

## SOME MYSTICAL CONCEPTS OF PROF. R. D. RANADE'S PHILOSOPHY

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### Introduction

#### (1.) Doctrine of Avatar

“The word Ava (means down) the meaning which is its due, but at the same time give it a mystical interpretation. Avatara is the descent of God's form before the spiritual vision of the aspirant. *Yaska* has said in his definition of the word *Rishi* in his *Nirukta*<sup>1</sup> :

*'tat Brahm swayambhu etaan rishin tapasyamananbhyaanarshat tadrishnam rishitvam'* A *Rishi* is one who sees the form of God descending before his very eyes.”

(1.1) “Incarnation is regarded as a verity and a fact, and not as a mere appearance. For, are we not told in the *Bhagavadgita* that God incarnates himself time and oft in the world of men whenever religion comes to an end and irreligion prevails<sup>2</sup>.”

(1.2) In words of Prof.V.H.Date, “An ‘Avatara’ ( ‘tr.’ with ‘ava’ as prefix means in Sanskrit ‘to descend’ ), according to Ranade, is the vision of God which descends from above and manifests before him in some definite Form, without there being any physical body made up of flesh and bones. This is exactly the description of the Atman as we find in the *Upanishad*. One might say that Ranade serves two purposes by this definition. Firstly, he points out that what he has experienced is supported by the *Upanishadic* statement, and secondly, that the immaculate Atman ( which has the form of the body of the individual denoted by the words ‘aham’ and ‘tvam’ ) is identical with the Brahman or God. (*Jivo Brahmaiva na aparah.*) That is why his definition aims at realising the Atman as distinguished from all others which have their aim in having prosperity in this world, combined with long life, health, power, progeny and fame, or in enjoying pleasures in the heaven, by pleasing a particular deity by means of the performance of sacrifices, or the giving of charity, etc<sup>3</sup>.”



## **(2.) Doctrine of Beatification**

Prof.R.D.Ranade introduced the philosophy of beatification as, “It is said by a great philosopher that it is much better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. We might extend this argument and say that it is much better to be a mystic dissatisfied than a Socrates satisfied! So this satisfaction of the mystic is what is called beatification, bliss or ecstasy..... The philosophy of beatification involves a sort of catalepsia. Now what is catalepsia ? It is one finger, five fingers, open palm, the one hand being entwined with the other. Such holding together is represented in mystical experience also, by the experience of the eye supported by the experience of the ear, tongue, skin, movement and so forth. This is what the Stoics used to call catalepsia. It is this kind of binding together and integration of supersensuous experiences that constitutes absolute beatification..... It is beatification that constitutes the ultimate end, and it is this that has been aimed at by all the mystics of the world. It is this ideal of the enjoyment of perfect bliss which binds the community of saints together<sup>4</sup>.”

## **(3.) Doctrine of consciousness**

“A consciousness of our own sins might enable us to realise God, as it did in the case of Augustine. Augustine led a very sinful life in the beginning, and so his mother Monica went to her teacher St. Ambrose and asked him in what way her son could be saved and she began to shed tears. Then St. Ambrose replied, “Weep not my sister; the child of these holy tears shall never perish.” And we know that St. Augustine became the second founder of Christianity. Having led a life of sin in the beginning, he later became one of the greatest saints of the world. So even a consciousness of our own sins, provided we mend our ways and never return to the bad life again, provided we go forward courageously on the path of virtue, then, that consciousness will serve as a sure incentive to the consummation of our spiritual life<sup>5</sup>.”

“It is not God who needs awakening, but it is the man who has to awaken himself to God. The Lord is always awake. How would it be possible for a man to awaken him? Man is to awaken himself to the consciousness and presence of God, and keep himself awake in that state. All Prabhatīs and Bhupalīs therefore seem to be out of place. As we shall later see when we come to the poems of Raidas, God does not need any lights or sounds; similarly, he does not need any awakening. A famous



saint of South used to that by *Kaakad aarti* , which only another name of *Prabhati* or *Bhupali*, we ought to understand that we have to drive away the *Kaak* or canker of sleep from our own eyes, and rouse ourselves to the consciousness of God instead of making any attempt to awaken God Himself<sup>6</sup>.”

“The mystic might have described himself as in the *Nistraigunya* state, having gone beyond the three qualities of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, or as having come to live in the *Turya* state, which is beyond the three states of consciousness - *Jaagrat*, *swapan* and *sushupti*. It would be perfectly psychological to regard this fourth state as the *Turya*, which passes beyond the three states of consciousness, but further to go on to describe the *Unmani* state as the fifth, is only an unneeded venture in the region of the ad infinitum. Some Vedantins have regarded the *Unmani* state as a fifth and if this process were allowed, one does not know where one might stop. It is best , therefore, to suppose the superconscious state as one- call it the *Turya* or the *Unmani* or by whatever other name you please. Naraharinath describes the *Turya* as having been inverted into the *Unmani*, thus suggesting that the *Turya* and the *Unamni* are the obverse and the reverse sides of the same state<sup>7</sup>. In any case, it is in that state; call it the *Turya* or the *Unmani*, that God is attained: ‘*Mil gai jaakar ke*’.

Prof.R.D.Ranade proposed the theory of **Divine self-consciousness**. He kept it at higher level and described it in the following constructive way : “Philosophers have talked of human self-consciousness as the be-all and the end-all of all Reality. The whole range of idealists from Berkeley downwards have made self-consciousness the pivot of all existence. The Gita dispenses with human self-consciousness and substitutes instead Divine Self-Consciousness. One of the greatest philosophers of antiquity, Aristotle was thus able to describe the nature of God as Thought of Thought and to characterise that state as *Theoria*. Divine Self-Consciousness alone would thus constitute the foundation and the peak of all Thought and Existence<sup>8</sup>.”

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