language and metre,[1] full of sensuous passion, though pitched at a high level of imagination, the poem became a symbol of the adventures of the soul with God.[2] To this theme Chandī Dās, and his contemporary Vidyāpati of Mithilā in the days of the glory of its university, dedicated their songs. They brought all the resources of art to tell of the dawn of love, of its messages, of the meetings and partings of lovers, of the pains of yearning, and the peace of union. The dark blue complexion attributed to Krishna was the colour of the sky, itself the emblem of infinity. Vrindāvana was no village on the map beside the Jumnā, it was the mind of man, where the Deity had his abode and deigned to enter into converse with his worshippers. The sonnets of Vidyāpati, more brilliant in metaphor and more elegant in expression, were recited enthusiastically by Chaitanya;[3] but Prof. Sen designates Chandī Dās as "a far greater apostle of love." So free were some of his hymns on "union of spirit" from all sectarian tincture, that they have actually been adopted with slight changes for use in the services of the Bengal Brahmo Sāmāj.[4]

Nimbârka, who had identified Krishna with the Supreme Brahman, had gone to reside at Vrindāvana in the twelfth century. The popularity of the Bhāgavata Purāna naturally increased the influence of the Krishna-cult. But its version of the forest-scenes did not shrink from the coarsest representations of his embraces, laughter, and wiles, as the young god, vehement as a maddened elephant, multiplied himself into as many Krishnas as there were cowherdesses! True, some of them might break the bonds of Karma by concentrated meditation; others might be sent back to serve their husbands, suckle their children, and tend their cows, while the husbands felt as if their wives had been with them all the time. But the poet

[1] Compare the metrical changes in Sir Edwin Arnold's version, the *Indian Song of Songs*.

[2] Two of his hymns in the Ādi Granth are translated by Macauliffe, in *The Sikh Religion* (Oxford, 1909), vol. vi. p. 15 f.

[3] Grierson, *The Modern Vernacular of Hindustan*, p. 10. He adds that "through him they became the house-poetry of the Lower Provinces." Cp. Krishna Dās in Sen, p. 484; Sarkar, *Chaitanya's Pilgrimages and Teachings* (Calcutta 1913), p. 112, including Jayadeva and Chandī Dās.

[4] Sen, p. 134.

is conscious that his deity's conduct is not consistent with a Descent for the suppression of evil and the propagation of the true religion, and he invents a threefold apology. Brahmā and Indra do the same; as those who are free from egoism acquire no merit by good acts and incur no guilt by evil acts, how much less can sin be imputed to the Lord of all creation; and lastly Krishna joined in the sports only to show grace to his devotees.[1] Like the Vishnu Purāna, the Bhāgavata was silent about Rādhā. It was significant that the first Bengali translator, Mālādhar Vasu, had to find a place for her in his version.[2]

The scenes of Krishna's youth covered the district now known as Braj, extending along both banks of the Jumna for some forty-two miles west of Mathurā, with an average breadth of thirty. Ancient devotion had adorned the city with temples which early attracted the cupidity of the Mohammedan invader. In the ninth invasion by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1017 it was captured after a vigorous resistance, and given up to plunder for twenty days. Five thousand Hindus were carried into captivity, and orders were issued for the numerous sanctuaries to be levelled with the ground. Five great images of pure gold with eyes of rubies and richly jewelled were carried away, with a hundred camel-loads of smaller statues mostly of silver. The desolation cannot have been complete, and some pious efforts may have been made from time to time for repairs and restorations. Pilgrims could only look on the ruins of former glory, and after repeated desecrations it was still possible (as a seventeenth-century historian triumphantly reports) for the accomplished Sultan Sikandar Lodi (1488–1516) to "ruin the shrines of Mathurā and give their stone images to the butchers for meat-weights."[3] Not till the tolerant reign of Akbar could reconstruction seriously begin. Now it contains about a thousand temples and private chapels, and a long line of thirty-two bathing-places on the river bank constructed by different princely benefactors.[4] For nine months in the year it is crowded with pilgrims as one festival succeeds another. The great revival began in the sixteenth century under the influence of Vallabha of Gokula and the followers of the great Vaishnava

[1] X. xxxiii.
[2] Sen, p. 222, between 1473 and 1480.
[3] Growse, *Mathurā*[3] (1883), p. 34.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 189.

preacher, Chaitanya of Bengal. Little by little hill and woodland, rock and grove, lake, pool, and well were fitted to some incident in Krishna story. In 1553 Nārâyana Bhatta compiled a list of no less than a hundred and thirty-three woodland sites on both sides of the river; and to thirty-six of these, together with more than a hundred other spots on hill and plain, large bands of worshippers make joyous visitation with song and dance, as the scenes of ancient story are re-enacted in a kind of miracle play upon the consecrated ground.[1] Here is the holy land of Vaishnavism, steeped in the memories of more than two thousand years, where innumerable multitudes of believers have found peace.

Fourth among the schools of the Vaishnavas[2] in succession to Rāmânuja, Nimbârka, and Madhva is the name of Vishnusvāmin. Tradition located him in the South, and vaguely dated him in the thirteenth century. But his life is veiled in obscurity, and the Bhakta-Mālā is responsible for the statement that his teaching was transmitted through three successors to Vallabhâchārya. Romance surrounded Vallabha's birth. His parents were Brāhmans from the Telugu country who had come on pilgrimage to Benares. Frightened out of the city by a popular disturbance, they sought shelter in a wild solitude known as Champaranya, and there the child was born and laid at the foot of a tree in 1479. Rescued a little later, he was brought up in the Holy Land of Krishna, where his father and mother fixed their home at Gokula. His father died when the boy was only eleven years old. The youthful scholar, already a prodigy of learning, shortly afterwards began to teach, and then in due time started on his travels. At Vijayanagar, the home of his mother's family, he defeated the court Pandits of Çankara's order in a public disputation, and was adopted by King Krishna Deva as his spiritual guide. He subsequently settled permanently at Benares, where he married and wrote his commentaries on the Brahma-Sūtras of Bādarâyana and the Bhagavad Gītā. But he paid long visits to the scenes of his boyhood, and founded at Govardhana in 1520 the great temple of Çrī-Nāth.[3]

[1] Growse, *Mathurā*, p. 75 ff.

[2] *Sampradāyas*, systems of religious teaching.

[3] Growse, *Mathurā*,[3] p. 283 f. On the legends about the Govardhana

Adopting the tradition of Vishnusvāmin's theology, Vallabha added the Bhāgavata Purāna to the usual authorities such as the Upanishads, the Gītā, and the Brahma Sūtras;[1] and in the little poem entitled the *Siddhânta Rahasya* or "Secret of Truth" he claimed that his fundamental doctrine—"every sin, whether of body or soul, is put away by union with the Creator"—had been directly revealed to him by the Deity himself.[2] How, then, was such union to be reached, and what was the nature of its privilege?

Interpreting with the utmost literalism the ancient formula "All this is Brahman," Vallabha insisted on the complete identity of both soul and world with the Supreme Spirit.[3] No veil of illusion laid its mystery of unreality over the surrounding scene. Brahman was not conditioned by any Māyā when he chose to produce the universe. His being was absolutely free, and Vallabha's monism accordingly was known as *Çuddhâdvaita*, or "Pure Non-Duality." Alone in timeless solitude Brahman desired to be many, and himself became the multitude of individual souls, and the inanimate world of which he was not only the material and the efficient cause, but also the Inner Ruler or controlling power. In himself the Lord of Being, Intelligence, and Bliss, he deigned to conceal the two latter attributes from the visible scene which manifested only his Being; in souls he permitted his Intelligence also to appear, while his Bliss was obscured. Here was a doctrine of *abheda* or "non-difference" which abolished all distinctions. In view of the identity of cause and effect, the reality of the world was secured, for Brahman's creation necessarily shared its Creator's reality. And as all souls were not only his but *he*, no charges of cruelty or caprice could lie against him in his administration of their destinies.

What account, then, could be given of the soul? It was, as the Sūtras taught, atomic in size, pervading the whole body by its quality of intelligence as sandal-wood made its presence felt

hill cp. pp. 60, 300. He is said to have died at Benares in 1530, Grierson, *The Modern Vernacular of Hindustan*, p. 20.

[1] Ghate, *Le Vedânta*, p. xliii.

[2] Growse, *Mathurā*,[3] p. 285.

[3] Cp. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 77 ff.; Ghate, *Le Vedânta*, p. xxxix ff.

where it did not exist by its scent. Produced out of Brahman as a part of himself like a spark from a fire, it was inevitably treated as though it possessed an individuality of its own. In the succession of existences ignorance and worldliness had indeed blunted its perceptions. Just as if a man gliding down a stream in a boat and watching the objects at different distances from the bank change their positions in respect both to himself and one another, supposed them in motion, he would be right in believing them to be real, but wrong in imagining them to move,—so the soul correctly interprets the world as real, but erroneously ascribes to it plurality. Illusion there is, but it is not divinely conditioned for the purpose of creation, it is the issue of our own experience which it is our business to throw off and transcend. We are thus suddenly confronted with demands for effort and self-control, and all sorts of choices are thrown open to the human will.

Two paths invite men to the great Release, by knowledge and devotion. Only the second of these leads to the realisation of the divine form of Brahman as the Most High or Krishna in his threefold character of Being, Intelligence, and Bliss. In the heavenly world known as Vaikuntha were the celestial counterparts of Vrindāvana, with its woods and bowers, its Gokula and river Yamunā. There Krishna for ever plays with those who love him. That devout affection passes through various stages, beginning in its lowest forms with the observance of Scripture rules and prohibitions designed to wean the soul from worldliness. By the divine grace it culminates in the highest mode of adoration, when the worshipper chooses the eternal service of Hari rather than the "union" (*sāyujya*) which would blend them indissolubly with him. Then Deity is seen everywhere, and love flows forth on every object, and finally the soul is admitted to the Vrindāvana which is above and with strange transformations joins in the everlasting sports. This sensuous scheme acquired a wide influence. Its followers are still spread through Gujarat, Rājputāna, and further to the north about Mathurā. The daily cultus of the child Krishna, ordained by the divine command to Vallabha in a vision, conducts the god from the hour of waking in the morning through bathing, dressing, meals, and cradle-rocking, with Rādhā by his side, till he is put to bed once more

at night, with incredible puerility.[1] And the extreme demands that all the belongings of the disciple should be placed at the service of the Guru led to notorious abuses such as were exposed in a famous trial in 1862 before the High Court of Bombay.[2]

While Vallabha was writing his commentaries at Benares, his younger contemporary Chaitanya, junior by six years (born in 1485), was leading a very different movement in Bengal. The elder Buddhism had been gradually supplanted by the worship of Çiva, brought near to the common heart in popular folk-songs as a peasant who could follow the plough, or a mendicant with a beggar's bowl. A loftier type emerged in the Purānas, where he was presented as the impersonation of calmness, absorbed in sacred meditation, an ascetic who, like the Buddha, had renounced the world.[3] As early as the long reign of the Buddhist sovereign Nārâyanapāla (875–930), Çiva temples were built where the image of the god bore the aspect of Avalokiteçvara as "Lord of the world."[4] Provision was made for the residence of Hindus and Buddhists together; the Buddhist festivals were observed; the Çaiva celebrations with song and dance drew the followers of various creeds, and the sacred food was distributed to all alike. When Rāmapāla moved his capital to Rāmāvati (1060–1100), Hindu and Buddhist temples arose side by side, and Çaivas and Buddhists both belonged to the Tāntric school.[5] The Dharma cult of Western Bengal came straight out of Buddhism with its doctrine of the Void;[6] and the Çūnya philosophy was still strangely combined with Vaishnavism by poets of the sixteenth century, who blended the names of Dharma and Buddha with the teachings of Chaitanya.[7] Like his great predecessor two thousand years before, the Bengal preacher of the love of God opened the way of faith to men of every caste, and the Hindu and the Mohammedan stood

[1] Wilson, "Religious Sects," *Works*, i. p. 126; Growse, *Mathurā*, p. 290; Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 80 f.

[2] Cp. Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*, p. 456 f.

[3] Raised above all desire, he slew Madana. God of love, whose name of Māra came out of Buddhism; Sen, p. 64.

[4] Sarkar, *The Folk-Element in Hindu Culture* (1917), pp. 169, 181.

[5] Sarkar, *ibid.*, p. 173.

[6] See the hymns quoted by Sarkar, pp. 94, 103.

[7] Sen, p. 403; see below, p. 447.

side by side among his disciples as they had done in the previous century under the leadership of Rāmânanda at Benares.

To all the tendencies inherent in Vallabha's teaching Chaitanya was fundamentally opposed.[1] He repudiated the whole *advaita* doctrine. He denied the identity of the human soul with the Supreme Spirit. He rejected Çankara's theory of Māyā, and the "Pure" form elaborated by Vallabha. Using the symbolism of the tale of Rādhā, and chanting the hymns of Chandī Dāsa and Vidyāpati, he demanded the utmost austerity of personal life, and while he did not discard the ceremonial of the temple, he gave no support to the trivialities of the cultus of the child Krishna. Biographies of him were numerous among the early disciples. The records begin with the notes of a young blacksmith, Govinda, who was for some years his devoted personal attendant. The fullest story, based on earlier narratives, the "Ambrosia of Chaitanya's life," was written by a physician named Krishna Dās (born in 1517), residing at Vrindāvana, at the request of some of the disciples who sought a more adequate account of the last portion of their Master's life. Full of learning and piety, the aged scholar undertook the task at seventy-nine, and devoted to it nine laborious years. It contained more than 15,000 verses, and quoted sixty different Sanskrit works.[2]

Chaitanya (or Krishna Chaitanya) was the religious name bestowed upon the Teacher when he assumed the life of a Sannyāsin. His father's family, Brāhmans by caste, had been Vaishnavas for generations, and his father himself had settled at Navadvīpa, some seventy miles north of Calcutta, on one of the branches of the Ganges,[3] to complete his education at its famous school of Sanskrit learning. There he married. Eight daughters died in infancy. A ninth child, a son, grew up, and, on the eve of his marriage at sixteen, disappeared. On the wedding morning he could not be found; he had devoted

[1] It is curious that one tradition affirms that his first wife was Vallabha's daughter.

[2] Sen, p. 479 ff. The second portion has been translated by Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, under the title *Chaitanya's Pilgrimages and Teachings* (Calcutta, 1913).

[3] The modern Nadiā, sometimes spelt Nuddea.

himself to religion. There was a tenth child, known by the pet name of Nimai. The anxious mother, fearing lest he should follow his elder brother's example, overruled her husband's desire that he should be sent to school. Tradition told of his boyish mischief, as he pilfered the neighbours' orchards with other young rascals, and teased the little girls who came to bathe in the river. He would not avoid unclean refuse which a Brāhman would not touch, and retorted to his parents' admonition by asking how he was to know the distinction if they would not allow him to study, adding, "Nothing is either clean or unclean in my eyes." The spirit of revolt was already roused. It was not surprising that the neighbours at last remonstrated, and the boy's education was begun. His progress was rapid. He was soon reading Sanskrit, and made himself obnoxious to his elders by pert questions. But his ability was undoubted. At twenty he himself opened a Sanskrit school which drew pupils from many quarters, while the great scholars who had made Navadvīpa famous stood aloof. A tour through Eastern Bengal increased his reputation; he found his own commentaries on grammar already in use, and his name widely known. He was young, ardent, joyous, handsome, affectionately known afterwards as "Fair-limbed" and "Fair-moon." But whatever might be the movements of his mind within, he had shown no interest in religion.

His father was now dead, and on his return from his teaching journey he found that the young wife to whom he had been early married had died too. A second marriage was arranged to provide for the maintenance of the customary family rites, and he at length quite unexpectedly sought his mother's permission to go to the ancient sanctuary at Gayā, once Buddhist and by this time held for many centuries by Vaishnavas, that he might lay at Vishnu's feet the offerings of food and water for his deceased father. An aged Vaishnava saint name Īçvara Purī had often striven to show him how faith would cleanse the soul, but the young man would conceitedly convict him of some grammatical flaw, and with assumed superiority spurn his exhortations. Now, however, he sought him out upon the journey, and his companions noticed that his ways seemed changed. A new life of emotion

was awakened, and as he entered the great temple at Gayā the bonds which had hitherto restrained it were suddenly loosed. Within the precincts was the visible sign of the presence of the Deity. In conquering a demon Vishnu had placed his feet upon the head of his foe, and the footprints were turned to stone. They were known as the "lotus-feet," and the priests sang—

> "These feet, O pilgrims, lead to heaven,
> Take ye refuge in them!
> There is no other way for man's salvation."[1]

Flowers and offerings were piled around; vast crowds thronged the hallowed courts; the air was full of music, and Nimai, overpowered with ecstasy, fell into a trance. His friends led him away more or less unconscious. When he regained his senses the tears still flowed. "Leave me, I am no longer fit for the world. Let me go to the Vrindā-groves to find out Krishna, my Lord and the Lord of the universe."

On his return to Navadvīpa he strove to tell what he had seen, but could find no words. The Highest had revealed himself to him, and he could think of nothing else. He gave up his teaching, that he might declare the love of God. He undertook menial services for the old and sick, he carried their burdens and even washed their clothes. A group of disciples gathered round him to live holy lives, perform acts of charity, compose and sing hymns, and chant the name of God. They met daily in the garden of a convert, the Pandit Çrīvāsa; they read together the Bhāgavata Purāna; they marched in procession through the streets with song and dance, and a religious revival was begun. Report spread quickly that the great God had once more descended into human form, and Govinda Dās, the blacksmith, driven from his home near Burdwan by a quarrelsome wife, resolved to find him out. As he reached the river at Navadvīpa, Nimai and some disciples came down to bathe.[2] The young teacher's complexion was of extraordinary

[1] Sen, p. 427.

[2] See the "Diary of Govinda Dās," in the *Calcutta Review*, cvi. (1898), p. 80 ff. The document (which is in verse) is of course no daily record. How long a time elapsed between the events recorded and the actual composition of the narrative is unknown.

brilliancy, and his long black hair hung down to his hips. Seized with an ardent longing to devote himself to this wondrous being, Govinda fell at Nimai's feet; the teacher gently raised him and took him to his house. There Govinda became his personal attendant, and received the *prasād* or food which had been offered to Vishnu off Nimai's own plate. No meat or fish or eggs or other forbidden foods might be served in a Vaishnava's house; but Govinda, who confesses that he was the "prince of gluttons," found ample satisfaction in the varied curries and sweetmeats of the daily diet. The meetings in Çrīvāsa's garden were diversified with religious plays founded on stories from the Purānas in Vishnu's honour. Nimai himself assumed the part of the god, and would fall into trances for many hours. But in his conscious states he rebuked anyone who spoke in his presence of his divinity. "O God, O God!" he cried, at Benares, "I am a despicable creature. It is a sin to regard any creature as Vishnu."[1]

The enthusiasm of the new movement proved contagious; its ranks were quickly filled by men of all sorts of occupations, for Nimai recognised no caste limits in the practice of devotion. The opposition of the orthodox Brāhmans became increasingly bitter. They complained to the Mohammedan magistrate that the nightly uproar kept them awake, and at their request he prohibited the procession. But Nimai boldly led it that evening to his door, and at the sight the Kāzi was delighted. Nimai had been joined by a Sannyāsin named Nityânanda.[2] A drunken Brāhman belonging to the Kāzi's police one day flung a brick at him as Nityânanda passed by singing. His forehead bled profusely. "Strike me again if you like," said he, "but chant Krishna's name." The assailant and his comrade repented and were reformed. Scholars and poets with the venerable Advaitâchārya of Çāntipur (another centre of Sanskrit learning) at their head now stood at Nimai's side. He was still young, only in his twenty-fourth year, when he resolved that he must give the final proof of his devotion by renouncing the house-

[1] Sarkar, *Pilgrimages and Teachings*, p. 309. Cp. at Vrindāvana, *ibid.*, p. 222.

[2] Identified by some authorities with his lost elder brother. But cp. Sen, p. 497.

holder's life and becoming a religious mendicant. Mother, wife, friends pleaded in vain. They were not to be consoled by stories of saints from the Purānas, explanations of the vanity of human wishes, sermons on the transitoriness of the world or the necessity of saving humanity sunk deep in sin.[1] So in 1510[2] he stole away accompanied only by Govinda, leaving his wakeful mother gazing after him at the door as he vanished in the darkness of the night. Three days later he took the vows as a Sannyāsin at Kātvā under Bhāratī; his beautiful hair was shorn, and he received the new name of Krishna Chaitanya.

Travelling further and further East, Chaitanya at last reached Purī, the hallowed seat among the swamps and sands on the sea-coast of Jagannātha, "Lord of the World." There stood the great temple of Vishnu, completed after fourteen years of labour in 1198, where men of every caste might eat the Holy Food together.[3] There Chaitanya won a victory over the greatest Indian scholar of the time, Sarbabhauma, refuting the Illusionist monism, and denying the identity of creation with God.[4] The Prime Minister Rāma Rāy, himself a Çūdra, but scholar and poet withal, became a disciple, and so did the King, Pratāpa Rudra. After three months, during which Govinda enjoyed himself to the full with the daily cakes and confectioneries from the temple-kitchens, Chaitanya announced his intention of undertaking a missionary tour, broke away from adoring disciples, and started with Govinda only for the South. Changes among the Mohammedan powers had brought almost the whole coast from the mouths of the Ganges to the mouths of the Indus under Hindu rule, and the Central Provinces were similarly governed. So the young preacher made his way to Cape Comorin and up to Dwarka, Krishna's famous city, on the coast

[1] Govinda Dās, *Calcutta Review*, cvi. p. 84.

[2] So, it would seem, the best authorities. Others, 1508 and 1509.

[3] The classical account is still that of Sir W. W. Hunter in his *Orissa*, vol. i. chaps. iii. and iv., 1872. Some modern impressions on pilgrimage by railway will be found in Zimmermann's *The God Juggernaut*, etc., New York, 1914.

[4] The poet Krishna Dās related that Sarba acknowledged Chaitanya as Krishna, and Chaitanya appeared to him in his divine form. Sarba fell at his feet, exclaiming, "Logic had made me hard like an ingot of iron, thou hast melted me." Sarkar, *Pilgrimages and Teachings*, p. 45.

of the Kathiāwār peninsula. There the priests gave a grand entertainment in his honour, and Chaitanya with his own hand distributed the food consecrated to Vishnu among the lame, the blind, the deaf and dumb. He worshipped in Çiva temples, or at shrines of Rāma, he bathed in sacred streams. Scholars and princes, Buddhists and Sānkhyans and followers of Çankara, ritualists and sceptics, all yielded to his enthusiasm and his charm. The leper was cured, the bandit and the wealthy courtesan forsook their evil ways. The Rājā of Travancore danced and wept like Chaitanya himself. At Padmakota a famous eight-handed image of Çiva's consort Durgā rocked with emotion as he preached, and a shower of flowers fell from heaven. A blind man who had been promised in a dream by Durgā that he should see the Descent in which Vishnu had favoured the sinful world with his presence, received his sight, and having gazed upon Chaitanya's shining countenance, fell dead at his feet. The journey was not without danger. Forests must be traversed, sometimes for one or two weeks, where the travellers must subsist on fruits and roots, and the wild beast might spring out of the jungle, or the snake inflict a deadly bite. After three days without food Chaitanya once lay senseless in Govinda's arms. But the dauntless missionary pressed on. To the Brāhman who assaulted him he only replied, "Strike, but proclaim Hari's name." And so at last, after traversing four thousand miles on foot in twenty months, he returned to Purī. There he resumed his ministrations and teaching in the temple. As the day of the Car-festival approached he led his followers in menial services, cleansing the precincts, and washing the floors, the walls, and the idol's thrones. In the great procession, when the immense wheels of the heavy car sank immovable in the sand, and neither the Bengal athletes nor the king's wrestlers nor powerful elephants could make it stir, Chaitanya took out the elephants and pushed it into motion with his head. With such tales did the adoring admiration of disciples glorify the Master's memory. Only once again did he leave Purī for any length of time when he went on pilgrimage to Vrindāvana. There he bathed at the twenty-four ghāts upon the Jumna bank at Mathurā. As he walked through the pastures and the woods the cows and the deer came round him and licked his limbs.

Birds sang their sweetest, and peacocks strutted before him. Branches laden with flowers and fruit bowed to his feet, and in thought he lovingly offered them to Krishna. So he climbed the sacred hill, entered the sacred cave, lingered beneath immemorial trees, bathed in hallowed pools, visited consecrated shrines, danced, wept, recited verses, laughed and sang, and finally, at the place of Krishna's sports, fainted away in love. Before he quitted the district he converted a group of Pathan horsemen, Mohammedans, who became ascetics known as the Pathan Vaishnavas and wandered forth singing his praise. Impressed with the importance of Vrindāvana as a centre for the extension of his teaching in the North-west, he made it the home of two of his most eminent disciples, Rūpa and Sanātana, the wealthy ministers of the Mohammedan Sultan of Bengal, Husain Shah (1493–1518), who renounced the world and under Chaitanya's direction devoted themselves to austerities and study, producing a long list of Sanskrit compositions[1]

Chaitanya himself wrote nothing. His metaphysic seems to have approximated most nearly to Nimbârkar's, though a modern interpreter has ranged him with Madhva.[2] Trained in the schools and accomplished in debate, he could use philosophy as a weapon in argument, but his real power lay in his personality. His protests against worldliness remind us again and again, like Kabir's, of Gospel sayings, though they are couched in a different idiom. But his attitude towards traditional pieties is less austere. He can worship before an image, and bathe in holy waters. He is as devout in a temple of Çiva as in one of Vishnu. Whatever form or emblem had acquired sanctity served to remind him of the object of his love. This was not the result of a crude Pantheism. It was the recognition of the value conferred by the devotion of others on objects which had aided them (however incongruous they might seem) to approach the Deity. A flower, a cloud, the light upon the ripple of the sea, displayed to Chaitanya the love of God, and threw him into ecstasy. For him there was only one object of adoration, known under different names as Brahman, Param-

[1] Sen, p. 504.

[2] The late Vivekânanda, according to Rev R. Macnicol, *The Indian Interpreter* (1914, Oct.), p. 118.

âtman, Bhagavat, or manifested under varying conditions as Vishnu, Brahmadeva, or Çiva, according to the predominance of one or other of the Three Strands, "being" or goodness, "passion" or energy, "darkness" or ignorance.[1] But the significance of Chaitanya's teaching did not lie in his special interpretation of the Vedânta. What gave him power over other minds was his impassioned religious consciousness, his vivid sense of the personal presence of God, and his conviction that the whole world was the scene of the divine Love. That was no illusion, and the response which it called forth from the worshipper begot a feeling of individuality which nothing could shake. God did not love a mere transitory modification of himself. He loved a being who could love him in return eternally.

Many were the modes in which this lofty affection could be cultivated. Pure faith was its source, and diverse were its forms,[2] as it rose in purity and intensity to the highest modes of spiritual emotion. It carried with it an exalted ethical ideal, demanding such virtues as compassion, truth, charity, humility, and other graces of the gentle spirit; and it kindled an immense enthusiasm for proclaiming the sacred Name. "Krishna's Name," he told an inquirer, "alone washes away all sins." No caste or race could limit its efficacy. When he sent out his two first and chief disciples to preach in Bengal, he bade them "Teach the lesson of faith in Krishna to all men, down to the Chandâlas, freely preach the lesson of devotion and love."[3] The Mohammedan was as welcome into his fellowship as the Hindu. So ardent was the pity for suffering humanity which he awakened, that one of his disciples threw himself at his feet with the prayer—"My heart breaks to see the sorrows of mankind. Lay thou *their* sins upon my head, let me suffer in hell for all their sins, so that thou mayest remove the earthly pangs of all other beings." "Krishna," Chaitanya is said to have confidently replied, "fulfils whatever his servants ask for. You have prayed for the salvation of all the creatures of the universe. They shall all be delivered without suffering for their sins. The task is not too much for Krishna, who is omnipotent.

[1] Cp. *ante*, p. 206.
[2] Cp. Sarkar, *Pilgrimages and Teachings*, p. 240 ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 169.

Why should he make you alone undergo their chastisements?"[1] The philosophy which interpreted the great Release as the absorption of all personality into Deity was unacceptable to such glowing trust. Love sought to expend itself for ever in the service of his will, and declared that even hell, where love could still rise from the midst of pain, were preferable to extinction in the very bosom of God.[2]

Such were some of the lessons which Chaitanya drew from his favourite book, the Bhāgavata Purāna. The last eighteen years of his life were spent at Purī, until, worn out with excitement and exhaustion, he died in 1534. His voice being heard no more in protest, the belief that Krishna had appeared in him produced its natural result in cultus. When the disciples in Çrīvāsa's garden at Navadvīpa had begun singing his praises, he silenced and dismissed them. To his friend the Prime Minister, Rām Rāy, who remonstrated with him on his reserve, he replied, "I am a man, and I have taken the ascetic's vow. In body and mind, in speech, and in all my dealings I must be spotless."[3] But King Pratāpa (whose reign lasted till 1556) was not satisfied till a wooden statue had been carved, which he placed in his capital at Pratāpa-Pur.[4] Sir W. W. Hunter found a temple still standing in Purī dedicated to his name, and many smaller shrines are scattered through the country. But the cultus was naturally combined with that of Vishnu, and of those joint temples the observer reckoned 300 in Purī itself and 500 in the district.[5] While Pratāpa Rudra was still on the throne six poets celebrated Vishnu-Krishna's name. Jagannātha Dāsa interpreted the episode of Rādhā as the type of the relation of the human soul to the Divine, and declared Vrindāvana and its holy places should not be identified with the actual scenes; they were the symbols of Mahā-Çūnya, the "Great Void." What is the meaning of this sudden entry of a Buddhist term?[6] Driven from Bengal by the Mohammedan invasion in 1200, Buddhist teachers had settled in Orissa, where

[1] Cp. Sarkar, *Pilgrimages and Teachings*, p. 177.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 49 f. [3] Sen, p. 442.
[4] This has recently been discovered by Mr Nagendranāth Vasu, *Archæolog. Survey of Mayurabhanja*, i. (1911), p. c.
[5] Hunter, *Orissa*, i. p. 109. [6] Cp. *ante*, p. 85.

from ancient days, it was believed, the sacred tooth of the Buddha had been preserved. Recent discoveries have proved how powerful was the influence of Mahā-Yānist art in Orissa, which can be traced through the phases of the Çaiva and Çākta cults. It was now the turn of all these modes of worship to give way to Vishnu. The conversion of the Buddhists of Mayurabhanja was the work of two of Chaitanya's disciples, Chyāmânanda and Rasikânanda. But the leaven of the old faith was still strong, and the poets who carried with them the doctrine of the Void sang of five Vishnus, corresponding to the five Dhyāni Buddhas.[1] In Bengal the conversions included large numbers of Buddhists. Nityânanda and Advaitâchārya, who (with the inveterate propensity to form groups of three) were soon associated with Chaitanya as partial incarnations,[2] organised a vigorous movement at Khardah and Çāntipur, and Nityânanda received 1200 Buddhist monks and 1300 nuns into his new order. A yearly festival at Kardah still commemorates the event. Nityânanda's sympathy with the outcast classes gained him the name of the "friend of the fallen"; rigid social restrictions were removed, and widow re-marriage was allowed.[3] The religious order organised by the two Bengal leaders attracted princes and scholars of wealth and learning. An active literature in Sanskrit and Bengali provided materials both for theology and devotion. Lives of the saints threw the Çāstras and the Purānas into the background, except the Bhāgavata, which became a kind of Vaishnava Bible. Numbers of poets in the next three centuries sang of Krishna, his incarnation, his perils, his sports, his loves, his conquest.[4] Still to this day in Orissa religious preceptors, evening after evening, from village to village chant Chaitanya's name, and devoutly explain the sacred books.[5] The professional narrators of stories in which Vishnu, Lakshmī, Krishna, play the chief parts, have become in Bengal the agents of moral appeal and

[1] Vasu, *op cit.*, pp. ciii, clxxvi ff. Cp. *ante*, p. 114.

[2] Çaiva hostility represented them as the threefold incarnation of the demon Tripurâsura who had been slain by Çiva. Sen, p. 568.

[3] Sen, p. 567.

[4] Prof. Sen gives a list of 170 poets, whose lyrics amount to over 3000, pp. 517, 557.

[5] Vasu, *Archæological Survey*, p. xcviii.

the inspirers of devotional sentiment. The standards of the religious orders of northern Vaishnavism have grievously declined.[1] But its influence on the masses of the people has been wide and deep. It sought to remove religion from the carefully guarded ceremonies of Brahmanical ritual and throw open its hopes and privileges to men and women of every rank and caste, of every race and creed. It needed no priest, for the offering of love required no sacerdotal sanction, and the grace of God was in no man's keeping. By its doctrine of incarnation it maintained a constant succession of divine acts of self-sacrifice before the eyes of the believer, which conferred new value on humanity when Deity thought it worth such efforts for its rescue from ignorance and sin. And these in their turn helped to promote ideals of charity, gentleness, and sympathy which neither the tenacity of the caste-system nor the solvent influences of Western culture can wholly obliterate from the national mind.[2]

[1] See the severe judgments of Dr J. N. Bhattacharya, in *Hindu Castes and Sects* (Calcutta, 1896), p. 464 ff. The author was President of the College of Pandits at Nadiya, Chaitanya's own city.

[2] In spite of the occasional hostility of the religious orders, it is extremely difficult at the present day to distinguish between lay worshippers of Çiva and Vishnu, and in the last census (1911) the attempt at statistical enumeration for the whole population was abandoned. The course of time has brought them together and mingled their practice. The *General Report* of the census quotes a letter (p. 115) from a distinguished native scholar who says that he fasts on one day because it is sacred to Çiva, and on another as dedicated to Vishnu; he plants the *bel* tree as dear to the first, and the *tulsi* as beloved of the second. In the Punjab, Pandit Harikishan Kaul reports that in spite of the difficulties of the task an effort was made to apply the tests for discrimination prescribed by the Census Commissioners. The results were so incongruous as to be really worthless. The religous orders showed a Vaishnava membership of 11,920, and Çaivas, 15,406. These figures awake the expectation of Çaiva preponderance among the laity as well. But among the orthodox householders and masses of the people the Çaivas only muster 4235, while the Vaishnavas count 7,292,927. Of the total followers of the Hindu religion (in the Punjab) the Vaishnavas amount to 83·3 per cent., and the Çaivas show the pitiful proportion of ·2. *Punjab Report*, i. p. 126 f. It is not surprising that the editor should ruefully remark that probably the Çaivas were not so few as the entries in the enumeration books would lead one to believe. In enumerations elsewhere we have heard of similar undercurrents of "C. of E."

LECTURE VIII

HINDUISM AND ISLAM

In the year 632, while the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang was lingering in Kashmir on his way to India, the Arabian prophet Mohammed died. It was not long before his successors began the career of conquest which ultimately laid the vast territory from Bagdad to Cordova at their feet. India was not forgotten. The seventh century was not completed when its coasts were raided, its passes were crossed, and the Punjab was ravaged. Frequent inroads and partial conquests continued for centuries. At no time was the Mohammedan power triumphant through the whole of India. The Punjab was naturally the first again and again to bear the brunt of devastation. The famous sovereign of Afghanistan, Mahmud of Ghazni (997–1030), led forth the first of his seventeen invasions in 1001. By and by he carried his arms as far as Kanauj, about half way between Delhi and Allahabad. Now he plundered the sacred localities of Krishna at Mathurā and Vrindāvana;[1] in another expedition (1024–26) the sanctuary of Çiva at Somnath, on the coast of Kathiāwār, was desecrated. The temple-gates were carried to Ghazni in triumph; the *linga*-symbol of the god was smashed, and fragments were sent in homage to the homes of Islam in Mekka and Medina.[2] But slaughter and destruction were not the only issues of such military violence. In the conqueror's train came students and scholars, and the learned Alberuni ("the foreigner") who resided in India between 1017 and 1030, embodied long and careful observations in his famous description of Indian life and thought.

By the end of the twelfth century the Mohammedan arms

[1] Cp. *ante*, p. 433.

[2] Hunter, *The Indian Empire*[2] (1886), p. 274.

were carried to the East. The capital of Bihār was seized probably in 1197; its great Buddhist monastery was destroyed; the brethren fled, some to Nepal, others to Tibet, others to the South; the monuments of art and piety were ruined; the library, when no one was left who could tell the victors what the books contained, was doubtless burned.[1] Two years later a party of horsemen rode up to the palace of the sovereign of Bengal, Lakshmana Sēna, at Navadvīpa,[2] while his majesty was at dinner. The aged king, a venerated prince of eighty years, fled slipperless through a back-door, and at last found shelter at Purī in Orissa, where he wore out his life in the service of Jagan-Nātha.[3] History was a monotonous round of sieges, massacres, and famines. Kutbu-d Dīn, once a slave, establishes himself as the first Sultan of Delhi in 1206, and is said to have destroyed nearly a thousand temples in Benares, and built mosques on some of their foundations. The Mohammedan power spread gradually to the South (1303–15), with a like tale of outrage and ruin. Women were carried off for the conquerors' use; the sanctuaries were stripped of their gold and jewels; a mosque was built at Adam's Bridge. Çrī-Raṅga, where Rāmânuja had lived and taught, was pillaged and ruined in 1326. Two centuries later, in 1565, the victory of Talikot enabled the Mohammedans to destroy the city of Vijayanagar, whose extensive ruins testify to its former splendour,[4] and the brilliant age of Akbar in the north is at hand.

The influence of Hindu culture on Islam has been very variously estimated, and the sources of Sūfiism are now sought firstly in the scripture and practice of Mohammedanism itself, and the early contact with Christianity, Gnosticism, and Neoplatonism, rather than in the philosophies and asceticism of India.[5] That these latter had their share in stimulating

[1] V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India* (1919), p. 221. Cp. *ante*, p. 119.

[2] Cp. *ante*, p 438.

[3] Cp. *ante*, pp. 408, 442.

[4] On the right bank of the river Tungabhadra, in the Bellary district, Madras. It was the capital of an extensive empire embracing all India south of the Krishnā river. *Imper. Gaz.*, xxiv. p. 310.

[5] Cp. E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia* (1903), chap. xiii.; D. S. Margoliouth, *The Early Development of Mohammedanism* (1914), lect. vi; R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (1914), p. 9 ff.

Persian mysticism at a later date is, however, not denied. Tales of course travel far by unknown channels, as the literature of Barlaam and Josaphat abundantly proves; and when Jalālu-d Dīn (1207–1273) at Qonia, the Iconium of St Paul in Galatia, told the story of the elephant in a dark room,[1] he was only repeating, with slight variation, a familiar apologue of the Buddha.[2] With such stories went different forms of religious experience, parallel ascetic disciplines, corresponding methods of spiritual culture. Islam had its wandering mendicants, its *fāqīrs* or poor men, its *pīrs* or saints, its rites and pilgrimages, its prayers and beads. Above all, it broke down caste; before Allah all men were equal; in the sphere of religion there was no privilege of birth. Here then were points of contact with teachers like Rāmânanda or Chaitanya. What was the effect of such proximity? Mohammedanism transcended the race-limits within which Hinduism was practically confined. How far could they mutually approach and influence each other? And from which side would the first movement start?

I

The rise of a religious literature in the vernacular languages was not confined to Bengal or the South. The Marāthas of the ancient land of Mahārāshtra in the West began to use their own speech for philosophical exposition in the twelfth century, when a Brāhman named Mukundrāj wrote a long poem on Brahman in the Vedântic spirit, entitled "The Ocean of Discrimination."[3] The Mohammedan invasions for a time checked all activity, but the movement to which Rāmânuja and Rāmânanda gave expression was not without its counterparts under the new rulers. From the thirteenth century to the eighteenth a long succession of saints and prophets strove for the purification of religion.[4] Many of them were Brāhmans;

[1] *Masnavi*, tr. Whinfield (1887), bk. iii. p. 122

[2] *The Udāna*, tr Major-General D. M. Strong (1902), p. 94.

[3] Mackichan, "The Marāthas and their Literature," *Indian Interpreter* (1913, Jan.), p. 167.

[4] Cp. Mr Justice M. G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power* (Bombay, 1900), chap. vii. "The Saints and Prophets of Mahārāshtra."

others were Mohammedan converts; a few were women. There were representatives of different castes and occupations, "tailors, gardeners, potters, goldsmiths, repentant prostitutes and slave girls." They struggled against Brāhman domination; they protested against self-mortifications, extreme fasts, penances, and pilgrimages. Above all achievements of Yoga they placed the daily practice of the presence of God, who might be known under many names, Çiva, Vithobā (Vishnu), Krishna, Rāma. Legend told how they healed the sick, fed the hungry, and raised the dead. The superiority of the religion of devotion (*bhakti*) was said to be demonstrated by Dnyāndēv in the thirteenth century, when Chāngdēv, relying on his *yoga* power, came riding on a tiger and flourishing a snake as a whip, and Dnyāndēv rode to meet him on a wall. Author of many Lymns and an elaborate paraphrase of the Bhagavad Gitā in 10,000 stanzas,[1] he was reported to have declared—"There is none high or low with God, all are alike to him. The Ganges is not polluted, nor the wind tainted, nor the earth rendered untouchable, because the low-born and the high-born bathe in the one, or breathe the other, or move on the back of the third."[2]

Dnyāndēv came apparently under the influence of a younger teacher named Nāmdēv, whose family belonged to a caste of tailors or calico-printers. Local accounts vary concerning the place and date of his birth; but his career was associated especially with Pandharpur on the river Bhīma (in the Sholāpur District, Bombay[3]), the chief sanctuary of Vishnu (Krishna) under the names of Vitthala and Vithobā. Born in 1270,[4] he early showed a singular aptitude for devotional practice. Sent to school at five years old, he made no progress in learning,

[1] Mackichan, *op cit*, p 168

[2] Ranade, *op cit.*, p 153. Mackichan places his death in 1300. His tomb is still shown at Alandi, in the Poona district, Bombay, and is said to be visited by 50,000 pilgrims at a yearly fair in November-December.

[3] For a description of the modern town with its great Vithobā temple and three annual fairs cp. *Imperial Gazetteer*, XIX p. 390.

[4] So Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion* (1909), vol. VI. p 18; Bhandarkar, *Vaishnavism*, p. 89; Mackichan, *op. cit.*, p. 171 (1278). Dr Farquhar has recently argued in favour of a later date, and supposes that he flourished "from 1400 to 1430 or thereabouts" *JRAS* (1920, April), p. 186.

but set his schoolfellows to sing songs to his favourite god. Impracticable in business, the despair of his parents, who were told that they had obtained a saint for a son, the wayward youth suddenly exchanged the company of religious mendicants for a band of highwaymen who plundered travellers and murdered even Brāhmans and pilgrims. A squadron of cavalry was at last sent to suppress them. The force was insufficient; eighty-four troopers were killed, and the rest fled. Some time afterwards he was attracted by a local saint Vishoba Khechar in an adjoining village, and one day outside the village temple he encountered the widow of one of the slaughtered horsemen, who reproached him with her poverty and the hunger of her child. It was the crisis of his life; he gave up the precious mare on which he had loved to scour the country, bestowed his clothes and available possessions on the Brāhmans, and in his own words "made a friend of repentance."[1] This was the key to all his subsequent teaching. "Your mind is full of vices," he sang. "What is the use of the pilgrimages you make? What is the use of austere practices if there is no repentance? The sins resulting from a mental act cannot be effaced by the highest holy place. The essence of the matter is very simple. Sin is effaced by repentance. So says Nama."[2]

Vishoba Khechar had apparently instructed him first in the illusionist philosophy; Māyā was only the sport of the Most High; waves with their foam and bubbles were not different from water; right ideas and reflection opened the way to knowledge; but this mood seems to have given way, perhaps under the influence of his profound moral change, to a simple trust in the Name, and an overflowing love for God. In his first years he had been a childish devotee of Çiva; in his maturity his love went forth to the many forms of Vishnu, Vithoba, Vitthal, Nārāyana, Rāma, Krishna. His repute came to the ears of Dnyāndēv, himself a former disciple of Vishoba Khechar, and they started on a long journey to Hastināpur, the modern Delhi. It was the seat of the imperial government under the strange combination of opposites, the inhuman, the accomplished, the charitable and bloodthirsty tyrant,

[1] Macauliffe, vi. p. 22.
[2] Bhandarkar, p. 90.

Mohammed bin Tughlak.[1] Nāma's repute had preceded him, and the Sultan, summoning him to his presence, required him to perform a miracle:—

> "Let me see your God Vitthal,
> Restore to life this slaughtered cow,
> Or I will strike off thy head on the spot."

The allotted hours ran out, and "the Lord of the three worlds had not yet arrived," but at the last moment the Deity came riding through the air and delivered his saint by revivifying the cow. It was a lesson to the unbelieving emperor to "walk in the paths of truth and humility"; "God," said Nāmdēv, "is contained in everything."

The travellers visited one sacred place after another till they reached Purī, and then recrossed India from the Bay of Bengal to Krishna's city, Dwarka, on the Western Sea. Later, Nāmdēv made his way to the extreme South, and reached Rāmeçvar, whence Rāma had set out on his expedition to Ceylon. At one of the temples on the way his singing drew a crowd around him, and the angry Brāhmans, fearing pollution, drove him with blows to the rear. A hymn ascribed to him commemorated the Divine vindication of his worshipper:—

> "I went, O Lord, with laughter and gladness to thy temple,
> But while Nāma was worshipping, the Brahmans forced him away.
> A lowly caste is mine, O King Krishna,
> Why was I born a calico-printer?
> I took up my blanket, went back,
> And sat behind the temple.
> As Nāma repeated the praises of God,
> The temple turned to his saints."[2]

These long wanderings brought Nāmdēv into contact with many forms both of Hinduism and Islam. Wherever he saw an external and unspiritual worship he raised his voice in protest. But in the religion of the Mohammedan conqueror

Chronology is again in difficulties, if Dnyāndēv's death is rightly assigned to 1300, as Mohammed did not establish himself on the throne till 1325. V. A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, p. 237.

[1] Macauliffe, vi. p. 32. For an analogous miracle of Vishoba Khechar cp. *ibid.*, p. 21; and of Nānak, below, p. 473.

he saw a fundamental identity with his own. By whatever name God was addressed the Unseen Reality was the same:—

"I am poor, I am miserable, thy name is my support,
Bounteous and merciful Allah, thou art generous.
I believe that thou art present before me
Thou art wise, thou art far-sighted; what conception can I form of thee?
O Nāma's Lord, thou art the Pardoner." [1]

This sense of lowly dependence was the fundamental note of Nāma's teaching. He never forgot his early experience of sin and deliverance; it gave him a confidence in the universal presence and agency of God—"In every heart God speaketh, God speaketh: doth anyone speak independently of him?" [2] With the imagery familiar to all the religious poets—as the rain is dear to the earth, or the scent of flowers to the bumble-bee, or the sun to the sheldrake, or water to the fish, so was God to his soul, the element in which he moved and had his being.

"Love for him who filleth my heart shall never be sundered;
Nāma hath applied his heart to the true Name.
As the love between a child and his mother,
So is my soul imbued with God." [3]

For such a faith the service of an idol was futile. Why bathe it when God was in the multitudinous species of the water; why weave a garland of flowers which the bee had smelled, when God was already in the bee? "In every heart and in all things uninterruptedly there is only the One God"; all life was one divine dispensation:—

"If thou give me an empire, what glory shall it be to me?
If thou cause me to beg, how shall it degrade me?
Worship God, O my soul, and thou shalt obtain the dignity of salvation,
And no more transmigration shall await thee." [4]

Singing such songs, sometimes a wanderer from village to village, sometimes at his trade in Pandharpur, Nāmdēv reached fourscore years. He never seems to have met his younger contemporary Rāmânanda. Others were singing around him,

[1] Macauliffe, vi. p. 52.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 68.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 44.

like Trilochana of Pandharpur, or Sadhna, a butcher of Sehwan in Sind. The Brāhmans saw their influence endangered. When the Queen of Chitaur visited Rav Dās, one of Rāmânanda's disciples, a tanner or leather-worker, they protested against such violations of social order. "What is dear to God is devotion," said Rav Dās. "He payeth no heed to caste." Using the familiar illustrations of the Vedântic philosophy, he boldly said:—

"Between Thee and me, between me and Thee what difference can there be?
The same as between gold and the bracelet, between water and its ripples."

But this doctrine of identity is immediately transformed into moral experience as he continues:—

"If I did not commit sin, O Eternal One,
How shouldst thou have gained the name of Purifier of sinners?"[1]

The Giver of salvation was both "father and mother."[2]

The time was ripening for a great spiritual movement through the approach of the higher thought and practice of Hinduism and Islam. Who would lead it? What forms might it take, and with what result? The first serious effort towards mutual appreciation and sympathy was made by the greatest of Indian mystics, Kabir.

II

Abundant legends gathered around Kabir's name, and much of the surviving literature attached to it may have sprung up among disciples.[3] The hymns of the presence of God celebrate the same theme in many keys; and repetitions of thought and phrase are easily caught up from singer to singer. But the authentic note of a great seer is heard too often to allow us to doubt their source in a mind of profound inner sensitiveness and daring utterance. The most authoritative record of his teaching is found in the collection entitled the Bījak. Tradition affirmed that it was dictated by Kabir himself to a disciple named

[1] Macauliffe, vi. p. 321. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

[2] Cp. Wilson, "Religious Sects," *Works*, i. p. 76. Wilson even thought it "not at all improbable that no such person ever existed," p. 69[1].

Bhagwan Dās.[1] It contains hymns in a great variety of metres previously unknown, of which Kabir is most naturally regarded as the inventor. Many more are included in the sacred book of the Sikhs, the Ādi Granth.[2] On the Hindu side Kabir is commemorated in the Bhakta Mālā as a Saint of devotion, and legendary lives are current in the Hindi, Gujarati, and Marāthi dialects. The language of the Bījak is said to be that spoken in the neighbourhood of Benares, Mirzapur, and Gorakhpur. Many foreign words had been in use for centuries since the Mohammedan invasions, and as many as 235 in Kabir's hymns have been traced to Persian, Arabic, and Turkish origins.[3]

Mystery surrounded Kabir's birth. He spoke of himself afterwards as a Çūdra, but that he was brought up by a Mohammedan weaver and his wife at Benares seems well established. Legend told that he was found lying on a blossoming water-lily in a lake called Lahar Talao, a short distance from the city. A small temple to Kabir still stands by the margin, and near it is the tomb of the weaver Niru.[4] The Qāzi was duly invited to open the Qorān, so that the first name which caught his eye might be allotted by destiny to the child. It proved to be Kabīr, "great,"[5] an epithet of Allah. But though brought up in a Mohammedan household, he was surrounded by Hindu practice, and early learned among his playmates to call out "Rām, Rām," and "Hari, Hari," when the little Moslems retorted by dubbing him with punning assonance *kafir*, "infidel." Tradition reckoned him among the followers of Rāmānanda, and even related that he devised a little stratagem as a youth to secure initiation into Rāmānanda's community. Chronology as usual interposes a difficulty. There is a general

[1] Cp *The Bijak of Kabir*, tr Rev. Ahmad Shah, Hamirpur, U.P (1917), p 31. Mr Burn, in Hastings' *ERE*, vii p 631, accepts Bhagwan Dās, "one of Kabir's immediate disciples," as the compiler, but curiously postpones the work for fifty years after Kabir's death. The term Bijak is probably used in the sense of a "key to a hidden treasure." Cp. *Ramaini*, xxxv 5, Shah, p. 71.

[2] Cp. below, p 479. Macauliffe, vol. vi. pp. 142–316.

[3] Shah, p 30.

[4] Macauliffe, vi. p. 123.

[5] From the same root as Akbar.

agreement to place Kabir's death in 1518. The latest date assigned to that of Rāmânanda is 1410, at the advanced age of one hundred and eleven. How could Kabir have been one of his missionary band, or even old enough to be received into his religious house? The boy's precocity might have gained him early admission, and his birth was carried back to 1398.[1]

Kabir grew up in the weaver's house, and practised his trade, though like the Apostle Paul he found time also to teach and to travel. For him the universe was a wondrous loom,—

> "No one knew the mystery of that weaver
> Who came into the world and spread the warp.
> The earth and the sky are the two beams,
> The sun and moon are two filled shuttles.
> Taking a thousand threads he spreads them lengthways;
> To-day he weaveth still, but hard to reach is the far-off end." [2]

The threads are the threads of Karma, and the fabric into which they are woven is the mighty sum of conscious and unconscious being. The whole background of Kabir's thought is Hindu. His favourite name for God is Rām. Like all his Vaishnavite predecessors he seeks release from transmigration, and opens the path to deliverance by loving devotion. The ancient mythology provides him with frequent illustrations; the great gods of the venerable Triad, Brahmā, Vishnu, Çiva, still perform their functions in the economy of existence. And Kabir has not studied philosophy for nothing; its language is often on his lips. He may reject its formal systems, but he can boldly restate its ideas. He looks with pity on the many who "grew weary searching and searching," for "few were they that found." Reliance on the Scriptures, declarations that God

[1] Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism*, p. 69, provisionally accepts this arrangement. At the upper end Macauliffe (p. 140[1]) quotes a native work which dates the death as early as 1448; while Mr G. H. Westcott, *Kabir and the Kabir Panth*, Cawnpore, 1907, cuts the knot by delaying his birth till 1440, Chronolog. table, p. vii, without specifying any evidence at all. Westcott supposes him to have been really Mohammedan by birth, and associated with the Sufi order; he joined Rāmânanda's followers to break down the barriers between Moslems and Hindus. Dr Farquhar solves the chronological difficulty by bringing down Rāmânanda's date to about 1400–1470, *ante*, p. 428, and *JRAS* (1920, April), p. 187.

[2] *The Bijak*, tr. Shah (1917), *Ramaini* 28, p. 67.

was *nirguna* or *saguṇa* or *asat*,—these were all vain; "the All-Merciful, the All-Great, he is seen by few indeed."[1] If the arguments of philosophy were futile—"millions of births and ages passed in whims and fancies,"—the practices of caste and idolatry were even worse. Let no false pride mislead men; "that Hindu and Turk are of different family is false."[2] Turning to the Mohammedans, he cried—

"Adam, who was first, did not know
Whence came mother Eve.
Then there was not Turk nor Hindu:
No blood of the mother, no seed of the father.
Then there were no cows, no butchers;
Who, pray, cried 'In the name of God'?
Then there was no race, no caste:
Who made Hell and Paradise?"[3]

The Veda and the Qorān might have their rituals, but "if you milk black and yellow cows together, will you be able to distinguish their milk?"[4] Hindu and Turk were pots of the same clay; Allah and Rāma are but different names.[5] Why, then, bow the shaven head to the ground, what is the use of sacred bathing-places or prostrations in the mosque? The pilgrim marches with deceit in his heart, what profits his journey to Mecca? And "if by repeating Rāma's name the world is saved, then by repeating 'sugar' the mouth is sweetened": if men could get rich by merely saying "wealth," none would remain poor. Looking on the naked ascetic, he declared that all the deer of the forest might equally be saved; the bathers at morning and evening were satirically reminded that frogs were in the water all day; if the worship of stones was of any avail, Kabir proclaimed that he would worship a mountain; but lip-service could profit nothing:

"It is not by fasting and repeating prayers and the creed
That one goeth to heaven;
The inner veil of the temple of Mecca
Is in man's heart, if *the truth* be known."[6]

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[1] Shah, p. 238. [2] *Ramaini* xxvi. 8, Shah, p. 66.
[3] *Ramaini* xl., Shah, p. 72.
[4] *Ram.* xxxix. 2, lxii. 5, Shah, pp. 72, 82.
[5] *Shabda* xxx., xcvii., Shah, pp. 110, 141.
[6] Macauliffe, vi. pp. 140, 145, 215, 205.

"Make thy mind thy Kaaba, thy body its enclosing temple,
Conscience its prime teacher;
Sacrifice wrath, doubt, and malice;
Make patience thine utterance of the five prayers;
The Hindus and the Musalmans have the same Lord."[1]

Married, with son and daughter, Kabir plied his trade at Benares, where he confronted the Brāhman pandits and ascetics. For some time, also, he lived at Mānikpur on the Ganges, in the Fatehpur district, and he afterwards proceeded to Jhusi, opposite to the fort of Allahabad. Here he encountered famous Mohammedan teachers, of whom Sharkh Taqqi was the most distinguished.[2] A cotton-cleaner by profession, he belonged to a Sufi order, and Moslem tradition claims him as Kabir's *pīr* or teacher. Kabir made no pious journeys to Vrindāvana or Purī, but he speaks of himself as much-travelled, he knew many men and cities; he has wandered into the Deccan as far as the Nerbudda river; he has been a visitor at kings' courts; the royal and the rich have been among his disciples. From Shaikh Taqqi he is said to have asked a blessing which would enable him to remove the differences which parted Hindus and Moslems.[3] It was a vain attempt at reconciliation, his efforts only awoke anger, and Mohammedan hostility culminated in a summons before the Sultan Sikandar Lodi at Jaunpur in 1495.[4] Rumour had already ascribed to Kabir the revivification of a dead boy and girl. The sovereign of Delhi imposed the same test which his predecessor Muhammad bin Tughlak had demanded from Nāmdēv. A cow was slaughtered in the imperial presence, and Kabir, who had already emerged triumphant from three trials, was ordered to reanimate her. He stroked her with his hand, made an encouraging noise as if driving her, and the cow stood up quite sound.[5] But religious enmity was not the only issue of Kabir's labours. Out of the storms of life's experience he had won peace.

[1] Macauliffe, vi p. 258.

[2] *Ramaini* xlviii., Shah, p. 76. Westcott, p. 39, endeavours to distinguish between two teachers of the same name.

[3] Westcott, p. 42.

[4] On the river Gamti, slightly N.W. of Benares. Sikandar reigned from 1488 to 1517; he ruined the temples at Mathurā, cp. *ante*, p. 433.

[5] Macauliffe, vi. p. 133, quoting a hymn ascribed to Kabir; Shah, pp. 24–26.

"When I met the True Guru, he showed me the way,
The Father of the world then became dear to my mind;
I am thy son, Thou art my Father,
We both live in the same place." [1]

So he could say, "Kabir is the child of Allah and Ram; He is my Guru, He is my Pīr." [2] There were men and women of both religions who could follow this vision, though afar off. The aged Teacher was at Magahar, some fifteen miles west of Gorakhpur. Common belief affirmed that those who passed away there would be reborn as asses, and the disciples entreated that the Master should return to Benares to die propitiously in the holy city. "What is Benares, what the waste land of Magahar," replied the saint, "if Rāma dwells in my heart?" His departure seemed to him like a bridal; King Rāma, his husband, had come to his house to fetch him; "I go hence," he exclaimed triumphantly, "wedded to the One, the Immortal." [3] The Hindus wished to cremate the body, the Mohammedans to bury it. The disputants waxed hot over the bier, when a voice bade them raise the shroud which covered it. The corpse had vanished, and in its place lay only a heap of flowers. [4]

Kabir is regarded as the father of Hindī literature. His copious utterances may be classified according to their metres, but they cannot be arranged in dates. The clues to his spiritual history are lost, and the phases of his experience toss to and fro in his verses, lighting up his character and illustrating his moods, but obscuring his development. He starts as a follower of Rāmānanda, who "drank deep of the juice of Rāma." That teaching he repeated to a heedless world till he was weary. [5] Around him he saw only the blind pushing the blind, and both falling into the well. [6] Vehement in his protests against conventional religion, and unable to carry

[1] Macauliffe, vi. p. 197.

[2] *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, tr. Rabindranath Tagore (London, 1914), p. 46, lxix.

[3] Shah, p. 27.

[4] The voice was variously ascribed to an aged saint, an utterance from the sky, and an appearance of Kabir himself. The grave has ever since been in Mohammedan keeping, Westcott, p. 44.

[5] *Shabda* lxxvii. 4; Shah, p. 132. Cp. Tagore, p. 23 (xxix).

[6] Westcott, p. 79 (4), 71 (117). Cp. *Luke* vi. 39; *Matt.* xv. 14.

either its professors of learning or its ignorant commonalty with him, he stood alone, and the loneliness was very grievous. Like the Buddha of old he saw the whole world burning,[1] but he found no leader to whom he might join himself. "I never met a bosom friend," he complains sadly.[2] It was an iron age, but that which was in the vessel must needs come out of the spout.[3] Sometimes it seemed that he was the only madman and all the world was wise; and then confidence replaced self-doubt, Kabir was the only true Yogin, the rest were delusion's slaves.[4] So life was for him, as for Plato, a practice of dying.[5] Fierce sometimes was the struggle. "I am the worst of men," he cries in self-abasement,[6] like the apostolic "chief of sinners." He counts up his possessions, lust, wrath, covetousness, pride and envy; "I have forgotten him who made and favoured me—preserve me, O God, though I have offended thee." "There is none so merciful as thou, none so sinful as I."[7] For such a leader life was bound to be a battle, and in noble words he called comrades to the strife which he himself waged even to old age:—[8]

"Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight.
Fight, O my brother, as long as life lasts.

. . . . . .

In the field of this body a great war goes forward,
Against passion, anger, pride, and greed.

It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment, and purity that this battle is raging, and the sword that rings forth most loudly is the sword of His Name . . .

It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker, for the vow of the truth-seeker is harder than that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her husband.

For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle with death is soon ended;

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as life lasts it never ceases."[9]

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[1] *Sakhi* 340, Shah, p. 216. [2] *Ibid.*, 339, Shah, p 316.

[3] *Shabda* xxi. 5, Shah, p. 105.

[4] *Shabda* xlviii. 5, *Sakhi* iii. 16, Shah, pp. 118, 214. *Shabda* cii. 5, Shah, p. 144.

[5] Westcott, p. 51 (14).

[6] Macauliffe, vi. p. 279; Westcott, p. 71 (120).

[7] Macauliffe, vi. pp. 244, 230. [8] Macauliffe, vi. p. 229 (iii).

[9] Tagore, *One Hundred Hymns*, p. 28.

So did he wrestle with himself, declaring that there was no penance higher than truth—"In him within whose heart is truth doth God himself abide,"—till he could say, "I have now become pure in heart, and my mind is happy."[1] The sense of deliverance burst forth in ecstasy, "Thou hast united Thy heart to my heart."

The life of emotion must needs have its vicissitudes; the life of thought was more stable. Rāma's cliff was very high, but Kabir had climbed it, and though clouds might sometimes veil it, he could never forget the mighty prospect which its elevation had afforded.

"The house of Kabir is on the mountain peak, where the path is winding.
There the foothold even of the ant is not sure, there men load their oxen no more."[2]

The first result of the contemplation of this vast expanse was the intense conviction of the omnipresence of God. To this theme innumerable hymns are dedicated.

"None can find the limit or the secret of the Sustainer of the earth:
He shineth in the plantain blossom and in the sunshine,
And hath taken his dwelling in the pollen of the lotus.
The great God reacheth from the lower to the upper regions of the firmament;
He illumineth the silent realm where there is neither sun nor moon.
Know that he pervadeth the body as well as the universe.
He who knoweth God in his heart and repeateth his name,
Becometh as he."[3]

"The earth bloometh, the firmament rejoiceth:
Every heart is gladdened by God's light.
The Lord God rejoiceth in endless ways,
Whithersoever I look, there is he contained."[4]

But this was no monist doctrine of identity. The ancient formula "That art thou" is expressly repudiated. The reality of the world cannot be denied, for it would involve the denial

[1] *Sakhi* 343, Shah, p. 217; Macauliffe, vi. p. 250.
[2] *Sakhis* xxxi., xxxiii., Shah, p. 187.
[3] Macauliffe, vi. p. 268 (condensed).
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

of its Infinite Cause. Kabir can try his hand at retelling the story of creation: "In the first beginning there was thought" —the Unconditioned Intelligence whence all things proceed. Brahmā, Vishnu, Çiva, and Çakti play their appointed parts with the help of the mystic syllable Om and the sacred verse known as the Gāyatrī.[1] But this learned trifling in Upanishad style is not Kabir's real philosophy. That rests on profound inner experience, where "the Eternal Being is his own proof." It is possible for the soul to confront the Source of its existence, to recognise it as All-pervading, and yet to retain its own independence.—

> "O Rama, I am standing at thy door!
> O Kabir, come and meet with me!
> Thou art merged in all,
> But I would not utterly be merged in thee"[2]

It is an experience of wonder and awe, too profound for words. Behind all visible forms lies the realm of the Unseen, unconfined, illimitable, home of all types of creation in the mind of God. No human speech can show forth its fulness —

> "O how may I ever express that secret Word?
> O how can I say He is not like this, He is like that?
> If I say that He is within me the universe is ashamed
> If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.
> He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be indivisibly one,
> The conscious and the unconscious both are his footstools
> He is neither manifest nor hidden, He is neither revealed nor unrevealed:
> There are no words to tell that which He is"[3]

Here is a conception which embraces all the contrarieties of life, and transcends them all. Like the opposites which Heracleitus beheld blended within a higher unity, differences and antagonisms disappear. The right hand and the left hand are the same; the inward and the outward become as one sky; life and death are in conflict no more, their separation is ended; in the light of love day and night, joy and sorrow, cease to be

[1] Cp. *Ramainis* i.-iii., Shah; p. 51 ff.; Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism*, p. 70; Tagore, p. 21.

[2] *Sakhi* cclx., Shah, p. 209.

[3] Tagore, p. 6. ix.

at strife; fear and trouble pass away, and renunciation is transfigured into bliss. For he who is within is without, and one love pervades the whole world.[1]

In the valuable interpretative essay by Miss Evelyn Underhill this apprehension of opposites as complementary in a perfect whole is described as "the synthetic vision of God," where the contrast between the Absolute of philosophy and the "sure true Friend" of devotional religion is carried up to a higher plane and disappears in light.[2] Kabir's vision soars above the world of sense and change, as all Hindu metaphysic sought to rise above the successions of time into the realm of the Eternal. All round us is a constant process, the fruit comes from the flower, the tree from the seed, and within the seed is an inmost germ of life. So in the universe which he figured as a mighty tree,[3] behind its wondrous forms and manifold forces, conducting its growth and accomplishing its dissolution, lay the mysterious Brahman, shaping to our view the hidden treasures of the Everlasting and Unseen. The limit and the Limitless, the finite and the Infinite, were both there in mutual relation, and neither could exist without the other. What, then, united them? Even this mighty difference must be resolved in some secret source, the inner spring of all existence. Reason must needs fail to describe it, but insight could pierce the veil and affirm it, and Kabir could boldly sing—

"As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree, as the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are in the void—
So from beyond the Infinite, the Infinite comes; and from the Infinite the finite extends.

. . . . .

He himself is the limit and the limitless; and beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.
He is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.

. . . . . .

The Supreme Soul is seen within the soul,
The Point is seen within the Supreme Soul,
And within the Point the reflection is seen again.
Kabir is blest because he has this supreme vision."[4]

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[1] Tagore, in many passages, *e.g* pp. 13, 15, 16, 19, 42, 65.
[2] Tagore, p. xv.
[3] Macauliffe, vi. p. 242, the manifestation of God. Tagore, p. 4, vii.

So Plato had mounted beyond the worlds of Becoming and Being to the Good, and a later disciple had designated this Supreme Mind as a Point, neither good nor evil but above both. So Plotinus, in whom Platonism reached its highest expression, sought to apprehend the Absolute, as yet undivided between subject and object, and hence beneath all diversity even within Itself. And so Clement of Alexandria had pursued his search for Reality till he too reached a Point or Monad where God could be recognised not by what he *is* but by what he is *not*.[1] But, like Kabir, Clement needs a God whom he can love. As he contemplates the Creator's goodness, his heart overflows with holy joy. He dwells on the variety of the divine graces and invitations with which the Eternal deigns to draw to himself the spirits of the children he has made, and even likens his anxiety for souls to the mother-bird's care for a nestling that has fallen out of the nest. Such tenderness can he combine with the severity of metaphysical abstraction. Is it more than a coincidence that Clement and Kabir should both help themselves out with intermediate conceptions which bear at least a superficial analogy to each other? As Clement surveys the higher correspondences of human thought in the teachings of prophets and lawgivers, of poets and philosophers, he sees everywhere the action of a Divine Revealer, using the Logos or Word as his great educative instrument.[2] Hindu theology had long evolved a conception of *Çabda*, "sound" or utterance, which played a great part in the defence of the doctrine of the eternity of the Vedas.[3] The term acquired important significance when it came to be used not of individuals but of species, and thus stood for some kind of intellectual conception.[4] The Vedânta Sûtras affirmed that the world originated from the Çabda or Word, not in the sense in which Brahman was its material cause, but in the sense of the logical priority of the idea to the class or group. It is Kabir's way to

[1] The familiar antithesis of the *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* Brahman in Hindu philosophy.

[2] Cp. J. E. Carpenter, *Phases of Early Christianity* (New York, 1916), pp. 345–349.

[3] Cp. Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*,[2] vol. iii. (1868), p. 71 ff.

[4] Cp. Çaṅkara on *The Vedânta Sûtras*, i. 3, 28: *SBE*, xxxiv. p. 202.

play with the language of the schools, with māyā, the gunas, and the like. So he starts one of his fancy sketches of the world's evolution by assuming the existence of Light and Sound (or Word). The Word was a woman (Desire), identified in another cosmogonic sketch with the Gāyatrī, the most sacred verse of the Rig Veda.[1] The student of the ancient tales of the origin of the universe is familiar with the mysterious potencies ascribed to certain words such as the sacred syllable Ôm, a perfect reservoir of powerful energies: "From the word Ôm the creation sprang," says Kabir.[2] So the Word comes to be the symbol or expression of the spiritual principle of the whole field of existence. To recognise it is to destroy doubt.[3] The only way out of transmigration is to "make your abode with the Word," to live in fellowship with the Eternal,[4] for it is the Word which gives the vision of the Invisible.[5] That quenches all ignoble cravings, for "he in whose heart God hath implanted his Word hath ceased to thirst."[6] There are teachers of divers kinds, says Kabir, "worship ever that Guru who can reveal the secret of the Word."[7] Nay, "the Word is the Guru, I have heard it and become the disciple," and it is the Word from which the universe has sprung.[8] So it belongs really to the soul's very being; it is the authentic witness of participation in the Immortal,—

"Kabir says: 'Listen to the Word, the Truth, which is your essence. He speaks the Word to himself; and He Himself is the Creator.'"[9]

And the utterance of the Word is love and joy.

Philosophies had been reared in India on the doctrines of pain or illusion. Existence had been viewed in the gloom of universal suffering, or the shadow of unreality. For Kabir such vision was essentially false. True, egoism was the root of all evil; no insight was possible for the heart insistent on the satisfaction of its own claims. "Where there is 'I' there is

[1] *Ramainis* i. and ii.; Shah, p. 51; Bhandarkar, p. 70.
[2] Tagore, p. 56, lxxxii.
[3] *Sakhi* lxxxviii., Shah, p. 192.
[4] *Ibid.*, cccxxxviii., Shah, p. 226.
[5] *Ibid.*, cclxiii., Shah, p. 219.
[6] Macauliffe, vi. p. 227. Cp. other passages quoted by Westcott, p. 68.
[7] *Sakhi* ccccxvii., Shah, p. 225.
[8] Tagore, p. 39, lvii.
[9] Tagore, p. 33, xlvi.

'my'"; and sorrow bred sin; but "where there is mercy there is strength; where forgiveness, there is He."[1] When Kabir had been thrown into the Ganges in chains, flung into fire and exposed to an elephant's fury, by the orders of Sikandar Lodi, tradition told that he sang "My spirits fell not, why should my body fear?" and bade his followers sow flowers for those who for them sowed thorns.[2] Let daily life be free from care, "the Giver is powerful; the beasts of the field, the birds and the insects, have neither wealth nor storehouse."[3] When his mother wept at his adoption of the religious life, he replied, "While the thread was passing through the bobbin I forgot my Beloved God. Hear, O my mother, the One God will provide for us and them."[4] He understood the great paradox of life, "Who saves his head loses his head; who severs his head finds a head"; does not the candle give added light when trimmed?[5] The key to the great secret lay in love, and "he drinks the cup of love who lays down his life for others."[6] Such love he saw for ever pouring through the world. The mighty rhythm of the universe was its constant manifestation. For the heart that was darkened with desire earth and sky did but swing in the swing of delusion. Night and day they swung, kings and peoples, millions of souls together through each year's rains, through the Four Ages, through illimitable Æons.[7] Do but mount to Kabir's house on Rāma's height and you will see the infinite process revealed as the Creator's Game of Joy.[8] Earth and sky, sun and moon, land and water, oceans and rivers, life and death, are all his wondrous play. God is in all consciousness, all joys and sorrows of the common lot, "He holds all within his bliss."[9]

"Behold what wonderful rest is in the Supreme Spirit! and he enjoys it who makes himself meet for it.
Held by the cords of love, the swing of the ocean of joy sways to and fro; and a mighty sound breaks forth in song.

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[1] *Sakhi* ccccxxx., Shah, p. 225.
[2] Macauliffe, vi. p. 267; Westcott, p. 83 (24).
[3] Westcott, p. 95 (90). Cp. Tagore, p. 42, lxiii.
[4] Macauliffe, vi. p. 216.
[5] Westcott, p. 92 (75).
[6] Westcott, p. 84 (29).
[7] *Hindola*, Shah, p. 182 f.
[8] Tagore, p. 56, lxxxii.
[9] Tagore, p. 21, xxvi.

Music is all around it, and there the heart partakes of the joy of the Infinite Sea.

There the unstruck music is sounded; it is the music of the love of the Three Worlds.

Look upon life and death; there is no separation between them."[1]

Like the Seer of the Apocalypse, Kabir heard the whole universe singing in adoration day and night. The harmonies of the Divine Joy sounded continually in his ears; the unbeaten melodies filled the air like light. "Dance, my heart, dance to-day with joy!" he cried in ecstasy, the hills and the sea, life and death, dance to these strains of love. Nay, the Creator himself "dances in rapture, and waves of form arise from His dance."[2] Well might he appeal to the selfish and blind—

'Open your eyes of love, and see Him who pervades this world.
He will tell you the secret of love and detachment, and then you will know indeed that He transcends this universe.

There the Eternal Fountain is playing its endless life-streams of birth and death.
They call Him Emptiness who is the Truth of truths, in Whom all truths are stored[3]

There within Him creation goes forward, which is beyond all philosophy: for philosophy cannot attain to Him:
There is an endless world, O my Brother! and there is the Nameless Being, of whom nought can be said
Only he knows it who has reached that region: it is other than all that is heard and said."[4]

To those who had penetrated to this open secret he might well say, "We shall not die though all creation die; we have found One that quickeneth."[5] Using the figure common in *bhakti* poetry of the night-bird gazing at the moon, he declares God his Lord and himself God's servant—nay, "I am Thy son, Thou art my Father, we both live in the same place."[6] Such a relation no outward change can sever; it is the guarantee of immortality.

[1] Tagore, p. 12 f. Cp. the whole of this wonderful poem.
[2] Tagore, pp. 21, 24, xxvi. and xxxii.
[3] Alluding to the doctrines of the "Void," and the "True of the true," *ante*, pp. 88, 195.
[4] Tagore, p. 50 f., lxxvi.; cp. p. 65, xcvii.
[5] Westcott, p. 96 (96). [6] Macauliffe, vi. p. 197.

"From the beginning till the ending of time there is love between Thee and me, and how shall such love be extinguished?
Kabir says: 'As the river enters into the ocean, so my heart touches thee'" [1]

III

As Kabir was growing old near Benares, and the youthful Chaitanya was a boy at Nadiya, the fame of a new teacher began to spread through North India from the Punjab. This was Nānak, the founder of the community of the Sikhs.[2]

[1] Tagore, p. 26, xxxiv Out of the teachings of Kabir a religious order or Panth was formed in his name The Kabir Panthis may be found all the way from Orissa and Bihar to the Punjab (though they are not numerous in Bengal), in the Central Provinces, in Bombay and Gujarat There is an establishment of pre eminent dignity at Benares (Wilson, "Religious Sects," *Works*, i p 97), and two at Maghar for Hindus and Mohammedans (Westcott, p 99) Some are ascetics living in religious houses (but occasionally keeping concubines), others follow trades (*e g* especially as weavers), abstaining from meat and intoxicants (*Census Reports* for 1911, Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, p 243, Punjab, p 122) The latter reckons the Panthis in the Punjab at 89,254, the numbers having considerably declined since 1891. One branch derives its succession from a disciple named Dharm Das, to whom Kabir himself appeared (according to one tradition) after his death, having appointed him his successor, and one of their books, the *Sukh Nidan*, represents Kabir as the Infinite Spirit, Creator of the world, etc. (Westcott, p 144). Dadu, a disciple of one of the Panth teachers about 1600, at the close of the reign of Akbar, is commemorated by Dādu Panthis (*Census Report* for the Punjab, 1891, p 147, Rose, *Glossary of Tribes*, etc., ii. p 215) The teaching of Dadu was of a Quietist type (Wilson, i. p 103 ff.) "Whatsoever Rama willeth, that without the least difficulty shall be Why therefore do ye kill yourselves with grief, when grief can avail you nothing?" "All things are exceeding sweet to those who love God." "O God who art the Truth, grant me contentment, love, devotion, faith." "He that formed the mind made it as it were a temple for himself to dwell in" The influence of Kabir may be traced far beyond the limits of those who take his name "There is hardly a town in India where strolling beggars may not be found singing songs of Kabir in original, or as translated in the local dialects"; Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects*, p 496.

[2] The materials for the study of the Religion of the Sikhs have been laboriously collected by Mr M. A. Macauliffe, and presented in his translations of the hymns of Nānak and his successors with full biographical details, *The Sikh Religion*, 6 vols., Oxford, 1909. The following sketch is founded on this ample work. On the Ādi Granth, see below. Some passages from an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1911, are here reproduced by the Editor's kind permission.

The parents of Nānak were Kshatriyas by caste, and he belonged to the ranks of the "twice-born." His father was an accountant in the village of Talwandi,[1] about thirty miles south-west of the city of Lahore. Though surrounded by forest, it had been sacked and destroyed by Mohammedan invasions, but at the time of Nānak's birth it had been restored by Rai Bular, son of a Musalman Rajput, who built a fort at the summit of a small tumulus, and ruled his heritage below with a tolerant indifference. There Nānak was born in 1469.[2] The babe entered life with the appropriate premonitions of future greatness. His utterance at birth was "as the laughing voice of a wise man joining a social gathering"; the astrologer who drew his horoscope, following the example of the Buddhist Asita two thousand years before, duly regretted that he would never live to see him in his future glory, bearing the umbrella, the symbol of regal or prophetic dignity. At five years old the boy talked of religion: at seven he was taken to the village school, the teacher wrote out the alphabet for him, and the boy promptly composed an acrostic upon it. The woods around the village sheltered numbers of recluses and ascetics who sang to him the songs of the Lord: and he became familiar with the aspects of nature which are frequently reflected in his hymns. To qualify him to succeed his father in the accountancy he was taught Persian, and astonished his instructor by composing an acrostic in that alphabet also, which showed that he had already made acquaintance with the language of Sūfiism. When the time arrived for him to be invested with the sacred thread of the "twice-born," he refused to wear it, and the boy of nine was credited with the declaration—

"By adoring and praising the Name honour and a true thread are obtained.
In this way a sacred thread shall be put on which will not break, and which will be fit for entrance into God's court."[3]

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[1] The modern Naukana.

[2] The earliest authentic biography was written by Bhai Gur Das, who flourished about 1600. Macauliffe, i. p. lxxiii.

[3] Macauliffe, i. 17, cp. 238, *slok* xv., the *jansu* is the Hindu's sacrificial thread.

Sent into the forest to herd buffaloes, he plunged into meditation, and his hours of rest were adorned with wonder. The shadow of a tree remained stationary for him as for the youthful Gotama; or a large cobra watched over him and raised its hood to protect him. Reproaches for idleness were of no avail; agriculture was turned into parables. When his father called for help on the land, the youth replied—

"Make thy body the field, good works the seed, irrigate with God's name,
Make thy heart the cultivator, God will germinate in thy heart."[1]

Married at the age of fourteen, tillage, shop-keeping, horse-dealing, Government service, all failed to hold him. At one time his father thought him mad. When the doctor was brought and the youth was asked about his symptoms, he could only say that he felt the pain of separation from God, and a pang of hunger for contemplation of him. At last, however, he became storekeeper under the Mohammedan governor of the district, Daulat Khan, and discharged his duties with great success. But one day in the forest he was taken in vision into God's presence, and the memory of that supreme communion was enshrined in the opening verses of the long poem known as the Japji, the morning devotion of the Sikh:—

"There is but one God whose name is True, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great and bountiful.
The True One is, was, O Nanak, and the True One also shall be."[2]

So he abandoned the world, faced the charge of possession by an evil spirit, put on religious dress, and after a day's silence inaugurated his new career by the solemn declaration, "There is no Hindu and no Musalman."[3] Both had alike forgotten the inner secret of their religion. Interrogated by the magistrate

[1] Macauliffe, i. 21.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 35. The poet's name is usually inserted as a kind of signature, and was so used as a sort of authentication by his successors.

[3] *Ibid.* i. 37.

in the presence of the Mohammedan governor, the young seer explained his meaning thus—

"Make kindness thy mosque, sincerity thy prayer-carpet, what is just and lawful thy Qurán,
Modesty thy circumcision, civility thy fasting, so shalt thou be a Musalman.

. . . . . .

There are five prayers, five times for prayer, and five names for them—
The first should be truth, the second what is right, the third charity in God's name,
The fourth good intentions, the fifth the praise and glory of God."[1]

When they adjourned for afternoon service to the mosque, Nānak laughed in the magistrate's face as he conducted the service. The outraged official complained to the governor, who had also been present. He was full of apprehension, replied Nānak, for a new-born filly, for he suddenly remembered a well in the enclosure where it had been unloosed, and feared it would fall in. The governor's prayers, he added, were equally worthless, for *he* had been meditating on buying horses in Kabul. The stricken culprits acknowledged the charge. Such was the need of inwardness instead of lip-service.

Thus launched on his career as prophet, Nānak broke down caste restrictions in every direction. A minstrel named Mardana had attached himself to him as his servant, and they started on religious wanderings. In the house of a carpenter of the lowest caste he declined to eat his food within the usual enclosure smeared with cow-dung: "the whole earth," he pleaded, "is my sacred lines, and he who loveth truth is pure." At the sacred bathing-place at Hardwar he exposed the futility of whose who threw water to the east for the spirits of their ancestors. He converted thieves; he cured a leper; as Kabir had reanimated the emperor's cow, so Nānak at Delhi brought to life an elephant belonging to the reigning sovereign Ibrahim Lodi. The gospel miracle of the blasted fig-tree was reversed, and a withered pipal tree beneath which he rested suddenly

[1] Macauliffe, i. 38 f. The five times of prayer are at dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night.

became green.[1] At Vrindāvana he saw a dramatic representation of the sports of Krishna. He is tempted in the wilderness, and the Lord of the Age offers him a palace of pearls, beautiful women, the sovereignty of the East and West; he is unmoved. From Benares he went to Gayā, where he refused to perform the ceremonies for the repose of ancestral souls for which Chaitanya would afterwards travel thither. Purī and its temple awoke only an impassioned plea for a spiritual worship. So he passes to and fro among devotees and ascetics, in courts and cottages, among the learned Hindus and Mohammedan saints. Once more in the Punjab he visits a Moslem shrine whose incumbent Shaikh Ibrahim cried broken-hearted to the saint he served. "My friend," urged Nānak, "examine the truth, lip-worship is hollow. The Beloved is not far from thee; behold him in thy heart."[2] At length, after twelve years, he returns home. Fame has preceded him, and his father goes out ceremoniously on horseback to meet him. But neither parental entreaties nor conjugal duties can detain him, and the prophet with Mardana and his rebeck sets forth anew.

Such a teacher naturally gathered disciples (Sikhs) around him, and little societies formed themselves in the places which he visited. At Kartārpur, east of Lahore, devotion began, a watch before day, with the repetition of the long composition entitled the Japji.[3] Other hymns were read and expounded before breakfast; the disciples met again in the third watch; in the evening they dined together, and sang hymns before retiring. The teacher demanded of them freedom from the distractions of sense, pious discourse and devout praise, instead of holding up an arm, standing on one leg, living upon roots, or scorching amid five fires. They must associate with holy men, serve those who were superior to themselves, expel all evil from their hearts, renounce slander, pride, and obstinacy. In accordance with

[1] Macauliffe, i. 59. The miracle occurred again in Ceylon, p. 155; and once more before his death, p. 188.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. 85. This language is in the style of Kabir. He was supposed to have met him when he was twenty-seven (1496), and he was certainly familiar afterwards with his hymns. Westcott, *Kabir*, p. 24.

[3] Macauliffe, i. 195. Most of this elaborate hymn and others by Nānak and some of his successors may be read in Miss Field's little vol., *The Religion of the Sikhs* (Wisdom of the East series), 1914.

ancient custom they were required to prove their humility by drinking of the water in which the Guru had washed his feet. That act of reverence made a man a Sikh.

Tradition extended the area of Nānak's preaching as far as Ceylon, and even sent him to Arabia. In the blue dress of a Mohammedan pilgrim, with a faqir's staff in his hand and a book of his hymns under his arm, he made his way to Mekka and sat among the worshippers in the great mosque. As he lay down to sleep at night he turned his feet towards the sacred stone. An Arab priest angrily kicked the sleeper and asked why he had turned his feet towards God. "Turn my feet," was the well-known reply, "in the direction in which God is not." The indignant Musalman dragged his feet round, whereupon, to justify the Guru, the whole temple revolved to match.[1] Devout rationalists understand the wonder in a spiritual sense, as a symbol of the conversion of the centre of Islām. The Teacher vindicated himself before the authorities by quoting a hymn of Kabir—

"O brethren, the Vedas and the Qurán are false, and free not the mind from anxiety.
If for a moment thou restrain thy mind, God will appear before thee.

. . . . .

Take heed, ever fix thine eyes on Him who is everywhere present.
God is the purest of the pure; shall I doubt whether there is another equal to Him?
Kabir, he to whom the Merciful hath shown mercy, knoweth Him."[2]

And addressing his hearers in Persian he added—

"I have consulted the four Vedas, but these writings find not God's limits.
I have consulted the four books of the Mohammedans, but God's worth is not described in them.

. . . . . .

I have dwelt by rivers and streams, and bathed at the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage,

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[1] Cp. the story of Nāmdēv, *ante*, p. 454.
[2] Macauliffe, i. 177.

I have lived among the forests and glades of the three worlds,
and eaten bitter and sweet:
I have seen the seven nether regions and heavens upon heavens,
And I, Nānak, *say* man shall be true to his faith if he fear *God* and *do good* works."

At Bagdad he proclaimed the call to prayer, substituting other Arabic words for the mention of Mohammed, and announced his mission: "I have appeared in this age to indicate the way unto men.[1] I reject all sects and know only one God, whom I recognise in the earth, the heavens, and in all directions."

When Babar invaded the Punjab in 1526, Nānak and Mardana were at Saiyidpur. On the fall of the city a general massacre followed. Nānak and his much-tried follower were spared, but were enslaved. "I have sold myself in the shop for God's word," sang Nānak; "where He placed me, there am I placed." Brought at last before the Emperor, Nānak declined his proffered gifts, refused to embrace Islam, and bade him "deliver just judgments, be merciful to the vanquished, and worship God in spirit and in truth."[2] So the years ran on, and the Teacher returned to Kartārpur, where his faithful companion, the minstrel Mardana, died. "Sit on the bank of the Ravi," said the Master, "fix thine attention on God, repeat his Name, and thy soul shall be absorbed in his light." A little later it was the Guru's turn. His two sons were neither of them fit to succeed him, and he chose a devoted attendant, to whom he gave the name of Angad, to carry on his work. Kinsmen and disciples, whole troops of Sikhs, Hindus, and Musalmans, gathered round him to bid him farewell. In solemn words he was believed to sum up his life's teaching; the omnipresence and omnipotence of God, the transitoriness of the

[1] An early tradition related that on Nānak's death in a prior age two roads opened before his soul; one led to heaven, the other to hell. Nānak chose the latter, and having descended to the nether realms brought all the inhabitants out. The Lord God said to him, "These sinners cannot enter heaven; you must return into the world and liberate them." So Nānak came into this world, and the Guru comes and goes till that multitude shall have found their salvation. *Dabistan* (tr. Shea and Troyer, 1843), ii. p. 269.

[2] Macauliffe, i. 121.

world, the destiny of the soul according to its deeds, were the great themes of his message.[1] The Hindus desired to cremate him, the Mohammedans to bury him. "Let the Hindus set flowers on my right hand," said the dying Teacher, "and the Mohammedans on my left. They whose flowers are fresh in the morning shall dispose of my body." They sang at his request a hymn of praise; he made the last obeisance to God, and blended his light with Guru Angad's. In the morning the flowers on both sides were fresh; but when the sheet spread over his body was lifted, it had disappeared.[2]

The hymns of Nānak, like those of Kabir, contain two distinct currents which frequently flow on side by side like the Rhone and the Saône, and hardly mingle. On the one hand is a mystical pantheism: "Wherever I look, there is God; no one else is seen."[3] He is the lake and the swan, the lotus and the lily, the fisherman and the fish, the net, the lead, the bait. So he is "Himself the worshipper." "search not for the True One afar off, He is in every heart, the light within."[4] Salvation, on this basis, lies in knowledge of God, in recognition of the mystery of union, conceived in terms of the most intimate of human relationships; God is often described as "the Father and Mother of all"; the soul yearns for him as the bride for her husband. The realisation of this union is the act of his grace. "He to whom God giveth understanding, understandeth." The Law of the Deed is incorporated in the divine justice, and may be expressed in the old figure of the drama of God's "play," or in the Mohammedan terms of predestination. But, on the other hand, while God thus works in outward circumstance and inward thought, the field of conduct is left open to the will, and the disciple is summoned to control his own destiny by shaping his own character. Worldliness and hypocrisy, the profession of religion and secret vice, sensual indulgence combined with the Hindu ascetic's long hair and ashes smeared upon his person, the Mohammedan judge telling his beads and taking bribes—these are lashed with unsparing scorn. Of what avail the shaven head, the penance of the five

[1] Macauliffe, i. 188.
[2] Compare the analogous miracle at the death of Kabir, *ante*, p. 461.
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 319. *Ibid.*, i. 254, 265, 328.

fires, the beggar's patched coat, with a heart full of covetousness or pride! Abandon falsehood and follow truth, put away lust and avarice, slander and wrath; "All men's accounts shall be taken in God's court, and no one shall be saved without good works."[1] Here is an ethical demand, strictly encompassing the raptures of religious ecstasy, which recognised a sphere of independent action, and set up man as the maker of his own fate.[2] Nānak leaves the antinomy as he found it in the great religious tradition of his race. The world is the scene of God's Providence, "As a herdsman keepeth watch over his cattle, so God day and night guardeth man and keepeth him in happiness." So by his order they obtain preordained pain or pleasure. Yet these diversities are not all his doing; "Man himself soweth, and he himself eateth," for transmigration is the divine appointment on our human acts.[3] The point of view suddenly shifts and the universe is a mighty game of irresponsible power, a divine sport on the field of infinity. Again, men are under the dooms of destiny; they are involved in the ocean of birth, death, and rebirth; they rise and pass away in virtue of their merit or their guilt in former lives. Yet all this while, did they but know it, the Eternal Spirit is within them. The Pandit and the Preceptor may ever "read the Purānas, but not know the Thing within them—God who is concealed within the heart."[4] What is it that hides him? The blindness of the inward eye, the lust of the world, Māyā, the great illusion, not of metaphysical unreality, but of moral materialism.[5] On the divine side, it is true, Māyā is the power which constituted the stuff of the universe with its Three Strands; and to its action the deities of the great Triad owe their being.[6] But in the human sphere it is the force of attraction to the things of sense, the pleasures of passion, wealth, and ease, which fill the mind with selfishness and greed. Deliverance only comes to him who can overcome the demands

[1] Macauliffe, i. 357, 369.
[2] Cp. ten conditions of holiness, and four vices to be avoided, i. 136 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 301, 196, 206.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 317.
[5] Macauliffe frequently translates it by "mammon."
[6] i. 219; iii. 399; i. 213.

of egoism and humbly say, "If it please thee, O Lord, Thou art mine and I am Thine."[1]

Here lay the significance of the Guru. Though it is God who imparts wisdom and causes man to do good works, the mediation of the Teacher is still essential. Nānak might lay it down that "he on whom God looketh with favour obtaineth Him." But by what means? The answer was immediate: "He becometh free from hopes and fears, and destroyeth his pride by means of the Word."[2] And the Word was not the immanent Light, it was communicated truth. "God saveth man through the true Guru's instruction—the true Guru is the giver and procurer of emancipation."[3] The object of Nānak's coming was "that through him the Name might be remembered. He was saved himself, and he saved the world."[4] The maintenance of the succession thus became matter of the first importance. Without it, the loose company of the first disciples could never have been organised into a close-knit and coherent religious community.

Very different were the characters and destinies of the nine Gurus who followed Nānak. With the fourth, Rām Dās, the office became hereditary, though it did not descend to the first-born. Arjan, the fifth, dies a martyr at Lahore (1606), by order of the Emperor Jahangir. Teg Bahadur, the ninth, refusing to embrace Islam, was put to death by Aurungzeb (1675). Last of the ten, Gobind Singh, after his sons have been slaughtered, perishes by an Afghan's wound—he is subsequently seen riding in the forest, bow in hand,—after solemnly announcing that the Granth, the book of sacred hymns, shall be the future Guru. "Let him who desireth to behold me, behold the Guru Granth. Obey the Granth Sahib. It is the visible body of the Guru."[5]

A mysterious bond united this succession. Early Mohammedan speculation had described Mohammed as a primeval light before God, a divine spark sent forth from the Infinite Radiance. Deposited in the loins of Adam, it had passed on to Noah, and thence to Abraham, Moses, and Christ. A similar continuity

[1] Macauliffe, i. 317. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 230.
[3] *Ibid.*, i. 363; removes transmigration, ii. 59.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 268. [5] *Ibid.*, v. 244.

united the ten Gurus. The light of Nānak blended at his death with that of Angad, and in due course, as one lamp is lighted from another, was transmitted through the rest.[1] There was a sense in which they were but one, and Nānak was the real author of his successors' hymns.[2] The conception of the Guru, however, advanced to still higher flights. In a land of "Descents," it was not difficult to claim some kind of transcendental unity with God.[3] Miracle and prophecy manifested their power. They were depositaries of supernatural might. They healed the sick, they gave sight to the blind, the deaf heard, the dumb spoke. They even raised the dead. Teg Bahadur causes the chains of three followers imprisoned with him at Lahore to fall off; the prison doors open, the guards snore, and they walk away, while he remains to give his life for his people, and by his sacrifice secure the undoing of the Mohammedan power.[4] But he refuses to perform a miracle to convince the Emperor, because it was "the wrath of God." For the disciple the Guru thus became "God in Person."[5] He that has seen the Guru has seen God "O God, the Guru hath shown thee to mine eyes."[6] God's Word and the Guru are interchangeable terms: "The Word is the Guru, and the Guru is the Word"; nay, more, "Know that God and the Guru are one."[7] It was not wonderful, therefore, that on the death of the sixth Guru, Har Gobind (1645), the sky should glow rose-red, songs of welcome should be heard on high, soft fragrant winds should blow, and a vast multitude of saints and demigods should assemble.[8] So the last Guru proclaimed himself a "Son of the Immortal," and declared, "I tell the world what God told me: as God spake to me I speak."

[1] Macauliffe, II. 282, IV. 236

[2] For somewhat similar phenomena in modern Babism, compare Mírzá Jání in the *New History* (tr Prof. E. G Browne, 1893), p 331; and the doctrine of "the Return," p 335, and *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1889), p. 952.

[3] Ten Gurus like ten Avatars, Macauliffe, v. 257.

[4] *Ibid.*, IV 382. [5] *Ibid*, II 145 [6] *Ibid.*, III. 312.

[7] *Ibid.*, II. 339; iv. 285 So Beháulláh, the successor of the Bab, was designated "God" or "the Truth," *JRAS* (1889), pp. 518, 519.

[8] Macauliffe, iv. 236. Cp. similar manifestations at the death of the Buddha.

To the Granth, therefore, containing the hymns of the Gurus, their authority was in due time committed.[1] Angad, Nānak's successor (1538–1552), wrote down many of the prophet's verses in a modified Punjabi dialect. But the formal compilation was not completed till a later day. This was effected by the fifth Guru, Arjan (1581–1606). His purpose was to show that saints of every caste and creed were worthy of reverence, and he invited both Hindu and Mohammedan teachers to supply poems for insertion. Some were possibly altered on the way, but two Mohammedan compositions were included. The work was finished in 1604, and complaints against Arjan were soon laid before the Emperor Akbar for speaking of Mohammedan leaders and Hindu incarnations with contempt. It was a futile charge. After hearing various hymns, the Emperor declared that he found in them only love and devotion to God, and he proceeded to pay Arjan a visit and remit the revenues from the Punjab that year in answer to his representations of the suffering caused to the poor cultivators by a severe famine.[2] The Pandits might object to the use of a vulgar instead of a learned tongue, but Guru Har Gobind (1606–1645) replied that the Granth must be preserved in a language which women and children could understand, so that all persons of whatever caste could read it.[3] The religion of the Sikhs thus became a book-religion, and the first advance was made towards a new formalism. To study the Granth became more than a duty; it was a passport to salvation; "Even if an ignorant man read the Gurus' hymns," said Har Gobind, "all his sins shall be remitted."[4]

Parallel with the creation of a Scripture ran the organisation of worship and the foundation of a temple. Daily devotions had been obligatory from the days of Nānak. But the fourth Guru, Rām Dās ("Servant of God," 1574–1581), who established the

[1] The Granth (Sanskr. *Grantha*) was "the Book." Cp. *Biblia* and Bible.

[2] Macauliffe, iii. 81–84.

[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 136.

[4] *Ibid.*, iv. 58. The hymns were not arranged according to their authors, but were grouped under the 31 *rāgs* or musical measures to which they were to be sung; i. p. li. Hymns of Kabir and other poets, including Mīrā Bāī, daughter-in-law of the Rāna of Mewar, will be found in Macauliffe, vol. vi.

principle of hereditary succession for the transmission of the Guruship, provided a cultus and an ecclesiastical centre. No less than his predecessors, he preached the doctrine of the universal presence of God. "The soul of the world is everywhere diffused, and filleth every place; within and without us is the one God"; "I am searching for my Friend, but my Friend is with me."[1] But at the same time he instituted a Mekka for his Sikhs, in the temple erected in the midst of the "Pool of Immortality," known as Amritsar.[2] Guru Amar Dās (1552–1574) had already, in obedience to Nānak's command in a vision, established a sacred well known as the Bawali.[3] Eighty-four steps led down to it, and the Guru promised escape from transmigration to all pilgrims who should reverently and attentively repeat the Japji on each one. Rām Dās proceeded to construct a second; and on a site said to have been granted by the Emperor Akbar, thirty-three miles east of Lahore, he excavated a vast pool. Its miraculous efficacy was soon attested by the cure of a leprous cripple, and in spite of the ridicule repeatedly poured in the hymns on the sixty-eight bathing-places of Hinduism, the Guru promised that whoever bathed in Amritsar should gain all spiritual and temporal advantages.[4] Founded in 1577 on an island in the midst, the temple was

[1] Macauliffe, iii. 335. 347. The logical sequel of this was, "Wherefore I go nowhere," iii. 331.

[2] The modern city contains a population of over 150,000, the Mohammedans being the most numerous, and Hindus coming next. The original temple was destroyed by Ahmad Shah in 1762; a new temple was subsequently built, and was decorated by Ranjit Singh (1802) and roofed with sheets of copper gilt. Under the dome of this "Golden Temple" lies a copy of the sacred Granth, from which passages are read at morning and evening service. Other buildings for the Temple treasures and the accommodation of worshippers and their friends surround the tank. *Imper. Gazetteer*, v. p. 328.

[3] Now "an object of reverent pilgrimage to Hindus as well as Sikhs in the city of Grindwal," *ibid*, ii. 87. The Gurus desired to guard their Sikhs from mixing with Hindus at Hardwar, Benares, and other sacred places. Immemorial custom, however, has proved too strong. At the great fair of the twelve years' cycle at Hardwar in 1903, at least 100,000 Sikhs are said to have been present, i. p. xx.

[4] Macauliffe, ii. 271. He laid it down otherwise that "religious ceremonies produce pride," ii. 309.

completed by Guru Arjan (1581–1606). In token of humility he ordered that it should be approached by descending steps; in contrast with Hindu temples entered only from the east, it was open on all sides, to give access from every quarter under heaven; and the Guru renewed the promise of forgiveness of sins to all who duly bathed and worshipped God.[1] Thus did ceremony begin to creep into the religion of the Spirit.

This materialising tendency was further promoted by the rise of a military organisation in the new community. The tolerant Akbar, curious about so many religions, did not neglect the growing order of the Sikhs. He visited the third Guru, Amar Dās, and condescended to eat the coarse unseasoned rice which was all that his kitchen could provide. After hearing hymns from the Granth he offered a subsidy to Guru Arjan, which the Teacher declined in favour of aid to famine-stricken peasants. But his successor, Jahāngīr, adopted a different policy. Arjan aided Akbar's unfortunate grandson, Prince Khusrū, with money on his flight to Afghanistan, and paid for his rash pity with his life. As he passed from his prison at Lahore to the bank of the Ravi, where he was permitted to bathe before his death, he is said to have sent a message to his son and successor Har Gobind (1606–1645), "Let him sit fully armed upon his throne, and maintain an army to the best of his ability."[2] The youth of eleven was not slow to follow his father's advice. He promptly called for arms, and arrayed himself in martial style. To his mother's remonstrances that his predecessors handled no weapons, and the family possessed no treasure, no revenue, no land, no army, the boy boldly replied in his father's words, "The Lord who is the searcher of all hearts, is my guardian." So the faithful brought offerings of arms and horses. Warriors and wrestlers were enrolled as a bodyguard, and the duties of preaching and organising services were diversified with military exercises and the chase. For a while all was secure. Robbers vanished like owls and cats at sunrise. Travellers passed in safety through the forest. Songs of joy rose out of village homes, and the golden age seemed to have returned.

Such assumption was naturally provocative. Collisions followed with the imperial troops. The speeches and combats

[1] Macauliffe, iii. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 99.

of the protagonists are related in epic style. The Guru, when his adversary is unhorsed, disdains to press his advantage, dismounts and offers him a choice of weapons; they fight with sword and shield, and, "when the combat was becoming monotonous," Guru Gobind at one blow strikes off his opponent's head.[1] It is a long way from the language of Amar Dās, the third Guru. When his Sikhs asked how long they should bear the tyranny of the Mohammedans, "As long as you live," he answered; "it is not proper for saints to take revenge."[2] The principle of militarism, once established, held its own through varying fortunes, and the community was finally consolidated on a fighting basis by the last Guru, Gobind "the Lion" (1675–1708). It was his ambition to create a national movement and rule North-West India. For this end he organised his forces as a kind of "church militant," to which he gave the name of Khalsa, or "the Pure."[3] Starting with five Sikhs who were willing to stand the severest tests of obedience, and offer their heads for their Lord, he gave them the half punning name of Singhs or "lions," and baptized them by sprinkling a specially consecrated water on their hair and eyes. They promised, and thousands followed them, to worship one God, to honour Nānak and his successors, to keep their hair unshorn,[4] to carry arms, to help the poor, to eat out of one dish,[5] to avoid tobacco, and to be faithful to their wives. Of these vows the "five K's" were the symbol—five articles the names of which began with K,—the uncut hair, short drawers, an iron bangle, a small steel dagger, and a comb. The sacred food of a communion meal must be prepared, with prayer, by a Sikh who had bathed in the morning, and could repeat at least the Japji from memory.[6]

Thus was a sect converted into a nationality. The move-

[1] Macauliffe, iv. 212.

[2] *Ibid*, ii. 68.

[3] The word is said to come from the Arabic *Khālis*, "pure," Macauliffe, v. 95[1]. With this the Teacher identified himself so completely that he could say, "The Khalsa is the Guru, and the Guru is the Khalsa," *ibid.*, 96.

[4] This was justified by the examples of Krishna, Christ, and Mohammed, v. 90.

[5] "How," asked the Hindus, "can the four castes dine together?" v. 97.

[6] *Ibid.*, v. 114.

ments initiated by Kabir and Chaitanya never acquired such organisation and consistency. The orders which grew up out of their teaching lacked the same definite leadership, the same localisation, the same embodiment in a Scripture, the same close bond for mutual defence. More clearly than either of his two predecessors did Nānak endeavour to fuse and transcend both Hindu and Mohammedan elements in his teaching.[1] The whole background, however, both for him and his successors, is plainly Hindu. The existing scene is derived in the world-process from the ancient Triad, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Çiva. The explanation of the vicissitudes of the human lot is found in the Law of the Deed. Escape from transmigration is promised to the faithful. The believer's goal is now Nirvāna, where the saint unites his life with God, and now a Paradise where sorrow and sickness and death are unknown, and the blessed are ever chanting the Creator's praise.[2] In some hymns the Deity is presented in the twofold aspect of philosophical pantheism. He is the Absolute, raised above all differentiation, of whom nothing can be predicated, because he is eternal and immutable, without attributes (*nirguna*).[3] But he is also the immanent God of the visible world, Maker of all beings, as fully contained in the ant as in the elephant, dowered with all the qualities of his boundless creation (*sarva-guna*).[4] The hymns of Guru Arjan are repeatedly built upon this contrast.[5] The world, however, is not unreal in Çankara's sense. The Teacher's cry, "Rid thyself of duality," has no metaphysical significance, it is the summons to the exclusive worship of the Only True.[6] God is the universal Father, who abides in every heart, and makes all partners in his infinite activity.[7] Creator of earth and sky, he is the Ocean of mercy and Saviour of sinners.[8] The confessions of sinfulness,

[1] The practical significance of the Sikh religion may be seen in the analysis by Bhai Gur Dās (about 1600), Macauliffe, iv. 241–274.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. p. lxiv f.; iv. 226, 238.

[3] For the negative theology cp. iii. 245, 399.

[4] *Ibid.*, iii. 174, 263 f.; v. 262.

[5] *Ibid.*, iii. 113, 117, 169, 294, 321.

[6] *Ibid.*, i. 165[1]; iii. 180.

[7] *Ibid.*, iii. 112.

[8] The repeated description of him as the "Merciful" points to the Arabic epithets of Allah as *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*.

like those of Kabir and Chaitanya, are pitched in a key not often heard in earlier Indian literature. Many Sikhs, we are told, repeat the following prayer on rising in the morning:—

"We commit many sins of which there is no end.
O God, be mercifully pleased to pardon them.
We are great sinners and transgressors.
O God, thou pardonest and blendest unto thee, otherwise it will not come to our turn to be pardoned.
The Guru graciously cut off our sins and transgressions by blending us with God." [1]

Azrael appears again and again as the counterpart of Yama, the Dharma-rājā or "king of righteousness," sovereign and judge of the nether realms, in ancient Hindu folk-lore. The saint who can say, "My soul is reconciled with God, and become imbued with his wondrous love," exclaims, "What can Dharmrāj do, now that all his account-books are torn up?" [2]

The language of erotic devotion has plenty of antecedents in the religions of *bhakti*, without resort to Sufi ecstasies [3]—"Give thy heart to thy Darling, enjoy him, and thou shalt obtain all happiness and bliss." The longing of the chatrik for the rain-drops, of the bumble-bee for the lotus, of the sheldrake for the sun, of the bride for her husband, these are but faint images of the love which man should bear to God; and worship without love is valueless.[4] God in his turn shows his love for man not only in the beauty and the bounty of nature, but in his constant provision for human deliverance: "It hath ever been usual that when God seeth his people suffering, he sendeth a Saviour of the world"; "He was saved himself," they sang of the Guru, "and he saved the world." [5] This is effected by the teaching and influence of the Teacher, and it implies a human effort and response to fulfil the "Word" which he imparts. On this the whole of the noble Sikh morality reposes as the sure foundation of all personal experience. But the language of religion is not satisfied with the Western exhortation, "Act as if man does all,

[1] Macauliffe, ii. 250, hymn of Amar Dās (1552–1574).

[2] *Ibid.*, v. 355, cp. iii. 417. The seven heavens and the seven hells, v. 285, are Semitic rather than Hindu.

[3] Arjan takes a favourable view of the Vaishnava and the Bhāgavata, iii. 225.

[4] *Ibid.*, i. 375; iii. 112; v. 148, 221. *Ibid.*, iv 357, 239.

trust as if God does all." The Sikh boldly throws all responsibility on God. It is he alone who causes man to act; good and bad deeds alike are his appointment; in the great world-symphony man is the instrument out of which God brings what music he chooses:

> "God is able to act and to cause others to act,
> What pleaseth him shall ultimately be.
> God extendeth himself in endless waves,
> The play of the Supreme Being cannot be understood." [1]

Man's conduct, therefore, is what the Creator predestined for him from the beginning; in the dance of life God is the invisible agent: "God playeth his own play, who can criticise him?" The great drama of joy and sorrow, rejoicing and mourning, on the vast theatre of the universe, is God's own exhibition, and he is the sole performer.[2] Or, with a figure familiar to the Bible reader, "There is no fault with the vessels of clay, and no fault with the Potter."[3]

The implicit contradiction is partially solved by the incorporation of the moral order as realised by the Law of the Deed in the divine Will. Daily experience is framed in a practical ethic of humane and vigorous activity. Man must always reap what he sows. The earlier Gurus are never weary of warnings against externality and ostentation, and lay the utmost emphasis on the homely virtues of pure family life. Truthfulness and honesty, humility and obedience, are demanded from all. Noteworthy especially is the influence exerted by the Guru's mother, and the reverence paid to her. Like the early Christians, the Sikhs must be given to hospitality; they must avoid covetousness; they must bear injuries and conquer revenge. Kings must not oppress their subjects; let them construct tanks, wells, bridges, and schools, and extend religion throughout their dominions.[4] The worship of ancestors was futile,[5] and Amar Dās discouraged the burning of widows. With the usual method of transferring outward practice into inward devotion,

[1] Macauliffe, iii. 172; ii. 188; iii. 227.

[2] This is the reiterated teaching of Guru Arjan, iii. 233, 239, 253, 314, 417.

[3] *Ibid.*, iv. 17, Guru Har Gobind, quoting Kabir.

[4] *Ibid.*, iv. 288.

[5] *Ibid.*, i. 50; iv. 346.

he declared that "they are known as Satis who abide in modesty and contentment, who wait upon the Lord, and, rising in the morning, ever remember him."[1] Arjan, starting on the journey to Lahore which was to end in his death, enjoined his wife not to cremate herself when he was gone. Guru Gobind sarcastically inquired why, if salvation was to be secured by burning, even the serpent in hell should not be saved.[2]

Thus the early Sikh community strove to adapt itself to an environment that could not maintain the simplicity of its primitive form. Starting with a Puritan quietism which repudiated outward rites as in themselves meritorious, and conceived the life of the believer as a continued communion with God, it developed temple and service and observances of ceremonial piety. Rejecting every kind of violence, and enjoining the completest forgiveness of wrongs, it protected itself by military organisation, made disciples into warriors, and turned the devotee into the soldier-saint. It announced religion in the broadest terms, broke down all barriers of caste and race, and then imposed the obligation of the sword with a rite of initiation which drew the tightest of limits around a semi-national church-fellowship. Of the three teachers whose lives for the space of a generation seem to have coincided, Kabir, Chaitanya, and Nānak, the influence of Kabir was perhaps the loftiest and most diffusive, the personality of Chaitanya the most attractive, the work of Nānak and his successors the most definite in its practical results. Historians have written of the Sikhs and their wars. Brave, loyal, obedient, they are said to make the finest soldiers in the East. But they do not all now accept the baptism of military service instituted by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. The Singhs or "lions" still constitute one main division; the second, known as Sahijdharis, devote themselves as ordinary householders to agriculture and trade. In both groups various schisms and sub-sects have arisen with the usual facility of multiplication.[3] The lengthy devotions of four centuries ago are irksome to the modern spirit. Against the austerity of their ritual many Sikh women prefer the colour and festivals of idolatry; there are men who no longer

[1] Macauliffe, ii. 228. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 91; v. 275.

[3] Cp. Maclagan, *Report of Panjāb Census* (1891), pp. 148–171.

wear their hair uncut, and are hardly distinguishable from Hindus. Newspapers and colleges and associations may aid a temporary revival, and the ties of custom and tradition may retard decline.[1] But the influences of the present age seem unfavourable to the maintenance of the stricter type; and with the gradual disintegration of the community the specific form of religious life which it was founded to promote will be ultimately merged in the pieties that are slowly learning to hold out hands of fellowship to each other all round the globe.[2]

IV

The movement of Nānak, which culminated in the formation of a kind of Church-nation, was fed from two sources, and attempted to establish a religion combining the higher elements of Hinduism and Islam alike. It sprang from the Hindu side. It started in poverty: it was born in the breast of a village boy with no advantages of culture, race, or rank. Before we take our leave of Medieval Hindu Theism in the work of the great poet Tulsī Dās, it may be well to glance at another experiment in religious syncretism, made from the Mohammedan side. Cradled in a palace, the "Divine Monotheism" was issued with the imperial authority of Akbar (1556–1605), the creator of the splendid empire of the Moguls, which maintained a precarious existence till the eighteenth century, and only lost its ghostly claims when the last nominal emperor emerged for a moment as a rebel in the Mutiny of 1857, and died a State prisoner in Rangoon in 1862.

For nearly two hundred years Mohammedan kingdoms had been established in India, when the Tartar Timur (Tamerlane) in 1398 swept through the Afghan passes at the head of his wild predatory hordes. Conquest and massacre followed in city after city. The streets of Delhi were rendered impassable by the slaughtered dead. The victor pursued his march as far as Hardwar, and then unexpectedly turned and retired to his seat in Central Asia. Sixth in descent from him was Babar

[1] The census of 1911 gave their total number in India as 3,014,466, of whom more than 2,000,000 were in the Punjab, and 16,187 were fakirs.

[2] A Sikh professor was present at a Congress of Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers held at Berlin in the summer of 1910.

"the Lion" (1482–1530). After an adventurous career in the ancestral regions, he seized Kabul in 1504, entered India in 1526, and defeated the Mohammedan sovereign of Delhi at Panīpat (53 miles N.N.W.), occupied Delhi and Agra, made himself master of all North India, extended his power as far as Behar, and finally died at Agra in 1530. His eldest son Humāyūn succeeded him at the age of twenty-two. A slave to the opium habit, he could not cope with the formidable difficulties which soon threatened Babar's newly created empire. After ten years he was a homeless wanderer. In this poverty he married a girl of fourteen in 1541, daughter of Shaikh Alī Akbar Jāmī, who had been the preceptor of his youngest brother. The next year, on November 23, 1542, the heir of the crownless king was born at the small fortress town of Umarkōt, on the main route between Hindostan and Sind.[1] At length the tide of fortune turned. With Persian aid Kandahār was first occupied, and then Kābul, in 1545. Husband and wife and son, long separated, were reunited, and in March 1546, on the ceremony of circumcision, the boy's name was finally settled as history afterwards knew it, Jalālu-d dīn Muhammad Akbar.[2]

Among the crowd of literary men, historians, jurists, poets, who made Akbar's court illustrious, two writers watched him most carefully from opposite points of view, and left copious records of the greater part of his reign. Abul Fazl, the second son of Shaikh Mubārak, was born at Agra in 1551. His father, famous for his learning, gave to his elder son Faizī the training which made him the foremost poet of his age; while Abul Fazl preferred the quiet life of a recluse, and was already a teacher before he was twenty. But the success of Faizī at court led Abul Fazl thither almost in spite of himself in 1574; he soon became established in Akbar's confidence, and as his friend and

[1] V. A. Smith, *Akbar, the Great Mogul* (Oxford, 1917), p. 13. Umarkōt is now a town with about 5000 inhabitants. A stone slab with an inscription still marks the supposed spot of Akbar's birth. *Imp. Gaz.* (1908), xxiv. p. 118.

[2] Jalālu-d dīn, or "Splendour of Religion," replaced an earlier name, "Full Moon of Religion," Smith, p. 19. Akbar, "Great" (from the same root KBR as Kabīr), was a title of Allah in the Qorān. In later years the formula *Allāhu akbar*, "Allah is great," came to have an alternative significance, "Akbar is God."

minister he exercised an immense influence on his policy, till his assassination at the instigation of Akbar's eldest son, Prince Salīm, in August 1602.[1] Nine or ten years older than Abul Fazl was Abdul Kader Maluk Shah, of Badaun, between the Jumna and the Ganges, south-east of Delhi, commonly known by his place-name as Badāonī.[2] The two men arrived at the seat of the government about the same time, so that, observes Badāonī, "we were, as was said, loaves from the same oven." But they were men of very different temperaments. Badāonī was a strenuous Mohammedan; when he was enrolled among the attendants at Akbar's assemblies for religious debate on his introduction at court, "the Emperor made me (he relates) dispute with sages who boast of their depth of science, and who admit no uninitiated into their presence, and was himself the arbiter. By the grace of God and the strength of my natural talent, and the sharpness of my intellect, and the courage which is inherent in youth, I overcame most of them."[3] He had a somewhat chequered career in Akbar's service. For some time he acted as one of his seven Imāms or chaplains (one for each day of the week), Badāonī's turn for duty falling on Wednesday. When Akbar discontinued his daily prayers, he was still occupied as a Sanskrit scholar with translations into Persian; and he rendered two sections of the Mahābhārata and the whole of the Rāmâyana (25,000 couplets, as he dolefully records) into the elegant language of the court. Abul Fazl, who filled the

[1] See the Prince's statement in Blochmann's biography of Abulfazl prefixed to his translation of the *Ain-i-Akbari* (Calcutta, 1878), vol. i. p. xxvi. Abulfazl has sketched his own mental history before his introduction to Akbar, in the conclusion of the work, vol. iii. (tr. Jarrett, 1894), p. 409, and gives a fuller account of himself and his father, *ibid.*, p. 417 ff.

[2] Badāonī's history, the *Tārīkh-i Badāonī*, or *Muntakhabu-t Tawārīkh* ("Abstract of Histories"), includes the general history of the Moslem rulers of India. Vol. ii. (tr. W. H. Lowe, Calcutta, 1884) contains the details of Akbar's reign. Some extracts are translated in the *History of India* of Eliot and Dowson, vol. v., 1873. It ends with the year 1595–6, and was not published (for reasons which the reader will readily appreciate) till after Akbar's death. Besides the account of the imperial administration in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl wrote a history, the *Akbarnāma*, which carried the record down to the early part of 1602, tr. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1897), and onwards (vol. iii. is not yet complete).

[3] Lowe, ii. p. 175.