

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

### LIFE AFTER DEATH

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to *Bankim*): ‘Well, you are a great scholar and an author of many books. What is the duty of man and what accompanies him after his death? Is there a next world? What do you say?’

*Bankim*: ‘A next world! What is that?’

*Sri Ramakrishna*: ‘Yes, a man who has attained Knowledge does no more undergo any birth after his death, in any region whatsoever. But so long as he is in ignorance and devoid of the Knowledge of God, he is born again and again. There is no escape for him from this chain of births and deaths. Life after death is real for him so long as he is subject to ignorance. But on the dawn of Knowledge and realization of God he becomes liberated and free from the bondage of births and deaths. Paddy does never sprout if it is boiled. A man scorched in the fire of Knowledge, likewise, does no more lend himself to the play of creation. He

becomes immune from worldly life and loses all attachment for lust and gold. Of what avail can boiled seeds of paddy be even if they are sown in the field?’

*Bankim* (smiling): ‘Sir, weeds also do not serve the purpose of a fruit-bearing plant.’

*Sri Ramakrishna*: ‘A man of Knowledge cannot be compared to a weed. A man who has attained the vision of God comes to possess a fruit which, unlike the common stuff, bestows on him eternal life and sets him free from the shackles of births and deaths. He is not born again either on this earth or in the regions of the sun and the moon.

‘Comparisons are always one-sided. You are a learned man. Have you not read logic? If a man is described as terrible like a tiger, it does not mean that he is a tiger in every detail, even to the head and the tail. (All laugh).

‘The same thing I said to Keshab Sen also. Keshab asked me, “Sir, is

there a next world?" I did not give a direct reply. I said, "A potter produces earthenwares and puts them in the sun to dry. Now, there may be pots that are still raw, and also those that have been already hardened by fire. Sometimes cows or other animals may happen to pass over them and break a few. The potter rejects the pots that have been baked by fire, but picks up those that are still raw, reduces them to clay again, and produces new wares by putting the clay on the wheel. He does not throw away the broken pieces of the raw pots." Therefore, so long as you are in ignorance and have not attained the vision of God, the Great Potter will subject you again and again to the wheel of creation and you will have no rest from this cycle of births and deaths. You will have to be born again and again. Freedom can be attained only when God is realized. The Great Potter will, then, let you off, because, you no longer serve the purpose of creation which is due to illusion. A man of Knowledge transcends the limits of Maya or illusion. What attraction can he then have for this world of Maya?

'Of course, some of these free souls the Lord retains here to lead people out of the quagmire of this world of illusion. A man of Knowledge takes shelter in Vidya Maya in order that he may teach people the saving truths of religion. Or, really speaking it is the Lord Himself who keeps this veil over him to serve His own purpose. Such was the case with Shukadeva and Shankaracharya.

(To Bankim) 'Well, what is the duty of man? What do you say?'

*Bankim* (smiling): 'Well, sir, if you ask me I must say that it is to eat, sleep and enjoy the pleasures of a sex life.'

*Sri Ramakrishna* (with disgust): 'What a shame! How mean-minded you are! You are giving utterance to what you practise day and night. Lust and gold dominate your life and so your tongue also indulges in talks about them. Man loses his sincerity and turns a hypocrite if he indulges too much in worldly thoughts. The thought of God redeems him of all his crookedness. A man blessed with the vision of God will never speak in terms of what you have said.'

MERE LEARNING AND LUST AND GOLD

(To Bankim) 'Of what use can mere learning be if one is not devoted to God and is devoid of Viveka and Vairagya? Learning cannot save a man if he is attached to lust and gold.'

'Kites and vultures may indeed soar very high, but their eyes are all the while fixed on the charnel-pit where the carcasses of dead animals are lying. A pandit may be well versed in the scriptures, may quote from them at length, and may be an author of many books, but he may, at the same time, lead a lustful life and hug wealth and honour as the be-all and end-all of life. Should he be called a pandit? A pandit who is not devoted to God is not worth the name.'

'There are persons who think, "These people always talk of God. They have lost their balance and run insane. But see, how clever we are and how we enjoy the world! Wealth and honour abound in our life and the pleasure of the senses we never deny!" A crow also thinks itself very clever, but right from the morning it is on the lookout for dirt on which it lives. Just notice a crow and you will see what an air of cleverness it puts on! (All are silent).'

'But there are people who are devoted to God and pray to Him to liberate them from the shackles of lust and

gold. Sense-pleasures appear bitter to them, and they desire nothing but the nectar of devotion at the feet of the Lord. Their nature is like that of a swan. If milk and water are mixed together and put before the swan, it takes out the milk by leaving the water. And have you marked the movement of a swan? It goes straight. A man of pure devotion also has no other end in view but the realization of God. Nothing more he desires and feels no attraction for anything else. (Softly to Bankim) Hope you won't mind.'

*Bankim*: 'Well, sir, I have not come only to hear sweet words.'

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to Bankim): 'The world consists of nothing but lust and gold. This itself is Maya. It does not allow man to think of God. After the birth of one or two children the husband and the wife should live as brother and sister and indulge in no other talk between them but that of God. This will ultimately lead both of them towards God and the wife will turn out to be a helpmate to the husband in his spiritual life. The bliss

of God-realization is impossible of attainment until one kills the brute in him. He should pray to the Lord to relieve him of his animal nature, and do it earnestly. The Lord knows the heart of all and if there is earnestness He is sure to respond to it. There can be no doubt about it.

'There is another obstacle—gold. One day I sat in the Panchavati near the Ganges, repeated severally the words "Money is earth and earth is money," and then threw both of them into water.'

*Bankim*: 'Money is no better than earth! Sir, we can help a poor man even with a few copper coins. If money is to be looked down upon as earth, should there be then no effort on our part to show mercy and help others?'

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to Bankim): 'How glibly you talk of mercy and charity! What power have you got to help others? Men are so full of pride but when they sleep they cannot know even if the worst danger happens to them. Where do their pride and egotism vanish then?'

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"The person who desires to realize the Self while devoting himself to the nourishment of the body proceeds to cross a river by catching hold of a crocodile mistaking it for a log."

## CITIZENSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The world was never made;  
It will change, but it will not fade.  
So let the wind range;  
For even and morn  
    Ever will be  
    Thro' eternity.  
Nothing was born;  
Nothing will die;  
All things will change.

The poet sounds a note of optimism. In the very next poem, however, he gives us a pessimistic view of the fate of our 'old earth.' For he says,

Nine times goes the passing bell;  
Ye merry souls farewell.  
    The old earth  
    Had a birth,  
    As all men know,  
    Long ago.

And the old earth must die,  
So let the warm winds range,  
And the blue wave beat the shore;  
    For even and morn  
    Ye will never see  
    Thro' eternity.  
All things were born.  
Ye will come never more  
For all things must die.

—Alfred Lord Tennyson

As the poet provides us with two diametrically opposed views, he may not be helpful to us in our search for Beginnings and Endings. Let us turn to the scientists and hear what they have to say on this matter. For the last three centuries, that is, ever since the time Galileo pointed his telescope to the sky and began to make a closer examination of the heavenly bodies, astronomers have done a considerable amount of work in exploring the sky

and giving us precise information concerning the distances of stars and planets, their size, chemical composition, velocity of movement and so on. During the last few decades physicists by their brilliant researches into the structure of the atom have opened up a new universe in which relative magnitudes and relative distances bear close resemblance to relative stellar magnitudes and distances. Thus the macrocosm and the microcosm have in a way been explored and charted. We have precise information, where the ancients had to navigate uncharted seas. Man stands in the middle, for it has been found that his size is a mean between the size of an average star and the size of an atom. The ratio of the size of a star to the size of a man is the same as the ratio of the size of a man to the size of an atom. Much work has also been done on the ultimate composition of matter. The study of the source of the sun's energy has led scientists to the startling fact that in the interior of the sun matter gets annihilated and in ceasing to be matter becomes radiant heat and light. It has been calculated that every minute the sun loses about 250 million tons of matter, which as heat and light and other cosmic rays radiates into space and according to existing scientific views is irrecoverably lost as matter. The same thing happens to the stars, for we all know that the sun is also a star and not a very important one either. The second law of thermodynamics definitely shows that we are inhabitants of a running-down universe which will ultimately cease to be. The end may be millions of years off. As practical men, we may not be much

concerned with what is going to take place in such a distant future but philosophers who seek for ultimate truths have to accept the verdict of science, at any rate provisionally, and see how far the cosmological views propounded by physical science will influence their ideas of man's destiny.

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The speculations of ancient Hindus as recorded in their Puranas hold that time moves in cycles. The arrow of time makes a long flight and comes back to the place from where it started. Creation and preservation are succeeded by destruction, and during the Maha-Pralaya the universe rests in the womb of the Creator and at the dawn of a new creation, a new cycle commences. This introduces the idea of an extra-cosmic Creator, an idea not much in favour with modern science. Let us hear what a leading scientist, Prof. A. S. Eddington has to say regarding the conception of a never-ending cycle of rebirth of matter and worlds. 'At present we can see no way in which an attack on the second law of thermodynamics could possibly succeed, and I confess that personally I have no great desire that it should succeed in averting the final running-down of the universe. I am no Phoenix worshipper. This is a topic on which science is silent, and all that one can say is prejudice. But since prejudice in favour of a never-ending cycle of rebirth of matter and worlds is often vocal, I may perhaps give voice to the opposite prejudice. I would feel more content that the universe should accomplish some great scheme of evolution and, having achieved whatever may be achieved, lapse back into chaotic changelessness, than that its purpose should be banalised by continual repetition. I am an Evolutionist, not a Multiplicationist. It seems rather

stupid to keep doing the same thing over and over again.'<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

The great scientist admits a 'purpose' and a 'great scheme of evolution' directed towards the fulfilment of that purpose. These admissions are of value to the philosopher whose quest is for the discovery of permanent values in a changing universe. There is no reason why the philosopher should not accept the verdict of science *in toto*. On the other hand, the scientist need not have any quarrel with the philosopher, if the latter attempts to fill up gaps in the findings of the former. The scientist takes up a ready-made universe and traces cause preceding cause and arrives at the birth of matter, the birth of the great nebulae, the birth of the stars and the planets, the formation of the seas and the mountains on the face of our planet, the coming of life, the evolution of various species of plants and animals and the evolution of man, the crowning glory of creation. All these the scientist does without positing a Creator. He computes in millions of years the time taken by all these processes and directing his eyes forward brings to our view the distant future in which the moon, the satellite of our planet, will approach the earth and finally collide with it; he stirs up our imagination by pointing to us a dying sun, which from being white-hot becomes red-hot and finally ceases to be, very much like the coal in a burnt-up furnace. Long before this event, he tells us that the last human being on earth would have died leaving behind no heir to all our noble heritage of culture and civilization. As science stands at present, the accepted view is that the night that would set in will

<sup>1</sup> Prof. A. S. Eddington: *The Nature of the Physical World* (Gifford Lectures 1927). Chapter IV last para.

know no dawn. Thus according to the scientist, out of the void we came and into the void we return. We fail to see the 'purpose' behind this 'great scheme of evolution.' In speaking of a running-down universe, the scientist compares the universe to a wound-up clock which will keep on functioning for millions and millions of years to come. But as to who wound it up, or how it came to be wound up, the scientist is significantly silent. We have no reason to find fault with the modern scientist. He himself admits that we emerged from our animal ancestry fairly recently and that the time we have so far given to the study of these problems is very very little. Future scientists may have many more valuable findings to communicate to the human race, but that does not in any way decrease the value of the work already done.

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The fact that matter gets annihilated into cosmic radiation and thereby gets dematerialized is of interest to the Vedantist who negates matter. Life such as we know it evolved out of matter, at any rate it is associated with matter. Inorganic matter surrendering itself to the embrace of the vegetable gets incorporated in the body of the vegetable and becomes organic matter. Of the ninety-two elements carbon with its possibility of linkage enters greatly into the formation of organic compounds. Animals cannot directly make use of inorganic matter; vegetable matter by surrendering itself to the animal helps the latter to build its body tissues. Mind, consciousness and spirit are thought of by us so closely associated with, functioning through and expressing themselves by means of bodies, that it is almost impossible for us to conceive them in isolation. The immortality which religion promises is ordinarily conceived as a survival of the

human personality clothed in a body of some kind, probably composed of finer matter, shining and resplendent. God, although He is spoken of as the Pure Spirit by all theologies, enters the human imagination as a person 'having definite feelings, endowed with knowledge, thinking successive thoughts as we do and finally arriving at a decision to be carried into effect.' The inveterate habit of the mind to form images exhibits itself in language and thought as the desire to give some kind of vesture to abstract notions and speak and think in metaphors, similes and personifications. As soon as we hear the word 'courage,' our mind brings into its field of vision the picture of a lion or a strong man, the word 'purity' may usher in a white flower or a saintly personage. The poets confirm our natural propensities and enlarge their scope by giving corporeality to all kinds of abstract notions. As a convenient device for communicating thought images certainly have a place, but do they not vitiate higher thinking and prevent the spirit from breaking the shackles of matter? Higher mathematics has developed by rising above the necessity of using figures and models which are indispensable in the lower branches of the subject. The differential equations and such other symbols which it uses belong to a higher order of entities. Modern relativity physics has made its brilliant discoveries by eschewing models and making use of the symbols of higher mathematics. Why should not religious and philosophical thinking do something similar? The heaven of the dualist is peopled with a host of images. The city of God is conceived in dualistic scriptures as built up of pure gold as transparent as glass and of all manner of precious stones such as jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, beryl, topaz, jacinth

and amethyst. The Supreme Being is thought of as a person seated on a throne surrounded by devotees all clad in fine raiments. Flowers unfading and exquisitely perfumed and the harmonies of sweet music lend enchantment to the charming city,

Where the bright Seraphim in burning  
row

Their loud up-lifted Angel trumpets  
blow

And the Cherubic host in thousand  
choirs

Touch their immortal Harps of golden  
wires.

\* \* \*

The thinking man's ideas of cosmogony have undergone a revolutionary change in the course of the three centuries that have elapsed, since the time Milton, the great English poet, wrote his immortal epic. Astronomy has searched the skies and has provided us with a new set of cogent ideas. As poetic imagery Milton's conception of heaven and earth may be considered as valid for all time. But do they approach anywhere near the modern conception of space, time and matter revealed by mathematicians and physicists and the brilliant conception of Reality which transcends space, time and matter and also forms the background of space, time and matter, a conception formulated by Vedantic philosophers who lived in India two thousand years ago? Einstein's theory of relativity with its ideas of a finite, yet boundless universe, of time conceived as mixed up with space forming a space-time continuum, of the warping of space, of matter conceived as a curvature of space, of the interdependence of the units of length, time and mass and of the necessity of our revising the ideas propounded by classical Newtonian mechanics, has withstood the rigorous tests of scientific

thinking and has brought about a revolutionary change in the scientists' conception of the external world. Minkowski's exposition of a four-dimensional world has made scientists to revise their old ideas of time. The philosopher may perhaps find in it the possibility of identifying 'becoming' with 'being.' Max Planck's quantum theory by measuring the value of the constant  $h$ , the single quantum of action, has introduced an element of chance into the way in which a particle of matter may act under fixed conditions. This has led to the formulating of the Principle of Indeterminacy and to the recognition of the fact that the laws of Nature divide themselves into three classes: (1) identical laws, (2) statistical laws and (3) transcendental laws. The scientist has worked his way up to the portals of the mystic and admits the possibility of the latter's possessing certain aspects of the knowledge of Reality, at present denied to scientists. Physical science has come to realize its own limitations and looks up to the philosopher and the mystic for a solution of the deeper problems of life and Reality. At the same time, shall we not say that it behoves the philosopher, as the seeker of fundamental truths not to belittle the claims of science but to accept its conclusions within the limitations it has set to itself. It is gratifying to note that the conclusions of modern science are in harmony with the findings of Vedanta philosophy.

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We have already noted that science upholds the ultimate annihilation of matter. It has also propounded theories which hint at the illusory nature of seemingly solid and palpable matter. The immortality of the Spirit remains unshaken; it does not fall within the circumscribed realms of science. Con-

cerning the approach which the mystic makes to the realms of Reality we hope to say something in our next article on 'The Scientist and the Mystic.' Let us proceed to examine the claims made on behalf of physical immortality. Religious legends tell us about the sage Markandeya and others who have been blessed with physical immortality. We admit that there may be more things in heaven and earth than our philosophy dreams of. As far as we know, Vedanta philosophy wherever it speaks of the blessed abode of the Devas, the shining ones, adds that they have a long but limited life and have to be born again as men to enter into Mukti or Nirvana which is a state in which space, time and matter cease to be. In differentiating between the attainment of heaven (Svarga) and the attainment of emancipation (Mukti), Vedanta philosophy upholds the conception of spiritual immortality and casts aside all ideas of physical immortality. If the physical bodies of Sage Markandeya and others were to persist through the Maha-Pralaya of the Puranas or the annihilation of matter of the scientists, they must be composed of something other than matter, at any rate matter as conceived by modern science. If spiritualizing matter means a process in which the inherent attributes of matter get replaced by the attributes of the spirit, then also matter loses its identity. The Siddhas, a class of alchemists of medieval India, claimed to have discovered the elixir that would prolong human life indefinitely. Alchemists of other countries have also made similar claims. We have no evidence to prove the validity of their claims. Some of them might have lived longer than the normal span of life allotted to humanity, but all of them appear to have completed their sojourn on earth and finally departed treading the same path as

their forefathers. Again the question arises, is it desirable to prolong life indefinitely, particularly if physical and mental deterioration sets in even to a small degree? What is the harm in passing through the portals of death with the possibility of being reincarnated in a fresh young body to continue whatever work one may have to do and gather fresh experience? In the case of persons whose religious philosophy holds that a human being has only a single chance of living in this 'best of all possible worlds' there is some justification in desiring a length of life beyond the normal span, as Mr. Bernard Shaw does in his *Back to Methusaleh*. Even such persons may not think of a physical immortality.

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The Legend of the Wandering Jew advocates the case for death. Undue attachment to the flesh and the fear of the unknown make the normal human being shrink from the approach of what he or she considers to be an unwelcome visitor. But if philosophy teaches anything it is the insight into Nature's plan, which enables the knower to rise above this unwholesome fear, the fear of death. The Wandering Jew desired death but a curse pronounced on him prevented him from getting it. Shelley, the English poet, has immortalized this legend which was current in Medieval Europe. Some worthy men of those credulous times have even testified to having come face to face with the Wanderer. Ahasuerus (also spelt Ahasverus) was a Jew by birth and a shoemaker by trade. He lived in the time of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Tradition says that when Jesus was wearied with the burden of His ponderous cross and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove Him away with brutality. Jesus uttered no complaint. But an angel of death appeared before



Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, 'Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of Man; be it denied thee also, until He comes to judge the world.' Because of the curse Ahasuerus tramped and wandered over the wide world and years afterwards returned to his native town and found it in ruins and full of desolation. He wanted the consolation of death but the curse precluded him from the rest of the peaceful grave. Whenever he attained the age of one hundred years, he fell into a swoon and suddenly recovered finding himself to be thirty years old, just the age which he was at the time the curse was pronounced on him. The mental struggle which the poor Jew had to undergo is best described in his own words: 'Dreadful beyond conception is the judgement that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell—I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans—but, alas, alas! the restless curse held me by the hair;—and I could not die! Rome the giantess fell—I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell and did not crush me. Nations sprang up and disappeared before me; but I remained and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrows of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount's sulphurous mouth—ah! ten long months. The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist. A forest was on fire; I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed

my limbs; alas! it could not consume them. I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged into the tempest of raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriated Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my skull; balls in vain hissed upon me; the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins; in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled high in the air I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body, the executioner's hand could not strangle me, the tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon. The serpent stung, but could not destroy me. The dragon tormented, but dared not devour me. I now provoked the fury of tyrants; I said to Nero, "Thou art a bloodhound!" I said to Christiern, "Thou art a bloodhound!" I said to Muley Ismail, "Thou art a bloodhound!" The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me. Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die—not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to behold for millenniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring!—Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful Avenger in Heaven, hast Thou in Thine armoury or wrath a punishment more dreadful? Then let it thunder upon me, command

a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant, and writhe, and die!"<sup>2</sup>

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Even men who live more than the normal span of life are afflicted by the bereavement consequent upon the passing away of near and dear ones. Methusalehs will have to hear the pain of parting from generations and generations of friends. It is, of course, a different thing if by some decree Providence decides to lengthen the span of life of the whole human race. Until such a time comes one would surely prefer to tread the path of one's forefathers and be gathered unto their bosoms when Death the leveller takes hold of him. Living in the realms of heaven with resplendent bodies may give a span of life probably three hundred and sixty-five times as long as the present life for the scriptures say that the human year is but a day to the gods on high but even such a life holds forth no permanency. What then is the eternal life, the true citizenship in the Kingdom of God? Long familiarity with our planet has bred in our hearts a certain amount of contempt for it. We have forgotten that our earth is also one among the many heavenly bodies. If we could transport ourselves to the Morning Star we may see our earth as a brilliant star in the blue vault of heaven. There is no reason why eternal bliss and the Kingdom of God should not begin for us even while we are sojourn-

ing on this planet, the home of all our joys and sorrows. Our scriptures bear testimony to the Jivan-Muktas, the released souls who although they were in the body were not of it. They had established full communion with the All. A limited body howsoever fine and resplendent it might be could not contain the soul that had pervaded All having become one with the All. When Shukadeva was addressed by name, mountains and rivers, the wide ocean and the raging winds responded to the call, for Shukadeva had become the All. The sacred scriptures give us glimpses of the life eternal, which appears to be not a mere lengthening out of the span of life but a change in the quality of life. If time is only a relative entity, as it is claimed to be by modern science, a moment can become a millennium and a thousand years shrink to a single moment. The human being already experiences three distinct conceptions of time in his waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. Is not the blessed state of the released souls something that transcends time? Einstein tells us that the velocity of light which is a finite quantity is bound up with time and if a conscious being were to move with the speed of light time would stand still for that being. Matter that gets annihilated and time that ceases to be cannot assure a persisting material vesture for an immortal spirit. He who lives, moves and has his being in God has gone above mortality, and immortality seems to be the verdict of the sacred scriptures.

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Rappoport, Ph.D.: *Medieval Legends of Christ*, Ivor Nicholson and Watson Ltd., London 1934.

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# ETHICS AND RELIGION\*

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

True ethics and religion are inseparable, though distinct. It may be worth while to recall at the outset two chief uses of the term ethics. As generally used ethics is synonymous with morality. But a nice distinction is sometimes made between these two words; ethics, then, connoting more particularly the social phase, which is not so evident in the word morality. The truth, of course, is that morality likewise embraces the social features. Exact writers reserve the term ethics to denote the attempt at systematizing the moral data. We shall use the word mainly in the first sense, i.e. as a synonym of morality.

Religion, properly conceived, is synonymous with spirituality. It is therefore evident that the relation between ethics and religion is but that of morality to spirituality.

One can be moral without being spiritual, but one cannot be spiritual without being moral. Moral life is preparatory to spiritual life. Moral virtues are the *sine qua non* of spiritual enlightenment.<sup>1</sup>

\* Paper read before St. Louis Philosophy Association at Lindenwood College, Saint Charles, Mo., U.S.A., January 9, 1941.

<sup>1</sup> 'He who has not turned away from bad conduct, whose senses are not under control, whose mind is not collected and pacified, cannot attain the Self by supreme knowledge,' declares the Katha Upanishad (II. 24). In Vedantic culture Shama and Dama (control of the internal and the external senses) are the first two of the six assets of a spiritual aspirant. Of the eight steps of Yoga, Yama and Niyama constitute the first two. (Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali II. 29.)

In the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna mentions twenty different virtues, such as

Though moral life is possible without spiritual knowledge, yet morality reaches its culmination in the transcendental spiritual experience. Morality ends in spirituality, spirituality begins in morality. These are the two stages of development or the two allied expressions of the same life. To illustrate, let us take the flower and the bud. There can be buds without flowers but there cannot be flowers without buds. The flower is the developed form of the bud, the bud is its potential form. In moral rules spiritual truth is always involved. The rationale of morality is in the spiritual oneness of all.

But this is a truth very often ignored in modern times, when organized efforts are made to divorce ethics from religion and the moral life of man is planned independently of the religious ideal. The reasons behind such movements, so far as we can see, are mainly these:

Morality free from religious bias may have a universal appeal and serve the cause of human amity and advancement much better than religion; moral principles are, generally speaking, common to different religions, in spite of hopeless contradictions of doctrines and practices. Supporters of morality are to be found among such also as stay outside the pale of religion.

humility, unpretentiousness, innocence, patience, uprightness, and so on, as conducive to self-knowledge (XIII. 7-11). In fact, the ancient scriptures of India are replete with statements glorifying the ethical qualities in the life of the aspirant as well as the adept.

Morality appeals to man's common sense. It is concerned with human interests. It deals with this tangible world of ours. To be moral one has not to bother about such dubious entities as God, soul, heaven, hell, and so on.

Religion, on the other hand, it is contended, turns the focus of the mind from the seen to the unseen, from the real to the imaginary, from the immediate concerns of life to an uncertain future. It makes men otherworldly. It is life-negating.

Under the religious impulse man has a tendency to forget his surroundings, turn a deaf ear to the call of humanity, and shun his fellow beings to brood on himself. Religion makes man ego-centric. Though it upholds morality, there is in it a strong non-ethical element.

As we shall develop the relation between morality and religion, it will be seen how far this position of the ethicist with regard to religion is tenable. It is true that religious conceptions, beliefs, methods, and customs are extremely varied, yet, underlying all these divergences, there is the unity of fundamental spiritual principles. The following three may be noticed as the common background of religions:

1. There is one Supreme Being, self-existent, self-luminous, permeating the whole universe and enfolding all beings and things.

2. Man's real self, the soul (Atman), is ever united with the Supreme Being.

3. The *summum bonum* of life consists in the realization of this union.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the opinion of many great scholars Buddha did not deny the existence of God. Nirvana in Buddhism means the extinction of the psychological self, not of the metaphysical Self. In fact Buddha taught nothing but what the Upanishads teach. Mahayana Buddhism deviates very little from the Vedanta. Amar Sinha, the great Bud-

The same spiritual truths are also the basis of morality. If the theologians as well as the moralists were to take their stand on this common meeting-ground, a much deeper world-understanding would be achieved thereby than through mere ethics. Also in moral matters there seems to be as much difference of views in these days as in religion. Though a general agreement appears to exist among religionists as far as the fundamental moral principles are concerned, yet in the practical application of these principles vast differences become evident. In practice the ideals of truthfulness, non-violence, temperance, chastity, charity, and so forth, widely differ among the various races, nations, communities, and cults of the world. So ethics, too, does not easily provide a common meeting-ground for all.

A most vital question is raised in the Bhagavad-Gita: What makes man immoral? What is it that impels man to sinful deeds against the remonstrance of his reason and the resistance of his will? Sri Krishna answers: 'It is greed (Kâma-asha)' (III. 37). Greed is the natural outcome of attachment to the body. When man denies or ignores his real self, the soul (Atman), which is pure, illumined, and free (Shuddha-Buddha-Mukta), and thinks of himself primarily as the physical body, his chief concerns in life centre in the body. To preserve the body, to make it comfortable, to glorify it, becomes the principal objective of his life. He relies on the senses, highly values the sense-world as real, and wants to satisfy the senses by all possible means. But the senses are insatiable. They want more and more. This creates greed, which breeds all

dhist lexicographer, calls Buddha Advaya-vadi (a non-dualistic Vedantist) in his lexicon.

vices, such as selfishness, hatred, pride, anger, jealousy, hypocrisy, and so forth. The more we identify ourselves with the body, and the more we value the sense objects, the greater is the domination of greed over us. It may be the greed of possession, of power, or of fame. When the sensuous outlook on life becomes predominant, the intellectual and moral values seem less important than the material values. Morality becomes a matter of expediency rather than a question of principle. To be moral in the real sense therefore, it is necessary to get rid of the body idea.

Even though a man may be unaware of his spiritual being, still it asserts itself through his mind and makes him feel, however vaguely, his inner purity and deeper relationship with others. From this the moral sense in man derives, which functions as conscience (Viveka) or moral intuition (Prajna), when developed. There is within us on the one hand the urge of the soul and on the other the urge of the flesh. This causes the inner conflict of good and evil in practically every person. The more he attunes himself to the soul, the stronger grows his moral nature; the more he attunes himself to the body, the weaker it becomes. This may happen consciously or unconsciously. Every moral deed we do serves to bring us nearer the soul, nearer the Supreme Spirit, God. He who follows the path of righteousness without the thought of the soul or God is a moral man; he who does the same with the idea of attaining unto God and soul is a spiritual man. But the same principle holds good for both of them: the more a person gets attached to the body, the less is his control over the body and the senses, and the more selfish he is; the more a person feels himself distinct from the

body or the psycho-physical complex, the greater is his control over the body and the mind, and the less selfish he is. The standard of morality, according to Hindu ethics, is to be found in the following statement of Vyasa, the celebrated author of the Mahabharata: Paropakâro punyâya pâpâya parapidanam—To do good to others is virtue; to injure others is vice. In other words, to be unselfish is moral; to be selfish is immoral.

So we find that moral consciousness is in the very constitution of man. It is not imposed upon us by society, as the psycho-analysts opine, nor is it infused into us by injunctions and prohibitions, as some religious leaders hold, nor can it be grafted on us by the State, as totalitarianism presumes. External conditions no doubt help or retard its growth. In most people the moral nature is undeveloped. Even among such as know the right and intend to follow it there are many who have not the strength to act accordingly. But if they reflect on the evil consequences of their wrong way, persist in their efforts to do right, contact righteous persons, and study ennobling literature, their moral character develops correspondently and paves the way for the spiritual life. Only such as faithfully perform their duties, practise self-control, are honest and guileless, can attain the inner purity and clarity of vision that brings home to them the evanescence of sense objects and the futility of worldly desires. It is they who seek the real, the eternal, the immutable. They crave for freedom from every bondage. They come to know that it is the realization of Truth and Truth alone that can make them free. This is spiritual awakening. With it comes the awareness of the reality of the Spirit behind the changefulness of matter, and the

attainment of the Spirit as the very substance and fulfilment of one's being presents itself as being the highest goal of life. Here is the line of demarcation between the moral and the spiritual life. Spiritual life begins only when one turns away from the changeful to the changeless, from the evanescent to the eternal, from the unreal to the real; in short, from matter to spirit. Matter is conditioned; spirit is unconditioned, self-existent, self-luminous, perfect. The entire relative existence, including mind, belongs to the category of matter. Even a man highly advanced in the moral life or who is a great philanthropist may not be a spiritual person. The distinction between a religious and a spiritual person may also be pointed out here. He who believes in some spiritual entity and man's relationship with it, however vague or clear the conceptions may be, and acts according to that belief, can be called a religious person. But he should not be considered spiritual until he chooses the attainment of spiritual perfection as the supreme end of life and is ready to strive after it. A spiritual person is religious as well.

The thirst after supreme knowledge and bliss renders the moral life of a spiritual person more natural and smooth. He has less difficulty in controlling his desires. His desires change their course, as his mind turns from the temporal to the divine. Instead of flowing towards the sense objects they gravitate towards the Divine Self within. As he contemplates on the Divinity, its sublime influence transforms the sensuous outlook on life, making him more and more conscious of the innate purity and blissfulness of the Self. The outgoing tendencies of the mind subside and an inwardness develops. His desires are transformed into love of God. The moral life is not

secure nor smooth until the mind is able to grasp something far more valuable than sense objects and is naturally drawn thereto by its sublime worth and attractiveness.

Evidently a spiritual aspirant is indrawn and contemplative. This does not mean, however, that he is less active or less capable of work than others. Rather his contemplativeness balances his activity. It must not be forgotten that a long preparation through self-discipline and faithful discharge of duties, domestic as well as social, has developed in him the inner consciousness of a spiritual aspirant. So his capacity for work is already well developed. Such are the true types of workers, in whom action and contemplation go together. They act rightly and efficiently who can think and will rightly and efficiently. He who is self-collected, calm, and cool-headed always works better than he who is ever active with a distracted and unsettled mind.

Though contemplation is greatly conducive to the spiritual life, yet action is not incompatible with it. One can develop spiritual consciousness through work as well. The distinction between the secular and the spiritual is in the difference of the outlook on life. By cultivating the right attitude of the mind the common deeds of life as well as the social activities can be turned into means of spiritual development. This method of converting work into worship is known as Karma-Yoga. It removes the antithesis between the secluded and the social life and combines in a single process the outer and the inner growth. Its first great exponent was Sri Krishna, whose genius has harmonized mysticism, knowledge, devotion and action. Declares he in the Bhagavad-Gita:

'Being steadfast in Yoga, O Dhananjaya, perform actions, abandoning

attachment, remaining unconcerned as regards success and failure. This evenness of mind is called Yoga' (II. 48).

'The Gunas of Prakriti (body, senses, and the mind) perform all actions. With the understanding deluded by egoism, a man thinks, "I am the doer"' (III. 27).

'He who can see inaction in action, who can also see action in inaction, he is wise, he is devout, he is the performer of all actions' (IV. 18).

'He who performs actions surrendering them to Brahman (God) and abandoning attachment is not tainted by their merits and demerits, even as a lotus leaf by water' (V. 10).

One absolute condition of the spiritual life is non-attachment, which means freedom from egoism. It is egoism, the identification of the self with the non-self, which, asserting itself as I-ness and my-ness, produces attachment. The spiritual man, being free from egoism, performs his work in the most unselfish manner. Religion enjoins renunciation on spiritual aspirants. But renunciation does not necessarily mean the abandonment of society. Its real sense is the severance of attachment by the conquest of egoism. One can live in society in the true spirit of renunciation. It depends on the aspirant's mental make-up, his environment, and the particular method of spiritual culture he follows.

Meditation is of the greatest help in the cultivation of spiritual consciousness. The practice of meditation requires seclusion. The more profound the subject, the deeper must be the meditation; and the greater is the need of seclusion. All great thinkers, philosophers, scientists, artists, and the like, feel the necessity of isolated life. Religion deals with the highest truths. It does not rest contented with concep-

tual knowledge. Its goal is the immediate apprehension of the Supreme Reality by complete absorption of the mind. So in the mystic's life there is the greatest need of seclusion. All spiritual persons are mystically minded. All seek the direct vision of Truth. But most of them do not leave society, though some may not enter into family life. They combine action with meditation. But there are just a few others in whom the mystical nature becomes so predominant that they can devote all their time to meditation, whose longing for God-vision proves to be so intense that their minds refuse to think of anything else but God. Only such as these are considered free from obligations to society. They alone are entitled to a life of retirement from the world. But though they may leave the world, their life still remains a blessing.

Now, you may say, 'Does it not spell selfishness to abandon human society for the sake of one's perfection? How can the selfish be perfect? Every spiritual person is anxious for his own liberation, for this is the ideal religion sets up before him. Even if he works for society, he does not care for it as much as for his self-purification. He is so engrossed with himself. He is self-centred. Even if he leaves society, religion approves it. Hence it is not wrong to say that religion makes a man ego-centric.' Such as prefer this charge should remember that religion makes a distinction, and a very valid one, between the ego and the soul, between the unreal and the real self. Neither the body, nor the mind, nor their conjunction, is the real self of man. Yet man thinks of himself as a mere physical or a psycho-physical being and forgets his real self, the changeless soul, the only constant factor in him, which maintains his identity in spite of all the changes of

the body and the mind, watches all their movements, and co-ordinates all their functions. It is the unawareness of the real self and the misapprehension of the non-self as the self that is the cause of all bondage and all suffering in life. Man is *born* ego-centric. It needs no religion to make him so. On the contrary, it is the aim of religion to make him 'soul-centric' by completely eradicating his egoism and making him aware of the true nature of the self. The soul (Atman) is ever pure, illumined, and free. It is simply the realization of the true self that sets one free. So the spiritual person centres himself not on the ego, but on the soul. If he seems to be concerned about his ego, it is merely to overcome it. He struggles to supplant ego-consciousness by soul-consciousness.

It is the consciousness of the spiritual self that makes a man unselfish in the real sense. The soul is not limited to the body. It is one with the Supreme Spirit, which is the Soul of all souls. So when you realize your real self and thereby your unity with the Divine, you find yourself in others as well. Thus self-knowledge leads to self-expansion. All the efforts and struggles of a spiritual person for individual freedom inevitably result in this. It is the surest and soundest way to unselfishness. 'Knowledge leads to self-identification with others like the self-identification with the body,' says the *Panchadashi*. (VI. 285).

Apart from metaphysical and psychological considerations, the distinction between the soul and the ego is valid on moral grounds as well. Without this morality has not a leg to stand on. If this ego is real and true, one can very well say, 'Why should I be unselfish? I must seek my own interests. I see my pleasure and pain are distinct from those of others. Why

should I not make myself happy? I must aggrandize myself.' You may answer such, 'Your interests must not clash with the interests of others. If every one clamours for his own interests, there will be chaos, in which case the interests of all will suffer. Your interests are bound up with the interests of others. So it is wise to make your interests consistent with or subordinate to the common weal.' This is how we are led to curb our ego and cultivate social virtues. Evidently it is not unselfishness that impels us to do so. Here there is no spirit of sacrifice for the common good, but only mutual consideration of the material interests of life resulting in a compromise of interests. In a way it is an 'appeasement' of the ego. And the ego, whose creed is greed, refuses to be appeased. So there is constant conflict between individual and individual, nation and nation, mass and class, Labour and Capital, people and State.

Even when we seem to identify ourselves with the family or society or a nation or race, and so forth, we seldom sacrifice our ego. It is more often an enlargement of the ego rather than self-expansion. So in most cases no self-purification is evident. On the contrary, demoniacal nature prevails. It is very often found that a dutiful, loving father does not hesitate to ruin his neighbours or cheat the world for the sake of his family; that a faithful member of a community turns to be a sworn enemy of the aliens; that a patriotic national leader plays the devil to other nations, there being no crime he cannot perpetrate in the name of his nation.

Nevertheless we feel we should not be ego-centric, we must sacrifice our own interests for the sake of others, we must be unselfish regardless of personal considerations, unselfish for the sake of un-



selfishness. This shows that we regard unselfishness as a value higher than the material interests of life. We want to do good to others simply because it is good to do so. So there is an inherent tendency in us to forgo the ego, to be at one with others. The reason is that we perceive, however vaguely, a subtle relationship with others much deeper than all the relationships of economic and intellectual interests. In fact, such relationship exists in the unity of all souls in the Supreme Spirit. We may or may not be conscious of it. Such as feel this relationship intensely may be without any knowledge of the soul, often become selfless workers in society, some of the great philanthropists being of this type. To such as these the utilitarian slogan 'The greatest happiness of the greatest number' or 'The greatest good of the greatest number,' as some prefer to have it nowadays, has an appeal. Otherwise, from the

standpoint of the ego or the separate individualities, it has no meaning. 'Why should I do the greatest good to the greatest number and not to myself? I shall do good to others only when it promotes my own interests.' There is no answer to this. All this becomes meaningful only through the recognition of the essential unity of all, and this is the very foundation of ethics. Religion wants us to feel this unity consciously by making us aware of our spiritual self and its oneness with the Infinite Self, which is the Self of all. Through the Infinite we reach all the finite. We understand our human relationships the best through our relationship with God. The more a person finds himself in God, the more he sees others in God, and the deeper he realizes his relationship with them. Thus, with spiritual consciousness a feeling for all naturally grows.

*(To be continued)*

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"Every religion preaches that the essence of all morality is to do good to others. And why? . . . What is the reason that I should be moral? You cannot explain it except when you come to know the truth as given in the Gita—'He, who sees everyone in himself, and himself in everyone, thus seeing the same God living in all, he the sage no more kills the Self by the self.' Know through Advaita that whomsoever you hurt, you hurt yourself; they are all you. Whether you know it or not, through all hands you work, through all feet you move, you are the king enjoying in the palace, you are the beggar leading that miserable existence in the street; you are in the ignorant as well as in the learned, you are in the man who is weak, and you are in the strong; know this and be sympathetic."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO

BY PROF. S. K. MAITRA, M.A., PH.D.

(Continued from the March issue)

## II

### THE SUPERMIND

In my first article I have shown that a link is necessary between Sachchidananda and the world, and that this link cannot be Mind. Mind has certain fundamental limitations which render it unfit to serve as a link between God and the world. Mind, as Sri Aurobindo points out, 'is not a faculty of knowledge nor an instrument of omniscience; it is a faculty for the seeking of knowledge, for expressing as much as it can gain of it in certain forms of a relative thought and for using it towards certain capacities of action.' He further says, 'It is the power which interprets truth of universal existence for the practical uses of a certain order of things; it is not the power which knows and guides that existence and therefore it cannot be the power which created or manifested it' (*The Life Divine* Vol. I. pp. 178-79).

It is clear, therefore, that the link must be something higher than Mind. It must retain the true nature of Sachchidananda and not exhibit it in a veiled, distorted or diluted form. It must at the same time be the consummation and fulfilment of Mind and not merely related to it as something transcendent. Such a link is the Supermind.

The Supermind is called by Sri Aurobindo 'Real-Idea.' By giving it this name he wants to emphasize the fact that 'it is a power of Conscious Force expressive of real being, born out of real being and partaking of its

nature, and neither a child of the Void nor a weaver of fictions. It is conscious Reality throwing itself into mutable forms of its own imperishable and immutable substance' (Ibid. p. 177).

Sri Aurobindo also calls it a Truth-Consciousness. The name, he says, he has borrowed from the Rig-Veda. In the Rig-Veda 'Rita-cit' means 'the consciousness of essential truth of being (Satyam), of ordered truth of active being (Ritam) and the vast self-awareness (Brihat) in which alone this consciousness is possible.'

The Supermind thus is the Creative Idea which retains to the full the truth of the Supreme Reality. Mind, Life and Matter are an inferior expression of it which serves as a goal towards which these are trying to move. It creates a world of 'phenomenal reality of variable conscious being which, inevitably drawn towards its own essential Reality, tries at last to recover it entirely whether by a violent leap or normally through the Ideal which put it forth.'

It is, in fact, nothing else than God as Lord and Creator. It is, however, different from the Ishvara of the Vedantist or the Demiurge of Plato. The Ishvara of the Vedanta is not the Absolute in its pure untarnished form. It is the Absolute seen through its reflection in Maya, which reflection partially disguises and even distorts its true nature. Sri Aurobindo in this matter wants to go back to the unsystematized Vedanta of the Upanishads, which is innocent of this conception of a Maya-ridden Ishvara, and to the

standpoint of the Vedas. The sages who said. “यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते। येन जातानि जीवन्ति। यत् प्रयन्त्यभिसविशन्ति” did not contemplate a Creator who was himself shrouded in Maya.

The Supermind is likewise different from the Demiurge of Plato. The Greek philosophers were in a fix to explain the origin of motion. Parmenides denied motion altogether, and the result was that the whole of creation was nothing but an illusion to him. Anaxagoras, a realist, took the created world to be real, but he had to face the difficulty of accounting for the generation of motion from a plurality of static beings. This difficulty he tried to solve with the help of the principle of Nous or Reason which, being incorporeal, he thought could alone impart motion. But the Nous had no relation whatsoever either to the infinity of primeval seeds or to the world of generation which it helped to bring about. It was a pure *deus ex machina*, brought in for the sake of solving an insoluble difficulty.

The difficulty persists even in Plato. In the account of creation which he gives in the ‘Timaeus,’ Plato conceives the Demiurge or Creator as creating according to an archetype or pattern. But if that be the case, what is his relation to the archetype? Is the archetype created or not created? Plato reluctantly declares that it cannot be created, for then it would be imperfect, and God would in that case be creating the world according to an imperfect pattern, which could not be, as it would militate against God’s goodness. But if it is not created, then either God would be subordinate to it or it would be co-eternal with God. Jowett in his masterly introduction to this dialogue has tried his best to explain the difficulty, but he has to confess that it does not admit of any satis-

factory solution. ‘We must reply again,’ he says, ‘that we cannot follow Plato in all his inconsistencies, but that the gaps of thought are probably more apparent to us than to him. He would perhaps have said that the “first things are known only to God and to him of men whom God loves.”’ There are other difficulties in Plato’s theory of creation, namely, his admission of a prior existence of Matter and also the problem of Evil, which are traceable to the same cause, namely, the loose manner in which his conception of a Creator is related on the one hand to the Ideas and on the other, to the world of creation.

Sri Aurobindo’s conception of the Supermind is free from the difficulties of the Vedantist or of Plato. Their mistake lay in thinking that the creative principle was something different from the ultimate reality. The result of this was either (as in the case of the Vedanta) that the world came to be regarded as unreal, or (as in the case of Plato) that the unity of the system was destroyed and the Ultimate Principle, the Creator and the World fell asunder.

The only philosopher I can think of who has succeeded in maintaining a continuity between the Absolute Reality, the Creator and the created world is Hegel. But Hegel did this work with help of his logic and by making Thought all in all, which suffered from the very serious defect that it gave no recognition to Will or to the suprarational powers of cognition.

The conception of the Supermind is the pivot round which the whole of Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy moves. It is of the utmost importance to understand its true nature, and I shall therefore have to present in greater detail his view of it. Fortunately for us, Sri Aurobindo has dealt with it very

exhaustively in his book *The Life Divine*.

#### SUPERMIND AND MIND

The Supermind is not only Knowledge but also Will. As Knowledge it is twofold, namely, a pervading and comprehending knowledge and a projecting and apprehending knowledge. As Will it is not only a Will to light and vision but a Will to power and work. In general terms it may be described 'as a vastness beyond the ordinary firmaments of our consciousness in which truth of being is luminously one with all that expresses it and assumes inevitably truth of vision, formulation, arrangement, word, act and movement, result of action and expression, infallible ordinance or law' (Ibid. p. 187).

Its essential characteristics can be grasped from the fact that it is the link between Sachchidananda and Mind. It is also possible occasionally for human beings to get glimpses of it, and that is how our Vedic sages could describe its nature, although it is not yet given to man to dwell permanently in it. From its position as a link between the Absolute and the world, we get the following characteristics of it: 'It is a comprehensive and creative consciousness, by its power of pervading and comprehending knowledge, the child of the self-awareness by identity which is the poise of Brahman, and by its power of perfecting, confronting, apprehending knowledge, parent of that awareness by distinction which is the process of the Mind' (Ibid. p. 189).

It is the culmination and consummation of Mind: it is all that the Mind strives to be but cannot attain. Mind can divide things and then can synthesize them; it can analyse a thing into its component parts and then piece them together and get an idea of a whole, 'but the ultimate unity and absolute

infinity are to its consciousness of things abstract notions and unseizable quantities, not something that is real to its grasp, much less something that is alone real' (Ibid. p. 191). It can analyse and synthesize but it can never have integral knowledge.

It is here that the Supermind steps in as the fulfilment and completion of Mind. It differentiates without dividing, as it integrates without joining. 'It establishes a Trinity, not arriving, like the Mind, from the three to the One, but manifesting the three out of the One—for it manifests and develops—and yet maintaining them in their unity—for it knows and contains. By differentiation it is able to bring forward one or other of them as the effective Deity which contains the others involved or explicit in itself, and this process it makes the foundation of all other differentiation.'

#### THE SUPERMIND AND INTUITION

We thus see that there is a vast gulf between Mind and Supermind, and consequently it is necessary to seek an intermediary between them. Can intuition serve as such an intermediary? What is the relation between the supramental consciousness and intuition? As there is a lot of misconception on this point, I think it necessary to make clear Sri Aurobindo's views on it and also show how those views are related to those of one of the most celebrated Western philosophers of the present century—I mean Bergson, whose recent death has created a void in the philosophical world which it is difficult to fill. The question, unfortunately, has been further complicated by the ambiguity of the word 'intuition.'

Sri Aurobindo looks upon intuition as a communication to the mind from above. 'Intuition,' he says, 'brings to man those brilliant messages from

the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge' (Ibid. p. 102). He further calls it a projection of the characteristic action of these higher grades (that is, higher grades of consciousness) into the mind of Ignorance (Ibid. p. 418). Its value is very great, for it establishes a connection between Mind and what is above it.

Nevertheless it would be wrong to call it the highest form of consciousness. For in human mind 'its action is largely hidden by the interventions of our normal intelligence; a pure intuition is a rare occurrence in our mental activity.' 'What we call by the name is usually a point of direct knowledge which is immediately caught and coated over with mental stuff, so that it serves only as an invisible or a very tiny nucleus of a crystallization which is in its mass intellectual or otherwise mental in character' (Ibid. p. 418). Very often 'the flash of intuition is quickly replaced or intercepted, before it has a chance of manifesting itself by a rapid imitative movement, insight or quick perception or some swift-leaping process of thought which owes its appearance to the stimulus of the coming intuition but obstructs its entry or covers it with a substituted mental suggestion, true or erroneous, but in either case not the authentic movement.'

Intuition, thus, being overlaid with mental stuff and its flow being frequently interrupted by imitative mental movement, is not in a position to give us that integral experience which alone reveals the ultimate truth. No wonder, then, that it is followed by Reason, for at the level of mind in which we are, Reason alone can organize and articulate our experience. This is, indeed, what happened in our own country when the intuitive age of the Vedas and the Upanishads was followed by an age of Reason. This is not to be

regarded as a retrograde movement, as a downward march, for the lower faculty gets an opportunity of assimilating as much as it can of what the higher has left and thereby transforming itself and preparing itself for the reception of the higher truths.

From this brief sketch of the intuitive process as understood by Sri Aurobindo, it would appear that the reason why he does not regard it as the highest form of consciousness is that it is under the influence and control of mind. Human intuition is always more or less under such influence and control and can therefore never be the same as the pure truth-consciousness or supramental consciousness. If it were possible for us to have an intuition completely free from all mental action, then we could have the ultimate truths revealed through it. In fact, Sri Aurobindo calls such an intuition the supreme intuition.

Let us now see what Bergson thought of intuition. He defined intuition in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* as 'a kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible.' In another passage of the same book he called it 'an intellectual auscultation.' It is thus a direct approach to reality which, in Bergson's opinion, enables us to enter into the heart of it. Any other approach, such as, for instance, the intellectual approach, will not, he thought, take us to the heart of reality but will only make us describe a circle round it. It follows, therefore, that the only way of knowing reality is by way of intuition.

This view of intuition, however, is not free from difficulty and raises a number of questions. In the first place, we may ask: Do we get this intuition naturally, that is, without our seeking it, or does it require any effort on our

part to get it? If it requires an effort, what is the nature of this effort? Secondly, are the intuitions of all persons of the same value, or even in the same person, are all the intuitions obtained at different moments of the same value? If not, by what criterion are the values of the different intuitions to be determined? Unfortunately, Bergson did not give any satisfactory answer to these questions. But he repeatedly spoke in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* of 'the effort of intuition,' of 'a laborious and even painful effort,' of 'the active, I might almost say violent, character of metaphysical intuition.' These expressions suggest that in Bergson's view intuition does not come naturally to us but has to be obtained by an effort. He has, however, nowhere specified what the nature of this effort is, and whether by some training this effort may be increased. But at any rate his recognition that intuition has to be obtained by an effort leaves the door open for the possibility that some men have better intuitions than others, and that even in the same man intuitions of various grades of value occur. As I shall show presently, Bergson does clearly recognize that there are grades of intuition. And if that be the case, it cannot be said that any and every intuition is the full and complete revelation of reality.

Bergson regarded metaphysics, that is, the full and complete knowledge of reality, as integral experience. But in view of the obvious difference in value between one intuition and another which Bergson himself admitted, are we not entitled to say that our ordinary human intuition is incapable of giving us this integral experience, and that it is only the highest type of intuition that can be called integral experience?

That Bergson did recognize grades of intuition appears clearly from his last

book *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. There in a passage which occurs in his account of the philosophical value of mysticism, he contrasted the ordinary intuition of human beings with the deeper intensifications of it in mystic experience. As the matter is of considerable importance, I quote here his exact words: 'But just as there subsisted around animal instinct a fringe of intelligence, so human intelligence preserved a halo of intuition. The latter, in man, had remained fully disinterested and conscious, but it was only a *faint glow* and did not radiate very far. Yet it is from this that the light must come, if ever the inner working of the vital impulse were to be made clear in its significance and in its object. For this intuition was turned inward; and if, in a first intensification, it made us realize the continuity of our inner life, if most of us went no further, a *deeper intensification* might carry it to the roots of our being, and thus to the very principle of life in general. Now is not this precisely the privilege of the mystic soul?' (The italics in these sentences are mine) (*Two Sources* etc. p. 214).

The difference between Sri Aurobindo's view of intuition and that of Bergson is therefore not so great as at first sight it appears to be. Both look upon integral experience as revealing the true nature of reality. Both think that human intuition at its present level is not capable of giving this integral experience, and therefore of revealing the true nature of reality. But while Bergson put all the different strata of consciousness, from integral experience to the ordinary human intuition, under the same title 'intuition,' Sri Aurobindo has made a more thorough-going analysis of them and has differentiated the different layers, giving them different names. He has also very clearly

shown why it is that human intuition falls short of integral experience. Bergson, although he has based the whole of his philosophy upon intuition, has not, unfortunately, indicated in a manner free from ambiguity, the nature of intuition and has not also shown on what principle the gradation of intuition can be made.

#### SUPERMIND AND OVERMIND

In our search for a link between Mind and Supermind, we came across Intuition. Intuition no doubt is a revelation to us of a truth which is not ordinarily accessible to the mind. But, as we have seen, it is too flashy, too unstable, too much under the influence of masses of mental stuff that penetrate into it, to be able really to serve as a link between Mind and Supermind. It itself has its source in something higher, a 'superconscient cosmic mind in direct contact with the Supramental Truth-Consciousness.' This superconscient cosmic mind is the link between Mind and Supermind, and is called by Sri Aurobindo the Overmind. His description of it in *The Life Divine* is a wonderful piece of literary art: it combines the richest poetic imagery with the highest flights of philosophical thought. We are told, for instance, that it 'covers as with the wide wings of some creative Oversoul this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness, while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden Lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight, intervening with its flood of infinite possibilities as at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality' (Ibid. Vol. I. p. 424).

Although the Supermind communicates all its reality to the Overmind,

yet the latter is 'a first parent of the Ignorance,' because it lacks the integrality of the Supermind. It takes each aspect or power of the Supreme Reality and constitutes it into a separate and independent reality. Thus the integrality of the supramental consciousness in which all the different aspects or powers of Reality exist harmoniously in one whole, is destroyed, in the Overmind. 'Purusha and Prakriti, Conscious Soul and executive Force of Nature, are in the supramental harmony a two-aspected single truth, being and dynamic of the Reality; there can be no disequilibrium or predominance of one over the other. In Overmind we have the origin of the cleavage, the trenchant distinction made by the philosophy of the Sankhyas in which they appear as two independent entities, Prakriti able to dominate Purusha and cloud its freedom and power, reducing it to a witness and recipient of her forms and actions, Purusha able to return to its separate existence and abide in a free self-sovereignty by rejection of her original overclouding material principle. So with the other aspects or powers of the Divine Reality, One and Many, Divine Personality and Divine Impersonality, and the rest' (Ibid. p. 426).

Employing the ideology of the Vedas, Sri Aurobindo says, 'If we regard the Powers of the Reality as so many Godheads, we can say that the Overmind releases a million Godheads into action, each empowered to create its own world, each world capable of relation, communication and interplay with the others.' And just as in the Vedas each god is worshipped as if he were himself the Supreme God, although each is a separate deity, acting sometimes in opposition to the other deities, sometimes in harmony with them, so the Overmind erects each of the powers of the Supreme Reality into a separate

reality, with its separate action and principle of development, although it shows also how it combines harmoniously with the other powers of the Supreme Reality.

Further, he says, 'Overmind consciousness is global in its cognition and can hold any number of seemingly fundamental differences together in a reconciling vision' (Ibid. pp. 428-29). Where the mind sees irreconcilable differences, the Overmind intelligence perceives coexistent correlatives; what to the mind are contraries are to the Overmind complementaries.

#### THE SUBLIMINAL SELF

We have so far dealt with the surface consciousness—the surface mind, life and matter. But there is also an inner stratum within us—the subliminal Self. There is a subliminal mind, life and matter which is more plastic, more powerful, more capable of dynamic action than our surface mind, life or body. 'The subliminal mind in us is open to the Universal knowledge of the cosmic mind, etc.' (Ibid. p. 337). The subliminal are functions of our larger

and truer personality. In the subliminal our individuality is close to the universality and is in constant contact with it.

This subliminal Self plays a very important part in the process of the ascent to the Supermind. Indeed, without any awakening of this Self, no ascent to a higher consciousness is possible. This Self 'is capable of a direct communication with the universal forces of the cosmos, a direct feeling and opening to them, a direct action on them and even a widening of itself beyond the limits of the personal mind, the personal life, the personal body, so that it feels itself more and more a universal being no longer limited by the existing walls of our too narrow mental, vital, physical existence. This widening can extend itself to a complete entry into the consciousness of the cosmic mind, into unity with the universal life, even into oneness with universal Matter.' Once we make an entry into this inner being, our inner Self will be found to be capable of an ascent upwards into things beyond our present mental level.

(To be continued)

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# SAVITAR

## A STUDY IN THE RIG-VEDA

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[A pathetic interest attaches to this paper, for the young and talented author was snatched away in the prime of youth by the cruel hand of death. We are told that friends have made arrangements to bring out in the form of a book his researches on 'Savitar.' As may be seen by a perusal of this paper, the author identifies Savitar with the Aurora Borealis. The sense of wonder and the poetic insight of the ancient Aryan seers led them to recognize the manifestation of the Deity in all that was beautiful and awe-inspiring. What can be more beautiful than the northern lights that break away the gloom of the long winter night of the Arctic regions?—Ed.]

It is well known to all scholars versed in the Vedas that Sayana, in the introduction to his Bhashya, stresses the importance of the study of the Vedas with a clear knowledge of the meaning of the texts, but attaches little value to merely memorizing them. His Bhashya has remained ever since and still continues to be the unquestioned authority in the interpretation of the amazingly vast number of hymns composing the Vedas. We cannot, therefore, fail to follow him, in general, in a consideration of the Vedic hymns which may engage our attention.

I have devoted some years to a study of the Rig-Vedic hymns and come to definite conclusions about the nature of Savitar, and these form the groundwork of a book which I have prepared and which I hope to publish at an early date.

Sayana bases his commentary on what are known as the six Vedangas, to which I have also strictly adhered. In the interpretation of the hymns with which I am concerned I have taken one of the several meanings which a word is capable of in Sayana's own judgement, while I have not taken liberties with the case and number of the expressions in the text. Thus, I have taken 'Dhanā' to mean 'light,' which Sayana himself accepts. And what is more, I have had no occasion to resort to Upalakshana to

force my meaning into the text. And if I have departed from Sayana in different places, I have done so without violating the laws laid down in the Vedangas, and in so far as Sayana seems to me, as he will seem to every intelligent reader, to have confused the issues involved in interpreting some important 'Riks.' With our present-day advance in geographical knowledge, we are in a position to throw considerable fresh light on the meaning of some 'Riks' which undoubtedly refer to certain natural phenomena peculiar to some parts of the globe and totally absent in our own country.

The Vedic Rishis credited the forces of Nature with conscious individuality, and worshipped and lauded them and offered sacrifices to them in the belief that they rule the destinies of men and that it is in their power to protect us by averting danger and by showering on us the gifts solicited of them. The gods so worshipped are legion, among whom figure the Orbs of Sun and Moon, the Earth, Ushas, Savitar and elements such as Agni. I have concerned myself chiefly with Savitar and Surya whose identity has been taken for granted by Sayana and by most Western and Eastern scholars alike after him, in spite of internal evidence to the contrary.

In the Rig-Veda, the oldest of the

scriptures, whole hymns are separately addressed to the two gods; and in my book I have devoted my particular attention to those hymns which claim Savitar as their presiding deity. In eleven entire hymns Savitar is hailed and lauded as the stimulator of all things and the giver of light, which seems to have decided Sayana in regarding him as identical with Surya or at any rate as a phase of day's luminary. However, when we fix our regard on these hymns without letting Sayana's interpretation prejudice our vision, we are made aware of certain distinctive attributes of this strange deity which we never experience in contact with the Sun. A close examination of (I-35) the 35th hymn in the first Mandala which I have discussed stanza by stanza in my book, has yielded me certain data which constitute the basis of my theory. Thus Savitar, unlike Surya, is a nocturnal deity who presides over a luminous phenomenon which enlightens night as is indicated by the following 'Riks.'

आ कृष्णेन रजसा वर्तमानः (I-35-2), निवेशयन् प्रसवन्नक्तुभिर्जगत् (IV-53-3), अपसेधन्नसोयातुधानानस्थाद्देवः प्रतिदोषं गृणानः (I-35-10), सनः क्षपाभिरहभिश्च जिन्वतु (IV-53-7), विष्टपर्णो अन्तरिक्षाय ख्यत् . . . क्वेदानीं सूर्यः कश्चिक्ते कतमांघ्रां रश्मिरस्यातत्तान (I-35-7), उदुष्यदेवः सविता दमूना हिरण्यपाणिः प्रतिदोषमस्थात् (VI-71-4), हृदियेन दाशुषे यच्छति त्मनातन्नोमहां उदयान्देवो अक्तुभिः (IV-53-1).

Moreover, the electrical nature which is predicated of this god (X-149-2) and his kinship with another deity particularized by implication in the expression देव्यस्य (I-35-5) figure nowhere in the Rig-Veda as epithets to Surya nor are they distinctly discernible facts of human perception when applied to Surya. From the meaning of Savitar as stimulator, Sayana identifies him with Surya, but in many places he contents himself by simply noting that Savitar is a god

or that he is a different form of Surya thus differentiating the two deities. He does not clearly state the nature of Savitar.

There are many facts which differentiate Savitar from Surya. Savitar is invariably spoken of as having two arms (VII-45-2, IV-53-3) and is broad-handed (II-38-2); no such description of Surya is found in the Rig-Veda. Savitar's chariot is drawn by two horses which are bay brown or dusky (I-35-3) whereas Surya is said to have seven green horses or one horse bearing seven names. The rays of Savitar are tremulous or deep quivering गभोरवेपाः (I-35-7) while the beams of Surya are moveless ध्रुवासः (I-54-3). In VII-45-2 a wish is expressed that even Surya may grant him (Savitar) active vigour. In I-35-7 the poet asks 'where is Surya now—who knows which celestial sphere he illumines now, while he (Savitar) hath illumined the sky regions.' Taking I-35-9, we note अपामीवां बाधते वेति सूर्यमभिकृष्णेन रजसार्थामृणोति ॥ He destroyeth outright sickness and attendant distress, and acquires the function of the sun, and with darkness destroying light overspreads the sky. In this verse वेतिसूर्य is explained 'he moves towards the sun' by Sayana, who adds 'even though Savitar and Surya represent one and the same deity, the phenomena are two different manifestations of the same deity, and in consequence one may be said to move towards the other. He has no choice but to explain the difficulty as he has done. A more rational explanation of वेतिसूर्य is सूर्यत्वं प्राप्नोति 'Acquires the function of the sun.' This is in conformity with the other attributes, viz. removing sickness, destroying darkness. 'But if the sun for six months in the year deprives the circumpolar countries of the splendour of its fires, an imposing phenomenon frequently illuminates the

long nights with dazzling radiance as if Nature sought to compensate for the absence of the orb of the day by the most impressive of all her optical wonders.' (*Earth and Sea* by Louis Figuier, 1874).

For the reasons enumerated above and for many more which I have adduced in my book in the course of the critical examination of the hymns, it is evident that the Rig-Vedic Rishis designated as Savitar some deity other than Surya, whom they believed to preside over the manifestation of some luciferous nocturnal phenomenon which they actually observed. Now, which deity is this Savitar? Which natural phenomenon was designated as such by the Vedic poets?

When we examine the hymns dedicated to Savitar, we shall find embodied in them fine and exact descriptions of the various forms of aurora borealis which is a common sight in the northern latitudes. I quote below a few hymns and append extracts from the writings of Western scientists and explorers for comparison. From a perusal of them one is struck by the sameness of the descriptions contained in them. In II-38-2 देव ऊर्ध्वः प्रबाहवा पृथुपाणिः सिसर्ति 'The shining one, large-handed, extends his arms from on high.' Again in VI-71-1 उदुष्यदेवः सविताहिरण्यया बाहू अयंस्तसवनायसुकतुः 'Savitar hath lifted up his golden arms to impel all moving life to action.' In VII-45-2 उदस्यबाहू शिथिरा बृहन्ताहिरण्यया दिवोअन्तां अनष्टाम् 'His large golden arms, extended from on high, reach the ends of the sky.' In VI-71-3 he is spoken of as having tongues of flame: हिरण्यजिह्वः। Compare the following extracts.

'In the afternoon we had a magnificent aurora borealis—glittering arches across the whole vault of the sky from the east towards the west.' (Nansen's *Farthest North* Vol. I, p. 190). 'The arc

can also appear across the heavens from horizon to horizon.' (J. R. Astro. Soc., Canada, 1929).

'The arc has its highest point on the magnetic meridian and frequently seems to reach the horizon in the N.W.' N.E. The arc may be visible alone, but frequently from it rays appear to spread out like the spokes of a fan. At other times there is a rapid cross-motion and again they seem to shoot rapidly upward and then recede.' (*Ency. Brit.* 1932, p. 696.) 'Rays were emitted from a small luminous bow that appeared in the north. These rays, of a very decided greenish hue at the lower base, were on the contrary at their upper extremity of a splendid purple.' 'Now it is a fiery dew accompanied by a strange rustling sound; or it may appear in the form of sheaves of flame darting from the north to the various points of the compass.' (*The Atmosphere of Camille Flammarion* 1873, p. 497 and p. 503).

Savitar is said to have 'a hand of fair fingers' स्वंगुरिः। This indicated an arc form of aurora with upward streamers.

In interpreting I-35-3 Sayana reverses the order of the words प्रवता and उदृता and explains that the high path refers to the Sun's course from morning to noon and the lower to his course from midday to sunset. Macdonnell connects the hymn with evening and without reversing the order of the above words, seems to hold that the downward and the upward paths refer to the Sun's afternoon course and his next forenoon course respectively, with a hiatus of twelve hours in between. In this verse two white steeds of Savitar are mentioned. The stanza can be easily construed in terms of aurora borealis. That night the poet might have witnessed an auroral display consisting of two white arcs (two white horses) first above the horizon with upward flowing streamers. Aurora sometimes proceeds upward from

below the horizon and sometimes makes its appearance at the zenith and then travels downward. The poet seems to dwell on this aspect of aurora when he says that the god goes 'by the low path and by high' with two white steeds. The Deva comes from the sky's end. 'Homogeneous quite arcs—they can appear near the horizon and between the arc and the horizon a dark segment is often seen; narrow or broad, very often diffuse along the upper border but sharp along the lower one. Then the arc is double, the upper arc can turn around in the eastern end and continue as the lower arc (on the northern hemisphere). The lower border can be regular like a rainbow or can be more irregular (in the latter case very often strongly luminous) and transforming soon afterwards into rays.' (J. R. Astro. Soc., Canada, 1929).

'The auroral rays seem to shoot rapidly upward and then recede.' (*Ency. Brit.* 1932, p. 636).

I-35-4. This stanza embraces a description of aurora in its various aspects. Sayana's elaboration of the many forms of gold in the chariot is fanciful. It is ornamented, he says, with here a row of golden elephants, there a group of horses, elsewhere a collection of human forms and so on. The epithets **अभीवृत्तम्**, **कृशनेर्विश्वरूपं**, **चित्रभानुः** acquire a startling significance in connection with Savitar when aurora is substituted. 'The aurora borealis is one of the most beautiful spectacles in the sky. The colours and shape change every instant, sometimes a fan-like cluster of rays, at other times long golden draperies gliding one over the other. Blue, green, yellow, red and white combine to give a glorious display of colour.' (*Forces of Nature*).

'There are many types of auroral phenomena, sometimes several types appearing simultaneously. These are

known as arcs, rays, bands, curtains, draperies, coronas and diffuse glows. When the arc is faint it is generally white, if fairly bright, yellowish, and when bright, many other colours particularly red and green appear.' (*Ency. Brit.* 1932, p. 696). 'At other times the display begins with nearly vertical curtains of light the folds of which keep changing in form. It is often a fascinating and resplendent spectacle and it is pardonable if a word picture falls short of the reality.' (Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institute, 1936. *Northern Lights* by A. P. Eve, p. 147).

A reference may be made to I-24-7 and X-139-2, and also to I-36-13 in which the streamer or pillar form of aurora is indicated.

The strikingly pulsating characteristic of aurora is described in several Riks. II-38-3. **आशुभिश्चिद्यान्विसुचाति नूनमरीर-मदतमानं चिदेतोः। अहर्षणां चिद्ययां अविष्या-मनुव्रतंसवितुर्मोक्यागात् ॥**

'Savitar (moving in the firmament) is abandoned by the fast moving (rays of light). Verily, (he) by his movement has gladdened (again) the fast moving (life). And he has checked the movement of those rays of light that glide like serpents. Night succeeds (the cessation of the activity) of Savitar.' This translation differs from that of Sayana. Compare also III-38-9, VII-38-2.

'Pulsating arcs—parts of an arc can flare up and disappear regularly with a periodicity of about 20 seconds. The pulsation can often be more rapid and much more intense in such a way that whole arcs appear and disappear one after another almost at the same place.' (J. R. Astro. Soc., Canada, 1929).

'Presently the aurora borealis shakes over the vault of heaven its veil of glittering silver changing now to yellow, now to green, now to red. It spreads, it contracts again in restless change, next

it breaks into waving many folded bands of shining silver, over which shoot billows of glittering rays, and then the glory vanishes. Presently it shimmers in tongues of flame over the very Zenith, and then again it shoots a bright ray right up from the horizon, until the whole melts away in the moonlight. But now it is growing again new lightnings shoot up, and the endless game begins afresh.' (Nansen's *Farthest North* Vol. I, p. 153).

Perhaps one of the most knotty verses which exercised the ingenuity of Sayana for a correct explanation is IV-53-5  
 त्रिरन्तरिक्षं सवितामहित्वना त्रोरजांसिपरिभूखीणि-  
 रोचना । तिस्रो दिवः पृथिवीस्तिस्र इन्वति त्रिभि-  
 र्ब्रह्मैरभिनोरक्षतित्मना ॥

According to Sayana, the three divisions of the Antariksha are Vayuloka, Vidyutloka, and Varunaloka. Savitar pervades the three regions which cause delight in the earth, mid-region and the firmament. Previously the three regions of the mid-region were spoken of but here mid-region is mentioned in general and hence there is no repetition. Being the lord of the three regions, i.e. earth, mid-region and the firmament, he pervades by his power—Agni, Vayu and Aditya (as they belong to the respective regions). Previously the three divisions of the mid-region were spoken of but hereafter the divisions of the earth and heaven will be stated. The three heavens are Indraloka, Prajapatiloka and Satyaloka. The threefold earth he pervades. He who so pervaded, by three functions i.e. of distributing heat, rain and cold, himself favourably minded, may he protect us. This explanation of Sayana leaves one in confusion and unconvinced. The following extract from Nansen's *Farthest North*, Vol. I, p. 187 throws a flood of light on the meaning of the stanza. 'There is the supernatural for you. The northern lights flashing in matchless power and

beauty over the sky in all the colours of the rainbow. The prevailing one was at first yellow, but that gradually flickered over into green and then a sparkling ruby red began to show at the bottom of the rays on the under side of the arch, soon spreading over the whole arch. And now from the far away western horizon a fiery serpent writhed itself up over the sky, shining brighter and brighter as it came. It split into three all brilliantly glittering. Then the colours changed. The serpent to the south turned almost to ruby red with spots of yellow, the one in the middle yellow and the one to the north greenish white. Sheaves of rays swept along the sides of the serpents driven through the ether-like waves before a storm wind. They sway backwards and forwards, now strong, now fainter again. The serpents reached and passed the Zenith.'

In the light of this extract, the simple and natural explanation of the verse seems to be—'Savitar by his greatness encircles the firmament on the three sides, presents light of three colours. Then spreads out three luminous forms and impels them to the Zenith. He completely fills with light the three regions—earth, mid-region and the firmament. By three acts (as the cause of the existence and activity of all moving life and as a source of light) himself protects.'

The observation of the Vedic poet gives us also the approximate height of the aurora which he at times noticed. In I-35-8—

अष्टौव्यख्यत्ककुभः पृथिव्यास्त्री घन्वयोजना  
 सप्तसिन्धून् ॥

'From the height of three Yojanas (about 30 miles) from the earth he hath illumined the eight points and the seven seas or lakes.' Sayana, however, takes it as 'hath illumined the three worlds which unite living beings to their respective enjoyments.' In I-123-8 Sayana

takes 'Yojana' as a measure of distance equal to a league. The same meaning may be adopted in this stanza I-35-8. 'Dhanva' means 'sky.' Hence the translation I have given above. 'Stromer has stated that the lower limit of height in Norway is 80 k.m. On two occasions at Saskatoon banks were photographed, the lower limits of which were at a height of only 60 k.m. The lowest recorded was at 59 k.m. In these photographs the intensity was good and the edge of the aurora clearly defined,' (*Reviews of Modern Physics* Vol. 9, No. 4, p. 413. *A Survey of the Facts and Theories of the Aurora* by E. W. Hewson).

'Prof. A. H. Newton gives the heights of 28 aurorae calculated by a new method by him ranging from 33 to 281 miles, with a mean of 130 miles.' (*Ency. Brit.* 9th Edition, Vol. III. Reprint 1898, p. 93).

'By this method an upper limit of from 50 to 240 miles and a lower limit of 50 to 100 miles have been fixed. These heights refer to auroras which occur in that portion of our atmosphere not illuminated by the sun.

'Trustworthy observers have, however, reported seeing the aurora between them and a mountain or a cliff or below clouds. This would mean an altitude of a mile or less.' (*Ency. Brit.* 14th Ed. 1932). In I-24-6 also there is an indication of the height of aurora. Savitar's paths, dustless and easy to travel, indicate a suspicion, if not a clear knowledge, on the hymner's part of the rarefied condition of the upper atmosphere (I-35-11).

We find comparisons instituted between Ushas and Savitar in respect of their splendour in VI-50-8 and VII-79-2. 'The northern lights being alone conspicuous in Europe had from the earliest periods various popular names in the northern languages. They were described by Gassendi in 1621 under the appella-

tion aurora borealis or "northern dawn," their simplest form suggesting the appearance of dawn or approaching sunrise in the northern horizon.' (*A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* Vol. I, p. 567). 'Feeble glow near the horizon resembling the dawn, of white or red colour.'

'This form often is the upper part of an arc whose lower border is under the horizon.' (J. R. Astro. Soc., Canada, 1929).

In X-139-1, Savitar, the protector, is said to move through the air's mid-region in conjunction with Ushas or the light of the Sun which fountains forth in a continuous stream below the horizon. Sayana takes it that the deity presiding over the period between the birth of Ushas and sunrise, is Savitar. He gives the same explanation in V-81-4—'you mingle with the rays of the Sun, (He who is before sunrise is said to be Savitar; from sunrise to sunset he is said to be Surya) and go on both sides of the night.' If Savitar be the deity before sunrise, it is not intelligible how he can be said to go on the other side of the night, i.e. in the evening hours also. The following extracts furnish an explanation of the fact that Savitar 'goes on both sides of the night.' 'It was noted that quiet bands and arcs predominated in the early evening hours and forms with ray structure just before daylight in the morning.' (*A Survey of the Facts and Theories of the Aurora* by E. W. Hewson—*Reviews of Modern Physics* No. 4, Vol. 9, October 1937).

'One of the most spectacular aurora seen in Norway in the last twenty years occurred on the night of March 22-23, 1920. The measurement and calculation of these brought out the striking fact that after sunset and before sunrise the auroral rays had a considerably higher position than in the middle of the night. It was a remarkable violet grey

aurora appearing on September 8, 1926, which suggested to Stromer the conditions under which these high rays occurred. This aurora extended from the horizon in the west up to a certain height in the sky, and then disappeared, and was at the unusual height of 300-500 k.m. above the earth. The great height, unusual colour and situation near the region where the sun had set suggested that it lay in the upper atmosphere in full sunshine. A few rays seemed to extend into the earth's shadow, but were separated from the higher rays by dark intervals—the high rays of the brilliant aurora of 1920, seen before sunrise and after sunset, had been illuminated by the sun.' (*Reviews of Modern Physics* by E. W. Hewson).

'The most conspicuous features were red auroras of long duration and sunlit aurora rays of quite unusual height. The first sunlit aurora rays in the morning appeared five hours before sunrise in the N.N.E. The lowest points were at the border line between the sunlit and dark atmosphere at 600 k.m., and the summits reached the astonishing height of 1100 k.m. above sea level. The rays were red. Later sunlit aurora rays of the common feeble grey violet colour appeared and lasted till dawn.' (*Nature* April 3, 1937, p. 584, Carl Stromer, vide also the description by Nansen in his *Farthest North* Vol. I, p. 179).

I believe that I have adduced sufficiently convincing evidence that it is the aurora borealis which the Vedic Rishis designated by Savitar, which is the grandest phenomenon in the polar regions. 'What a strange world is that of the poles; nearly every night there is a more or less brilliant display of these auroral lights.' (*The Atmosphere of C. Flammarion*).

According to the hymns, then, men were inhabiting a region illuminated nightly by Savitar. In I-110, the

hymner imparts to us that his ancestors, the Ribhus, the sons of Sudhanva Angiras, were at first mortals, that they had visited Savitar's abode after a long and arduous journey, desiring what deserves to be experienced, and that Savitar granted them immortality in appreciation of their worship of him. In VII-52-3, we learn that the energetic Angirasas spread desiring Savitar's excellent wealth. From the foregoing we conclude that the Aryans, at any rate, some of the clans, inhabited the polar regions where aurora borealis constantly manifested itself and that their descendants gradually drifted with the advent of the great ice age. From among the clans who had thus drifted away from auroral regions, people in a spirit of adventure or urged by faith would still travel north in quest of Savitar, and on their return, would be received with the rare honour of canonization. Worshippers of Savitar bore the title of 'Hiranyastupa.' The sacrifice they performed was called 'Hiranyastupa Vrata,' and it was a custom with them to instal 'Hiranyastupa' in their homes.

Commenting on hymn X-149, Sayana says that Hiranstupa, the author of the hymn, is the son of Hiranyastupa, who, in turn, is the son of Angirasa. Durgacharya, the well-known commentator on Yaska's *Niruktam*, on the other hand, observes that Angirasa Hiranyastupa of the hymn is invoking Savitar as Angirasa Hiranyastupa of a former age had done. After the departure of the Aryans from the polar regions, with the advance of centuries, Aurora faded out of people's memory and its identity got merged in that of the Sun. No wonder, therefore, that Sayana experiences difficulty in reading descriptions of the Sun and his activity into the Suktas which celebrate Savitar, whom we identify with aurora borealis.

In my book I have explained the 'Riks' in detail quoting authorities where necessary and also inserted photographs of the different forms of aurora for reference each in its context. I shall consider myself amply rewarded if competent scholars take it that my investigations, on the lines followed by me,

have yielded tangible results by throwing fresh light on one of the unintelligible portions of the Rig-Veda and that the identification of Savitar with aurora borealis lends unerring support to the theory of the arctic home of the Aryans or, at any rate, of some of the Aryan tribes.

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## GEOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF GAUDA

BY DR. DEBENDRA CHANDRA DAS GUPTA, M.A., ED.D. (Calif.)

(Concluded from the previous issue)

The architectural growth of the city of Gauda followed in the train of the commercial and political activities. In course of time the city came to be decorated with large number of buildings—growing larger and larger as time advanced. Unfortunately we have no trace of the architectural greatness of the city of Gauda under the Hindu rulers, as the Muhammadan rulers made it a point to destroy Hindu buildings, temples, and to build mosques out of the ruins of these. 'After the flight of the Raja, Bukhtyar gave up the city to be plundered by the troops, reserving for himself only the elephants and public stores. He then proceeded, without opposition, to Lucknowty, and established the ancient city of Gaur as the capital of his dominions. As a necessary part of this ceremony, he destroyed a number of Hindu temples and with their materials erected mosques, colleges, and caravanseries, on their ruins.'<sup>25</sup> The practice of the Muhammadan conquerors of building mosques on the ruins of the temples is concretely testified to by actual remains. Mr. Creighton whom we have several times quoted in this

thesis refers to actual plates showing the remnants of Hindu Divinity in pieces of stone which belonged to the Golden mosque. 'This plate (No. XVI. Varaha Avatara) represents the two sides of the same stone, being one of those taken from the inside of the small Golden mosque. The figure represented on the left hand, is that of the Hindu Divinity, Vishnu, incarnated in the Boar. It appears to have been the general practice of the Muhammadan conquerors of India, to destroy all the temples of the idolaters and to raise mosques out of their ruins.

'The figure (No. XVII. Sivani, a Hindu image) here represented is said to be that of Sivani, the consort of Siva, one of the Hindu triad. The stone on which it was carved was also found in the small Golden mosque.'<sup>26</sup>

Though we have little knowledge of the architectural wealth of the Hindu Gauda, we know a good deal of it of the Gauda under its Muslim rulers, thanks to the accounts left by the Muslim historians and European tourists. The Muslim rulers of Gauda built forts, constructed palaces, erected monuments,

<sup>25</sup> Charles Stewart: *The History of Bengal* pp. 62-63.

<sup>26</sup> H. Creighton: *Ruins of Gauda* pp. 42-45.



mosques and towers, some of which remain even to this day. We propose to offer below a brief but systematic account of the architectural grandeur of Gauda under the Moslem rule.

Muhammad Bukhtyar Khiliji, the first Muslim conqueror of Bengal who assumed the title of Sultan Ghiyasuddin in the year 1203 A.D. made Lakhanauti or Gauda his capital and built the fortress of Basankot. This was a fort of considerable dimension.

Sultan Shums Addeen Bhengara, a descendant of Ilyas Khaje was elected the king of Bengal by the nobles, and he assumed the title of Nasir Shah in 1547 A.D. He built an extensive fortification around his capital evidently with the object of making it impregnable against invaders.<sup>27</sup> From a passage of the *Āin-I-Akbari* we gather that there was a strong fort on the western bank of the lake called Chhatiapatia meant for the purpose of protecting the city against invasion from the north, other sides of the city as we have already noted having strong natural barriers. According to Mr. William Hedges who visited the city in the seventeenth century the royal palace of Gauda was superior in point of grandeur and architectural design to similar palaces in European cities like Constantinople. His words are quoted below. 'May 16.—We spent 3½ hours in seeing the ruins, especially of the palace, which has been (as appears by the gates of it yet standing), in my judgement, considerably bigger and more beautiful than the Grand Seigneur's Seraglio at Constantinople, or any other palace that I have seen in Europe.

'The building was chiefly of brick; the arches of the gates and many other places were of black marble, and other black hard stones to supply the want of

it, which is exceedingly rare and difficult to procure in this kingdom.'<sup>28</sup>

Over and above building forts, the Muslim rulers of Gauda constructed mosques and erected monuments. We give below opinions of some European tourists on the magnificent ruins of mosques and monuments. A picturesque description of the ruins of a fort in Gauda is given by Mr. Creighton. The fort was rather a splendid palace of formidable dimensions having a length of nearly one mile and a breadth of half a mile surrounded by an earthen rampart reaching a height of forty feet. There was a large and deep ditch surrounding it. The northern gate of the city known by the name of Dakhil gate could be still traced. Within this enclosure there was a part of a brick wall forty-two feet high which surrounded a spacious palace 700 yards long and 100 yards wide. This huge edifice was divided into three apartments and it was evidently the king's palace. Within the palace the remains of Shah Husain's tomb were still visible. From the account we get an idea of the vastness, magnitude and magnificence of the architectural grandeur of Gauda. Jela Addeen, the son of Raja Ganesh, transferred his capital from Pandua to Gauda in 1392 A.D., and adorned it with beautiful mosques, baths and caravensaries.

Malick Andiel the Abyssinian slave who ascended the throne of Bengal (1491 A.D.) under the title of Firoz Shah constructed several mosques, minarets and reservoirs revealing no mean architectural grandeur. After the death of Sultan Alauddin Hussain Shah, his eldest son Nusserit Shah was elected to the throne by the nobility in 1521 A.D. To Nusserit Shah belongs the credit of erecting two mosques of superb architec-

<sup>27</sup> Charles Stewart: *The History of Bengal* p. 100.

<sup>28</sup> William Hedges: *The Diary* p. 88.

tural excellence, namely, golden mosque in 932 A.H. and Kadam Russul in 939 A.H. He also built a shrine in honour of the saint Mukhdum Akhi Sirajud-din at Sadu-t-laphur. Muhammad Shah, son of Alauddin who waded through a sea of blood—he murdered his young nephew, the son of Nusserit Shah—was the last independent king of Bengal. He built a mosque at Sadullapore.

It is quite evident from the remarks of Reuben Burrow (as quoted by Creighton in his *Ruins of Gauda*), who visited the ruins in 1787 that the elimination of the architectural works of this ancient capital has been due more to the rapacity of men than to the destructive influence of time. Bricks and stones, especially stones from the buildings and gates of buildings, have been taken away by men for their own use. Only the brick buildings have been spared. 'Gour is an enormous heap of ruins, but seems to have been destroyed by the removal of the materials for' other purposes than by time. The fields about it have their 'soil composed, in effect, of nothing but broken bricks, and' those bricks have been so well made and burnt that the 'marks of the fingers of the makers are still to be seen on' many of the pieces. There are five large gates of the city 'still remaining, besides some beautiful entrances to the' tombs of the ancient princes, and mosques, etc. These 'tombs were, not long ago, in perfect order, and were held' in a manner sacred, till they were torn to pieces for the sake of the stone; indeed, such of the gates as happened 'to have no stone in them are almost perfect, but whenever' a piece of stone happened to be placed, the most elegant 'buildings have been destroyed to get it out, . . .'<sup>29</sup> Rennell, a British officer of the East India Company, who also visited the

city of Gauda substantially agrees with Mr. Reuben in his description of it.<sup>30</sup>

Ravenshaw, an officer of the British India Government, tells us that most of the villages and the regions surrounding Gauda bear evidence to the fact that the private houses there were constructed at least partly out of the bricks taken away from the architectural works of the capital. It is fortunate that some important buildings are now preserved by the Government of India for which they really deserve thanks. Among the important buildings thus preserved are Dakhil Darwaza, Firoz Minar, the Baradwari mosque or the Bara Sona Masjid, and the Lattan Masjid.<sup>31</sup>

The citizens of ancient Gauda both under the Hindu and the Moslem rule were divided into various classes—the nobility, the military class, the mercantile community, the priestly class, the educational fraternity, the dancers and musicians, the artisan class, the menials and others. We do not know much about the citizens under the Hindu rule; but there is reason to believe that the classes were very much the same under the Hindu as under the Moslem rule. First in point of importance is the all powerful class of nobility—both hereditary and nominated—who made and unmade kings and influenced all governmental measures. This class of people were by birth and training politicians, diplomats and administrators capable of doing immense good and evil. There were very many able men among them and certainly there were also many turbulent agitators. The next in point of importance is the military class—the class of professional soldiers—who were very large in number. It may be remembered that prior to the time of Akbar the Muslim rulers of India had no

<sup>30</sup> James Rennell: *Map of Hindustan* pp. 55-56.

<sup>31</sup> John Henry Ravenshaw: *Gaur: its Ruins and Inscriptions* p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> H. Creighton: *Ruins of Gauda* pp. 5-6.

professional paid soldiers but had feudal armies. Commanders of the army were given free lands in consideration of which they used to undertake to supply fixed number of soldiers in proportion to the size of the free lands enjoyed. Owing to the prevalence of this system the number of Moslem soldiers belonging to the military class must have been very large in the capital city of Gauda. Earlier still under the Hindu rule we have evidence of the existence of military class in the city as we were informed by Kalhana Misra that when Jayapida visited Pundravardhan, then a dependency of Gauda, found the citizens engaged in the worship of Kartikeya, the war-god. In connection with this ceremony a musical performance also was held.<sup>32</sup> There was evidently a military class there. From what happened in the dependent city we may fairly conclude that there must have been a similar class of people given to the art of fighting.

The third class in point of importance is the community of merchants who played a very important part in the life of the city both under the Moslem rulers and their Hindu predecessors although we have very little definite knowledge of the state of things taking place under the Hindu rule. By its favourable geographical position to which we have already referred Gauda has always been a centre of commerce and the signs of its prosperity could be traced even in the midst of its ruins by William Hamilton. It may be noted that the Portuguese merchants came to Gauda for the purpose of commerce during the reign of Mahmood Shah, the last independent king of Bengal. Some Portuguese merchants who came to Gauda with presents were first detained and then released by the said king to

secure the Portuguese help against Sher Khan. Among other classes of citizens to be noted are the professional preachers and teachers, groups devoting themselves to various trades; and notably there were the class of architects who contributed to the architectural grandeur of the city. There were sculptors, painters, caligraphers, etc. There were professional dancers and musicians who delighted the king, the nobility and the rich citizens with their performance.

Over and above, there were varieties of menial classes engaged in private and public services. According to the Portuguese authority Faria Souza the population of Gauda was over a million in the sixteenth century and its population was divided into seven classes, viz.:—(1) the nobility, (2) the military class, (3) the professional classes including the teaching fraternity, (4) the mercantile community, (5) the artisan class, (6) the musicians and dancers, and (7) the menial class.

Let us now proceed to discuss the political and cultural activities of Gauda from the standpoint of geography. Our knowledge of Gauda under the Hindu rule is comparatively meagre: yet we know something of it through various sources. It appears to have been selected as a capital of the province through favourable sites, considered from economic, political and strategic standpoints. The expression 'Lord of Gauda' that we come across in historical and semi-historical literatures refer to the city as well as to the province, sometimes to both; and the potentates so designated were not all necessarily Bengalees. The lords of Gauda had, in many cases, their capitals in cities other than Gauda.

Whatever part the city of Gauda might have played in the history of Hindu Bengal, the province of Gauda did play indeed an important part in

<sup>32</sup> Kalhana Misra: *Rajatarangini* tr. by Dr. Stein, p. 160, verse 422.

the history of India. We learn from authoritative historians that the then lord of Bengal went to the assistance of Lalitaditya when he attempted to crush the ambitious king of Kanouj, the overlord of Gauda. Let us insert below an extract from *Rajatarangini*: 'King Lalitaditya, withering in a moment the mountain-like Yasovarman's troops (Vahini), resembled the fierce sun. [When it dries up a hill-stream (Adrivâhini)].'<sup>33</sup> 'Numberless elephants joined him from the Gauda land, as if attracted by friendship for the elephant [carrying] the conch of Laksmi, was attached [to the king].'<sup>34</sup> After this period the Gurjaras kept Bengal in subjugation for some time. Then came the period of anarchy to remedy which the people elected Gopala Dev as their king. He thus became founder of the famous Pala dynasty. The Palas style themselves as Lords of Gauda but they had their capital elsewhere, 'Although Gaur in Bengal was the original seat of the Pala family, there is no reason to doubt that they had acquired the paramount sovereignty of India, and that the seat of their Government was fixed for at last, in Kanauj.'<sup>35</sup>

Ballal Sen, the famous king of Bengal, fixed his capital at the city of Gauda in the year 1169 A.D. His son Lakhman Sen transferred his capital to Navadwip and it was from this new capital that he was driven when Bukhtyar Khiliji invaded Bengal.

Bukhtyar Khiliji, the first Muslim conqueror of Bengal, selected Gauda as his capital for strategic reasons and it remained the capital of Bengal till the time of Ilyas Kaji. All the rulers of Bengal were theoretically dependent upon

the Pathan emperors of Delhi by whom they were appointed; at any rate their rulership had to be sanctioned by the Pathan emperors. Taking advantage of the geographical position of Gauda its rulers from time to time would defy the Imperial authority whenever they could. One ruler Nasiriuddin, awed by the powerful Emperor Alauddin, was content to remain as a mere vassal and the emperor reduced Bengal into two provinces, the capital of the eastern part being Sonergong. This happened in the year 1299 A.D. This arrangement did not prove happy. The newly appointed Governor of East Bengal revolted against the Imperial authority and had to be subdued. A new Governor was appointed in his place. A long period of anarchy and internecine strife followed till 1343 A.D. Ilyas Haji united the whole of Bengal and transferred his capital to Pandua. Gauda again became the capital of Bengal under Jelal Addeen in 1392 A.D. The successor of Jelal Addeen had diplomatic relationship with the Tartar ruler of Herat to check the invasion of Joanpur. The capital was transferred from Gauda to Ekdala for a short time under Sultan Ala Addeen Hussein Shah in 1489 A.D. During the reign of his son Gauda served as a refuge for the political offenders against the court of Delhi. When Baber defeated the last Pathan Emperor, Ibrahim Lodhi, many Pathan princes were given welcome, shelter and pension by Nusserit Shah, the ruler of Bengal. Incensed by this Baber sent an army against the king of Bengal, but the Imperial wrath was pacified by presents and submission.

After the death of Baber, the ruler of Bengal assumed an independent position and intrigued against the emperor of Delhi with the ruler of Guzerat. Then followed the invasion of Sher Shah who ultimately became the emperor of India.

<sup>33</sup> Kalhana Misra: *Rajatarangini* tr. by Dr. Stein, Vol. I, p. 132, verse 134.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 135, verse 148.

<sup>35</sup> James Prinsep: *Essays on Indian Antiquities* p. 293.

The Emperor Humayon in order to punish Sher Shah came to Bengal, occupied Gauda, but ultimately had to meet with a disastrous defeat at the hands of Sher Shah who became the king of Bengal and Bihar and ultimately the Emperor of India. Under Cazy Fazlut the capital of Bengal was removed from Gauda to Tanda. Akbar's general Mainam Khan defeated Daud Khan, Pathan ruler of Behar and Orissa, and attempted to transfer the capital to Gauda in 1575 A.D., when a pestilence broke out claiming thousands of victims including the Imperial General Mainam Khan. 'The City of Gore, which had been the capital of Bengal till the time of Shere, who on account of the badness of the air, had made Chawaffpoor Tanda the metropolis, was now greatly decayed. Chan Chanan admiring the antiquity and grandeur of that place, gave orders to repair the palaces, and made it his residence; but he soon fell a victim to the unhealthy air of Gore and died.'<sup>36</sup> Never again did Gauda rise to eminence. Its subsequent revival was made impossible by nature. The course of the Ganges changed remarkably, so that after nearly two centuries, as we learn from Rennell, the site of Gauda stood at a distance of four miles and a half from the river bed. A part of the ruined city which was formerly washed by the waters of the Ganges stood at a distance of twelve miles. This being the case the revival of the city is out of the question. 'According to Ferishta's account, the unwholesomeness of its air occasioned it to be deserted soon after; and the seat of Government was removed to Tanda, or Tanrah, a few miles higher up the river.

'No part of the site of ancient Gour

<sup>36</sup> Mahummud Casim Ferishta: *The History of Hindoostan* tr. by Alexander Dow, vol. ii, pp. 270-271.

is nearer to the present bank of the Ganges than four miles and a half; and some parts of it, which were originally washed by that river, are now 12 miles from it.'<sup>37</sup>

During the Hindu rule the cultural atmosphere of Gauda must have been an elevated one. The system of imparting education both higher and elementary was thoroughly efficient. The members of the royal family, the nobility and even the citizens at large were well educated. Not to speak of others even the actresses were well educated. In support of our contention we may refer to the story of Jayapida and Kamala the actress. The actress could understand Sanskrit enough to follow the king. 'From this verse which the king recited to himself, she, who was versed in [all] arts, knew him verily to be some great person.'<sup>38</sup>

As a great monument of the cultural activity of Gauda we may refer to its erudite monarchs Ballel Sen and Lakhman Sen, Ballel being the author of Dana Sagara and Udbodha Sagara, the commentaries on Smritis and astrology.<sup>39</sup> Lakhman Sen was the author of many poems. These monarchs were great patrons of learning. Dhoyee and Jayadeva flourished in the court of Lakhman Sen.<sup>40</sup> The Muslim rulers of Gauda like their Hindu predecessors were great patrons of learning and promoters of culture. Bukhtyar Khiliji

<sup>37</sup> (a) James Rennell: *Map of Hindoostan* p. 55.

(b) H. Creighton: *Ruins of Gauda* p. 5.

(c) Major William Francklin: *Journal of a Route from Rajmahal to Gour*, 1810-11 A.D., p. 1.

(d) Walter Hamilton: *Geographical Statistical and Historical Description of Hindoostan* vol. 1, p. 229.

<sup>38</sup> Kalhana Misra: *Rajatarangini* tr. by Dr. Stein, vol. i, p. 161, verse 442.

<sup>39</sup> R. D. Banerjee: *Banglar Itihas* pp. 292-293.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p. 298.

founded schools, colleges and made liberal grants to educational institutions.<sup>41</sup>

We have abundance of evidence to show that the science of iconography received maturity of perfection at Gauda both under the Hindu and the Muslim rule. The culture of Gauda was then a wonderfully perfect one. The king, the nobility, as well as the mercantile class received general as well as technical education of a high order. The masses were not also illiterate. The educational facilities must be of a high order where the very actresses could talk Sanskrit. Purely literary education was evidently supplemented by an aesthetic culture of a very high type.

The civilization of Gauda was, to a certain extent, influenced by minerals like copper, iron, silver and gold—a fact which is evident from copper plates, ancient coins and other iconographical and numismatic evidences.

<sup>41</sup> Maulana Minhaj-ud-Din: *Abu-Umar-I-Usman, Tabakat-I-Nasiri* tr. Major H. Raverty, p. 583.

We have reason to believe that Bengali was the language of Gauda which was not affected by foreign rule. 'Ormuz found the people of Bengal using Bengali as their vernacular in 1745 A.D. when Bengal was under Muslim rule.'<sup>42</sup> A fact from which we can easily infer that Bengali must be the mother tongue of the citizens of Gauda although the court language was Persian.

From the foregoing pages it must have appeared to the reader that the civilization of Gauda both under the Hindu and the Moslem rule was purely an artistic civilization associated with the growth and development of fine arts, philosophy and religion with a good deal of military, political and commercial activities in the background. It was indeed a unique and splendid civilization comparable to any other civilization of the ancient times.

<sup>42</sup> R. Orme: *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indoostan* Vol. ii, p. 5.

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## IN QUEST OF SADHUS

BY J. M. GANGULI

To many abroad India is a land of mystery and miracle. They have read and heard about strange and mysterious things happening in this ancient country; about the great spiritual advancement attained by the sages here; about deep forests and dark mountain caves, where Yogis and Sannyasins sit and have sat for years in meditation; about beautiful riverside Ashrams, where men on renouncing the world live to realize truth and everlasting happiness. They have heard also of some of the supernatural powers

of the Yogis acquired through difficult Yogic practices.

All the above is true. In fact, much more strange and mysterious things have happened and still happen than we ever come to know of. Some of the foreign tourists, who visit India more in quest of mystery than of the amenities of urban life in the country, have asked me where they could find a real Yogi possessed of miraculous powers. I have looked up in surprise at the question, for they seemed to think that Yogis were to be found sitting at

known places with name-plates hung outside their abodes.

Such an idea is not peculiar to foreigners, but is also found among even many educated Indians who believe that really advanced Sadhus could be found in abundance on the wayside in the Himalayas and other sacred places. Once, I know, on the occasion of the great Kumbha Mela at Hardwar, a very learned Sanskrit pandit, who is now on the staff of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta, being very keen on meeting a great Yogi, several of whom must have gone to Hardwar on that occasion, went about in search throughout the place only to be disappointed at the end. Not that he did not meet Sadhus,—there were many of them—but a Yogi of the type he was seeking, a real Yogi who had realized himself, to whom nothing was unknown, and who by practice and meditation had acquired even supernatural powers, none of which he had however use for, as he had conquered all desires, a perfect Yogi of that class did not come in his way.

Hungry, thirsty and exhausted when he was returning homeward in the evening he was accosted by an old friend of his, who was passing his retired life in Hardwar for several years, and to whom he narrated his disappointment. His friend smiled and asked how it was that in spite of his learning and wisdom it had not struck him that a Yogi would not go about proclaiming his identity and attracting people to him. How could he be recognized in the mass of sadhus who pretended to be Yogis?

That truism disillusioned the pandit, who went home pondering over the words of his friend, who had said that one must have acquired great virtues in order to have the good fortune to meet a Yogi, and that when one had

such virtue one would meet him even at one's own door without having to go about in his search.

I know and believe that as very true. I recognize fully well the strength in the argument with which the pandit's friend consoled him in his disappointment. I have myself said the same thing to many foreign enquirers and to my friends who have evinced interest in such things. But I have myself a weakness which I cannot get over, and which has taken me several times far away into lonely wildernesses in different parts of the country and at times into dangerous spots in the interior of the Himalayan jungles in search of real Yogis. The more I have read of the lives and deeds of great saints like Shankaracharya, who checked by his Yogic powers the onrushing floods of the Narbada to save his Guru, who was in meditation at the time on the river bank; of Trailanga Swami, who could remain under water for days together and who only about forty-three years ago left his physical body at Benares after having lived for two hundred and eighty years; of Gorakhnath, who practised hard Yoga for twelve years in the cold valley of Badrinath without food and who could walk on air and could infuse life into a doll of clay; and of others, the more impatient have I felt to meet a saint myself.

Once, near Manikpore, at a place called Chitra-kut on the E. I. Railway, I alighted from a train, having heard that many Sadhus lived there. About six miles from the station there was a quiet, small, beautiful place at the foot of a hill and by the side of a river. About a mile from the village in a sequestered place and on the bank of a streamlet there dwelt those Sannyasins about whom I had heard. The site was well chosen, for the stillness and

aloofness of it and the beautiful natural environment of it seemed to render it very suitable for undisturbed meditation and probably also for the attainment of that eternal bliss, which was the goal of the Sannyasins there, though about which we have little or no idea. There seemed to be an air of sanctity about the place, which made me hesitant to move forward and break it. It was summer then and very hot during the day, with a hot wind blowing and a scorching sun shining overhead. What attracted my notice first was a fire burning strongly around a frail human being seated erect and motionless, with eyes closed and head and body uncovered in the glaring sun. He looked absolutely engrossed in meditation, and his serene posture indicated that neither the fire nor the sun, nor even anything in the world had any significance to him. Later I learnt from others that he was a Bengalee and a graduate of the Calcutta-University. He was doing hard Tapas (Yogic practice) there for some time. What led him to renounce the world and lead that hard life in such an obscure and remote place, nobody could tell, for he was most uncommunicative.

Looking round I found some deep caves dug out in the high embankment. There were some Sadhus also sitting outside, whose spiritual advancement I could not of course gauge, though I was struck by their unassuming ways and unpretentious talks. Unlike the common Sadhus, or rather the professional mendicants posing as Sadhus, who are found in numbers near temples and bathing ghats in towns, these people were least inclined to show off, so much so that when I asked one of them, a very bright and intelligent-looking man, what attraction was there in their life which had made them forgo all the pleasures, happiness and affinities of

worldly existence, if they had got a clue to greater happiness or if they had ever perceived in their lives the reality of an Almighty Force,—he just smiled a little and looked up to my eyes with a deep stare, which seemed to penetrate into my inner self and which made my eyes turn down. But he said nothing. When I looked up again to implore an answer he said in soft tones that what I considered as happiness was but the contrary of it, for it never lasted and it invariably brought misery and dissatisfaction in its wake; and therefore that kind of happiness should have no charm for a wise man. As to my questions regarding himself he said that he had achieved little and was then only on the way, though there was nothing to be impatient for, as life was eternal, and as it must take long to subjugate our mind with its fickleness and its various inclinations to our will. When, finally, with a sympathetic gesture he told me that he was not a great Rishi (a very advanced Yogi) and was, in fact, no better than myself, I was astounded at his modesty and simplicity. Truth was in his eyes, in his voice, in his gestures. I believed what he said; but, there was one great difference between him and me, which struck me at once; and that was that whereas I was still groping in the dark and running after the mirage of unreal ordinary worldly happiness, he had been able to assess the real value of such happiness, and, having therefore discarded the cravings thereof, had put himself on the road to the attainment of some more lasting thing. I could not tell what he would achieve in the end, but I felt from his freedom from insatiable worldly desires that he did not suffer from the pangs of disappointment and dissatisfaction, to which we are prey, and was in the enjoyment of the great happiness of contentment.



He blessed me when I bowed to him and got up.

It was evening now; the setting sun had made the sky crimson. The fire burning round that Bengalee Yogi, who was still seated motionless as before, looked redder. The approach of night had made the place quieter, and as if more solemn. There was but one thought, which wrapt me, as I slowly treaded on the lonely footway leading me back into the ever-same rush and roar of the world, and that was 'Do such people, who realize the unreality of worldly happiness and who renounce the material world to pass their days in isolation and obscurity for meditating on deeper things and for disciplining their body and soul by hard Yogic practices,—do such persevering people become the all-knowing and all-powerful Yogis I was looking for?'

But I was not satisfied; and I have continued my search till now in the course of which I have met several people who have impressed me more or less and I have come to know also a little of their ways and practices. I cannot say which of them were great, for, great men are not very communicative, much less disposed to disclose themselves, as they are not interested in self-propaganda. It is not possible to describe the various people I have met and my experiences in connection therewith in the course of one article, but I shall only write here something about a remarkable man I met in the Himalayas, who impressed me deeply.

Having visited Jumnotri (the source of the Jumna) I was proceeding to Gangotri (the source of the Ganges). I had some companions with me. We stopped for the night at a small *chatti* (a resting-place for pilgrims) some sixteen miles from Uttarkashi. As the evening grew darker a tall, thin-built Sadhu, with a stick in hand and a small

light bundle consisting of a little blanket and perhaps a piece of cloth also under his arm, entered the *chatti*, and looking round selected a corner where he stretched himself. His reserve and exclusiveness attracted my notice, but when I went to him, he seemed almost to resent it. Eventually, however, I succeeded in reconciling him into a conversation during which I learnt that he too was out on pilgrimage like ourselves to the five great sacred places, namely Jumnotri, Gangotri, Trijugarain, Kedarnath and Badrinath. But he was going very fast doing over thirty miles a day. On my asking him information about Yogis he said there were many, but they were not easily to be seen, as they avoided frequented places. Seeing my intentness, however, he added that there was one practising Hatha-Yoga near Hirsali on the way to Gangotri and I might see him.

All the way till I reached Hirsali I thought of this Hatha-Yogi and felt impatient to meet him. But at Hirsali I found it difficult to find him. Nobody could tell, till I went to the *chattiwalla* who said that there was one Sadhu living on the bank of the Ganges down below, but he could not tell whether he was the Hatha-Yogi I was looking for. On the way down to the river was a small temple and near it the ruins of an old building. Going all over the place I found nobody and in great dejection I returned to the *chattiwalla* who asked me to go inside the ruins of the building. I went back and entered the broken building with considerable caution. There must have been rather a big building there, parts of which were still standing. From inside a dark small room there came the glow of smouldering fire, which gave me hopes of finding the Sadhu there. But I was afraid of

entering the room, so dark it was. A big log of wood was burning softly and by its side was sitting some human being. I was awe-stricken and did not know what to do when the figure looked round and beckoned me in. Except for a loin-cloth or rather what they call a mere *langoti* not a scrap of cloth covered his fire-burnt, copper-complexioned body. His big eyes were rather reddish and when he looked at me all over I felt running through my body a cold shiver not of fright but of a strange feeling, which probably the presence of the man, I was facing, gave rise to. He was seated on a long piece of plank by the fireside and was occasionally kindling the fire. He had no belongings of his except an old iron pan lying near the fire. I was positively embarrassed at my intrusion and could not speak when, however, he came to my help and began interrogating me about myself. But did I not have more things to ask of him than he of me?

My first question—'Did he not feel frightfully lonely?'—evidently surprised him. But he said, 'When a child plays with dolls it thinks it has good company and does not feel lonely, but you, who know the dolls to be lifeless, consider the child to be lonely. Similarly when you are in the company of human beings, you believe you are not alone; but one who is more spiritually advanced thinks that you are very lonely. Human soul is not satisfied with the company of moving human figures and does not feel lonely in their absence.' It must be true what he said, otherwise how could a man live in that dark pit for days in and days out without a human voice ever echoing from the rugged, smoke-sooted walls of that room, where-within was a lonely soul trying to realize himself. How very determined must he be, what a tremendous will-

power must that frail human figure have inside it,—I thought. But what I marvelled at most was the strength with which his soul must have been attracted away from the common world of ours towards what we know nothing of, but what had kept him supremely content in that hideous environment, and unmindful of the rigours of his daily practices. Hardly when the dawn broke, at midday, and when the sun had set—thrice he had a full dip in the fast-flowing current of the Ganges, whose water was icy cold; his one meal in twenty-four hours consisted of some leaves or sometimes of some potatoes fried on his iron pan; his sleep amounted to about an hour's inclining with eyes closed against the wall. About the manner of his practice of Hatha-Yoga I could not know, nor did I dare ask, for I felt that to be improper inquisitiveness. I could not, however, help asking him if it was not true that Hatha-Yogis were possessed of miraculous powers. He smiled, nodding affirmatively, but added that while those powers seemed to appeal so much to others they were seldom availed of by Yogis themselves, for they feared that the use of the powers might bring desires and attraction to materialism which were the greatest stumbling blocks on the path of spiritual advancement. Appreciating my curiosity regarding his own self, he said, that he never had an occasion nor the inclination to test if he had acquired any powers; but there was one thing which he had come to realize, and that was, that he would not die unless he himself willed it.

Sitting face to face with that strange man, with a smouldering log of wood separating us, inside the dark ruins of an age-old building, in a none too frequented part of the Himalayas, when I heard that confident assertion by the

Yogi, whose countenance flushed up as his lips uttered those words, I confess my hairs stood on ends—I knew not why. All that I instinctively felt was the presence of supernatural greatness, and as I looked at that slim figure, radiant with an unmistakable glow of deep self-confidence, rendered brighter by the light of the fire against the dark background of the room, and heard that strangest of strange things—that he would not die unless he himself willed so—my body shivered. When I recovered and looked up, his eyes were still on me, but his gaze was vacant,

for he seemed to be lost in meditation. His soul which had uttered those words was engrossed in the supreme realization of himself.—What was I then for it to take notice of?

How often have I pondered over those words of the Yogi? How often have I argued within myself about the impossibility of his assertion, and about its being no more than a mere inspired outburst! But never have I been able to shake off my conviction in its truth. What was indeed death to that emancipated soul?

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## GAUTAMA BUDDHA, THE ENLIGHTENED

BY MRS. JEAN PARK McCracken

When it first came to my attention that the Vedantists were about to celebrate the birthday of Gautama Buddha, although they themselves are not Buddhists, and that they also celebrate the natal anniversary of Jesus Christ, I was happily impressed with that spirit of religious tolerance which reveres all great spiritual teachers, and I was reminded of the Bible verse:

‘How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth glad tidings of great joy’—as expressing the attitude of the Vedantists towards all these great prophets.

There are no chapters in history which are more noble than those which tell of the coming of the founders of religion, to the men of their time—Isaiah in Jerusalem; Socrates in Athens; Zoroaster in Persia, and Buddha in India.

They relate the new visions of eternal things that come to men through the medium of exalted personalities—one of the noblest of whom was Gautama Buddha.

Although Buddhism has well-nigh died out in Gautama Buddha’s own land, and while corrupt and quiescent in many places, yet it is still sufficiently vital to dominate the lives of hundreds of millions.

This great teacher is conceded to be the chief artificer of Eastern civilization and the contributor of some of its finest features.

Gautama Buddha—a prince—went forth in the bloom of his youth (29) to find a way of escape from the harrowing sorrows of life which seemed to stalk unhindered in the midst of everything that had life.

From his early youth he seems to have brooded over the unavoidable miseries of this earthly existence:—that old age with its attendant decrepitude should in time be upon each; that racking sickness may at any time seize one; and that death would inevitably cut off all present sources of enjoyment.

For weeks he sat plunged in abstraction, revolving the causes of things.

He reflected that being born to this earthly existence subjects man to its evils, and therefore the way of salvation was in escape from birth. But whence came this birth or continued existence? Through a long series of reasoning on intermediate causes he came to the conclusion that 'ignorance' is the primary cause of rebirth and therefore the removal of ignorance would cause rebirth, with all its consequent woes, to cease.

He reasoned that ignorance implied error; error implied limitation; limitation, individuality; individuality, separation, and separation implied birth—a separation from the one Life which was conceived of as a unity. Hence birth is an evil because it is inseparable from ignorance.

Man, he perceived, was a creature of desire, and only the removal of ignorance could lead to the suppression of desire and only the suppression of desire could lead to peace, while only the complete extinction of all desire could free one from rebirth and gain him Nirvana, since, so long as material desires remained one would be magnetized to the place where these desires could be fulfilled.

He had sought with weariness and toil for this secret of life. He wasted time in following wrong roads. He demonstrated to himself the foolishness of many thoughts, but never discouraged he sought until he found and what he found

he gave to all men as a heritage for ever that the way might be easier for them.

Although his search had led him almost to the point of death by the rigours of the austerities he practised, at the eleventh hour his splendid sanity brought him the realization that self-torture was not the way to enlightenment, and as the intuition, which is the gospel of Gautama, dawned upon his mind, he became an Arahat—an emancipated one,—the Buddha—an enlightened one—seeing clearly the way to put an end to rebirth, and also that his own release from rebirth had come.

I am sure that to fathom Buddha's wonderful scheme of life is worth serious and sympathetic study. Such study would bring us the knowledge of the debt of the Buddha to the philosophy of the Upanishads and of that which is of greater importance to us of the West, the indebtedness of Western thought—of Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus and Jesus himself to the same sacred source. It is attested by many that an exhaustive and appreciative study of Gautama seems to heighten a supreme devotion to Jesus Christ.

Such was Gautama Buddha!—a majestic character, a rare lover of mankind, a hater of sham, a seeker after the unknown God. His teachings should be known by all those who wish to understand one of the titanic forces of our own day as well as of antiquity.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### SCIENTIFIC FARMING

The *Hindu* in a leading article on 'the Plight of the Country-side' draws attention to the many difficulties under which the agriculturist in India labours. Rural indebtedness, the reform of co-operative credit societies, the establishment of land mortgage banks and above all the devising of measures for increasing production and making agriculture pay are some of the problems discussed. Attention is drawn to certain interesting experiments carried out in the United States of America. A great insurance company which had nearly two million dollars locked up in farm mortgages 'engaged the services of a trained agriculturist as the head of its farm-loan division and commissioned him to put through a programme of development and rehabilitation of these farms. These rehabilitated farms were let out on annual leases at a share-rental basis; tenants were required to follow a scientific crop rotation schedule under the supervision of the company's representatives and the results were recorded. Advertised for sale as "opportunity farms," these were taken up as sound going concerns by the members of the public. Last year the company sold 1,164 such farms, 91 per cent of the purchasers were resident farmers to whom the company gave easy hire-purchase terms. The secret of the success of the company lies in the fact that it has demonstrated to rural communities how scientific farming can be made to pay.' A similar experiment may be tried in this country.

### SCIENTIFIC AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the course of his presidential address at the Indian Science Congress at Benares, Sir Ardeshir Dalal emphasized the mission of Science and Industry and put in a powerful plea for the expenditure of much larger sums of money on scientific and industrial research in this country. 'In Great Britain,' he said 'the responsibility for planning the programmes of research, even when the cost is borne directly by the Government, rests with research councils or committees who are not themselves State servants but distinguished representatives of pure science and industry. It is to be hoped that if any comparable organization is developed in India, there will be a proper representation of scientific men from the universities and corresponding institutions and also of the industries directly concerned. It is of the highest importance that the detailed planning of research should be left entirely in the hands of those who have the requisite specialized knowledge of the problems which require attack. In the British organizations there is no political atmosphere, but of course the responsibility of allocating the necessary funds ultimately rests with the Government.' Various other speakers also emphasized the need for research and drew attention to the important part which science can play in developing the natural resources of this country and thereby help her to take her proper place in the comity of nations.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**BENGAL VAISHNAVISM.** BY BIPIN CHANDRA PAL. *Published by The Modern Book Agency, 10, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 174. Price Rs. 2.*

Though Vaishnavism is found in different parts of India, the philosophy of Bengal Vaishnavism has certain distinct features. The definition of Bhakti according to Bengal Vaishnavism is the worship of the Lord, who is the director of all the senses, through the activity of the senses which have been purified and freed from all desire for physical enjoyment. To quote the author: 'The Vaishnava movement in Bengal, initiated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, not only gave us a new theology of the Absolute or a new philosophy of art or created new forms of beauty through its lyrics,—the richest in the whole body of Bengali literature—but it delivered a new social message, the message of the presence of the Lord in every human individually and collectively in the human society, and applied itself to secure both individual and social uplift.' Herein we have the gist of the new awakening Bengal Vaishnavism has brought about in the life and thought of the people. The entire thought and realizations of the Bengal School of Vaishnavism have been built upon certain scriptural texts called the 'Mahavakyas,' such as the Brahmananda Valli of the Taittiriya Upanishad and the Parama Tattva as described in the Bhagavata. The Bhakti cult centres round the love (as differentiated from lust) of Srimati Radha for Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna is the embodiment of all Rasas or the essence of the senses, and, therefore, Sri Krishna is the one and only Supreme Object of all sense activities.

The book is divided into six chapters. The first two chapters are introductory. In the third chapter a detailed description of the various Rasas and Bhavas is given. Keertana or devotional singing plays an important part in Bhakti Sadhana. An account of the different kinds of Vaishnava lyrics and the special Bhavas they express, together with representative examples, is contained in the next chapter. In the last two chapters the author has many interesting and original things to say regarding the contributions of the Vaishnava movement

to the moral and social life of Bengali people. At the end is appended a short article written by Mr. Pal on the doctrine of incarnation according to the Bengal School of Vaishnavism.

### SANSKRIT

**VIJNANA DIPIKA.** BY PADMAPADACHARYA. EDITED BY UMESH MISHRA, M.A., D. LITT. *Published by the Allahabad University. Pp. 43+37. Price Re. 1.*

Padmapada was one of the foremost disciples of Acharya Shankara. His commentary on the Shariraka Bhashya called Panchapadika, stands out as a monumental work on Advaita Vedanta. The present treatise attributed to him discusses the various means for the attainment of the supreme goal of life—the realization of the identity between the individual self and the Universal Self. In tracing the cause of bondage and Samsara the author alludes to the views of a number of differing schools and concludes that though Vasana and Janma, as shown by them, are contributory causes to the bondage of man, it is Karma which is ultimately responsible for the existence of Samsara. So, a complete annihilation of Karma can alone lead man to his cherished goal, the realization of Brahman.

There are two ways to get rid of Karma: Karmabhava, i.e. complete cessation from work, and Phalabhava, which means the absence of any desire for the fruits of actions. Padmapada says that it is the latter that frees man from the bondage of Karma. Karma has to be performed, but without any desire. Thus performed it purifies the heart of the aspirant, endows him with Vairagya and Jnana, and leads him eventually to the state of liberation or Akarma. Free from all bondage he then realizes his identity with Brahman.

The different phases of Karma such as Sanchita, Sanchiyamana and Prarabdha have been discussed at length, and various means of performing Karma without attachment to its results have also been enumerated.

The text consists of seventy-one couplets and a running commentary called Vivritti, which is at once lucid and scholarly, has

been added to the book. A short summary of the text is given in English in the beginning. The printing and get-up are quite satisfactory.

The book, as it comes from the pen of a renowned philosopher of India and deals with some of the most intricate problems of religion and philosophy, will, we hope, be of much interest to the scholarly world.

## GUJERATI

Ma Sarada. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot. Pp. 56. Price 3 As.*

It contains a short but beautifully written biographical sketch of Sri Sarada Devi or the Holy Mother, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna. It also gives some of her illuminating conversations setting forth her teachings.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SWAMI MADHAVANANDA'S TOUR

Recently Srimat Swami Madhavananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, went on a short preaching tour during which he visited a number of our centres, addressed the public and students at various places and met numerous friends and devotees of the Mission. Leaving Belur Math on March 4, 1941, he reached Midnapore, where he stayed for the night and met some of the friends of the Sevashrama. He next visited Bankura where he reached on the morning of the 5th. Here he delivered two lectures, one in English on "Sri Ramakrishna and Practical Vedanta" on the 5th evening and another in Bengali on "Sri Ramakrishna's Life and Teachings" on the 6th. On the 6th he also visited on invitation the Borstal School and the Amar Kanan, about 13 miles off from the town, and addressed the boys at both the places.

The Swami left Bankura on the 7th morning and reached Patna the same evening, paying a flying visit to the Asansol Ashrama on the way. At Patna he lectured every evening from March 8 to March 11 on various aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's Life and Teachings at the Patna Ashrama, the B. N. College Hall, the Bihar Young Men's Institute and the Ashrama respectively. All the lectures were in English except the last one which was in Bengali and was delivered in a ladies' gathering. A large number of friends and devotees of the Ashrama met the Swami at Patna.

Leaving Patna on the night of the 11th the Swami went to Benares and stopped at the R. K. Mission Home of service for the 12th and the 13th, meeting the important workers and friends. Leaving Benares on the 14th he reached Lucknow the same night after a few hours' visit to the Cawnpore Ashrama on the way. At Lucknow he gave a lecture on Sri Ramakrishna on the 16th and met some important friends. On the same day he also visited the Vidyant Hindu High School and gave a talk to the boys. Returning to Benares the same night he stayed there till the night of the 17th. Here he gave a talk to the workers. From Benares he went to Monghyr, where he stopped till the 19th and met a number of notable persons in connection with the proposed college at Belur.

The Swami left Monghyr on the 20th and arrived at Jasidih the same noon, where he was received by some members of the Vidyapith, Deoghar. From Jasidih he motored to the Vidyapith. The boys of the Vidyapith presented an address to the Swami on the morning of 21st, to which the Swami gave a suitable reply. At Deoghar he met the members of the Local Committee of the Vidyapith and was invited to tea along with the members of the Committee by Rai Bahadur A. N. Das. Afterwards he addressed a public meeting on Sri Ramakrishna in Bengali at the local High School. Leaving Deoghar the same night he returned to the Math on the morning of the 22nd.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MADRAS

The Math at Madras is a premier institution of the Ramakrishna Order. Since its

inception over forty years ago it has been carrying on various humanitarian activities

in the form of spiritual ministration and social service. The Charitable Dispensary was started as a side-activity of the Math in the year 1925. The report for the year 1940 shows what a large section of the poorer public of Madras derive medical relief from it. The Dispensary provides both for allopathic and homoeopathic treatments. The total number of cases treated during the year was 61,543, of which 12,505 were new and 49,038 repeated ones. 18,795 patients received homoeopathic treatment. Cases examined in the laboratory were 149 and the number of surgical operations was 1,335.

The Math popularizes the universal teachings of Vedanta through regular classes and occasional lectures and discourses in various

parts of the city and outside. Two monthly journals, one in English and the other in Tamil, are conducted. Besides, the Math has published a good number of English, Tamil and Telugu books on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and has translated many Upanishads into English. The Math also undertakes relief activities in the city and outside whenever necessary.

*Present Needs of the Dispensary:* (1) A permanent endowment fund procuring a monthly income of at least Rs. 350/- for the maintenance of the Dispensary. (2) Suitable donations in kind or cash making available for the Dispensary medical appliances for the surgical, pathological and other departments.

### SIND

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at several places in Sind. A largely attended public meeting was held in this connection at the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Karachi, on 2nd March 1941, in which speeches on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were delivered in English, Sindhi and Hindi. Hyderabad, a cultural centre of Sind, also celebrated the

anniversary on the same day. The occasion was observed at Sukkur by organizing two meetings on the 1st and 2nd of March. Swami Satswarupananda of the Ramakrishna Order addressed both the gatherings on the life and gospel of the Master. Neushahr Feroze, a small town in the District of Nawab Shah, also celebrated the birthday with due observances.