

The Talks of Sadguru Upasni-Baba Maharaja

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PREFACE

Thirty-five years ago, Shri Sadguru Shri Upasani Baba Maharaja of Sakori used to talk to the devotees—mostly men of the world—the businessmen, clerks, villagers, womenfolk, etc., for hours together almost every day, and they used to listen to him with rapt attention. His style, explanations and examples were such that any commoner was able to grasp the most difficult and abstruse points. These talks were no lectures or discourses; they were not pre-planned; no particular subject was taken up. As the devotees worshipped him one by one, he went on talking to them. There were many an extraneous occurrence obstructing the talk; many a newcomer used to come for his Darshana and go away, and naturally enough, he had to talk a word or two to some of them; some of them used to ask him suddenly some questions about their own affairs—their household or personal problems, or physical ailments and so on. Some times he used to feel irritated and used to admonish them, or sometimes he just walked away from the place. Thus, there were many an unnecessary intrusion, and yet he used to go on, and went on like that for over five years.

Some of the intelligent devotees began to feel the necessity of recording these talks; some of them tried to some extent without success. But in 1923-24, for two years, one of them, Shri Rangrao Vakil, actually began jotting down notes and reproduced them from memory later on. The talks were in colloquial Marathi (one of the vernacular languages), and Rangrao was not much used to it, neither was he a scholar, nor what is understood by an 'educated' person. Naturally, he was always diffident. All the same the world is indebted to him, because but for him, these talks could never have been available.

As Rangrao's notes began to take shape, some devotees thought that the talks should be published at least in the form of a monthly journal, and actually one was run for two years (1925-26). By this time some others thought of publishing them in a book form, and five volumes were published one after another, under the title of 'Sai-Vak-Sudha', their enthusiasm leading them to publish the talks contained in the first 12 issues of the journal, as volume II of that series! Some of the devotees thought that these talks should be re-written and sanctified and hence they approached Shri Baba and requested him to lay down awards, meaning thereby that the recitation of a particular talk for a certain number of times would help to get over some difficulty or attain some cherished desire. A saint is all kindness, and Shri Baba had to yield, and actually he dictated

rewards for some of the talks. And thus five more volumes under the title of 'Upasani-Vak-Sudha' were published, each containing a certain number of cantoes at the end of which the results to be achieved on its recitation were given. Many of the talks in Upasani Vak Sudha are virtual reproduction of those in Sai-Vak-Sudha.

Due to some private difficulties, Rangrao left Sakori sometime at the end of 1925, keeping his note books with the Manager of that place. It was over 25 years later, in 1950, that I was asked by my Mother -- Sadguru Sati Godavari Upasani Maharaja, the only disciple of Shri Baba and the present occupant of His Gadi - the spiritual heir of His, to go through all these note books, and see what could be done about them; She also asked me to try to render the talks in English.

As a Hindu I look upon my Sad Guru - my Mother Sati Godama-as the Doer of everything taking myself to be just an instrument in Her hands. So with `such' assurance I went through all the note-books and found out the portions that remained unpublished; (in this I was helped a great deal by my wife, children and a nephew). With her permission in due course, these were published in two parts under the title "The Unpublished Pravachanas of Shri Unasani Baba Maharaja. Simultaneously, with her moral support and inspiration, I commenced to render the volumes of "Upasani-Vak-Sudha" into English. As it is, philosophy is a difficult subject; in that the aspect of Absolute Non-Dualism is more difficult to comprehend; then again these talks were in colloquial Marathi, catechetic in nature and in spoken dialect; the task of rendering them became still more difficult due to my meagre knowledge of English language. All the same, I set before myself the ideal to render them in such a way that anybody interested in the subject, with meagre knowledge of English language, should be able to grasp the subject-matter without much difficulty, and I only hope that I have succeeded to some extent. I may be permitted to point out that somehow I have never approved of sacrificing precision for stylish expression. As noted above, the talks were never preplanned and were never given with a view to elucidate systematically a particular topic. In Shri Baba's own words, it could be said that he talked and talked with all the intrusions as thoughts 'carne' to him; that is all; they can be aptly described as 'thinking aloud' of Shri Baba. From the writing point of view, however, to give a 'heading' is naturally necessary, but under the circumstances it was almost an impossibility. In Upasani-Vak-Sudha there are so many diverse headings under each canto; since, however, the cantoes were approved of by Shri Baba himself, the question of giving any heading did not arise. In other publications, Shri Rangrao tried to give some headings by splitting the talk on one day into suitable components. I have tried to improve on these headings following his policy and have done the same in the case of Unpublished Pravachanas. If, therefore, any inadequacy is felt regarding the headings the readers will please connive at it.

The text is, no doubt, full of repetitions, specially in its earlier part. Now in this, one has to think of the Upasani- Vak Sudha in a different light; the text of those volumes was actually "passed" by Shri Baba, and hence the question of repetitions occurring therein had just to be left out of consideration. With regards to others, well, many a commoner have gone through the text and have opined that the repetitions have

been a great help to them. There is another point worth considering, that some of these repetitions are only apparent, because they are either seen to elucidate some other thought or arrive at a different conclusion. The repetitions had, therefore, to be accepted as they were.

I had to chalk out some plan for the purpose of rendering all the talks in English. In all, there were four groups of publications before me, and I decided to treat them as follows:

Part I-All the five volumes of Upasani-Vak-Sudha first, since the text was passed and awards declared cantoe by cantoe by Shri Baba. To reap the awards they have to be read in the original language, and as such it was unnecessary to render the wordings of the awards; hence the awards should be dropped.

Part II-All the five volumes of Sai-Vak-Sudha and

Part III-All the 24 issues of the monthly Sai-Vak- Sudha Journal.

In this (Parts II and III), to find out the talks that did not occur in words and/or spirit in Upasani-Vak-Sudha, and render them only obviously for economic reasons. On actually going through all of them it was found to be a very difficult task, and so with great diffidence some talks were ultimately chosen for rendering.

It may be, if it is so willed, that all barring the ones actually reproduced in Upasani-Vak-Sudha may subsequently be published.

Part IV- The Unpublished Pravachanas as they were.

When the question of publishing came forth, three things were suggested to me by my friends. The first was to append some sort of introduction that would enable particularly the non-Hindu readers to follow the text without much difficulty. I have done this; I only hope that it serves its purpose to some extent. The second was to select some talks and publish them in a volume, firstly, for those who cannot afford to buy all the volumes, and secondly for those who are more interested in the thoughts than the rituals. With the help of some of my friends, I selected some talks from all the four groups and they form Vol. I of this series; naturally all others will be included in Vols. II and III. The third was that every talk should show its position in the original publications. This I have done this way: All the talks in all the four groups have been given running serial numbers and against each is put the reference and date, e, g. 1. U. V. I-1. 12-12-1923.

The abbreviations used are self-evident.

It is customary to give at least the life-sketch of the person concerned in the beginning ; I have, however, left it to Vol. III for economic and some other reasons.

It was not economically practical to print phonetic symbols in the text. The only possible course left open was to append a glossary of such words etc., which has been done. Under the heading of 'pronunciation problem' details about it have been given.

Such a task could never be normally a one man job; naturally I have been helped by many. One of them, a well known erudite scholar, author and poet went through every line of the text and gave his valuable suggestions strictly within the limits of my knowledge and expression in English; two others made a clean type-written copy for the press; yet two others, who happen to be brothers, printed this. Various others have also helped me in achieving this

task. Since, however, all of them have helped me in the 'spirit of service', it would not be fair on my part to mention their names, eulogise their help or thank them. I can only say that I am equally grateful to them all.

I have already stated about my meagre knowledge of the English language Again this is my first attempt. Readers can themselves understand what it means. Under the circumstances I humbly request all the brothers and sisters who may handle these to connive at all the fault's of an inexperienced younger brother and look through them to get those sublime ideas and thoughts so magnificently and kindly given by Sadguru Upasani Baba Maharaja to lead them all to that Absolute Eternal Infinite Bliss.

Nagpur :

26th October 1957. M's. B. D.

GODAMASUTA