifice. And the highest work, the noblest service, Mira realises, is *kirtan*, *Nam-kirtan*. Mira gradually builds up groups of kindred spirits,—to sing the Name of

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the Lord. Mira's work is wonderful. It is not what is ordinarily understood by "work". Our "work",—is it better than "utility" required by a community, a muscular and wage-earning society or state? Mira's "work" is "pure" work, pure act,—an offering to the Eternal. In this, the purest act, in *kirtan*, adoration of the Name, the cry of the soul is :—"No more worldliness! Thou, O Lord! Thou art my All!"

Krishna, Krishna, All Around !

SHRINE after shrine does Mira visit as a wanderer and a pilgrim. To places of the holy ones Mira goes as a pilgrim to find escape, in the words of a great mystic, "from the flame of separation." "O Krishna! Thou art my All!" is the deepest yearning of her heart. She wants not the world's wealth, neither palace nor paradise. She has longing for Krishna alone.

The one teaching of the great seers of humanity hath always been :—"Break all bondage of *moha* (attachment)!" This teaching Mira sings in a number of her lyrics, as she wanders from place to place. In her heart burns a longing which is even as a fire consuming every thing worldly, every thing earthly,

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every thought even of “paradise”. The flame in her heart consumes every thing save the Beloved.

On her pilgrimage to shrine after shrine, she meets a number of men and women, and every word she speaks is an offering to Sri Krishna. Does she serve the needy as she moves on? Every act of her “service” is an offering to Sri Krishna. Her offering is charged, through and through, with deep *shraddha* (faith or self-dedication to the Lord). Her pilgrimage is one rapturous procession, one wondrous song of adoration to the Lord.

In a significant *sutra* in Patanjali, we read the following pregnant words :—“He who sacrifices all to *Ishwara* (the Lord),—he enters into *samadhi* (the super-conscious state).” Mira has renounced her all to Him whom she loveth, so that nothing remains to her of her own. To Mira earthly things, all wealth, all worldly honours, all the joys of life in the palace are transient. Her only wealth and only joy is her Lord. And to Him she cries, again and again. Listen to some of Mira’s deepest cries of the heart :—

Come, O Compassionate One!
Come and meet me, Master!
Mira is Thy maid-servant :
Through the ages
Hath Mira been Thine, Thine own!
Mira falls at Thy feet :

O bless me, Beloved!

*

Mira hath Thou accepted

As more than Thy maid.

Mira is Thy bride, Beloved!

Protect me then,

Guard Thou Mira's honour, Lord!

At Thy Lotus-feet

Do I shelter seek!

My refuge art Thou, Beloved!

And in this broad, boundless sea

Of life art Thou my Boat.

How can I cross

Without Thee, Beloved?

MANY years have passed since I journeyed to see Mira's Temple at Chitor. Step by step, I ascended the height, until I reached Mira's shrine on that sacred evening which I may not easily forget. The sun had set: I entered the Temple. I bowed at the shrine with tear-touched eyes.

Some one asked me :—"What is Mira?"

And I said :—"Sing on the Song of the Lord,—this is Mira!"

On her way onward, by day and by night, Mira sings on the Song of the Lord. And, as she sings, her

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eyes are touched with tears. Mira sings : Mira weeps : Mira cries :—"Where art Thou, Beloved?"

The pebbles of the road are pure after the rains. And the heart is purified after the rain of tears. Mira, with a strong, unearthly longing in her heart, cries out, again and again :—"Where art Thou, Beloved?"

Seeing a shrine at some distance Mira hails Krishna, again and again :—"Beloved! Beloved!"

And moving on, she finds at many places children met together to greet her,—boys and girls, sons and daughters of the cowherds such as Krishna loved in Brindaban. Mira meets the children. Mira feels the spiritual magnetism of children. Mira gazes at their faces and drinks in their sincerity, simplicity, spirituality, even as they drink in the love and longing of Mira's heart. Mira rejoices to see the love-lit faces of children. She looks at them. And she says :—"What a picture! A picture of trust and faith are these little ones! A picture of *bhakti*!"

Yes,—children know nothing of your "big" things,—your business, your earthly transactions. One rich treasure the little ones have : they have not lost the meaning of holy things. And, looking at Mira, they cry :—"Mother ! bless thy children!"

They join her in her singing. And the birds make a consecrated chorus : they sing the song of angels and seraphims. Mira sees that in the faces of the little ones is veiled the Face of Krishna. On more than one occasion, Mira holds out her hand,—the little, white hand of one who, indeed, was fair as she was pure,—the hand of a queen among women. And holding out her hand she says :—“Give me what you will!” A queen begging of these poor children and saying :—“Give me what you will!”

And they bring her rice and curds and a vegetable to eat. And she accepts it all with love and gratitude in her heart. Then, looking at them, Mira says with tear-touched eyes :—“My little ones ! how shall I bless you? You have given me richly of the love of your hearts!”

Mira's heart is filled with hunger and thirst for Krishna's love. Mira is *bhakti*-filled, *bhakti*-intoxicated. So were Sahajo Bai, and Daya Bai—the two sisters who sang lyric songs and who came many years after Mira had passed away. So, in another country, beyond the borders of India, in Basra, sang the *bhakti*-filled, love-intoxicated Rabia, the mystic-singer of Islam. So have sung, too, other singers of the Lord in other lands, in other ages. In every one of them, has sung a song, which hath been a holy descent from the Eternal on the human heart. And the cry of every one of these lyric singers of love hath been :—

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“O Thou, the Ravisher of the heart! O Thou, the Joy of life!”

As gold burnt in fire is purified, so is Mira's soul purified in the fire of love and longing for her Lord. This purification comes after renunciation (1) of earthly honours, and (2) of creaturely affection. Renunciation of this kind is accompanied by an intense longing, often referred to as “burning of the heart”.

IN a suggestive, little story, we read of a scholar who has longed for spiritual life for a number of years and who cries out :—“O Lord! show me a man who would teach me the Truth!”

And there comes to the scholar a Voice, saying :—“Go to yon shrine of worship and you will find a man who will show you the way to blessedness.”

And going there, the scholar finds a man, who is poor, whose feet are torn and covered with dust and dirt and whose clothes are soiled. Of him the scholar asks :—“Whence are you?”

The answer given is :—“From God.”

Of him the question is asked again :—“Where did you find God?”

S. M. . . 4

The poor man says :—"I found Him in detachment : I found the Lord of all in renouncing *moha*, attachment."

Mira, renouncing all *moha*, moves on, from place to place. After this "renunciation", comes darkness, suffering, pain. And after suffering and pain, her life is enriched with that *concentration* which deepens into devotion,—*bhakti* of the highest type for the Lord.

To Mira, Krishna now is become the Lamp of her life. Krishna, too, becomes her Way, the Path which she treads, travelling on and on. And every step she treads is filled with spiritual anguish. Krishna hath captivated her : Krishna hath wounded her! Steep is the Ascent of Love and steep is the Path of Mira's quest.

She moves on! She sings on! Her songs are in Brijabhasha or Gujerati or Hindi of Northern India. They are penetrated with the power of spiritual music. It is the music of the Great Heart vibrating to the pilgrim's heart.

If the earlier stage is that of "burning love", the next stage is that of "songful love", love filled with "joy",—which the *rishi* of the *Upanishad* refers to as *ananda* (joy). From *ananda*, the *rishi* says, hath flowed the universe : and to *ananda* will return all that is ! Mira's sorrow, her longing, her yearning,

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every aspiration of her heart is now turned into a song of joy. Listen to one of her songs at this stage :—

*Inebriate with love am I :
And no one knows of the love
Born within me.
Sing thou, my heart!
Sing thou of the Lotus-feet
Of the Ageless One!*

*Behold ! All that is on earth below
And in the skies above
And between the earth and sky
Will pass away !
So be not vain
Of thy body and thy brain!
Of dust are they :
To dust will they return !
O wanderer! Wander no more!
Thy way is not to wander thus !
Thy way is still to sing the Name
In love at the Lotus-feet!*

MIRA now has entered into a new realisation. She sees her beloved everywhere. She feels the Universal Life, the Life Divine. She looks around : she feels that full of Krishna are all the streets and all the market-places of men. She sees the world is full of God.

She has held her senses in check and now transcends them. She has passed through the painful process of purification and has now enriched her life with devotion to the Lord and fellowship with the poor and suffering ones in whom she sees the *rupas*, the Images of her Lord. The creatures by themselves, she feels, are nothing. "The Friend," she says, "is everything."

Mira has passed through "experience" of anguish to the "conquest" of the senses. She has attained to "*yoga*", "*union*" in holiness. And becoming holy, she well may spend herself not only in singing of the Lord, but in service of the Eternal, who incarnates Himself in the poor and the lowly.

Mira now breathes out but one simple prayer:—"O Krishna! O Beloved!" She needs not many words to open out her heart to her Lord. Krishna, the Ancient, Krishna, the Unborn, Krishna, the Purest of the pure, Krishna, the Holy of holies, Krishna, the Stainless, Krishna, the Prince of peace, Krishna, the Dweller in silence, Krishna, the Light of lights, —Krishna is now seen by her to be the Life of her life. "I live not for me," she feels; "Krishna liveth in me!" The sun, the moon and the stars are Krishna-fragments. And Krishna is in the sea and the rocks, in the trees and the flowers. The life of each individual is hidden in Him : and He liveth in each. Each blade of grass now speaks to Mira, sings to her:—

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*“Krishna! My Krishna!
I know none other but Thee!”*

Krishna's Name shines in every star. To her, Krishna is in the ant, in dung, in dust, in *maya*, as Krishna, too, is in the pure, the saintly, the holy. In every flower and wave is He : in every bird and form of beauty is He. In the sweetness of spring is He. And is He not the spark at the centre of every soul?

Mira has, after passing through a great agony of separation, broken at last the spell of *samsara*, the glamour of the world and its activities.

Mira's joy passes into what is deeper than “joy”, passes into silence,—the silence of the mystic who utters not a word but gazes at Krishna, as Krishna in silence gazes at him. Mira, with tear-touched eyes, now looks on every creature as a theophany, a *rupa*, a form, an image of Eternal Krishna.

Gone is now the illusion of separateness. Listen to one of Mira's songs in this connection :—

*Forget not this, O man!
This human birth is thine,—
A gift from the Blessed One!
But this happens not again and again.
This body is a gift to thee from God
That thou mayst in wisdom grow
And sing in thy heart the Name!*

*And know this, too, O man!
 Thou wilt not know the Name
 Without the Guru's grace!
 Without the Guru thou wilt go athirst.
 But with the Guru's aid
 A blind man, too, can drink
 The nectar of the Name.*

*So have I found the Lord :
 And I sing of Govinda, the Gracious One!
 And so with faith in Him
 I have entered into illumination
 And the ecstasy of bliss!*

What a thrill in these words of Mira! She hath attained, at last! She sings :—

*Let my garment be dipped
 In colours of the sunset!
 Red is my heart
 Dyed deep in colour
 Of my Lover's love!
 So crimson-red let my garment be!
 For I go as a bride
 To the bowers of the Beloved!
 I go to greet Him!
 I go to sing to Him my Song,—
 The Song of Adoration and Love!*

Brindaban-Leela

BRINDABAN, at last! Significant is the word, “Vrindavan”. Vrinda is the sacred basil (*tulsi*) tree, and “bana” means “forest”. Brindaban is the home of the sacred *tulsi* tree. Situated on the right bank of the river Jamuna, in the Mathura District, Brindaban is dear to every lover of Krishna. There Krishna played on the flute and threw the spell of his pure, divine love on all who saw Him and heard Him. And there a thousand temples stand dedicated to “Govinda Deva”,—to Krishna, the Guardian of cows and the cattle. Krishna is, in Brindaban, remembered as the *Deva*, the Divine Guardian and Servant of the cow and the cattle.

Mira has put on the *gerua* cloth. Mira has crossed forests and mountains. Mira has washed herself in

the waters of sacred rivers. Mira has touched the dust of many Krishna-shrines on the way.

At Brindaban, there lives a great *bhakta* of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu whose name is Jiv Goswami. Mira is anxious to have his *darshana* : and, standing at the Temple-gate, Mira sends a request to be permitted to see the Goswami.

He sends a word :—"I never meet women!"

Mira sends an answer in the following words :—"O great one! I thought Gridhara, Sri Krishna, was the only *Purusha* (male) in Brindaban : and I thought everybody else was a woman in Brindaban. But now I know that Krishna has a compeer, that there is a second Krishna in Brindaban!"

Jiv Goswami is struck with Mira's answer. It goes right into his heart. He realises that Mira is no ordinary singer of Krishna. Mira, he understands, is a supreme *bhakta*. What Mira means is :—"I regard Krishna alone as the *Purusha* (male) : I see all others as *sakhis* (females)."

And Jiv Goswami quits his seat, quickly opens the gate of the Temple and, in great love, meets Mira.

With what love is Mira greeted by the people

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in Brindaban, as she moves along, crossing street after street! They come out of their houses and bow down to her in reverence. They gaze at her face and listen to the one word she utters again and again :—"Govinda! Govinda! Govinda!" In the simplest language, which is the language of love, she teaches them the great lesson of *bhakti*, the supreme lesson of self-surrender.

"Blessed is Mira," they say; "her touch sanctifies the soil made sacred by Krishna's contact and communion, in the long ago." Some say :—"Her songs bring back to us the ancient memory of *rasa-lila*." Some say :—"When she dances in ecstasy, we see Krishna again." Some say :—"We feel that Shyama is nigh to us as we sit at her feet and as we gaze at her holy face rapt in meditation." Some say :—"Wonderful is she! Once a queen, she comes to us today in the garb of a beggar,—a wanderer in the streets of Brindaban. Blessed, blessed be Mira!"

Little ones, the children of cowherds, come running to her and touch her feet and say :—"O Blessed One! here is milk for thee. Drink and bless us!" Not a few, bowing to her in reverence, say :—"O Holy One! sing again to us the ancient, forgotten song of the *gopis* of Brijā." And Mira gently, in deep humility, sings her one-word song :—"Govinda!"

Govinda! Gridhari! Gridhara Nagara!" She sings, then weeps, then laughs, then falls down unconscious! Does she swoon or does she rest in the Holy Lap of her Beloved?

Every day of her stay at Brindaban is a day of joy in Krishna's adoration, a day of *kirtan* before the Image of Shyama. And everyday, she looks at the trees of Brindaban, and to every tree and every leaf and every flower, she says :—"Blessed art thou! Thou and I have been together, birth after birth!"

Mira rejoices in the thought that Krishna did, in the long ago, cast His holy glance on every lane in Brindaban. Putting on her feet the little bells and taking in her hands *kartala*, she sings as one who is love-intoxicated. She calls herself *prema-devani* (love-intoxicated). With tear-filled eyes, she does *arati* (worship) to Krishna, tears flowing from her eyes profusely. And even when her eyes are shut, she sees the Beloved and cries, again and again: "My Master!" Mira sees Krishna everywhere. Every flower and every tree, every leaf and every stone is Krishna's. She, too, is His! For her *samsara* (the world) has vanished in the one vision of Krishna. Yes,—the inner door of her heart is opened and she is filled with interior illumination. "Light! Light!" she cries, again and again. In a beautiful, little song, she sings thus :—

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*In mine eyes
And in the heart within me
Thou art!
Beloved, Thou art!
And to Thee I come
Radiant in Thy colour divine!*

And again :—

*Krishna! O Krishna!
Behold! The world is all asleep :
I keep awake!
In my heart is yearning
For Thee, alone for Thee!
I sit and weave
A garland of tears :
I count the stars :
And lo! the night is gone!
Beloved, meet me!
O meet me!
No more separation!
Krishna, my Life!
Krishna, my Communion!
Krishna, my Heaven!
Krishna, my All!*

Thus doth Mira sing of Shyama. And singing of Him, she falls unconscious, she goes into ecstasy, again and again. Then, waking up, she cries out :—
“Krishna! Krishna!”

In her *kirtan* and aspiration, in her wanderings from *kunja* (bower) to *kunja* in Brindaban, in the tears she sheds, in the little songs she sings, Mira adores Krishna as the Truth of her life.

Again and again, she feels happy in the thought that she has known Krishna, having renounced all arguments, controversies, discussions, debates. Krishna is to her a Reality, an immediate perception. And Krishna's knowledge is to her a revelation of God.

The City of Many Gates

AFTER a brief stay, Mira leaves Brindaban. Some say she goes back to her village, Merta, and stays there for a short time. From Merta she comes to Dwarka.

On the sea-shore, in Kathiawar, did Krishna build Dwarka, "Dvara-vati", "the City of many gates", in the long ago. And Krishna taught that "there be many gates to God, and by whatever gate My *bhaktas* come with love to worship Me, on that gate stand I to greet them."

With the dawn doth Mira see Dwarka, the Ever-blessed! It shineth in her eyes. Dim streets she sees afar. Each tree and leaf, each flower and wave doth know her. For Krishna, her Beloved, once

did dwell in Dwarka and bless its birds and consecrated cows and gardens fair, and on the sea-shore did Krishna play on His magic flute, even as it rained day by day and night after night.

With love and reverence in her heart doth Mira stand on the sea-shore, rapt, intoxicate. And Mira gazes at the waves, then bursts into song after song. Before her and all around,—here, there, everywhere,—she sees Krishna, Krishna!

With what longing in her heart singeth Mira of her Beloved :—

*I love Thee, Shyama!
I love Thee more than life!
My strength, my solace and my bliss
In Thee alone I find,—
In Thee and Thy Holy Name,—
My sweetest one!*

*When all is dark
Thy Name awakes in me a Light!
It burneth as a Flame
In my heart : day and night
It shines before me
As a Torch of Light,
Beautiful and bright!*

Mira spends her time in the Sri Ranchore Temple,

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sacred to Sri Krishna. There she does *kirtan* to the glory of her Lord. A number of devout ladies join her. With these she builds a little Group of Devotees, her *bhakta-mandali*.

A tradition has it that, one day, Rana Vikramajit comes secretly from Chitor to meet her in Dwarka and implores her to return to Chitor, saying :—
“Since the day you left the palace, Chitor has had to face many difficulties. And the people tell me :—‘Our sufferings are due to the treatment given to Mira.’ I come to ask you to forgive me. Bless me and return with me to Chitor!”

Mira repeatedly requests to be excused. The Rana returns alone, but sends a number of Brahmins to persuade her to come back to Chitor. They are wonder-struck at what they see. Mira is absorbed in her *kirtan*!

The Brahmins sit at her door, saying :—“O Holy One! We cannot go without you. Nor can we eat anything, until you come back with us to Chitor!”

Mira feels it is a sin to let the Brahmins stay and starve. She says to them :—“Do let me have a little time : and let me go to the Temple to take leave of my Beloved and get His blessings before I go back with you to Chitor.”

It is dusk : vanished is the warmth of daylight.
Mira enters the Temple alone. In silence she stands
before the Image of her Lord,—the Beloved. “More
to me than life,” she says, “art Thou, Beloved! In
mine eyes and in my heart Thou art! Thou art!”
And she sings :—

*The Bread of my soul art Thou!
The Strength of my heart art Thou!
The Treasure of my life art Thou!
Methinks, I hear Thy Voice,
I hear the sound of Thy Flute.*

*Sometimes I see Thee
Coming quick from a grove,
Beautiful and bright!
And over Thee I see
A touch of Fire,
A Flame of Beauty!
And from the Flame doth come
A Voice : but I understand it not.*

*And I sob and cry :—
‘O meet me, Master!’
No more separation!*

*Sometimes I see,
When all is dark,
That in the Heart within
Doth shine a Light, Thy Light!*

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*And then I cry :—
 'I have seen
 What I have seen!'
 And again I cry :—
 'Holy! Holy! Holy!
 The Holy One have I seen!'*

*And a Voice I hear again :
 It speaketh to my heart :—
 'Open to Me,
 For I come quickly!'
 I open! But Thou art gone!*

And Mira weeps. O, the tears! And Mira sings again :—

*In Thee, Beloved, is Light :
 And the Light doth shine
 In darkness of the world,
 And the world knows it not!
 O Light! Eternal Light!
 With a million eyes dost Thou
 Fill all worlds, all stars and suns.
 With a mercy immeasurable
 Dost Thou shine on me,—
 A pilgrim through endless space
 To Thy Holy Shrine!*

Then, with tear-touched eyes, doth Mira sing again :—

S. M...5

*Beloved!
Thy Light doth shine
On herb and grass,
On flower and fruit,
On drops of dew,
On beauty of the clouds,
On running streams,
On falling rains,
On winds and wheeling fires,
On thorns and roses soft,
On every birth
And every silence
Of night and sleep!*

Then, in utter devotion, she sings again :—

*O come Thou quick!
For, lo! I faint for Thee!
Beloved!
Come! Come! Come!
O Light of lights!*

Mira is adoring her Beloved within closed doors. The Temple-room is fragrant with the fragrance of Him who is the Purest of the pure. Mira is dancing in the presence of her Beloved.

Again and again, she exclaims :—“O Thou, the Treasure of my heart! O Thou, the Breath of my breath!”

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It is evening. Mira is doing *arati* to her Lord.
The evening hours slip, one by one, into the hour
of the midnight.

Then Mira holds out her arms to embrace
Krishna's Image. And the story has it that the
Image stretches forth Its arms to greet her!

Mira falls down unconscious. A stream of tears
is flowing from her eyes. Mira is mingled with her
Beloved, "Madhava". No separation now! Mira is
become one with the Holy One who is in All!

And the Temple is filled with a strange, myste-
rious light such as seldom was on earth or sea.

APPENDIX

A Pilgrim of Eternity

By J. P. VASWANI

Beloved Dada* was born on November 25, 1879, in Hyderabad-Sind, a land that has given birth to many *dervishes* and *fakirs*,—contemplatives and men of renunciation.

Even as a child, he was so different from other children. He did not play the games other children played. Part of his pocket money he utilised in getting flour for making *chappaties*, which he distributed among the blind, the lame and the halt, who sat on the wayside. And as he saw their faces beaming with joy, he knew that loving service of the poor was, indeed, worship of God.

Sometimes, as he sat to his meals and heard the cry of a passing beggar, he would take away his food to share it with the hungry

* Sri T. L. Vaswani, in love and reverence, is called "Dadāji." The word means "elder brother." And Dadaji was, verily, a brother of all men, all races and religions, all nations, a brother of the bereft and bereaved, a brother, too, of birds and animals, trees and flowers, stars and streams,—a brother of all creation.

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one. From the beginning of his days, he was filled with the spirit of compassion which moved out to all who were in suffering and pain.

At night, he would sit on the housetop and, for hours together, gaze in silent wonder at the moon shining in clear, cloudless skies. On one such occasion, as he sat out in the moonlight, he saw, as in a "vision," a white figure with silvery hair and flowing beard. The figure called out to him : and he answered the call, and was lost in silence, out of which he was awakened by his mother who carried him into the house. That was his first "vision,"—his first link with the unseen world : and he was only eight years old. Ever since, till the last day of his earthly life, he felt he was always under the protection of an unseen force.

As a school-boy, he was brilliant at his studies and rarely missed the first rank. At the matriculation examination, he secured a scholarship which took him to the College. His classmates in the college often wondered at the unsullied purity of his life and utter guilelessness : and they all loved and respected him as one belonging to a world remote from their own.

He became an "Ellis Scholar" and a Fellow of the D. J. Sind College, Karachi. And soon after passing the M. A. Examination, he was appointed as Professor in a Calcutta College.

He was thirty years of age, when he went to Berlin as one of India's representatives to the *Welt Congress*, the World Congress of Religions. His speech there and his subsequent lectures in different parts of Europe aroused deep interest in Indian thought and religion and linked many with him in India's mission of help and healing.

"I saw a few of the great cities of Europe," reads an entry in Dadaji's "diary" recording his impressions; "I did not feel

overwhelmed by their outer glamour. Wherever I spoke, I humbly set forth my belief in India's mission to the modern West. I repeatedly said that Europe was declining. I realised more than ever before why Schopenhauer had turned to Hindu thought as the solace of his life, the solace of his death. Wherever I went India was with me. Not the India of the modern politician, the noisy India of the clamorous crowds of cities,—but the India of her Rishis and Saints, the India that communed with the Eternal, and in her forest-schools built up a civilisation which made her a preceptor of the nations in the long age."

From his earliest years, Dadaji's heart was smitten with love for the Lord : he longed to dedicate his life to the service of God and His suffering children. The ideal that he had always placed before himself was that of the *fakir*,—the man who took the Word of God to waiting hearts, the man who was shorn of all possessions and was God-possessed. But for several years he had to do "secular" work. He served as Principal of more than one college; he became an idol of youth. There was a brilliant career open to him, but he was not out to carve a career for himself. He was forty years of age when his mother passed away. His only link with earthly existence having broken, he resigned his job. He renounced everything to be, in his own words, "an humble servant of India and the Rishis."

"Why do you give up your lucrative job?" they said to him; "you are still young. You have a bright future before you : you can make money, heaps of money."

"Life is not given to make money," he replied.

And they asked him :—"What is the purpose of life?"

He replied :—"To dedicate it to the Love Divine : to serve and be poured out as a sacrifice!"

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He entered into the struggle for freedom of the country. At that time, Mahatma Gandhi had appeared on the Indian scene and had launched his "Satyagraha" Movement. Dadaji was one of the earliest supporters of Mahatma Gandhi's Movement and a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi. The very first article on the front page of the first issue of Gandhiji's "*Young India*" was a contribution by Beloved Dada. He also wrote several books,—including *India Arisen, Awake! Young India, India's Adventure, India in Chains, The Secret of Asia, My Motherland, Builders of Tomorrow, Apostles of Freedom*,—exhorting the youths to dedicate their lives to the service of India, the Mother.

It is, perhaps, not known to many that Dadaji was, in his part of the country, i. e. in Sind, the foremost interpreter and, in India, one of the earliest advocates of Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. Dadaji came, in that early period, in the field of politics and, at the Sind political Conference, he moved the resolution on the policy and programme of "non-cooperation," and he carried the resolution in the teeth of united opposition of all veteran Sind political leaders. Thus was Sind pledged to Mahatma Gandhi's movement of non-cooperation.

Later, Dadaji turned his attention to education and other spheres, emphasising that character-building is nation-building. With this in view, he started "Youth Centres" in different places. He opened the "Shakti Ashram" at Rajpur, inspired by faith in the youths of India. He lectured in different places on the "Mission of Indian Youths," pointing out that Freedom was nigh, and that he looked to the youths of India for giving right direction to the life of the nation in the coming days. Dadaji held that India's youths were the destined leaders of the nation and should be trained and disciplined in order to fulfil the task awaiting them. He held, too, that Freedom's work was yet incomplete in India.

In his quiet, humble work for the "Youth Movement," his emphasis was on *shakti* (vitality). He organised two "Youth Conferences," at one of which the ceremony of unfurling the "Youth Flag" was performed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. At the "Shakti Ashram" at Rajpur, Dadaji endeavoured to train youths drawn from different parts of the country in the "School of *shakti*" for the service of India. The "Shakti Ashram" arrested the attention of a number of prominent persons and was visited, among others, by Mahatma Gandhi who planted a "Youth Tree" on the occasion of his visit to the Ashram.

Of Dadaji it was said, in those days :—"Who are the leaders of India, today? In the West, among the names known for spiritual life and teaching are Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindra Nath Tagore and T. L. Vaswani. India is blessed with Vaswani who asks the youth of India to build a bridge of brotherhood between the East and the West." V. I. Cooper of New York spoke of him as "the Faraday of spiritual science." Baron Howen of France called him a "living leader of the world." Dr. Cousins, the Irish poet and mystic, called him a "forerunner of the New Age" and a "thinker and revealer of the deep truths of the Spirit." Prof. Horwitz, the American thinker, spoke of him as a "path-finder and pioneer." Mon. Paul Richard, the eminent French savant, speaking of him, said :—"I have been blessed. For amidst the deserts of Sind, I have found a true Prophet, a messenger of the New Spirit, a saint, a sage, and a seer, a rishi of New India, a leader to the Great Future,—Sadhu Vaswani."

During a recent visit to Poona, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India, addressing a public meeting, said :—"Sadhu Vaswani was a true pilgrim who considered his work to be the spreading of enlightenment and comfort among the youth of his country.....Sadhu Vaswani created a new climate, a new atmosphere."

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Dadaji urged that a "new education" was necessary. "Our schools and colleges," he said, "are prison-cells. They keep out the sunshine of Indian ideals and Indian culture. This isolation of modern India's brain from the mighty Soul that made Aryavarta a model nation, in the long ago,— this is the tragedy of our life today."

Dadaji moved across the length and breadth of India. He went to the cities : he visited the villages. He met men and women and children. He looked into their needs. He found that the bodies of many were famished, their souls were impoverished. And he called upon the people of India to organise themselves for the service of humanity. "There is," he said, "an energy in Islamic countries which India lacks. The Hindu society has suffered much. Its one great sin has been the sin of softness. Some call the Hindus cowards. Some call them political fools. I call them tender-minded. Whoever will make men of the modern Hindus will be a saviour of modern India. The world's call has come to India. Europe and America need the inspiration of Hindu humanism. The West needs the message of the Rishis."

Dadaji pleaded for the birth of a new physical culture, a new spirit of adventure, a new love of danger and difficulty. His message to Young India was :—Be simple, be manly, be hard!

Dadaji pleaded for a new peasant renaissance. "The masses form the nation," he said. "Civilisations decay in the measure the quality of their mass-stuff is poor. The worst slavery is the slavery of the poor. How to abolish it? Land I regard as the one thing needful. Re-distribution of land is essential to my scheme of *swaraj*. Give land to the poor and teach them scientific methods of intensive agriculture and co-operative organisation."

In 1933, Dadaji founded the "Mira Movement in Education" which has, today, its headquarters at Poona. The Movement was started in Sind and plans were afoot to develop it into a Mira University when the "Partition" came to paralyse the best efforts of enlightened men in Sind. The Mira Movement attempts at enriching students with vital truths of modern life and, at the same time, making them lovers of the Indian Ideals and India's culture, at once idealistic and spiritual. Such an education is essential to India's social and political salvation. The emphasis in the teaching passed on in Mira Educational Institutions is that education is a thing of the Spirit and that the end of all knowledge is service,—service of the poor and lowly, the sick and afflicted ones.

A number of humanitarian activities are being conducted at Poona under the ever-living guidance and inspiration of Dadaji. They include two charitable dispensaries where hundreds of poor patients receive free medical aid; St. Mira's College and St. Mira's Schools, where education is given free to poor students; a "Welfare Fund" which sends out financial aid to displaced people in different parts of India; a Home of Service through work where women are given opportunities to earn their livelihood; a Jiv Daya Department dedicated to the welfare of brother birds and animals.

Dadaji's life was one of unceasing service and sacrifice. In the words of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, "the life of Vaswaniji has been a saga of unassuming service, spiritual illumination and a source of inspiration to us all."

Dadaji worked on, day after day,—wanting nothing for himself, seeking only opportunities to serve the poor, the lonely and the lost. His body was weak and, for a number of years, he was unable to move, but he felt he had "the strength of ten,"

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because in his heart was love and every fibre of his being thrilled with faith in Man and God. He kept away from honours of the earth and always rejoiced in wisdom as his wealth and in the service of the distressed and the oppressed as the treasure of his quest.

Dadaji was never tired of asking us to go and break to the needy the bread in love; for to live is to give. Religion, to him, was not rites and ceremonies, not creeds and conformities. "Religion," he said, "is life, is fellowship, is mingling of the individual with the Great Life. And this is not shut up in the temples. This is moving in the market place. The Great God is not somewhere in isolation. The Great God is in the procession of life. Greet Him there! You will not find Him in the temples of marble and stone. You will meet Him in the sweat and struggle of life, in the tears and tragedies of the poor. Not in decorated Temples, but in broken cottages is the Great God,—wiping the tears of the poor and singing His new Gita for the New Age!"

Having everything, Beloved Dada chose to live as a *fakir*, a man who possessed nothing. Knowing everything, he lived as one who knew naught. His humility was profound. This prince among men, this uncrowned king of our hearts chose to live as a servant of the poor and broken ones. His life was a source of perennial inspiration to thousands all over the world. His life was a saga of devoted service to the sick and afflicted, the forsaken and forlorn. He was a voice of the voiceless ones,—our dear dumb brothers, birds and animals, who, alas! are being slain by the million, everyday. Every little thing he did was inspired by the vision cosmic.

Beloved Dada's life rings with the message:—"Each day aspire to live in the love of God, in compassionate kindness to all, in fellowship with the broken ones and in the pure love of truth."

Glossary

AMRITA : nectar.

ANANDA : joy; bliss.

ARATI : worship; adoration.

BANA : forest.

BHAJANS : devotional songs.

BHAKTA : devotee.

BHAKTA-MANDALI : circle or group of devotees.

BHAKTI : love; devotion.

CHAMAR : cobbler.

DARSHANA : vision; contemplation.

DAS : servant.

DERVISH : contemplative.

DULAHA : bridegroom; beloved.

DWARA-VATI : the city of many gates.

GERUA : ochre.

GOPI : milk-maid; devotee of Krishna.

GOPALA : Guardian of the Earth; Protector of the cow.

GOVINDA DEVA : the Divine Guardian of cows and the cattle.

GRIDHARA GOPAL : a name of Krishna.

GUR-BANI : the Word of the Gurus or Saints.

GURU : spiritual preceptor; teacher.

HARI : God; He who takes away evil,—sin or suffering.

HARI-BHAKTAS : devotees of God.

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- HARI-NAMA** : the Holy Name; the Word that destroys sin and suffering.
- ISHTA** : sacred representation or expression of the Divine.
- ISHWARA** : the Lord.
- KAMA** : passion; lust; desire.
- KANCHAN** : gold; wealth.
- KARMA** : action; work.
- KARTALA** : cymbals.
- KIRTAN** : singing aloud the Holy Name in company of the devout.
- KUNJA** : bower; grove.
- MADHAVA** : Sweet One; a name of Krishna.
- MANDIR** : temple; shrine.
- MANTRA** : sacred word.
- MAYA** : illusion; appearance.
- MOHA** : attachment.
- MUSRHID** : spiritual preceptor; teacher.
- MURTI** : image; manifestation.
- NAMA** : the Holy Name.
- NAM-KIRTAN** : singing aloud the Holy Name in chorus.
- PITAMBAR** : yellow cloth worn at the time of worship.
- PREMA-DEVANI** : love-intoxicated.
- PURUSHA** : male.
- RASA-LILA** : Play Divine.
- RISHIS** : seers of wisdom.
- RUPAS** : images; forms.
- SADHU** : a holy man.
- SAKHIS** : sister-friends.
- SAMSARA** : the phenomenal world.

SANT-BANI : the Word of the Saints.

SEVA : service; devotion.

SHRADDHA : faith or self-dedication to the Lord; trust; reliance.

SHYAMA SUNDARA : name of Krishna; the Beautiful
One clothed in Darkness Divine.

SAMADHI : super-conscious state; ecstasy.

STHITAPRAGNA : balanced; equipoised.

SUTRA : spiritual aphorism or maxim.

SWAMI : master; lord.

TRISNA : desire; appetite; craving.

TULSI : the sacred basil tree.

TYAGA : renunciation; detachment.

UPANISHAD : scripture of the hidden Wisdom of the Heart.

VAIRAGINI : a devotee detached and freed from worldly desire.

VAIRGYA : detachment.

YA HU : O He!

YA MAN HU : O He who is!

YOGA : union,—of the seeker with the Spirit, of the worshipper or *bhakta* with the Beloved.

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