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"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।"

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By M.

Master's birth-day celebration—Warning to monks—Incarnation of God—Knowledge and devotion—Master's different spiritual moods.

March 11, 1883. It was Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. Many of his disciples and devotees wanted to celebrate the happy occasion in the temple garden of Dakshineshwar.

From early morning the devotees streamed in, alone or in parties. After the morning worship in the temples sweet music was played in the Nahavat (concert room). It was springtime. The trees, creepers, and plants wore a green mantle. The very air seemed laden with joy, and the hearts of the devotees were glad on this auspicious day.

Early in the morning M. arrived and found the Master talking smilingly to Bhavanath, Rakhal, and Kalikrishna. M. prostrated himself before him.

Master (to M.): 'I am glad you have come. (To the devotees) One cannot be spiritual as long as one has shame, hatred, or fear. Great will be the joy to-day. But those fools who will not sing or dance, mad with God's name, will never attain to God. How can one feel any shame or fear when the names of God are sung? Now, sing, all of you.'

Bhavanath and his friend Kalikrishna sang:

Thrice blessed is this day of joy;
May all of us unite, O Lord,
To preach Thy true religion here
In India's holy land:
Thou dwellest in each human heart;
Thy name, resounding everywhere,
Fills the four corners of the sky.

* * *

As Sri Ramakrishna listened to the song with folded hands, his mind soared to a far off realm. He remained absorbed in meditation for a long time. After a while Kalikrishna whispered something to Bhavanath. Then he bowed down before the Master and

rose. Sri Ramakrishna was surprised. He asked, 'Where are you going?'

Bhavanath : 'He is going away on a little business.'

Master : 'What is it about?'

Bhavanath : 'He is going to the Baranagore Working-men's Institute.'

Master : 'It's his bad luck. A stream of bliss will flow here to-day. He could have enjoyed it. But how unlucky!'

Sri Ramakrishna did not feel well, so he decided not to bathe in the Ganges. At about nine o'clock a few jars of water were taken from the river, and with the help of the devotees he finished his bath on the verandah of his room.

After bathing, the Master put on a new cloth, all the while chanting the name of God. Accompanied by one or two disciples he walked across the courtyard to the temple of Kâli, still chanting Her hallowed name. His eyes had an indrawn look like that of a bird hatching her eggs.

On entering the temple, he prostrated himself before the image and worshipped the Divine Mother. But he did not observe any formal ritual. Now he would offer flowers and sandàl-paste at the feet of the image, and now he would put them on his own head. After finishing the worship in his own way, he asked Bhavanath to carry the green cocoa-nut that he had offered to the Mother. He also visited the images of Râdhâ and Krishna in the other temple.

When he returned to his room, the Master found that other devotees had arrived, among them Ram, Nityagopal, and Kedar. They all saluted the Master who greeted them with suitable words.

He asked Nityagopal, 'Will you eat something now?' 'Yes,' answered the devotee. Nityagopal, who was twenty-three or twenty-four years old and unmarried, was like a child. His mind always soared in the spiritual realm. He visited the Master sometimes alone and sometimes in Ram's company. The Master noticed the spiritual state of his mind and became very fond of him. Referring to him, the Master remarked now and then that he had the spiritual realization of a Paramahamsa.

After Nityagopal had finished eating, the Master took him aside and gave him various instructions.

A certain woman, about thirty-one years old and a great devotee, often visited Sri Ramakrishna and held him in high respect. She had been much impressed by Nityagopal's spiritual state and looking on him as her own son, often invited him to her house.

Master (to Nityagopal) : 'Do you go there?'

Nityagopal (like a child) : 'Yes, I do. She takes me.'

Master : 'Beware, holy man! Go there once in a great while, but not frequently; otherwise you will slip from the ideal. This Mâyâ is nothing but "lust and greed". A holy man must live away from women. All sink there. "Even Brahmâ and Vishnu struggle for life in that quagmire." '

Nityagopal listened to these words attentively.

M. (aside) : 'How strange! This young man has developed the high spiritual state of a Paramahamsa. That is what the Master says now and then. Is there still a possibility of his falling into danger in spite of his high spiritual state? What an austere rule is laid down for a holy man! He may slip from his ideal by associating intimately with women. How can an ordinary being expect to attain liberation unless such a high ideal is set by holy men? The woman in question is very devout; but still there is danger. Now I understand why Chaitanya punished his disciple, the younger Haridas, so severely. In spite of his teacher's pro-

hibition, Haridas conversed with a widow devotee. But he was a Sannyâsi. Therefore Chaitanya banished him. What a severe punishment! How hard is the rule for one who has accepted the life of renunciation! Again, what love the Master cherishes for this devotee! He is warning him even now, lest he should court danger in the future.'

'Beware, holy man!' These words of the Master echoed in the hearts of the devotees like the distant rumbling of thunder.

The Master went to the north-east verandah of his room with the devotees. Among them was a householder from the village of Dakshineshwar, who studied Vedanta philosophy at home. He had been discussing Om with Kedar before the Master. He said, 'This Eternal Word, Anâhata Shabda, is ever present both internally and externally.'

Master: 'But the Word is not enough. There must be something indicated by the Word. Can your name alone make me happy? Complete happiness is not possible for me unless I see you.'

Devotee: 'That Word itself is Brahman, that Eternal Word.'

Master (to Kedar): 'Oh, don't you understand? He upholds the doctrine of the Rishis of olden times. They once said to Râma, "O Rama, we know you only as a son of Dasharatha. Let the sages like Bharadvâja worship you as God Incarnate. We want to realize Brahman, the Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss." At these words Rama smiled and went away.'

Kedar: 'Those Rishis could not recognize Rama as an Incarnation of God. They must have been fools.'

Master (seriously): 'Please don't say such a thing. People worship God according to their taste and temperament. The mother cooks the same fish differently for her children, that each one may get what suits his stomach. For some she cooks the rich dish of pilau. But all the children cannot digest it. For them she prepares soup. Some, again, love to eat fried fish and pickled fish. It depends on one's taste.

'The Rishis followed the path of Jnâna. Therefore they sought to realize Brahman, the Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. But those who follow the path of devotion seek an Incarnation of God in order to enjoy the sweetness of Bhakti. The darkness of the mind disappears when God is realized. In the Purâna it is said that a hundred suns, as it were, shone as soon as Rama entered the court. Why then weren't the courtiers burnt up? The reply to this is that the brilliance of Rama was not like that of a material object. As the lotus flower blooms when the sun rises so did the lotus of the heart of the people assembled in the court burst into blossom.'

As the Master uttered these words, standing before the devotees, he suddenly fell into an ecstatic mood. His mind was withdrawn from external objects. No sooner did he say, 'the lotus of the heart burst into blossom' than he went into deep Samâdhi. He stood motionless, his countenance beaming and his lips parted in a smile.

After a long while he returned to normal consciousness of the world. He drew a long breath and chanted repeatedly the name of Rama, every word showering nectar into the hearts of the devotees. The Master took his seat, the others seating themselves around him.

Master (to the devotees): 'Ordinary people do not recognize the advent of an Incarnation of God. He comes in secret. Only a few of his intimate disciples can recognize him. That Rama was both Brahman Absolute and a per-

fect Incarnation of God in human form was known only to twelve Rishis. The other sages said to him, "Rama, we know you only as Dasharatha's son."

'Can everyone comprehend Brahman, the Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss? He has attained perfect love of God, who, having reached the Absolute, keeps himself in the realm of the relative in order to enjoy the divine Lilâ (disport). A man can describe the ways and activities of the queen if he has already visited her in England. Only then will his description of the queen be correct. Sages like Bharadvaja adored Rama and said, "O Rama, you are nothing but the Indivisible Sachchidânanda. You have appeared before us as a human being, but in reality you look like a man because you have shrouded yourself with your own Maya." These Rishis were great devotees of Rama and had supreme love for God.'

Presently some devotees from Konnagar arrived, singing Kirtan to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals. As they reached the north-east porch of Sri Ramakrishna's room, the Master joined in the music, dancing with them intoxicated with divine joy. Now and then he went into Samadhi, when he would stand as still as a statue. While he was in one of these states of divine unconsciousness, the devotees put thick garlands of jasmine around his neck. The enchanting form of the Master reminded the devotees of Chaitanya, another Incarnation of God. The Master passed alternately through three moods of divine consciousness—the inmost, when he completely lost all knowledge of the outer world; the semi-conscious, when he danced with the devotees in an ecstasy of love; and the conscious, when he joined them in loud singing. It was indeed a sight for the gods to see the Master standing motionless in Samadhi, fragrant garlands hanging from his neck, his countenance beaming with love, and the devotees singing and dancing around him.

When it was time for his noon meal, Sri Ramakrishna put on a new yellow cloth and sat on the small bed. His golden complexion, blending with his yellow cloth, was a feast for the eyes of the devotees.

CASTES AND SAINTS

By the Editor

A devotee of Vishnu, even though he be a pariah, is counted high among the mystics and is greater than the brahmins; whereas one who is devoid of such devotion is less than a pariah, even though he be a brahmin.—*Brihannâradiya Purâna*, XXXIII. 39.

I

The *Aitareya Brâhmana* relates that in days of old there gathered some brahmins on the bank of the Saraswati for performing a Satra, a huge sacrifice lasting for days. Among them was seated as a priest Kavasha, the son of Ilusha by a slave woman. The other priests who could hardly tolerate his presence, exiled him to a waterless tract. With parched throat, Kavasha invoked the goddess of water, who appeared to him as a flowing, sparkling river. The other brahmins had now perforce to admit his sainthood, and thenceforward that invocation of his got an honoured place in Vedic rituals.

It was worth and aspiration that triumphed over birth and cavil.

The story of Satyakâma Jâbâla of the *Chhândogyopanishad* is equally fascinating. The boy went to Gautama to be initiated into the Vedic knowledge. On being questioned by Gautama about his lineage the intrepid boy said, 'Sir, I do not know my lineage. I asked my mother, and she replied, "I got you in my youth in the midst of a busy life. As such, I do not know your lineage. But my name is Jabâlâ, and yours is Satyakama." Thus, sir, I am Satyakama Jabala.' Gautama knew how to place truth above social norms and accepted the boy as a disciple.

Then there is the story of Raikwa and Jânashruti in the same Upanishad. Janashruti, when approaching Raikwa in an unbecoming way, is addressed as Sudra by the latter who is seen seated under a cart, scratching his itches. But a better and more reverent method of approach pleases the humble saint, who then tells Janashruti how to meditate on the Cosmic Vital Force.

In the *Brihadâranyakopanishad* as well as in the *Chhandogya* Pravâhana Jaivali, the Kshatriya king of the Pânchâlas, instructs the brahmin Gautama on the mysteries of life and death, and that with much reluctance, for he reminds the brahmin that till then this knowledge never went out of the Kshatriya fold. Thus also did Ashwapati, the Kshatriya king of the Kekayas, teach five brahmins how to meditate on the Cosmic Person.

The *Brihadaranyakopanishad* and the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* preserve the story of the brahmin Proud Bâlâki who presumed to teach Ashwapati, the king of Benares, a Kshatriya to be sure. When the brahmin had exhausted his knowledge, to his great dismay, the king said, 'Is this all! By knowing this much one cannot know Brahman.' So the brahmin had to ingratiate himself into the king's favour for a higher knowledge, and the latter very nobly saved him from the ignominy of becoming a Kshatriya's disciple by imparting knowledge without initiation. Here, again, worth, rather than caste, determined the relationship. One thing is very striking, however, in this story. The king in his modesty declined from formally accepting the position of a spiritual instructor, thereby drawing a line between social status and spiritual ministration. The one was not allowed to be obliterated by the other.

These Vedic stories or incidents, whatever we may elect to call them, set the norm for all the later ages. The lower castes were not easily accepted as disciples, much less as spiritual leaders. But once they could practically demonstrate their spiritual insight all restrictions stood automatically removed so far, at least, as the spiritual world was concerned, though social limitations still persisted. And we shall see, as we proceed, that the same principles are still actively at work.

II

The Kshatriyas continued to lead even after the Vedic period. Râma, Krishna, and Buddha—all Kshatriya princes—were recognized as Incarnations of God. But in social matters the brahmin's voice predominated and caste reigned supreme. The *Râmâyana* records how Rama was persuaded by the brahmins to behead with his own hand Shambuka, a Sudra who, contrary to custom, had recourse to a hermit's life. In the *Mahâbhârata* we read how Shishupâla inveighed against Krishna for his assumption of leadership not only spiritual but also temporal. As for Buddha, he was practically disowned by the Hindus of later ages; or even when recognized as

an Incarnation, he was branded by the Puranas as one who had come down only to delude the ungodly so as to hasten their downfall.

Nevertheless, by this time the principle had become well established that Kshatriyas could be recognized as saints (cf. Gita, IV. 2), provided their spiritual leadership did not interfere with social customs. The valiant Vishwâmitra seems to be an exception to the rule. This Kshatriya prince not only established himself as a brahmin by the mere force of his character and spiritual attainment but also received homage as a social potentate and left a line of brahmin descendants. Such also was the case with Vyâsa, the author of the *Mahabharata*, who was the son of a fisher-woman.

Such exceptions apart, saints who wanted to remain within the Hindu fold, were required not to tamper with social customs, and least of all with caste. Buddha was not openly against the caste system; but Buddhism surely was. And history shows who won in the struggle. Jainism, too, through its antagonism to caste practices had to shift for itself. And so also Sikhism of recent years had to carve out an independent sphere of its own.

One thing, however, resulted from these heterodox movements. The recluses recognized no caste amongst themselves. And sometimes the members of a brotherhood, both lay and monastic, overlook caste distinctions in purely spiritual matters, at least, within the sect itself. Thus a non-brahmin would often be accepted as a spiritual head. And on festive occasions, or in other religious conglomerations, inter-dining among the people of the same sect would often be tolerated by society, though no such thing could happen in the bigger social field. As a result of this tendency it is found in later days that the members of the Prâna-nâthi sect (estd. 1700-50 A.D.) of Kathiawar, consisting of Hindus and Mussulmans, follow at home their traditional laws and customs, but during devotional practices they mix freely and even take their food sitting in a row. Such a development is strictly in conformity with the maxim enunciated in the *Shândilya-sutra*: 'Among the devotees there is no distinction arising from caste, education, appearance, birth, wealth, or occupation, etc.' In other words, a compromise between social orthodoxy and spiritual liberalism was arrived at by making a distinction between esoteric and exoteric social behaviour, though society never relinquished its right to examine esoteric norms whenever the occasion or the opportunity arose.

This distinction worked for social equilibrium so long as the saints could keep themselves busy within their esoteric circles and the exoteric circles could keep the lower castes from a too easy access to culture and wealth. But from the nature of things an accretion of spiritual power to the lower classes was bound to work as a lever for social uplift; and the spiritual leaders could not easily be persuaded to avoid social clashes. Thus this two-sided thrust soon began to make itself felt. The Kshatriyas might have been pacified in olden days; but there were now the Vaishyas and Sudras to be taken into account. And the saints often felt that social injustice called for their active interference. Indian history thus became largely an account of the impact of spiritual liberalism on the stolid social mass. Spirituality ever worked for uplift, but society stood for the *status quo*. Any ground yielded was done grudgingly. As a result of this unresolved tension a militant religious sect could carve out a small section of

the Hindu society for itself, but the main body remained unmoved and avoided social contacts with the rebellious group.

III

Later history presents this struggle in bolder relief. Saints were not wanting who felt for the poorer masses—poorer in spirit, mind, and wealth. But society, as usual, moved very slowly. This latter fact often made the saints cautious. The great Shankaracharya showed much liberality in conceding that the Sudras could attain liberation through hearing the Puranas and Tantras and undergoing the practices prescribed in them. But even according to him, for the Sudras the avenues of Vedic learning and spiritual practices were hermetically sealed. Ramanuja also tried his best to throw open the spiritual path to the Sudras. He granted initiation to non-brahmins and recognized some sacred Tamil books, which were very often the works of non-brahmins and even of untouchable saints, as equal in status to the Sanskrit Vedas. But in practical social life the change was not substantial.

One thing, we must remember in this connection; before the Mohammedan suzerainty no saint of note actively engendered any revolt against established social arrangements. Whatever changes were effected in the wake of a great religious ferment were but the indirect result of the liberal ideas broadcast by the spiritual leaders. Apart from this every religious movement left the main Hindu society where it was. The tragedy of the Indian situation is that society has not proved to be as mobile as religion. But with this phase of the question we shall have to deal a little more in detail before its full implications can be realized.

Before Ramanuja's advent there were many Alwars or spiritual leaders in the South many of whom came from the lower classes. Tiruppan Alwar, otherwise known as Munivahana, was originally a pariah. The story goes that Tiruppan was one day singing with his stringed instrument sitting in an ecstatic mood on a public thoroughfare through which Muni, a temple priest, had to pass for bringing water for the holy image of Sriranganatha. The priest ordered the pariah to move away. But finding the latter unmoved, Muni hit him with a stone, whereupon, coming to his senses, Tiruppan moved away cursing himself all the while for thus proving a hindrance to God's service. On returning to the temple, Muni found the door closed from within and an unearthly voice declared that it would remain so till Muni circumambulated the temple by taking the pariah saint on his shoulders. Thus, much against his will, Tiruppan became Munivahana, i.e., carried on the shoulders of Muni. But this recognition of sainthood of a single pariah did not raise the status of the pariahs as a class. The spiritual marriage of Andal, a woman saint of unknown birth, with Sriranganatha under the auspices of the brahmins, the high honour bestowed on Namma Alwar (Our Saint) otherwise known as Satakopa, and the regard felt for Vishnuchitta, equally failed to heighten the social position of their compeers.

In Maharashtra, Tukaram, a Sudra saint, is venerated even by brahmins, and so also is Namdev who hailed from the tailoring class. A second Namdev of Marwar was a cotton-carder. Nishkulananda of Kathiawar was a carpenter by birth. Many Shaiva saints of the South were non-brahmins. Sadan, a follower of Ramananda, was a butcher. Jivandas and Trikamdas, disciples of Bhan of Kathiawar and belonging to Kabir's sect, were untouchables. In

fact such non-brahmin saints who commanded universal honour are innumerable. But still the non-brahmins as a class remain where they were millions of years ago.

The fact is that during the Mohammedan period, and even a few decades earlier, the Hindus had sufficiently separated spiritual allegiance from social norms to accept even Muslim Sufis as Gurus without endangering their social status. In Prithwiraja's time Khawja Muinuddin Chishti had established himself in North Western India; and he was followed by a number of Sufi divines who counted their Hindu followers by thousands. The Hindus were extremely liberal when they were in quest of God. But when they turned to society their conservatism asserted itself. And it often happened that as a sect grew older the erstwhile liberals sought for safe accommodation in the conservative Hindu society. Writes Mr. K. Sen: 'Sâdhakas of the Indian Medieval Age were mostly from the lower strata of the society, but sects which their teachings gave rise to, have tried afterwards in various ways to pass them as men of the higher castes.'

IV

Let us now turn more fully to this phase of the question. We have noted that Ramanuja was liberal in his outlook. But how slowly but surely has orthodoxy crept into his sect! As worshippers of Vishnu all devotees are equal,—that was the general enunciation. But when society refused to grant this immunity, the Ten-kalai or the Southern sect devised a makeshift. This sect ruled that every devotee should take his meals separately, thus making short work of an obvious difficulty of either dining together or rejecting the original liberal view. But Vedantadeshika discovered excessive freedom even amongst the Ten-kalais and set up the Veda-kalai sect which conformed more to orthodox requirements.

With Ramananda (c. 1370-1440 A.D.), India's religious life turned over a new chapter. The heterodox movements became more outspoken in their social views and more militant in their programmes. Ramananda belonged originally to the sect of the somewhat liberal-minded Ramanuja and was fifth in succession. But to give better play to his more liberal ideas he had to leave that sect. Nothing could be more pronounced than his views on caste: 'In the orthodox society Gotras (lineages) are known by the names of Rishis (seers). If such a thing is permissible why should not all mankind be known by the name of the great God who is worshipped by all such Rishis? And as regards the social position it should be decided by the excellence of devotion and not by birth.' He counted among his disciples Ravidas, a shoemaker, Kabir, a Mussulman, Sena, a barber, and Dhanna, a Jath. He substituted Hindi for Sanskrit as the medium of his spiritual ministration in order to reach the masses more easily. That Ramananda's disciples had intimate social contacts is evident from the fact that many of them were married people and were not allowed to give up family life.

Kabir (1398?—1518 A.D.) who is believed to have come of a Mohammedan weaver family succeeded through his own saintliness and Ramananda's influence in enlisting many Hindus as his followers. But the question of birth proved a social hindrance to some of these Hindus who asserted that though brought up in a Mohammedan family, the saint was originally the son of a brahmin. The net result is that though Kabir has left many fiery sayings against caste his sect cannot be said to

have freed itself from it. Thus the Udâ sect of Gujarat tracing its descent from Kabir does not use water, kitchen, and utensils used by men of other sects. Due to this fear of pollution through touch, the children of this sect cannot be educated in public schools.

The Naths and Niranjans had their days of glory in Bengal and Orissa, but are now begging for accommodation however humble in the Hindu society. The same is the history of the transformation of other sects as well. Nâbhâ, a saint of the Ramananda sect, is believed to have had an untouchable (Dom) mother. But some tried to conceal this supposed social stigma by tracing his genealogy to Hanumân, thus virtually throwing the case of the untouchables overboard.

Dadu (1544—1603 A.D.), whose original name is supposed to have been Daud, was a cotton-carder. But many of his followers now refuse to admit this. The saint was very outspoken in his views as regards caste. 'Amongst the servants of the Lord', said he, 'there is no high or low.' Many of his followers, such as Rajjab, Bakhna, and Wazid were Mussulmans. But more numerous were the Hindus who for a time avoided social antagonism by refraining from forming any sect. But as time rolled on and the number of disciples increased, sects began to crystallize, and the orthodox Hindu society pressed them to make their choice between ostracism and accommodation. The various sub-sects acted variously, and the original liberalism suffered accordingly.

The failure to achieve radical changes in the caste system was not due to the leadership being in the hands of non-brahmin saints. For such liberalizing movements were often led by the brahmins themselves. Chaitanya of Bengal (1485—1533), for instance, though himself a brahmin, admitted Mussulmans and non-brahmins into his discipleship. True, Chaitanya left society itself undisturbed. But his spiritual liberality tended to have repercussions on society, and when the Vaishnava brotherhood of later decades claimed the same immunity even outside their esoteric circles, the social reaction was anything but welcome. The brahmin saint Dedhraj (born 1771) of Agra was more militant in his condemnation of caste and took for his wife a Vaishya girl. The people belonging to his sect do not recognize caste. But how small is their influence!

We have said that the higher castes tolerated the non-brahmin saints and their heterodox esoteric societies so long as they did not imperil the main social structure. When, however, there was the least sign of encroachment they tried to mobilize all the social and political forces against these encroachments. When Ravidas of cobbler parentage established a Math with great difficulty, the brahmins of Benares complained to the ruler that he was polluting everything, though the case fell through. The brahmins made a similar attempt when Ravidas accepted the queen Jhâli of Chitore as a disciple. But the saint came out triumphant.

Most of the non-brahmin saints were honoured by all the castes. But there were many whose influence remained confined within their coequals. Thus the Satnâmis of Chhattishgar are Châmârs who are mostly agricultural labourers. They do not recognize the superiority of the brahmins. But that does not raise them higher in the social scale. Lalbeg, a saint of the Chamar class established a sect which like the Satnamis does not admit the superiority of the upper classes. But though their spiritual worth is readily admitted, socially they are no better.

The Bâuls of Bengal do not recognize caste, nor are they themselves rendered any social honour. They take their recruits from the lower strata of the Hindu and Mussulman communities and are consequently looked down upon by both.

V

If the above study has convinced us of anything, it is that the saints have not succeeded in modifying caste as such in any appreciable degree, though they have greatly stabilized the claim of the lower castes to spiritual leadership. The reasons for this social failure are not far to seek. The main consideration with a saint is spiritual uplift, and so long as society does not put any impediment on his way he does not feel inclined to adopt a militant social programme which may side-track his own spiritual movement. A saint may spread noble and dynamic ideas, but as a custodian of the nation's religious welfare he feels safer in his own spiritual field. It is a kind of division of labour and specialization naturally worked out.

Secondly, the saint may not often possess the technique and skill for social work. A good scientist is not necessarily an efficient engineer. The saint may discover high principles and appeal to the hearts of all. But he may be physically and mentally unfit for the din and bustle of the work-a-day world, which will better appreciate and follow a leader who can speak the language it can best understand.

Thirdly, social uplift depends on mental culture and not merely on spiritual advancement. A man of ecstasy need not necessarily be a man of culture in the worldly sense. Spiritual regeneration may supply the motive force and religious habits may lay the stable foundation for advancement in other lines. But unless that spiritual force is faithfully accepted and intelligently directed and unless the solid, religious foundation be used for a well-planned and lasting social structure, the work of the saints may prove futile. The monsoon breeze blows over all the water-ways. But only the expert boatman can take advantage of it. It is thus that though our Puranas, Tantras, the religious theatrical performances, and wandering monks served as untiring agents of religious culture, society could not attain the necessary dynamism in the absence of social sanctions and executive geniuses.

Fourthly, the saints directed their attention more to spirituality than to education and culture. The social reformers often indulged in tirades against caste rather than in raising the social worth of the lower classes. Mere negative criticism does not appeal unless it is backed by positive achievements. And, as we have seen, spirituality by itself does not determine social status for any sect. Besides, without culture sects speedily degenerate. The real problem is not the abolition of caste, but the cultural uplift of the masses.

Lastly, society has wrongly thrust too much work on the shoulders of the saints. The result is, as it were, a complete divorce between the thinking brain and the executive hands. There is stir in the upper spiritual plane, but no corresponding response in the other social organs. Grand ideas of the purest ray serene are born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness in the desert air of social inactivity.

The path of progress now becomes clearer to us. We who care for the real uplift of the masses and not merely for the uprooting of castes, must address ourselves to the advancement of education and culture, and must not believe that in a pickwickian manner

unseen powers will work wonders for us, once we have enlisted the help of the saints and rooted out class distinctions. It is no use running full tilt at castes, so long as the masses are not ready to take a superior position. We must learn our lessons sitting at the feet of the saints and must draw inspiration from the national spiritual lore, but for giving proper shape and direction to the ideas and ideals imbibed must rely on our own resources.

THE CULTURAL IMPORTANCE OF TAXILA IN ANCIENT INDIA*

By the Hon'ble Mr. Justice N. G. A. Edgley, M.A.

When Taxila was sacked and destroyed by the White Huns in the latter part of the fifth century A.D. it was probably one of the most magnificent of India's cities and one which already possessed a tradition and history of great antiquity. From the earliest times known to the literature of ancient India, kings had either ruled at Taxila or had made it the head-quarters of a viceroy, and we also know from the Jâtaka books that, even during the days of the earliest followers of the Buddha, the city was the seat of a famous university where royal princes, learned philosophers, students of religion, and leaders of society received instruction in arts and science. The influence of Taxila in the cultural development of India had been enormous.

It must be remembered that, shortly before the fall of the city, the greater part of northern India had been brought under the sway of the Imperial Gupta dynasty during whose regime philosophy, literature, drama, and art had reached a standard of perfection rarely attained in ancient times. It is only in recent years that, owing to the discoveries made by that great archaeologist, Sir John Marshall, we have been placed in a position in which it is possible for us to estimate in some degree the extent to which the powerful influences which radiated from Taxila contributed towards the culture of ancient India, which expressed itself so brilliantly during the Gupta period.

It was the third city of Taxila whic was destroyed by the Huns. It occ pied a strongly fortified area covering a site now known as Sirsukh, situated just within the boundary of the Hazara District of the North-West Frontier Province. At that time the older sites at Bhir and Sirkap had probably been entirely abandoned for ordinary residential purposes, although an outlying portion of the Hathial Ridge within the Sirkap area was occupied by the Stupa and monastery associated with the name of Kunala, the son of Ashoka, who was deprived of his sight through the machinations of a perjured and jealous step-mother.

The excavations on the Sirsukh site have not progressed sufficiently far to enable a detailed idea to be formed with regard to the internal arrangements of the city, but there is no doubt that it was a place of wealth and distinction. It was not only a point of first class strategic value commanding the approach to India through the mountains of the north-west, but it must also have

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been a commercial emporium for the caravans passing between India, Persia, Central Asia, and China. Further, its importance as a religious centre is indicated by the large number of flourishing Buddhist monasteries which had been established on the hills in the immediate vicinity of the city and which appear to have been pillaged and burnt when Taxila fell.

When Alexander the Great invaded India in 326 B.C. he received the submission of the king of Taxila with whose assistance he defeated Porus at the battle of the Hydaspes. Although Taxiles achieved some temporary success over a rival ruler, his triumph merely resulted in a Macedonian garrison being stationed at Taxila on Alexander's departure from India and in the degradation of his kingdom to the rank of a satrapy in the Macedonian Empire.

Alexander's project to consolidate the Indian portion of his dominions by establishing a chain of garrison towns along the Indus and its tributaries was frustrated by his death at Babylon in 321 B.C. followed by dissensions among his generals and the rise to power of Chandra Gupta Maurya. By 317 B.C. the latter had expelled the Greek garrisons and made himself the supreme ruler over the territory between Pataliputra and the Indus valley. Although Seleucus Nicator established his authority over most of the eastern provinces of Alexander's empire, he deemed it unwise seriously to challenge the position of Chandra Gupta. On the other hand, he ceded to the Indian king considerable territories in Afghanistan and Baluchistan, allied himself by marriage to Chandra Gupta, and sent an ambassador to his court.

The friendly relations established between the Seleucid and Mauryan dynasties continued uninterrupted until the death of Ashoka; and during this period, the reciprocal influences exercised upon each other by the countries of the Near East and India must have been profound. When, however, Ashoka's death brought about the dismemberment of his empire, portions of the northern provinces of India fell into the hands of the Bactrian Greeks (c. 190 B.C.), who established a powerful principality at Taxila. It was during their regime that a new city was founded (c. 170 B.C.) on the Sirkap site, which has been extensively excavated during recent years and where discoveries of the greatest archaeological interest have been made.

If Bactria had been able to produce a man with the personality and vigour of Alexander or Seleucus, the Greeks might have succeeded in establishing a great empire in India. Unfortunately for them they dissipated their strength by family feuds and dynastic jealousy, and only one of them, namely Menander, who ruled at Sagala from about 165 B.C. to 130 B.C., appears to have achieved some degree of fame as a soldier and an administrator. There is evidence to the effect that he conquered Surashtra, besieged Madhyamika (near Chitor), and even advanced into the dominions of Pushymitra Sunga (184 B.C. to 148 B.C.) as far as Pataliputra. Menander was unable to consolidate his conquests, and shortly after his death the political power of the Greek princes in northern India began rapidly to decline.

The Greeks even failed to unite in the face of the threat of invasion, and their prestige received a crushing blow about 136 B.C. when the Scythians succeeded in occupying Bactria, the main source and centre of Hellenistic influence in the East.

The Scythians then attempted a forward movement towards the West but ultimately found their further progress

obstructed by the formidable barrier of the Persian Empire and the vigorous policy of Mithradates II. (124 B.C. to 88 B.C.). The invaders, therefore, turned south, overran Afghanistan and Seistan, penetrated into the Indus valley and gradually extended their rule to the Punjab where, one after the other, the Greek principalities fell before them.

One of the last Greek princes to rule at Taxila was Antialcidas. There are some grounds for supposing that he succeeded in 120 B.C. to such remnants of the Bactrian kingdom as remained between the Indus and the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush after Heliocles had been expelled from Bactria proper in 136 B.C. Antialcidas was certainly not able to enforce his authority over Menander of Sagala who represented the rival house of Euthydemus, but it may possibly have been in order to obtain support against Menander from the Sunga king that Antialcidas sent his ambassador, Heliodorus, to Vidisa about 90 B.C. It was at this place that Heliodorus erected the remarkable column known as the Besnagar pillar, which shows that this Grecian ambassador had accepted the Vaishnavite cult.

Maues, a Scythian ruler, conquered Taxila about 80 B.C., and Scythian and Parthian rule continued there until about 60 A.D. when the city was included in the Kushan Empire.

Although the last of the great Kushans was Vasudeva (185 A.D. to 226 A.D.) Taxila was probably still included within a small kingdom ruled by a Kushan sovereign when northern India was overrun by the Huns during the latter half of the fifth century.

The excavations which have been undertaken at Taxila by the Archaeological Department have resulted in discoveries from which it is possible not only to gain an insight into the domestic life of the citizens but also to reconstruct to a considerable degree the houses in which they lived and the shrines at which they worshipped.

It is not possible to discuss in detail the numerous architectural remains, the statues, sculptures, jewellery, implements, and inscriptions which have been unearthed. I propose to refer merely to a few of these remarkable finds which appear to be of outstanding significance in connection with the history of Indian religion and culture.

The religion of the majority of the inhabitants in Taxila from the Graeco-Scythian period onwards appears to have been Buddhism. At the same time, certain shrines have been discovered which may be of Jaina origin. Further, the excavations at the Jandial mound have exposed the substructure of an extremely interesting building which, in the opinion of Sir John Marshall, may have been a Zoroastrian temple.

In most of the religious buildings which have been discovered at Taxila Grecian influence is apparent either in the design of the building itself or in the architectural or decorative motifs which have been employed. The Jandial temple is a good example of the adoption of the Greek style. Its courts and sanctuary are enclosed within a peristyle. It was adorned with columns of the Ionic order; and, as pointed out by Sir John Marshall, the only essential difference between the general scheme of its design and that of such shrines as the Parthenon and the temple of Artemis at Ephesus is the presence of a solid mass of masonry in the centre of the temple, which may have formed the base of a tower. The building may probably be ascribed to the first century A.D. during the late Parthian or early Kushan period. It is, therefore, one of the earliest structural temples in India.

At this point it will be convenient to refer to two Buddhist apsidal temples discovered at Taxila, which belong to approximately the same period as the Jandial temple. The first is of large dimensions and is situated on the east side of the main street of the old city, while the other is a smaller building on the west side of the Dharamrajika Stupa. As far as I know, the only other structural temples of a similar basilica design, and of approximately the same period or slightly earlier, are one at Harwan in Kashmir and another on which the pillared hall (No. 40) at Sanchi was subsequently erected. The cave temples of India, however, afford us examples of this style of design from a considerably earlier period. For instance, the Sudama Cave in the Barabar Hills dates back to Ashokan times, and certain Chaitya caves at Bhaja, Kondana, Pitalkora, Ajanta, and Bedsa were probably excavated in the first and second centuries B.C.

Buildings of the basilica type were common in Europe and Asia Minor both before and after the beginning of the Christian era. In India several of the cave temples, to which reference has just been made, contain indications to the effect that their design was based on previously existing wooden architecture. In any case, this plan is one of such a simple character that it is difficult to trace it back to a source originating in any particular country.

Be that as it may, it is clear that the discoveries which have been made at Taxila illustrate the first stages in the introduction of temple architecture in India, and it is a matter of importance that we should consider to what extent (if any) this far-reaching development may have been affected by the close relations initiated between India and the West as a consequence of contact with the Greeks.

It is known that Ashoka adopted Buddhism as the State religion of his empire, and there can be little doubt that such success as he achieved in furthering this measure may be attributed to the introduction by him of the Stupa cult. In this connection, the distribution by Ashoka of the Buddha's relics among innumerable Stupas throughout India was of great significance.

The original doctrine taught by the Buddha, although based on love and charity, was essentially intellectual, unemotional, and almost atheistic. It was, therefore, not a doctrine which would have made a wide appeal to the masses. Mankind in general hope for happiness in some future existence and look for salvation to the intervention in their affairs of some personal God who will respond to prayer, reward virtue, and punish vice.

The distribution of the Buddha's relics went a long way towards meeting this innate desire of primitive man for a personal God. From time immemorial among men of almost all faiths and persuasions, reverence has been shown to the relics of great saints or teachers, and such reverence is apt to develop into relic worship. By an imperceptible process the saint himself is gradually vested in the minds of his devotees with divine attributes; and, after deification, he sometimes becomes the centre of a pantheon of other divine beings. Such a deity would require an earthly home or temple in addition to his heavenly abode, and the tendency would be to worship him in a temple in which as an aid to prayer he and the members of his pantheon would be represented by images.

The idea of an earthly home for the deity seems to have been foreign to the conceptions of the primitive Vedic religion and to those of philosophical

brahminism. The gods of the pre-Buddhistic brahmins can hardly be said to have been brought to earth as friends of the common people, but represented powerful heavenly forces capable of being propitiated by means of an elaborate ritual known only to a small privileged class. In fact, the ruling classes of northern India appear to have followed an open-air religion overlaid by philosophic ideas regarding the origin of the universe, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, belief in the efficacy of sacrifice, and caste. The popular religion was to be found in the aboriginal beliefs of the millions of Indians whose mode of worship had been but little affected by the Aryan invasions.

By adopting the Stupa cult Ashoka set in motion a movement which in the normal course of events was likely to develop into temple worship; and the early shrines of Taxila seem to mark a stage at which the Buddha was already regarded as a deity requiring temples and cult Stupas as outward and visible signs of his presence among men.

Even if the rough shelters for certain cult objects shown in the Bharhut and Sanchi sculptures indicate that temple worship had been at all introduced in India in pre-Buddhistic times, it could only have played an insignificant part in the religious life of the people. On the other hand, it had been generally adopted by all the ancient civilized communities of the West, and, long before the time when the Buddha became invested in the eyes of his followers with divine attributes, the religious life of Western Asia, Egypt, and Greece centred round numerous personal gods for whose worship and glorification magnificent temples had been built. The impact of the Greek invasions had brought India into close contact with these peoples, some of whom had actually erected on Indian soil temples to foreign gods. The time was ripe for Indians to adopt this practice in respect of what had now become the most influential religion of the country; and the foundation of Buddhist temples came to be regarded as a work of merit and devotion.

In some cases these temples took the form of Chaitya halls for congregational worship. The great apsidal temple at Sirkap is an example of a Buddhist chapel constructed to serve the religious requirements of a large urban population. Many such places of worship must have been built, but all traces of them in cities which have been continuously inhabited for centuries have long since disappeared. It was merely due to the accident that Taxila was abandoned after its destruction by the Huns that this solitary example of a Buddhist city temple has survived.

In rural areas, although congregational Chaitya halls are to be found, the most usual type of temple consisted of a relic Stupa, often magnificently decorated, encompassed by processional paths, and subsidiary shrines. These Stupas formed the centres of important monastic establishments, the members of which were not only employed in the performance of an elaborate temple ritual but who were also engaged in the pursuit of learning and attention to the spiritual needs of the rural population of the locality and of pilgrims who came from more distant places.

Many of these monasteries grew up at a convenient distance from large cities. This happened in the case of the establishments at Jaulian, Mohra Moradu, Sanchi, and Sarnath. But numbers of Buddhist monks sought refuge in solitary areas like Ajanta, Ellora, or other remote places, far distant from human habitation.

The remains of Buddhist shrines and monasteries, which are to be found all over India, testify to the extent to which Buddhism had been accepted as the religion of the people during the first five hundred years of the Christian era.

It was undoubtedly the success which Buddhism had achieved that brought about a brahminical reaction which received a powerful impetus from the consolidation of the power of the Gupta dynasty during the fourth century A.D. It is true that, as far back as the second century A.D., a few inscriptions had begun to record the gift of land to brahmins for miscellaneous purposes, but from the fourth century onwards there is epigraphical evidence of grants in connection with temples and temple worship.

It is significant that no Hindu temple and merely a few fragments of sculpture, which may be definitely attributed to a brahminical origin, have survived, which belong to an earlier date than the fourth century A.D. It was, however, the period beginning with the end of this century which witnessed the construction of a number of Gupta temples in Central India, the best known of which are the rock-cut sanctuaries at Udaigiri in the Bhopal State, the Tigawa temple in the Jubbulpore District, and the shrine at Deogarh in the Jhansi District. These shrines, although small, mark the beginning of the movement which was ultimately to culminate in the magnificent temples at such places as Pattadakal, Ellora, Kajraho, Bhubaneswar, Halebid, and Madura. When we admire these splendid creations of human genius we must not forget the debt which we owe to the Greeks and the early Buddhists, who were probably the first to make known to India the vast possibilities of temple worship as a source of power to the priesthood and a means for the edification of the masses.

(To be concluded)

THE PROBLEM OF PERCEPTION

By Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D.

What Is Perception?

Perception is the most elementary and fundamental form of knowledge. To the ordinary mind, it is so simple and reliable that it presents no problem at all. We generally believe that what is given in perception must be true. Ordinarily, no man questions the truth of what he perceives by his senses. Even some logicians and philosophers uphold the common-sense view that perception is the ultimate ground of all knowledge and that there is no room for doubt or dispute in the matter of perception. Some Naiyâyikas tell us that all other forms of knowledge presuppose perception and must be based on it. So also, perception is the final test of all knowledge. We may question the truth of the knowledge derived from inference, testimony, etc., but the truth of perception is in a way beyond question. Knowledge derived from testimony and inference requires confirmation by perception, but the verifying perception is in need of no further confirmation. The Naiyayikas, how-

ever, do not suggest that the truth of perception is self-evident and cannot be questioned. But some Western empiricists and modern realists go further than the Naiyayikas and hold that 'whatever is known to us by perception is beyond the possibility of question'. Mr. W. T. Marvin, an American neo-realist, thinks that 'Perception is the ultimate crucial test (of all knowledge), and, as such, it does not presuppose its own possibility. It simply is; and the man who questions it assumes it in order to do the questioning!'[1] Similarly, Mr. Bertrand Russell tells us repeatedly that the truths of perception are self-evident truths, for which we require no test at all.[2]

But a close study of different perceptual situations would show that absolute reliance on the evidence of perception is more dogmatic than critical. It is true that there is a sense in which perception may be said to give us a true knowledge of reality, which is not and cannot be doubted. But what we generally mean by perception is the cognition of objects through the senses, i.e., sense perception. And sense-perception, we find, is very often misleading. The sun as seen by the same person at different hours of the day wears different appearances, none of which can be said to be the real sun as averred by science. If several persons look at a book from different positions in the same room no two of them will see exactly the same colour, shape, and size of it. Of two lines of the same physical length, one would be seen as longer than the other only if their ends are enclosed by arrows directed outwards and inwards respectively. To this we may add the illusory perceptions of snake in a rope, of silver in mother of pearl, and of ghosts in pillars and posts in a moonlit night. It would appear from all this that perception is not always true and that the evidence of perception may reasonably be doubted and validly contradicted. Hence in connection with perception arise such problems as: What is perception? How does it give us a cognition of objects? What is the reality of the object of perception?

What is perception? This is the first question we have to answer. Different answers have been given to it from different standpoints. From the standpoint of psychology, perception has been defined as the cognition of external objects through the interpretation of one or more sensations. When I perceive from a distance that a rose is red what happens is that the sensation of red colour produced by the stimulation of my visual sense is understood by me as the quality of a thing called rose. Similarly, when a boy perceives a fruit placed on the palm of his hand as an orange he takes his visual and tactual sensations as signifying the colour and touch qualities of an object named orange. If we analyse the mental process involved in the perception of the rose we shall find that it consists first in the discrimination of the given sensation of red colour from other kinds of sensations like sound and touch or other varieties of the same kind, like yellow and white. Secondly, it involves the act of assimilating the given sensation with other like sensations, i.e., recognizing it as similar to the red colour of other roses. Thirdly, the given colour sensation revives in my mind other touch and smell sensations with which it was connected or associated in my past experience, although I may not be explicitly aware of the process of reproduction. Then the whole group of given and revived sensations is referred to a

[1] *The New Realism*, pp. 66-67.
[2] *The Problems of Philosophy*, Ch. XI. *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 79.

particular point of space occupied by the object of perception which is *believed* to be really existing in the outside world and to possess the qualities of red colour, soft touch, and sweet smell. What is true of the perception of the red rose in our example is true of the perception of any other object of the external world. It is to be observed here that from the psychological standpoint we do not raise any question as to the truth or validity of perception. The object of perception may not really exist or it may exist in a way different from that in which it is perceived by us. Still, if we believe that it exists just as it is perceived, our cognition of the object is as good a perception as any other. Of course, in psychology we do not ignore the distinction between true and erroneous perception or illusion. But for psychology both are perceptions, since both are due to sense-stimulation and interpretation of given sensations, although in the latter case the object which we believe to be real *is* not real.

From the logical standpoint perception has been defined in different ways, all of which, however, agree on one point, namely, that perception must be a *true* cognition of some real object. The Buddhists define perception as the unerring cognition of some existent fact just given to sense (i.e., sensum or sensa) without any modification of it by subjective ideas (Kalpanâ) or the concepts of name, class, quality, action, and relation. To perceive a sound is just to sense it as a particular bit of existence (Svalakshana), but not to determine it in any way as the sound of a bell and as related to the class of sounds, or even to name it as sound. The Buddhists admit only such indeterminate cognition of simple particular facts as valid perception. The determinate perception of such objects as trees, jars, etc., is either excluded from the category of perception or branded as invalid and erroneous perception. These and other complex objects of the world are not actually given sensations, but are mental constructions in which some given sense-data are combined by certain ideas and concepts which have no counterparts in the objects themselves. But what is thus constructed by the mind cannot be said to exist in the outer world, and what does not exist cannot be sensed or perceived. It follows from this that perception is the cognition of an immediately given datum and is completely free from all subjective or conceptual determination.

It is to be observed here that the definition of perception as the pure cognition of a sense-datum suffers from one serious defect. It reduces perception to mere sensation. But there is a fundamental distinction between the two. The sensation of colour or sound is the bare experience of a sense-datum. But the perception of a tree or a bell is not the awareness of a sense-datum but that of a concrete physical object. It cannot be said that what is perceived is the colour just seen or the sound just heard, while the tree or the bell is only *thought of* or mentally *constructed*. We are not aware of any process of mental construction separating the sensation of colour or sound from the perception of the tree or the bell. The perceptions arise along with the sensations. To see the colour of a tree is to perceive the tree at the same time. Hence to say that the one is perceived and the other is constructed or imagined is to evade the real problem of perception. What we ought to do is not to reduce perception to sensation, but to explain how along with the sensation we have the perception of an object. We *perceive* a *bell* just when we *hear* its *sound*. This is real fact we have

got to explain. To say that the sound is perceived and the bell is only conceptually constructed or even inferred is not to explain the actual fact of experience.

Another logical definition of perception is that it is a definite and true cognition of some object, produced by its contact with some sense. The cognition of the table before me is a perception in so far as it is due to the contact of my eyes with the table and I have no doubt that the object *is* a table. The cognition of a distant figure as either a man or a post is a doubtful and indefinite cognition and, therefore, not a perception. In perception there is no element of doubt or indefiniteness affecting our cognition of the object. Every definite perception, however, is not a case of true perception. The perception of a snake in a piece of rope is definite but false, and so it is not a valid perception. From the standpoint of psychology illusion and hallucination may be treated as perception inasmuch as they are definite cognitions which are due to the contact of sense with some object. But in logic they are not recognized as perceptions because they are eventually found to be false. Psychology considers all perceptions, no matter whether they are true or false, while logic is concerned only with true perception.

The definition of perception as the true cognition of an object which is brought about by the stimulation of our sense-organs, is generally accepted by us. It is also accepted by many systems of philosophy, Indian and Western. But some philosophers like the Modern Naiyayikas and the Vedantins reject it on the ground that sense-stimulation is not a universal and essential character of perception. There may be perception without sense-object contact. God, we are told, perceives all things, but has no senses. When one *sees* a snake in a rope, there is really no snake to come in contact with one's eyes. Of course, the perception in question is false. But the man who has it feels, even when he is corrected, that he did *perceive* something which he should not have so perceived. Mental states like the feelings of pleasure and pain are perceived by us without the help of any sense-organ. Even in an ordinary true perception, like that of an orange from a distance, it cannot be said that there is a contact of its *perceived* touch and taste qualities with our sense-organs. It appears, therefore, that sense-stimulation is an accidental and not an essential character of perception. What is really common to, and distinctive of, all perceptions is the *immediacy* of the knowledge given by them. We are said to perceive an object, if and when we know it directly, i.e., without taking the help of previous experiences or any reasoning process. So some Indian logicians propose to define perception as direct or immediate cognition (Sâkshât-pratiti), although they admit that perception is in many cases conditioned by sense-object contact. This seems to us to be a more logical definition of perception. To define a thing is to state its essential character or specify its essential nature so as to distinguish it from all other different things. To state the conditions, out of which a thing arises, and the effect it produces, is not so much to define as to describe it. To say, therefore, that perception is cognition produced by sense-object contact or sense-stimulation is not to define it properly. Further, sense-stimulation is, on the one hand, absent in some cognitions which are avowedly perceptions and, on the other hand, it conditions not only perception but also sense-feelings like pleasures and pains. But for this we

do not bring these feelings under the class of perceptions. It may be said that although feeling is, in some cases, conditioned by sense-stimulation, yet as a mental state it has a different character from that of perception. If this be so, then we are to say that what distinguishes perception from feeling is not the fact of sense-stimulation, which is common to both, but their own intrinsic character. And this distinctive character of perception is that it is a direct or immediate apprehension of objects. This distinctive character should be taken as its defining character and perception should be defined in logic as the immediate apprehension or direct cognition of real objects. It is this character which distinguishes perception from conception, inference, and other kinds of indirect or mediate knowledge.

That there may be immediate knowledge without any stimulation of sense is admitted by many leading philosophers of the West. Knowledge by *acquaintance*, Mr. Russell tells us, is a direct knowledge of things without the intermediary of any process of inference. Of such acquaintance, he mentions as instances, our awareness of sense-data in sensation, of mental contents in introspection, of the past in memory and our knowledge of universals like whiteness, brotherhood, etc. Of these different cases, acquaintance by memory and acquaintance with universals are undoubtedly immediate cognitions of certain things of which we have no sensations. Similarly, Mr. A. C. Ewing says, 'Direct cognition would be quite possible without direct perception.' But the definition of perception is generally given in Western philosophy in terms of sensation or sense-stimulation. Some modern thinkers of the West, however, have begun to realize the inaccuracy of this definition and propose to define perception as immediate cognition. Hobhouse, for instance, thinks that the common and essential character of simple ideas of sensation and reflection lies not in their dependence on any sense-organ or its stimulation, but in their immediate presence to consciousness. Hence while admitting that apprehension in the sense of perception is conditioned by sense-stimulation, he defines it as knowledge of what is immediately present to consciousness.[3] The late Professor Creighton also subscribes to the same view when he takes a percept as the result of the mind's 'direct mode of apprehending real things' and admits the possibility of a perception of the particular states of consciousness in one's mind in the same way in which we may perceive a physical object present to sense.[4]

Cognition of Objects in Perception

Now we pass on to the second problem of perception, namely, how does perception give us a knowledge of objects in the way it seems to do and it should do, according to our definition of it? We have defined perception as a direct cognition of objects. And it will be generally admitted that perceptual consciousness is not due to any process of inference or reasoning going on in our mind at the time or just before we have it. At least we cannot detect any such process when we examine any clear case of perception. If I look out of the window of my room, I see a tree directly, and not by means of any process of inference or reasoning. There is neither any necessity nor any time for me to think and reason before the perception

[3] Cf. L. T. Hobhouse: *The Theory of Knowledge*, Pt. I. Ch. i.

[4] Cf. *An Introductory Logic*, pp. 54-55.

of the tree arises in my mind. I have also no doubt in my mind that there is really a tree which I now perceive by my eyes. But what is it that my eyes actually give me? It is only a patch of green. The sense of sight cannot directly apprehend anything about the touch, taste, and other qualities of the tree. Nor can it see directly the colour of the other parts of the tree, lying beside or behind that where the patch of green is, so long as I do not change my position. But what I *perceive* is not merely a patch of green, but a big object including many parts and having other qualities than colour. In a similar way it can be shown that in the perception of objects like chairs and tables, the senses give us certain colours, sounds, tastes, smells, and touch qualities. That which is directly sensed by a sense-organ is now called a sensum or sense-datum. Now the question is this : How can there be a perception of objects or things in the sense of a direct cognition of them, when all that one can directly get is one or more sense-data like colour or touch ?An object or thing is certainly not a colour or touch, nor a collection of colours, touches, tastes, etc., but an entity or substance which has these as its qualities.

Some empiricists who are also associationists think that perception consists in recalling or remembering past sense-data when one is present to our consciousness. When I see the colour of a tree (i.e., get a colour-sensum), I recall all the other sense-data with which it was associated in my past experience of trees. That is, the present sensation of colour revives in my mind the colour and touch sensations of its other parts in the form of images. The perception of the tree is just this present colour-sensation together with the images of other past sensations which were usually connected with it.

The associationist account of perception is plainly false, and that for at least two reasons. When we perceive a tree from a distance we do not recall and have images of its other qualities and parts on seeing the colour of one part. We perceive the tree just when we see a certain colour. To see the colour is just to perceive the tree, so much so that we cannot 'see the colour and yet not perceive a tree' at the same time. Secondly, even if it be true that in perceiving a thing we have images of past sense-data along with a present one, we do not understand how this can explain our cognition of the thing. The thing is not merely an aggregate of sense-data or sense-qualities, but an entity or being which *has* or is somehow *related* to those data or qualities. Of this entity or being we neither have nor can have any sensation or image.

Many rationalistic thinkers, including both idealists and realists, say that the existence of the objects of perception is *inferred* from present sensations or sense-data. Thus some realists like the Sautrantika Buddhist would say that the existence of objects cannot be perceived by us, because what our mind directly knows is its own states. But from such mental states as are copies of objects we can infer the existence of the latter as causes of the former. So also Mr. Russell seems to think that existence of physical objects is not directly known to us, but inferred from the existence of sense-data with which we are acquainted, i.e., of which we are directly aware. The idealists generally hold that objects have no existence apart from our experience of them. When we perceive an object what happens is that from one experience we pass in thought to other possible experiences. We perceive a tree when with the experience of its front part we *think* of its other parts and take all the

parts as forming a system of experiences. This then seems to mean that perception is the process in which from one experience we infer others and put them all into one whole.

The above account of perceptual consciousness is nearly as bad as that of the associationists. If in perception we are not directly aware of objects, no inference from sense-data can lead to any indirect knowledge about them. If nowhere in our experience we have a direct cognition of objects, how could we possibly know that there was any object at all to be inferred? Again, in the absence of direct knowledge of the object we cannot say that any mental state is a copy or true representation of it. Further, when we perceive anything we do not *infer* and are not aware of any process of arriving at conclusions from premises. The perceptual cognition of a tree before my eyes is not what I arrive at from something called sense-datum, but what I simply *have* along with the sense-datum.

Mr. Bertrand Russell in his *The Problems of Philosophy* tells us that while we are acquainted with sense-data, we know physical objects by description. Let us try to understand his position. According to him, there are two kinds of knowledge of things, namely, knowledge by *acquaintance* and knowledge by *description*. 'We have acquaintance with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths. Thus in the presence of my table I am acquainted with such sense-data as its colour, shape, hardness, smoothness, etc.' He gives 'the name of "sense-data" to the things that are immediately known in sensation; such things as colours, sounds, smells, hardnesses, roughnesses, tastes, etc.' By 'sensation' he means 'the experience of being immediately aware of these things. Whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation *of* the colour, but the colour itself is a sense-datum, not a sensation. The colour is that *of* which we are immediately aware, and the awareness itself is the sensation.' Now it is plain that if we are to know anything about the table, it must be by means of such sense-data as brown colour, oblong shape, smoothness, etc., which we associate with the table. But these sense-data are the appearances of the table and not the table itself; nor are they directly even properties of the table. The same table seems to have different colours, shapes, and touch qualities for different persons and for the same person under different circumstances. Different people looking at a table at the same time and consequently from different positions will see different colours. None of these can be taken as the real colour of the table, for one has as good a claim to be regarded as *the* colour of the table as any other, and we cannot consistently maintain that the same thing is differently coloured at the same time. Similar is the case with the shape and touch of the table. These too are different for different people or for the same person under different circumstances. Thus sense-data, depending as they do on the relation of the observer to some object, give us merely the appearances of the object. They cannot tell us anything about the reality of the object, or the object as it really is apart from us. Hence it follows that we can have no acquaintance with or direct knowledge of objects like tables and trees. Our knowledge of the table as a physical object is obtained through acquaintance with sense-data that make up the appearance of the table. It is of the kind which is called 'knowledge by description'. We know the table by some such description as 'the table is

the physical object which causes such-and-such sense-data'. In order to know the table we must know truths connecting it with things with which we have acquaintance: We must know that 'such-and-such sense-data are caused by a physical object'. Our knowledge of the table is not and cannot be direct knowledge, the sort of knowledge we have of sense-data. 'All our knowledge of the table is really knowledge of *truths*, and the actual thing which is the table is not, strictly speaking, known to us at all. We know a description, and we know that there is just one object to which this description applies, though the object itself is not directly known to us. In such a case, we say that our knowledge of the object is knowledge by description.'

Mr. Russell's position with regard to the knowledge of objects through the senses—a position which is abandoned in his later works—seems to be both critical and paradoxical. Taking any common object of the sort that is supposed to be known by the senses, he shows how what the senses *immediately* tell us is not the truth about the object, but only the truth about certain sense-data. Thus when in the presence of a table we say, 'We perceive a table', the truth of the matter is that our senses acquaint us with such sense-data as a brown colour, an oblong shape, etc. These are the things of which we are immediately aware and their existence cannot be doubted by us. But when from these we pass on to the judgement that 'there is a real table with brown colour and oblong shape', we are involved in difficulties. The table as a physical object is not given to any of our senses; it is not immediately known to us at all. We cannot even say that the table has really a brown colour and an oblong shape, and is hard and smooth. For all we know, these are merely appearances which may be and actually are replaced by other different colours, shapes, etc., when the table is observed by others or observed from a different point of view. Hence we should say that no colour, shape, or size, etc., belongs to the real table. As Mr. Russell himself says, 'Thus colour is not something inherent in the table, but something depending upon the table and the spectator and the way light falls on the table.' If this be so, how do we know that there is a real table at all? According to Mr. Russell, we know it by a description like this: 'The table is the physical object which causes such-and-such sense-data.' But, then, how could we be sure that there is anything to which this description applies? It is the causal principle, so thinks Mr. Russell, which gives us this assurance. This means that the existence of the real table is *inferred* by us from the existence of the sense-data with which we are acquainted and of which the table is the cause. But if it be true that the real table has no colour, shape, or touch quality inherent in it, we do not understand how it can be described as a table at all. Neither in ordinary life nor in philosophy should we speak of a colourless and shapeless something as a table. So it may be that there is no real table but the one which we perceive and which has in fact a certain colour, shape, etc. That our sense-data—colour, shape, smoothness, etc.—may be caused by *something* existing independently of us may be true. But if this something differs, as Mr. Russell thinks it does differ, completely from our sense-data, we find no sense in which it can at all be described as a table. Supposing that something like it is the real table, have we any means of knowing it? Mr. Russell says that it can be described by means of certain sense-data and inferred as the cause of those

sense-data. But how can that which is neither sense-data nor qualified by them, be described in terms of any sense-datum? How, again, in the absence of some direct experience of it, can we form the idea of a real table as the cause of such-and-such sense-data? Even if we take all this for granted and say with Mr. Russell that our knowledge of the table or of any physical object is 'knowledge by description', simply do *not* describe and infer it. we cannot but feel that this fails to explain the perceptual consciousness that we undoubtedly have of the table or any other physical object before us. The table at which I am now sitting is perceived by me as something which is present to my consciousness and is directly known by me, and not as something which is described and inferred by me. When I perceive the table I

(To be concluded)

SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA

By Swami Pavitrananda

(Concluded)

At Baranagore, Latu Maharaj along with other brother disciples passed continuously one year and a half in hard spiritual practices. He would spend the whole night in one or other form of Sâdhanâ, and in the day-time he would have a short sleep. That became his habit for his whole life. Even if ill, he would sit for meditation in the evening. At Baranagore he was at one time very ill with pneumonia. He was too weak to rise. But he would insist that he should be helped to sit in the evening. When reminded that the doctor had forbidden him to do that, he would show great resentment and say: 'What does the doctor know? It is his (the Master's) direction, and it must be done.' He would be so engrossed in spiritual practices and always so much in spiritual mood that he could not stick to any regular time for food and drink. It is said that at Baranagore, because of this characteristic, sometimes food would be sent to his room. But on many days the food that was sent in the morning remained untouched till at night. Latu Maharaj had no idea that he had not taken any meal. At night when others retired Latu Maharaj would lie in his bed feigning sleep. When others were fast asleep, he would quietly rise and tell his beads. Once a funny incident happened on one of such occasions. While Latu Maharaj was telling his beads, a little sound was made. One of his brother monks thought that a rat had come into the room, and he kindled a light to drive it away. At this all found out the trick that Latu Maharaj was playing on them, and they began to poke fun at him.

Latu Maharaj had his own way of living and he could not conform to the routine life of an institution. Because of this he would afterwards live mostly outside the monastery with occasional short stays at the Alambazar or Belur Math. It is said that Swami Vivekananda once made it a rule that everyone should get up in the early hours

of the morning, with the ringing of a bell, and meditate. The next day Latu Maharaj was on his way to leave the Math. Swami Vivekananda heard the news and asked Latu Maharaj what the matter was with him. Latu Maharaj said: 'My mind has not reached such a stage that it can with the ringing of your bell be ready for meditation. I shall not be able to sit for meditation at your appointed hours.' The Swami understood the whole situation and waived the rule in favour of Latu Maharaj.

Sometimes Latu Maharaj stayed at the house of devotees, sometimes in a room at the Vasumati Press belonging to a lay disciple of the Master, and very often he lived on the bank of the Ganges without any fixed shelter. The day-time he would pass at one bathing ghat, the night-time he would spend at some other ghat with or without any roof. The policemen who kept watch came to know him and so would not object to his remaining there at night.

One night while it was raining Latu Maharaj took shelter in an empty compartment of a railway wagon that stood near by for taking goods. Soon the engine came and dragged the wagon to a great distance before Latu Maharaj was conscious of what had happened. He then got down and walked back to his accustomed spot. About his food Latu Maharaj was not at all particular. Sometimes a little quantity of gram soaked in water would serve for him the purpose of a meal. He lived on a plane where physical needs do not very much trouble a man, nor can the outside world disturb the internal peace. When asked how he could stay in a room in a printing-press where there was so much noise, Latu Maharaj replied that he did not feel much difficulty.

But the main source of strength of Latu Maharaj was his dependence on the Master. He would always think that the Master would supply him with everything that he needed or was good for him. Latterly he would say to those who sought guidance from him: 'Your dependence on God is so very feeble! If you do not get a result according to your own liking, in two days you give up God and follow your own plan as if you are wiser than He. Real self-surrender means that you will not waver in your faith even in the face of great losses.' There was nothing in the world which could tempt Latu Maharaj away from his faith in God and the Guru.

It is very difficult to trace the chronological events of Latu Maharaj's life : firstly because there were no events in his life excepting the fact that it was one long stillness of prayer, and secondly because now and then he was out of touch with all. But Latu Maharaj wanted to live within a few miles of Dakshineswar, the great seat of Sadhana of the Master. In 1895 or 1896 he once went to Puri, in 1903 he was again at that holy city for about a month; and in the same year he visited some places of northern India like Benares, Allahabad, and Brindavan. Swami Vivekananda took him in the party on his tour in Kashmir and Rajputana. Excepting these occasions Latu Maharaj lived mostly in Calcutta or near about. It is said that Latu Maharaj prayed to Jagannath at Puri that he might be vouchsafed two boons —first that he could engage himself in spiritual practices without having a wandering habit and second that he might have a good digestion. When asked why he asked for the second boon which seemed so strange, Latu Maharaj is said to have remarked : 'Well, it is very important in a Sâdhu life. There is no knowing what kind of food a Sadhu will get. If he has got a good

stomach he can take any food that chance may bring, and thus preserving his health can devote his energy to spiritual practices.'

Towards the end of 1898 when Ramchandra Dutt was on his death-bed, Latu Maharaj was by his side. For more than three weeks he incessantly nursed his old master who had been instrumental in bringing him in contact with one who had kindled the spiritual flame of his life. It is said that Latu Maharaj went on attending to the needs of the patient almost throughout twenty-four hours of the day. He took upon himself the main brunt of looking after the patient. With the same earnestness did he nurse the wife of Ramchandra Dutt, whom he regarded as his mother, in her dying moments. For about a month or so with anxious care and unsparingly Latu Maharaj attended her. It was only when she passed away that he left the house.

Though Latu Maharaj was never closely connected with the works of the Ramakrishna Mission, his love for his brother disciples especially for the Leader, whom he would call 'Loren' in his distorted Bengali pronunciation, was very great. Latu Maharaj could not identify himself with the works started by Swami Vivekananda as they caused distraction to the inner flow of his spiritual life. But he had great faith in the mission of one whom the Master praised so much. He used to say, 'I am ready to take hundreds of births if I can have the companionship of "Loren-bhâi".' Swami Vivekananda infinitely reciprocated the love of Latu Maharaj. When on his return to Calcutta from the West, he was given a splendid reception and everybody was eager to see and talk with him, Swami Vivekananda made anxious inquiry about Latu Maharaj, and when the latter came he took him by his hand and asked why he had not come so long. Latu Maharaj with his characteristic frankness said that he was afraid he would be a misfit in the company where the Swami was. At this the Swami very affectionately said, 'You are ever my Latu-bhai (brother Latu) and I am your Loren-bhai,' and dragged Latu Maharaj with him to take their meals together. The childlike simplicity and open-mindedness of Latu Maharaj made a special appeal to his brother disciples, but they also had deep regard for his high spirituality. Sometimes they would poke fun at him taking advantage of his simplicity, though they always had high appreciation of his wonderful life. Swami Vivekananda used to say, 'Our Master was original, and every one of his disciples also is original. Look at Latu. Born and brought up in a poor family, he has attained to a level of spirituality which is the despair of many. We came with education. This was a great advantage. When we felt depressed or life became monotonous, we could try to get inspiration from books. But Latu had no such opportunity for diversion. Yet simply through one-pointed devotion he has made his life exalted. This speaks of his great latent spirituality.' Now and then the Swami would lovingly address Latu Maharaj as 'Plato' distorting the word 'Latu' into that famous Greek name—an unconscious testimony to the wisdom the latter had attained. Sometimes the happy relationship between Latu Maharaj and his brother disciples would give rise to very enjoyable situations. Once in Kashmir, Swami Vivekananda, after visiting a temple, remarked that it was two or three thousand years old. At this Latu Maharaj questioned how he could come to such a strange conclusion. The great Swami was in a fix

and replied: 'It is very difficult to explain the reasons for my conclusion to you. It would be possible if you had got modern education.' Latu Maharaj, instead of being embarrassed at this, said, 'Well, such is your education that you cannot teach an illiterate person like myself.' The reply threw all into roaring laughter.

In 1903 Latu Maharaj was persuaded to take up his residence at the house of the great devotee Balaram Bose. There he stayed for about nine years till 1912. A very unusual thing for Latu Maharaj! When the request for staying there came to Latu Maharaj, he at first refused it on the ground that there was no regularity about his time of taking food and drink and, therefore, he did not like to inconvenience anyone. But the members of the family earnestly reiterated their request saying that it would be rather a blessing than any inconvenience if he put up at their house and that arrangements would be made so that he might live in any way he liked.

Even at this place where everyone was eager to give him all comforts, Latu Maharaj lived a very stern ascetic life. An eyewitness describes Latu Maharaj as he was seen at Balaram Babu's place: '. . . Latu Maharaj was a person of few words. He was also a person of few needs. His room bore witness to it. It lay immediately to the right of the house-entrance. The door was nearly always open, and as one passed, one could see the large empty space with a small thin mat on the floor, at the far end a low table for a bed, on one side a few half-dead embers in an open hearth and on them a pot of tea. I suspect that that pot of tea represented the whole of Latu Maharaj's concession to the body.'

In this room Latu Maharaj passed the whole day almost alone, absorbed in his own thought. Only in the mornings and the evenings he would be found talking with persons who would approach him for the solution of their spiritual problems. Outwardly Latu Maharaj was stern and at times he would not reply though asked questions repeatedly. But when in a mood to talk and mix with people he was amazingly free and sociable. He had not the least trace of egotism in him. Beneath the rough exterior he hid a very soft heart. Those who were fortunate in having access to that found in him a friend, philosopher, and guide. Even little boys were very free with him. They played with him, scrambled over his shoulders, and found in him a delightful companion. Persons who were lowly and despised found a sympathetic response from his kindly heart. Once asked how he could associate himself with them, he replied, 'They are at least more sincere.'

Once a man, tipsy with drink, came to him at midnight with some articles of food and requested that Latu Maharaj must accept them, for after that he himself could partake of them as sacramental food. A stern ascetic like Latu Maharaj quietly submitted to the importunities of this vicious character, and the man went away satisfied, all the way singing merry songs. When asked how he could stand that situation, Latu Maharaj said, 'They want a little sympathy. Why should one grudge that?'

Another day a devotee came to him drenched with rain. Latu Maharaj at once gave him his own clothes to put on. The devotee got alarmed at the very suggestion of wearing the personal clothes of the much revered Latu Maharaj and also because they were ochre clothes, which it was sacrilegious for a lay man to put on. But Latu Maharaj persuaded him to wear them, as otherwise he might fall ill and fail

to attend office—a very gloomy prospect for a poor man like him.

An outward sternness Latu Maharaj maintained, perhaps, to protect himself against the intrusion of people. But however stern he might be externally in order to keep off people or however much he might be trying to hide his spiritual fire, people began to be attracted by his wonderful personality. Though he had no academic education whatsoever, he could solve the intricate points of philosophy or the complex problems of spiritual life in such an easy way that one felt he saw the solutions as tangibly as one sees material objects. Once there came two Western ladies to Latu Maharaj. They belonged to an atheist society. As such, they believed in humanitarian works but not in God. 'Why should you do good to others?' asked Latu Maharaj in the course of the conversation with them, 'Where lies your interest in that? If you don't believe in the existence of God, there will always remain a flaw in your argument. Humanitarian work is a matter that concerns the good of society. You cannot prove that it will do good to yourself. So after some time you will get tired of doing work that does not serve your self-interest. On the contrary if you believe in God there will be a perennial source of interest, for the same God resides in others as in you.'

'But can you prove that the one God resides in many?' asked one of the ladies.

'Why not?' came the prompt reply, 'But it is a subjective experience. Love cannot be explained to another. Only one who loves understands it and also the one who is loved. The same is the case with God. He knows and the one whom He blesses knows. For others He will ever remain an enigma.'

'How can it be possible that I am the Soul, I being finite and the Soul being infinite?' asked a devotee.

'Where is the difficulty?' replied one who had the perception of the truth as clear as daylight, 'Have you not seen jasmin flowers? The petals of those flowers are very small. But even those petals, dew-drops falling on them, reflect the infinite sky. Do they not? In the same way through the grace of God this limited self can reflect the Infinite.'

'How can an aspirant grasp Brahman which is infinite?' asked a devotee with a philosophical bent of mind.

'You have heard music,' said the monk who was quite innocent of any knowledge of academic philosophy, 'you have seen how the strings of a Sittâr bring out songs. In the same way the life of a devotee expresses Divinity.'

Once at Baranagore Math Swami Turiyananda, who had very deep knowledge of scriptures, was saying that God was all kind and was above any sense of hatred or partiality. At this Latu Maharaj replied, 'Nice indeed! You are defending God as if He is a child.'

'If God is not impartial,' said Swami Turiyananda, 'is He then a despot like the Czar of Russia, doing whatsoever He likes according to His caprice?'

'All right, you may defend your God, if you please,' said Latu Maharaj, 'but this you should not forget that He is also the power behind the despotism of the Czar.'

Though he had no book-learning Latu Maharaj could instinctively see the inner significance of scriptures because of his spiritual realizations. Once a monk was reading out the *Kathopanishad* to him, when he came to the following Shloka: 'The Purusha of the size of a thumb, the inner soul, dwells always in the heart of beings. One

should separate Him from the body with patience as the stalk from a grass.' When the last line was uttered Latu Maharaj was overjoyed and exclaimed, 'Just the thing!' as if he was giving out his own experience of life.

Though he himself could not read, he liked to hear scriptures read out to him. Once at dead of night—to him day and night had no difference—he awakened a young monk who slept in his room and asked him to read out the Gita to him. The young monk did that in compliance with his wish.

Latu Maharaj talked of high spiritual things when the mood for that came, but he was too humble to think that he was doing any spiritual good to anybody. Though by coming into contact with him many lives were changed, he did not consciously make any disciple. He used to say that only those persons who were born with a mission like Swami Vivekananda were entitled to make disciples or preach religion. He had a contempt for those who talked or lectured on religion without directing their energies to build up their own character. He used to say that the so-called preachers go out to seek people to listen to them, but if they realize the truth people of their own accord would flock round them for spiritual help. Whenever he felt that his words might be interpreted as if he had taken the role of a teacher, he would rebuke himself muttering half-audible words. Thus Latu Maharaj was an unconscious teacher. But the effect of his unconscious teaching was tremendous on the people who came to him.

In 1912 Latu Maharaj went to Benares to pass his last days in that holy city. He stayed at various places in Benares. But wherever he lived he radiated the highest spirituality and people circled round him. Even in advanced age he passed the whole night in spiritual practices. Sometimes in the day-time also, when he lay on his bed covered with a sheet and people took him to be sleeping, on careful observation he would be found to be absorbed in his own thoughts. During the last period of his life, he would not like very much to mix with people. But if he would talk, he would talk only of spiritual things. He would grow warm with enthusiasm while talking about the Master and Swami Vivekananda.

Hard spiritual practices and total indifference to bodily needs told upon his once strong health. The last two or three years of his life he was suffering from dyspepsia and various other accompanying ailments. But he was as negligent about his health as ever, and one would very often hear him say, 'It is a great botheration to have a body.'

In the last year of his life he had a blister on his leg which developed gangrene. In the course of the last four days before his passing away, he was daily operated upon twice or thrice. But the wonder of wonders was that he did not show the least indication of any feeling of pain. It was as if the operation was done on some external thing. His mind soared high up and even the body-idea was forgotten. Latterly he would always remain indrawn. At the time of illness he was completely self-absorbed. His gaze was fixed on the middle of his brow, and his thoughts were withdrawn from the external world. Wide awake, but oblivious of his surroundings, he stood midway between the conscious and the superconscious planes.

Then the moment came when the great soul was completely freed from the encasement of the body. Latu Maharaj entered into Mahâsamâdhi on 24 April 1920.

Those who witnessed the scene say that even after the passing, in his face there was such an expression of calm, joy, and compassion that they could not distinguish the dead from the living state. Everyone was struck by that unique sight. A wonderful life culminated in a wonderful death. Indeed Sri Ramakrishna was a unique alchemist. Out of the dust he could create gold. He transformed an orphan boy of lowly birth, wandering in the streets of Calcutta for the means of a livelihood, into a saint who commanded the spontaneous veneration of one and all. It is said that when Latu Maharaj passed away Hindus, Mohammedans, people irrespective of caste or creed rushed to pay homage to that great soul. Such was his influence!

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS OF ANCIENT TIMES

By Kalica Prasad Datta, M.A.

Though plain living and high thinking was their motto, it was not an accepted principle in the life of ancient Aryans. They neither neglected the aesthetic sense, which God had bestowed upon them, nor were they forgetful of the finer tastes of human life. The Vedic society had long passed the primitive stage; and the civilized life of this period conformed to the principles of a well-established organization. Documentary evidences prove it. 'Vâsas is the most usual word in the *Rigveda* for clothing.' (*Rigvedic Culture*, p. 212). The God Pushan was called a weaver of dresses (*Vâsa-vâya*). According to Macdonnell and Keith—'The Vedic Indian seems often to have worn three garments, an undergarment (Nivi), a garment, and an over-garment (Adhivâsa), which was probably a mantle and for which the names Atka and Drâpi also seem to be used.' (*Vedic Index*, 2.22). Probably the rich people used these garments, and the commoners dressed themselves in two pieces of garments, namely, the Nivi and the Paridhâna (dress proper). Urnâ (wool) is frequently quoted in the *Rigveda*. It was used as material for garments. The Sindhu country or the Indus valley was called Urnâvati (producer of wool). The *Mahâbhârata* speaks of woollen clothes, manufactured probably in north-western India.

Embroidered garments were not unknown. Peshas is frequently mentioned as denoting an embroidered cloth. In the *Yajurveda*, we find reference to the Peshaskari (a female embroiderer). The Maruts are mentioned as wearing dresses bedecked with gold (Hiranmayân Atkân). The epics also refer to golden and silver robes, which probably indicate that gold and silver embroidered garments were used extensively. Megasthenes describes some cotton apparel, too, 'worked in gold and ornamented with precious stones'. (Strabo, p. 509).

Spinning was generally done by the womenfolk. The clothes were woven of the Otu and Tantu, the warp and the woof. Animal skin was also used as clothing, particularly by the ascetics (Munis). The *Shatapatha Brâhmana* mentions the word 'Ajinavâsin' (clothed in skins). The chapter on the Superintendent of Weaving in Kautilya's *Arthashâstra* throws a flood of light on the cultivation of cotton during his time. According to him, fibre cotton

(Tulâ) and hemp and flax were generally used as materials for weaving purposes. He also refers to various kinds of woollen fabrics. Students generally wore garments made from Shana, Kshauma (silk) and Aviḳa (sheep's wool). The *Mahâvagga* (VIII.iii.1) also mentions various articles such as Khoma (linen), Kappasika (cotton), Koseyya (silk) and Kambala (woollen fabric). Sushruta speaks of bandages made of various stuffs including Patrorna (white silk) and Chinapatta (Chinese silk?). It is interesting to note that as far back as the fourth century A.D. Chinese silk probably found its way into Indian market. The *Mahabharata* refers to Kitaja and Pattaja (silk?) fabric. Kausheya was probably the name for silk in the *Râmâyana*. Dyed or coloured garments were also used, specially by the ascetic class. The Bauddha Bhikshu or the Shramana outshone all in the use of motley coloured clothes.

Our ancient forefathers were not unmindful of decorating the 'body beautiful'. Even in so early an age as that of the Vedas, they developed a high degree of aesthetic sense. There were ornaments of various kinds. Naturally the womenfolk excelled their compatriots, the men, in this respect. Nishka is frequently mentioned in the *Rigveda* (2.33.10; 8.47.15). It was probably a golden ornament worn round the neck (cf. Nishka-griva). Rukma was another sort of ornament worn on the breast. Pearls (Krishana) and precious stones are often referred to in the *Rigveda* (1.35.4; 10.68.1). Khâdi was probably a golden anklet (or an armlet) worn by men and women alike (*Rigvedic Culture*, Ch. VI). Karnashobhana was the name for ornaments for the ear. The boys, like the girls, wore golden ear-rings (*Rigveda*, 1.122.14). In the later ages, it was incumbent upon the father of a bride to give her away, well-adorned with ornaments, and the husband was charged with responsibilities for providing his wife with jewelleries.

Evidences in the *Ramayana* show that the art of manufacturing jewelleries was looked upon as a major industry. Further, in the epics, we read of different types of ornaments, e.g., Kundala for the ear, Keyura for the upper arm, and Anguriya for the fingers, Kirita used as head-dress, and Hâra for the neck, etc. These were used both by men and women. Jingling of Nupura (worn at the ankles usually by the ladies) made many a home happy. Besides, in the *Mârkandeya Purâna*, we find mention of Kataka or Valaya for use in the lower arms, Ardhachandra for the forehead and Graiveyaka round the neck. The *Kâlikâ Purana* enumerates no less than forty kinds of ornaments and enjoins that silver should not be worn above the neck nor gold to be put on the feet. The *Dhammapada*, in one instance, refers to five hundred goldsmiths engaged in making an excellent and delicately wrought ornament, to be worn by the daughter of a king's treasurer. In the sculptures and metal images, as well as in the paintings at Ajanta, we find but faithful reproductions of ornamental and decorative art as it flourished in different ages. This art, perhaps, reached the peak in the fourth or fifth century A.D. The rich people sometimes, it is said, maintained smith's shops at their own expense, in their dwellings. Reference to jewellery works in the *Mrichchhakatikam* (Act IV), in Vasantasenâ's house, is indeed an illuminating instance.

MAYA IN MODERN SCIENCE

By Swami Sharvananda

(Concluded)

A few more points of modern theoretical physics, and we have done with it. Apart from time, space, and matter we all perceive the presence of another entity in our physical universe. It is energy. This energy seems to strike our senses in various forms such as sound, heat, light, electricity, magnetism, and so on and produces the sense-perception of our physical world. The untutored mind perceives all these different manifestations of energy as entities entirely different from each other, and all belong to Nature. The nineteenth-century physics unified them all in a single concept of energy. Sound was found to be only the effect of the vibration of air particles propagating in the form of waves; heat is another form of the same energy produced from some material source and propagated through pulsation on an imponderable substance called ether. Light, electricity, and magnetism are all vibrations of the same energy, but with different frequency. Light itself was found to have different kinds of frequency of vibration, giving rise to different wavelengths and producing different colours. All kinetic energy propagates in the form of radiation, and all radiation consists of discrete bullet-like units which are called 'Quanta' or 'Photons'. A beam of radiation can be pictured as a regular shower of photons, all moving in parallel paths. And each photon of the beam does not move on its path straight-facedly, but it goes on spinning and spinning as it moves on. This picture of radiation as a crowd of bullet-like photons darting through space has many advantages for scientists in explaining facts. But 'nothing in the particle picture explains the most fundamental of all the properties of radiation, —its uniform speed of travel', as Sir James Jeans points out. Further, different experiments with light have clearly shown that light, and for the matter of that all radiation, moves on not always like discrete bullets, but sometimes like waves. Hence the modern physicist is constrained to acknowledge that radiation travels through space in the form of waves, but breaks up into grains of photons as soon as it encounters matter. The same is the case with electrons and protons; they behave like waves in space, but get congealed into particles when passing through matter. Heisenburg gives us the mathematical explanation for this double and mutually contradictory aspects of both light and electron. But after all, mathematical formulas are mere abstractions and do not help us in forming any definite idea of an objective reality, as it has been well explained by both Heisenburg and Schrodinger that radiation waves are 'mere mathematical waves, and possess no physical reality'. Bertrand Russell has truly said that 'we must not think of a light-wave as a "thing", but as a connected group of rhythmical events. The mathematical characteristic of such a group can be inferred by physics, within limits; but the intrinsic character of the component

events cannot be inferred. The events constituting light-waves are only known through this effect upon our eyes, optic nerves, and brains, and these effects are not themselves light-waves, as is obvious from the fact that nerves and brains are not transparent.' (*Outline of Philosophy*). So ultimately it comes to this that electrons, protons and photons, the ultimate constituents of matter and energy, 'are mere logical constructions of our own mind', as Russell has said elsewhere (*Analysis of Matter*), and have no objective correspondence in the outside world. With the evaporation of the materiality of the objective world, there vanishes also the corporeality of our own physical being. We become like ghosts stalking through a ghostly world of 'events'! There is another small fact of modern physics which draws our attention. When the physicist goes to calculate the nature of the atomic world and put it in mathematical figures, a fictitious figure crops up at every step; it is the notorious $\sqrt{-1}$. The whole of the atomic physics is pervaded with this fictitious figure! I call this $\sqrt{-1}$ as the Mâyâ in the fundamental physics. Does any one require any further proof of Maya? It dogs us at every step as we walk in the light of modern physics.

From physics and chemistry, when we go to astronomy, another department of modern science, we find the same presence of Maya even there. Both Dr. Eddington and Sir James Jeans, the foremost of modern English astronomers, tell us in no uncertain terms that our galactic system, like other nebular universes, had its origin in time. It might be that they were born some millions upon millions of years ago, still it is certain that they came out of the womb of the primeval chaos or nothingness. What was the exact nature of that primeval chaos, it is impossible to conjecture now with our present limitation of knowledge. In the bosom of that primal chaos a stir was produced, a motion was created, and by the force of what is technically called 'angular momentum', condensation of energy started, and electrons and protons were produced, and assuredly, photons also. The very first stage of the condensation can be marked out as the nebulae, of which 200 have been discovered so far. A nebula consists of an immense mass of luminous vapour of electrons and protons. With the increase of the momentum a further condensation took place, and stars shot out in discrete forms. From one of such stars, our sun which is a portion of its flaming vapour, was pulled out by the force of attraction, called 'tidal pull', of some passing star, even as tidal swells now form in our oceans due to the attraction of the moon. Further on, this mass of burning vapour got broken into smaller bits, which cooled down through the lapse of a long period of time into the form of the eleven planets which our sun holds around it still. Our astronomers tell us further that as things are going on at present, each of the fiaming bodies we call stars is losing millions of tons of substance per second in the form of radiation. Our own sun is losing about fifty million tons of its substance every second! Such huge losses cannot be sustained through eternity. It means, then, that our whole universe is heading to a final crash, a complete dissolution through radiation. This is what Sir James Jeans calls, 'the running down of the universe'. The birth of our galactic system might have taken place some four hundred million, million, million of years ago, and it may take more billion upon billion of years to get it dissolved through radiation into final

nothingness; but that final doom is certain to befall this entire universe. So it comes to this, that this visible material universe of ours has originated from primal nothingness, and it is destined to end into final nothingness. The Shunya-vâdin Buddhists tell us with a cogent logic, that if the origin of an object is from Shunya, i.e., nothing, and if its final end again be in Shunya, then the middle visible existence of the object must necessarily be taken as an illusion of the same Shunya, and can never be truly real. If one's father is a Negro and his son is also a Negro, he himself cannot but be a Negro. If we apply this dictum of the Shunya-vâdin to this universe of the modern astronomers it becomes only a delusive aspect of nothingness! Here, too, we are faced with the same Maya in modern astronomy!

Moreover, as the late Sir Oliver Lodge has pointed out in his last work, *My Philosophy*, the present-day astronomy can never tell us the reason why the first whirl was started in the calm passivity of the primeval chaos. It is a fundamental law of motion, the Law of Inertia, which says that when a body is at rest, it will continue to be in that state until some other force acts upon it and produces a change; similarly when a body is in motion its tendency should be perpetually to be in motion, unless some other force acts upon it and changes its state. So according to this Newtonian Law of Inertia, there must be some other power quite distinct from the cosmic energy which acts and stirs up motion in the latter. Of course, Sir Oliver, like a good theist, sees here the hand of God as the efficient cause of the universe. But a Vedantin who is not a theist of the Christian type, may see again the play of Maya even here. The whole picture of the origin, the middle, and the end of the universe that our astronomers and physicists draw for us, fits very well with the Maya doctrine of Shankaracharya.

There are a few other branches of modern science like biology, psychology, and ethics, which we find equally infested with Maya. But the limitation of space forbids us to enter into them. Only I would give a few instances from our practical life, which would make it plain to our readers how Maya fills our whole life. Suppose A steals a watch from B's table, and B catches him red-handed and charges A for stealing his watch. Then A like a good student of modern physics and psychology may tell the judge, 'Sir, I can't be held responsible for my hand's taking B's watch from the table and putting it into my pocket. What actually happened was this: the light-waves coming from the watch struck my retina, and the disturbances of the retinal fibres were carried through the optic nerves to the optic centre in the brain; then the agitation of the optic centre was transferred through the mysterious synopses to the motor centre that controls the hand; and this transference took place perfectly according to the Law of Conditioned Reflex which forms the path of low resistance. Then the stimulation of the motor centre discharged itself through the motor nerve into the muscles of the hand, and as its natural consequence, the hand took up the watch and put it into the pocket. The whole thing took place perfectly according to the psycho-physiological law. But I am blamed for the act. Where is the place of "I" in this whole series of activity? "I" is nothing but an epiphenomenon of the neural activities of the brain; nay, we may also call it the exhibition of language-habit according to the psychology of the Watsonian school. So

where am I, who am I, and how am I to be held responsible for this mere mechanical act of the hand which you call stealing? Or, if you please, according to the modern physics, only my shadowy hand has taken away the equally shadowy watch of a shadowy B and put it into the shadowy pocket of my shadowy coat. Where is then the crime of stealing? It is all a play of mere shadows! Further, there is no such thing as a single act, which you may designate as "stealing", the reality is that there is a series of events occurring in time-space-continuum; it has neither any agent, nor any patient.' If the judge be a true student of the behaviouristic school of psychology or modern physics, he should, in full conscience, give his verdict of 'not guilty' to A. But our judges are likely to say on such an occasion, 'Well, no matter, I send you to an equally shadowy jail.' The idea militates against our ethical notions. Here we see how there is a radical contradiction between truths of physics or psychology and those of ethics. Should we call it an instance of Maya in ethics?

Another instance. Hari gives a slap on the face of Rama, Rama remonstrates. Hari as a good student of physics may well reply, 'Fellow, you don't know science. Do you know that not a single molecule of my hand can actually touch any of the molecules of the skin of your face? The pain that you feel on your face is not actually due to the fact that my hand touched it, but due to the repercussion of the molecules of your own face. Do we not get hurt by kicking against a stone? It is also like that. Further, even if you insist that my hand has actually beaten against your face, it is equally true that the skin of your face has beaten against my hand. So I too can charge you for beating me.' Indeed it would be a strange life, if it be regulated strictly according to the ultimate truths of modern science. We notice contradictions everywhere between our practical life and the theoretical knowledge we call science. This is indeed Maya!

Shankaracharya in his introduction of the Sutra Bhâshya, identifies Maya with Avidyâ (nescience); and Adhyâsa (superimposition), he tells us, is the consequence of Avidya. When in the dark, a rope is mistaken for a snake, we perceive the substance (Visheshya) of the rope which becomes the subject of our false judgement that 'it is a snake'. But our ignorance of the right predicate (Visheshana) of the rope is responsible for the creation of a new predicate 'snake' in its stead and the tagging of it to the substance of the rope. So the superimposition (Adhyasa) of the snake-vision upon the substance (Adhishthâna) of rope is due to the ignorance or incapacity of knowing the real nature of rope. And this Adhyasa he describes as *Atasmin tad-buddhi*, i.e., taking a thing for something else which it is really not. And the Adhyasa being the effect of Avidya or Maya, is always inseparably associated with it.

Now we have seen how modern science proves it at every step that things are not what they seem. And so Shankara's Maya theory is amply verified by all the principal branches of modern positive science.

THE YOGA OF KUNDALINI*

By Prof. Mahendra Nath Sircar, M.A., Ph.D.

The Tantras place a great emphasis upon the Yoga of Kundalini. It is their unique discovery.

Kundalini is the spiritual power that is hidden in man. It is so called because of its coiled form or nature. (The word Kundalini means 'coiling' as the coiling up of a serpent—Ahisadri-shakrit). It is supposed to be stored up at the end of the spinal chord. Kundalini is always described as a force, usually inactive. It is the reserve force. The phrase 'coiled up' has that implication. This force is psychic and spiritual. It has its effect upon the vital force, even upon our psychical being. This force is available to man alone. It is potential everywhere, only in man it can be effective. Generally it is felt as a subtle current of energy which is luminous and which flows through a subtle passage in our system. But the current is not necessarily confined to this passage; it penetrates into the finer ethereal expansion far above our physical being. It is the *spirit-energy*. 'It is', the *Saradatilaka* says, 'like a flash of lightning—Vidyutlatâkârâ'. The power is potential in every man; it is really the higher urge for a better evolution in wider being and consciousness. When Kundalini remains inactive, man acts with his normal strength and knowledge; but with the awakening of Kundalini he acquires superhuman strength and power. Kundalini generates a force which unearths our whole being in order that it can really implant a new consciousness and infuse a new life. It is nothing miraculous, but the use of a great gift that is already in man in order that man may supersede his present stature of being and knowledge and can acquire new knowledge and power and put them into active service for divine purpose. It acquaints us with the still unborn self, the self which is our real nature and essence. Spiritual life is essentially the seeking of this unborn self, for the evolutionary ascent has not been completed with man. The evolutionary urge is still for higher manifestation, where man will be relieved of his limitations of knowledge and power. With the stir of Kundalini the true spiritual evolution starts. Many undreamt of possibilities unfold. It will be possibly a mistake to suppose that the Yoga of Kundalini constitutes by itself a new art or discipline. The Yoga of Kundalini is the art of recovering the sleeping spiritual potentiality in man; but in every form of spiritual discipline Kundalini can be active. In fact whenever there is poise in our being either through love or knowledge, Kundalini stirs, though at times not to our knowledge. A super-conscious realization is the direct effect of this force. It is the released force of spirit, waving new feelings, opening new vistas, starting freshness, yielding serene joys, unfolding our divine nature.

The Tantras, more than other forms of Indian mysticism, have made effort to consciously awaken Kundalini and regulate it in order that the highest fruit may be reaped.

* A chapter from Prof. M. N. Sircar's forthcoming book *Hindu Mysticism*, Vol. II.

Life Process and Kundalini

Kundalini is active more or less everywhere in life. It is the essence of life and is, therefore, present everywhere. It is the psychic and spiritual energy that is in all creation, high or low. Kundalini is in all the grades of existence. Its finest functioning can be seen in a spiritual genius, where its flow, radiation, and saturation are matters of direct perception. They can be directly felt. With the entrance and initiation into spiritual life its finest stirring can be consciously felt, and spiritual life becomes so attractive because of the new vital and conscious force it releases. Life-process is quickened by Kundalini, but Kundalini is not life-force. And naturally it may so fashion and guide our life-force that it may appear more gentle, intense, lovely, and joyous. It gathers up great force and makes its finest exhibition in spiritual formation and creativeness. It removes the barrier of normal consciousness and invests it with a rare luminosity and power. In fact, the life-process is so much quickened up that it takes many forms of expressions in knowledge, emotion, and spirituality. It fills our whole being and modulates all the chords. If Kundalini invests us with new life, it also endows us with new knowledge. To say that Kundalini develops our intuition is not to say enough. It makes our intuition swift; but what is more, it associates the new knowledge with the new life; it quickens our intuitions in all its phases, for its purpose is to lay bare all the higher potentialities in vitalism, in psychism, and spiritualism. Naturally, with the functioning of Kundalini a new spirit-force, along with the new intuitions in the highest consciousness, becomes active in us. Its whole movement is cosmic. Even in its sproutings it gives an inkling of the cosmic ways of life. This is its promise and attraction. It invests the actual existence with a new meaning and interest as it enables us to see it directly in the cosmic setting, not only in its totality but in its integral unity with the universal life and consciousness. It actually saturates us with the universal life-force and serene consciousness.

Naturally, with its awakening a new subtle order of knowledge starts which is not possible to envisage, far less to understand with the functioning of normal faculties. When Kundalini becomes active a new organ of knowledge becomes operative. We are thrown into a universe in which we enjoy a finer being, a wider knowledge, unfettered by the consciousness of three dimensions.

Kundalini is the stream of vital-spiritual current, which reveals the inner architecture of our psychic being together with its cosmic correspondence. It opens the avenues of subtler perceptions through the sense, subtle mentalism and imagining of subtler vital harmonies, subtler beauties, and transcendental essence. It makes a new orientation of our being. The kind of intuition it generates is psychic, spiritual, supra-mental, and transcendental. It makes our vital and mental being transparent. A fresh vitality with a luminous psychism is the inevitable experience that follows the working of Kundalini in us. It is not the chastened animal spirit that attracts us here. It is not merely the vital rejuvenation that awakens us. It gives us a still deeper insight into our being and endows us with a wonderful psychic intuition that puts us into connection with the subtler nature-spirit, natural agencies, denizens of heaven, and what is more, with the cosmic emanations. It reveals wondrous powers that are active to shape the

nature of events; and its inestimable gift acquaints us with the occult government of the world.

In whichever part of our being Kundalini becomes active, it reflects the forces that function there. It endows us with the secret knowledge of their formation. Our systems possess fixed sensitive parts—they are focal centres which control and regulate certain forces in us. The powers of Kundalini release these forces and make them active in us, endowing us with direct vision, subtle powers. All the centres do not give us the same kind of knowledge. Some give us the knowledge of the vital universe, some the knowledge of the subtle mental universe, some of the still finer universes. When it reaches the highest centre it attains a dynamic equilibrium and perfect poise and peace beyond all understanding. It is the focal point in transcendental consciousness. The intermediate planes show all the possibilities of evolutions in spirit and subtle wisdom and mysteries of the different levels of our consciousness. The highest plane manifests consciousness beyond all formations. It is the calm, the final reach of our being, and Kundalini, when it reaches this zone gets widely diffused and attains perfect equilibrium. A unique experience in wideness and freedom persists.

Our being has sensitive psychic centres. They do not serve any physical function, and generally they are inactive in us. These centres generate and diffuse currents of forces and become operative when the force of Kundalini acts upon them. They are all located in the psychic body and Kundalini makes the psychic self active in us.

The rise and the functioning of the Kundalini indicate the gradual psychication of our being. Evolution in knowledge and power proceeds even with imperfect psychication; when the psychication becomes complete, the divine wisdom and power are assimilated. The types of supermen are differentiated. The perfect psychication with complete spiritualization will put the superman in touch with the spring of divine life, and he will be invested with cosmic consciousness and will. Such supermen become directly conscious of the divine force functioning in them and get identified with it. The awakening of the Kundalini invests us with the psychic life and cosmic forces.

The immanent consciousness has not the same expression in all the parts of our being. The unconscious has its different layers of subtle existence illumined. All the principles working in us become revealed when the spiritual force functions through all the centres. The adept soon attains the height of divinization. The promise is there, but life-force works with accustomed habits; and naturally it takes long before the cosmic powers can be directly active. In fact, no physiological or psychological analysis can invest us with such knowledge. The details of our being are placed before us, and its physiological, vital, mental, psychic, supra-mental operations become clear to us, especially in their subtler and hidden aspects. These are but side-lights. The main objective is to endow us with the privilege of the cosmic consciousness and freedom from the limitations of the senses, the mind, the vital impellings, and the cabined experiences. As the force starts, immediately the sense of expansiveness together with a freshness and vivacity fills us. This cosmic feeling is the invariable experience though it becomes clear and apparent when the experience has been somewhat durable. All centres do not give the same experience besides consciousness which is the

basic principle everywhere. Different centres have their distinctive psychic individuality inasmuch as their functioning produces different kinds of vital feelings and psychic repose. Generally our system is divided into three parts, from the navel to the base, from the throat to the navel, from the brain to the throat. Vital experiences are quick and evident in the lowest part, vital-mental in the middle portion, and the higher mental are located in the upper portion. This is at best a rough division following the lead of usual experience; but in the case of adepts the lower centres move in unison with the higher, and gradually the lower centres lose their individuality by the process of transformation. Spirituality and occultism discover the spirit immanent in our nature; and when, therefore, the insurgence of the vital life comes down, the immanence of spirit everywhere, even in the vital life, is clearly felt. This is indeed a great advance; the crudeness of nature is eliminated before this advance is achieved. The latent forces of nature make their appearance. They show their strength and power; but all the powers of our being are linked up with the central spirit. A better organization takes place in us. The ideal is to mould our being in such a way that there can be no contradiction in its different parts. Each part submits to the influence of the higher spirit; and the physical, the vital, the mental centres part with their inertia, restriction, and formed habits, and move in the wake of spirit and in its strings. The apparent divisions that are noticed in our nature disappear, for really throughout the whole being the creative spirit moves;—their differences indicate the finer or the crude functioning of the creative force. Spiritual life aims at mastery in order that crude nature may not restrict our consciousness and its activity within its fold. For this, it is necessary to be acquainted with the finer side of nature, which is to be shaped for the higher expression. Before the final release is attained there should be the emergence of the spirit in every part of our being,—the physical, the vital, the mental,—which refines our nature and enables us to react successfully to the cosmic functioning of spirit. This emergence removes the narrow compass of our being and activity and endows us with the released cosmic force and power. This fact, evident in spirit, is established as a truth in experience. The same force of superhuman knowledge reaches the refined secrets of nature and uses them for further evolution as preliminary to the transcendent realization. This emergence in spiritual knowledge and spiritual power reaffirms the superiority of the spirit to matter and its ultimate control over it. The least advance is associated with freedom and ease. Each advance has its fruit in the attainment through the same force of magnified power and being called Bibhuti. The Tantras along with Patanjali speak of varied powers which are far beyond the conception of the scientific intellect, for they follow the functioning of the subtlest forces. Veils after veils are withdrawn, and wondrous forces under the control of the released spirit are revealed, ultimately endowing it with a form of superhuman omniscience. To the spirit's gaze is revealed all the strata of existence, its inner and outer forces. This revelation endows it with powers. The emanation in powers is possible only in the domain of Prakriti, for there the struggle between spirit and matter is possible; but beyond it there is no struggle in the supra-material world where the emanations are all spiritual. There is no extraordinariness in the exhibition

of superhuman knowledge and power for it is strictly determined by a law; and the law is that the more the spirit reasserts itself over matter, the more it drives out the grosser elements for its super-expression. With the functioning of Kundalini the obstruction of inert matter is withdrawn from our senses. This is the privilege that is associated with the rise of Kundalini.

The Negative and the Positive Poles of Existence

There are two scales of our existence, the negative and the positive. Creation is the bifurcation of the original unity of existence into a polarity. The polarity extends to knowledge, life, and psychic processes. Here we speak of psychic and spiritual polarity—the division of the original force into negative and positive forms. This division really indicates the eccentric projection of the original force. This takes place in creation. In creation the projection gets a form of individuality and functions as such. It cannot immediately restore its original unity. Polarization gives the stamp of concrete individuality by balancing the two forces, positive and negative. In some the positive force predominates, in others the negative force dominates. These give the stamp on our personality. In the extroverted types of modern psychology the positive force is active, in the introverted types the negative force is active. Their nature and character are distinguished by these elements. There are also mixed types. The negative type is more intuitive and emotional and more responsive to the finer currents of the soul and is more submissive. It is more subjectively conscious. The positive is the creative, the negative is the receptive force; but the negative is not necessarily the inferior, for in the economy of life it has its own purpose to serve. The negative has an in-drawing force: it attracts the positive which in turn fecundates it. Thus arises the cycle of creation with two forms of psychicism, negative and positive. Every created object has in it the two aspects of the force functioning. They determine its character.

This bifurcation of force, though a natural process, is followed by another process, viz, depolarization of forces. This is also natural in our life-process; for in depolarization the original unity is restored, and the forces enjoy the equilibrium before the process of creativity can once again start. This alternate polarization and depolarization are evident in nature's functioning: in this way nature manifests her creativity and economy. Activity and its suspension are at the root of all life-processes.

Spiritual life begins with the freedom from the life of restriction implied in creative polarization. It is, seriously speaking, not merely a life of transvaluation and conservation of values or a finer sense of aestheticism or a dignified holiness. These are indeed all sublime expressions of life and consciousness. These find their place in our personal life and its spiritual setting in the order of values; but they cannot forgo the very basis of personal existence; they cannot rise higher than the sense of values associated with personal life. The sense of personal life is so much intimately associated with religious consciousness that it is very difficult to think of spiritual life without a personal reference and personal feeling. But personality moves in a limited sphere; even at its height of expression it cannot rise above the limited reference to its centre. In other words, religion is the more dignified and expanded presentation of reality always in relation to a personal reference. It is the focussing, as it were, of the whole existence

into a particular centre. Religion loses its charm if it misses this reference to experienced being and intensive feeling. This is, no doubt, a truism. But this is not the finality in our spiritual aspiration. The Tantras indulge in a form of spirituality which does not imply a passing into the wider and higher reaches of consciousness but a loss of the centre through which the spiritual experience appears to possess its correct meaning and proper value. This is the impersonal spiritual consciousness where spirituality essentially is a process of depolarization and is, therefore, an experience quite unique and different from the exalted sense of values and expanded being. This is a kind of supra-personal consciousness which is even beyond the cosmical feelings associated with the perception of the cosmical existence.

The Yoga of Kundalini moves the fibres of our existence so powerfully that our knowledge moves from the personal to the cosmical, and finally to the supra-cosmical. It acquaints us with these stretches of being and invests us with altogether a new form of knowledge whence vanishes the sense of relativity which characterizes our normal consciousness. Kundalini gives us this freedom. And, naturally, spiritual life is associated with life free from humanism or even superhumanism and the values associated with it and is instrumental in investing us with the feeling of identity with cosmic and supra-cosmic reality. In fact at a certain stage in the evolution of spirituality the personal sense is overcome, and the cosmic and supra-cosmic sense opens, wherefrom it is possible to descend to the personal to elevate the collective consciousness to the cosmic and the supra-cosmic. This becomes possible when the sleeping force becomes active and rises upwards. The negative becomes united with the positive and complete equilibrium is reached. The inevitable experience is the widening of consciousness with fresh and quickened vitality. This is only the initial sign of the inception. A kind of fluid force is discharged which spreads out over the whole system. As the force rises up, it invests every centre of existence with light and power. They become active cosmically.

The Music and the Colour of Kundalini

As Kundalini vibrates, wonderful symphonies are experienced. A soft music and engrossing colours fill us. These are immediately experienced with its inception. It vibrates the universal life-force in us, bringing in its train the procession of music and colours. A perfect harmony with delicate ripples in form and sound is our immediate experience. The music and the colours and the fire of Kundalini make us know 'what life is'. The mist of ignorance disappears; a new power of seeing into the heart of things and hearing the delightful flood of music is acquired. The senses become gently modulated, receiving finer vibrations. All seems clothed with colour and drenched with sound. In perfect stillness the voiceless voice is heard. There is a voice of stillness. There is a light in darkness; Kundalini speaks through the voice of stillness, Kundalini emerges through the light of darkness. In the perfect clarity of silence the inaudible voice becomes audible, the invisible colour becomes visible. The one fills us with its delightful cadence, the other with soft impression. In a word, Kundalini introduces us into a new life-force with its new rhythm and joy. It develops intensive powers of seeing and hearing, feeling and intuition. This is the

greatest gift of Kundalini. In fact, it endows us with a new faculty which over-rides the spatial and temporal limitations.

The Tantras lend support to the emergence of a new sense, a wide dimension of consciousness. Nothing new in existence emerges. It is no new evolution. It makes one thing definitely clear that there is no absolute distinction between the natural and the supernatural, for the Tantras do not accept any principle but creative spirit. Nature is the cruder expression of the spirit in its descent and process of condensation. In its ascent, the limitations of nature are removed and the creative spirit is revealed in supernatural expression, where a subtler spiritual order makes its appearance, and psychic currents and events are directly felt and experienced. This is the occult order, and the fascination of Kundalini-yoga lies in directly acquainting us also with it.

Spiritualism and Transcendence

Though the ascent of Kundalini endows us with a fine psychic being with all its powers and possibilities, acquainting us with the direct impress of spirit and starting a unique life in the divine beatitude and harmony, yet the Tantras have assessed the highest value of spirituality in transcendence where the creative dynamism of spirit is replaced by the spirit in its non-creative transcendence. The Tantras characterize this state as beyond the realization of Godhead. Sometimes it is described as passing into the cloud of the unknowing, because it is something which cannot be exactly described in terms of our experience either intellectual or emotional—it defies all description. The Tantras conceive such exaltation in the highest intensity of mystical consciousness. The Tantras give indications of infinite shades of feeling which have spiritual values at different stages of experience.

(To be concluded)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

To our Readers

In the *Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna* we find him in the midst of devotees on one of his birth-day celebrations. . . . The Editor studies the position of *Saints* vis-a-vis *Castes*. . . . To the Hon'ble Mr. Justice N. G. A. Edgley of the Calcutta High Court we are indebted for his learned article on *The Cultural Importance of Taxila in Ancient India*. . . . Dr. S. C. Chatterjee throws a flood of light on *The Problem of Perception*. . . . Swami Pavitrananda concludes his article on *Swami Adbhutananda*. . . . Mr. Kalica Prasad Datta has succeeded in compressing an illuminating account of the *Dress and Ornaments of Ancient Times* within a short space of two pages. . . . Swami Sharvananda concludes his *Mâyâ in Modern Science*. . . . Prof. Mahendra Nath Sircar's *Yoga of Kundalini* is not only scholarly but fascinating and illuminating.

Politicians Talk Politics

Politicians too often declare that the present war is being fought for saving the Christian civilization against un-Christian Italy and Germany. And yet the allies count among them Russia, China, and India! 'The best that can

be said,' writes *The New Review* of December 1942, 'about this kind of declaration is that it is most inadequate and confusing. Religion, culture, civilization are not identical. A religion can be defined as a life-system of the relations between men and the Powers above; and Christianity is first of all a religion. Culture, on the other hand, refers to the refinement of mind, sentiment, taste, and manners; it is taken as the intellectual side of civilization. Civilization by itself suggests what makes out the townsman from the villager; it includes all the externals which differentiate a citizen from a barbarian; under the secularist influence of the last decades, it often covers only customs and conventions emptied of any spiritual contents, and the material aids to human activities: . . .' When such distinctions are kept in mind 'one can hardly speak of any nation as being a Christian nation; the number of nominal Christians is larger than many suppose; for instance, if we trust the London *Tablet*, there would be as many as seventy million people in the U.S.A. that are unbaptized. Then there arises the question as to how much these nations take their inspiration from Christian principles in their public and private life, . . . After having read the stern denunciations of successive Popes against the social and economic conditions obtaining in the West and the East one should rather feel reluctant of speaking of any actual civilization as being Christian, . . . On the other hand, it might be incorrect to suggest that such public speakers just want to soothe their warring hearts with some sort of a religious shampoo; most probably those politicians have a political motive, and want to reach a political audience. . . It would have been simpler for all to assume that politicians talk politics.'

The New Testament and Group Conversion

In an article under the above caption by Dr. D. A. McGavran, B.D., Ph.D., in *The National Christian Council Review* of December 1942 we read: 'We have a series of statements which seem to indicate that discipleship to our Lord is a strictly personal, individual affair, usually taken in the face of the disapproval of the relatives and friends. . . . The basic Christian belief in the worth of the individual also weighs heavily on the side of the statement that real conversion must always be something which the soul determines in the secret session with itself.' The writer might have added that conversion is not only an individual affair but it should also be a result of inner conviction. But he is not concerned much with this phase of the question. His immediate concern is a justification of group conversion. His conclusion is: 'The New Testament allows for group conversion in its teaching, and demonstrates group conversion in its practice.' But what do the Gospels preach? The writer does not touch that question. Then, again, is group conversion justifiable on spiritual, ethical, social, economic, political, and other grounds? Dr. McGavran is swayed mostly by scriptural authority. For to him, it would seem, Christianity is so supremely above other 'pagan' creeds that conversion itself is a blessing to the converted. This consideration wafts his attention from the real defect of mass conversion even when he unwittingly lays his finger on it. Writes he: 'Group action, though having its source in individual action, achieves a certain authority over the individual and results in demands by the group on the individual.' But may not the so-called 'individual action' be a matter of imitation, social allurement,

or even coercion? Further on in the same article we read: 'It is true that group conversion is probably open to a greater degree of danger of uncritical acceptance, because in most groups there are fine, strong characters concerning whose dedication there is no doubt, and there are weak, shallow characters who would not be taken alone, but who are taken in the hope that the strong will carry the weak forward into radiant faith, and in the knowledge that the strong will not come without the weak.' This line of argument, in our opinion, exposes the hollowness of group conversion instead of justifying it. The two terms 'weak' and 'strong' are relative. A man strong in Hinduism may be weak in Christianity; and it has not been proved that either religion is intrinsically better than the other.

Maya in Economics

In this issue is concluded Swami Sharvananda's article on *Mâyâ in Modern Science*. We have come across this Maya in another field, viz, economics, in the pages of *The Philosophical Quarterly* of October 1942. Writes Mr. M. M. Sharif: 'For early economists things are useful or useless and there is no third alternative. If they are desired, they are useful and thus have value; if not desired, they are without value and are in value neutral. Nothing has negative value.' Yet men of common sense will argue that they do certainly want to get rid of harmful things. Jevons, therefore, held that 'as positive value stands related to the utility of commodities, so negative value stands related to the disutility of discommodities. As there are many things which we want more, so there are almost as many things of which we want less.' The writer then examines this theory with reference to commodities like weeds, sewage, cinders, night-soil, etc., and labour, and he finds that from an absolute standpoint these cannot be discommodities. For sewage etc., are often sold by municipalities. As for labour, Mr. Sharif holds with Cannan and others that a man 'wants it in spite of its drawbacks and as, we are told, want is the only criterion of utility, we cannot but conclude that even such (tiresome and hired) work is a positive commodity.' The poor labourer may stand agape at this theory. But Mr. Sharif goes on: 'We conclude that to take labour as such to be unpleasant and relaxation as such as pleasant is a mistake based on incomplete analysis. All exertion to the liking of a man, like all relaxation after exertion, which indeed is only preparation for further exertion, is pleasant and so, in the utilitarian analysis, useful. Labour properly so called is, therefore, a commodity, not a discommodity. . . . In an industrial system, in which, to use Bertrand Russell's words, those who work are made to work for long hours and the rest are left to starve as unemployed, work and effort to get work are both bound to be unpleasant; but there is nothing unpleasant in the essence of work itself. What is the source of pain is indeed the *economic system* which Jevons and Marshall advocate.' But why did people seek leisure even in the pre-industrial age? We have no answer. We are left battling against an abstract idea 'system'. But are there not systems and systems? And did not men complain even about those systems? The answer will, perhaps, be, 'Even under those systems labour was not a discommodity.' What about the opinion of the man in the street? Well, an economist simply ignores him. It is the theory that matters. Theories are thus bound to be faced with a *reductio ad absurdum* when they seek for absolute truths in this relative world.

Towards a New World Order

'The world, as we see it at this juncture,' writes Shri Shankaracharya (Dr. Kurtkoti) in *The Modern Review* of December 1942, 'looks complex and contradictory. . . . But a careful study would reveal that the world suffers from one and only one major ailment and not a myriad diseases. In the *Cliche* of the present day it may be dubbed the Problem of Poverty—stark naked poverty of every kind on every plane of life—scarcity of food, lack of work, want of understanding, absence of faith, starvation of the intellect, need of comradeship, dearth of companion—and what not? And if satisfaction is rare contentment is unknown.' The common-sense view is that this poverty should be counteracted by abundance. But that is no real solution. 'For poverty is only the result of plenty. . . . In terms of relative Time and Space where we have our being, abundance is nothing else than garnering at one and depleting at another.' This is in evidence in every walk of life. The result is a clash of interests for which the West is responsible, for she has made herself the mistress of the earth enslaving the natives and suppressing their cultures. The remedy of the world malady lies in bringing about an equitable state of affairs or Samatva in the language of the Gita, which book being a by-product of war is eminently fitted for this task. 'Samatva is a Sanskrit word not easily translated. It means equality—not envisaged as an ideal but asseverated as an ideology and as the correct ideology of creation as well as of human endeavour. Samatva connotes the subtlest abstract as well as the most concrete quality of equability, equanimity, equilibrium. Samatva is the explanation of creation as it were : it is also the process of evolution, the basis of the universe : the *summum bonum* of Existence.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH CENTENARY VOLUME. Centenary Celebrations Committee, Cawnpore. *To be had of The City Book House, Meston Road, Cawnpore. Pp. xx+188. Price Rs. 2.*

The Maharaja Ranjit Singh Centenary Celebrations Committee, Cawnpore, deserves congratulations from all nationalists of India for reminding them of a neglect of duty by bringing into prominence through the celebrations as well as the publication of this, though very small, volume commemorating the death of one who was great not only as a soldier and a general but a statesman and a diplomat of no mean order, whom the Pathans, the Marhattas, and the British had to count, consult, and recognize.

Thanks to Lokamanya Tilak, the Marhattas have done and are still doing enough for holding before us ever afresh the ideal of Ramdasji and Shivaji. But Rajwara, as torn to pieces as ever, has not done anything worthy of mention to commemorate her numerous heroes and statesmen ; nor has the Punjab come forward, as zealously as the Maharashtra with her great ones, though the political ideas and activities of Man Singh and Jeswant Singh, Durgadas and Zalim, the Tenth Guru and Ranjit Singh are in no way less illuminating and inspiring. True, their particular qualifications as a general, statesman, or administrator are of little use to us and the posterity, the political and economic world has moved so fast and the military art and science, as well as the spirit, have been so thoroughly revolutionized! Still, the spirit that actuated them to the tremendous sacrifice that was theirs, the traits of individual and group characters giving rise off and on to peculiar circumstances they successfully handled, the effects of various political and military measures they adopted on the minds of different peoples, are factors which have abiding values and which no

nationalist can afford to ignore or minimize. Viewed from this angle of vision, the life of Ranjit Singh presents us a unique example.

Shivaji had only to call and the Marhattas rallied round the ochre flag—the nation was born, so to say, prior to the leader. No Rajput hero, however great and crafty, could unite a quarter of Rajputana, could even succeed in curbing the disruptive tendencies in the character of his own followers. Whereas Ranjit welded the warring Sikh *Misles* into a nation, convinced his people of the utility in modern warfare of the infantry and the artillery, thus converting their antipathy into a zeal for enlisting themselves in these branches of arms, made the turbulent Pathans peaceful and law-abiding not by force alone but by good administration in keeping with their tradition and temper and by appointing their talents to high and responsible posts calling forth great faithfulness. All these are achievements indeed!

Did Ranjit think in terms of all India? Documents are not wanting to show that he did. But almost every week events were piling on events which drove his idea of a free and united India to a dark and painful corner of his heart; and he had to make the best use of the worst possible situation. More facts and greater details of Ranjit's policy and achievements must be brought out—their bearing on the future frontier problems is indeed very great. Would, we could celebrate his *birth anniversary* instead of his *death centenary*—the Indo-Aryans commemorate not the death of a guiding spirit but the glad tidings of its advent.

The volume before us is, of course, not quite worthy of the great Sikh whose centenary it seeks to commemorate; and it would have been, no doubt, much more informative and attractive had not the unfortunate communal riots broken out on the eve of the celebration, bringing in their trail the deplorable schism in the centenary committee itself. Still, it has served its purpose, and one should say admirably, having brought out the peculiar greatness of this constructive genius. It contains some well-written articles from the pens of noted Indian scholars and writers. Sir Shafaat's presidential address is by far the most informative and instructive. His remarks on the various topics he has dealt with are the products of a true, unbiased scholarship and deep thinking, quite worthy of the University chair he occupies. The introduction from the facile pen of St. Nihal Singh beautifully reveals the many facets of Ranjit's character and the circumstances, sometimes too prohibitive, that have moulded it and heightened its beauty. Prof. Hari Ram Gupta's article has lent a fitting background to the full play of Ranjit's genius. Anyone, who wants to get a correct understanding of the state of things in the Punjab previous to Ranjit's political career, and thereby indirectly of the immense importance of the province in the politics of the country, cannot do better than read this article. Profs. Gurumukh Singh, Govind Ram, and Tripathi's papers are quite interesting and intriguing. But one fails to understand the propriety and necessity of incorporating here the articles by Dr. L. Ramakrishna, Dr. Dines Chandra Sircar, and Prof. V. R. R. Dikshitar. One glaring defect, which no one can fail to note with regret, is that the book does not contain any picture of our hero, though it does contain a group photo of the President and the Committee. On the whole, however, the volume is worth reading and is sure to enhance one's knowledge of and sympathy and admiration for the people and the province.

SRI AUROBINDO MANDIR ANNUAL, JAYANTI NUMBER. *Published by Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, 15, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 232. Price Rs. 3-8.*

Noble souls with genuine spiritual gifts generally keep away from this world and its evanescent values, but a few of them take pity on self-deluded humanity, and come to live and have their being in the midst of erring mankind in order to win them over to the side of Divinity. Sri Aurobindo belongs to this small class of people working for the salvation of man, and it is but fitting that the Pathamandir at Calcutta should bring out, on the occasion of the seventieth birthday of the great spiritual genius, a volume of studies which will serve to keep his ideals in the focus of the ever-shifting attention of the men of this world. This ideal is 'to divinize the human, immortalize the mortal, spiritualize the material'. Like the Veerashaivas, the Ashramites at Pondichery and other centres dedicated to Sri Aurobindo have as their ideal the spiritualization of the gross body. But, 'is this ideal possible? Is it practicable?' The first and the most important study in the volume is devoted to the task

of dispelling doubt and of establishing the reality and feasibility of the ideal.

A volume like the one under review should necessarily deal with the relation between Sri Aurobindo's ideal and other living philosophies of the day. So, fine chapters covering about half the book are devoted to a comparative study of Sri Aurobindo, and Shankara, the Gita, the Tantras, Bergson and the Vedas. These chapters constitute a valuable study of Sri Aurobindo's major works—*The Life Divine* being given, quite naturally, the place of supreme importance. The chapters on Mâyâvâda and Gita deal, among other topics, with the main points of difference between Sri Aurobindo and Shankara. The phenomenal and the real are, according to the latter, so completely different that the passage from the one to the other must be through sudden and complete transmutation ; Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, believes in a spiral ascent from this world to the realm of the Absolute. This spiral 'maintains a continuity with the initial starting point without losing itself in it'. This is the refrain of all the steps of the argument, and it is maintained with great vigour.

The arguments advanced against the barren type of absolutism upheld by absolute idealists in the East as well as the West have a certain degree of validity. It is true that a thinker like Shankara, Spinoza, or Bradley, who excludes from the Absolute altogether the positive element which the relations of the finite supply, must find himself confronted with an unknowable Absolute—an Absolute which, because it leaves the finite unexplained, is philosophically useless. The Absolute really becomes a phantom. It becomes the empty idea of being, which idea is indistinguishable from the idea of empty being, that is of nothingness. And over against this nonentity of an Absolute stands concrete existence, which though condemned as Maya or appearance, yet demands to have its appearance accounted for. There is no real way of escape unless the conception of the Absolute is either abandoned or completely revised.

This is the line of argument adopted by those who oppose absolute idealism, and on purely metaphysical grounds, they appear to be convincing. But (and it is a very big But) those who argue against Shankara in this way forget that the Bhagavân had an unique experience of the Absolute on a supermundane, and supersensuous plane, and that all his teaching flows out of this spring of experience. Criticism which does not belong to that plane is, perforce, irrelevant.

The excellent study of Bergson's creative evolution in relation to Sri Aurobindo's conception of evolution is doubly welcome at the present moment. 'Creative Evolution' is a sealed gospel to the men of this world. The two concepts 'creation' and 'evolution' are drawn from two different universes of discourse, and the synthesis of the two in one grand theory is difficult to grasp. This theory finds a place for everything, from the lowliest clod of earth to the most perfect Godhead—in its scheme of cosmic evolution ; and above all it accords a dignified status to fine art and the artistic impulse. And this brings us to the question of the Supermind which flowers out in the course of 'Creative Evolution'. This question together with that of the relationship between the Supermind, the Overmind, and mind and matter is clearly discussed in the chapter on *The Supermind in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy*.

There are in the volume other studies relating to 'Divine Evolutionism', 'A New World', etc. A few striking poems and certain anecdotes and personal reminiscences complete a most worthy memento of the seventieth birthday of Sri Aurobindo.

P. S. NAIDU, M.A.

'You get what you seek. He who seeks God gets Him; he who seeks for wealth or power gets that. Verily, I say unto you that he who wants Him finds Him. Go and verify it in your own life; try for three days and thou art sure to succeed.'

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

NEWS AND REPORTS

CYCLONE RELIEF

Ramakrishna Mission's Work

The Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on cyclone relief work since the last week of October, against enormous difficulties of supply and transport. The area taken covers 228 villages, in the Khejuri, Nandigram and Mayna Thanas of the Midnapur District, the Saugor Thana of 24-Parganas, and the Bhograi Thana of the Balasore District. In the week ending on the 10th January, 1943, our 10 centres distributed 321 mds. 20 srs. of rice, 3,201 mds. 25 srs. of paddy, 80 mds. 22 srs. of dal, 3,922 pieces of new cloth, 23 chaddars, numerous used clothes, 762 blankets, 20 shirts and frocks, 5 mats, among 50,112 recipients as well as 28 srs. of powdered milk and 7 srs. of barley for children.

Our total receipts up to the 21st January, 1943, are Rs. 2,71,318/-, and our total expenditure about Rs. 2,10,524/-. We have also received articles worth approximately Rs. 83,000/-. Our weekly expenditure is roughly Rs. 25,000/-.

The unprecedented nature of the disaster and the incalculable damage done to life and property are already well known to the public. In view of the total loss of crops and complete destruction of dwelling houses, the work of gratuitous relief should be continued at least up to the end of February. The limited funds at our disposal, however, will not permit us to continue our work after the first week of February.

The following are the principal donations received from the 16th December 1942 to the 21st January, 1943:

Swami Sambuddhananda, Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Bombay, Rs. 15,000/- ; Delhi Women's League, Delhi, Rs. 10,000/- ; Through Mrs. K. Lahiri, Amarda, Rs. 9,259/8/- ; The Bengal Cyclone Relief Committee, Burnpur, through the Secretary, Governor's Cyclone Relief Fund, Calcutta, Rs. 3,500/- ; The Secretary, Cyclone Relief Committee, Jamshedpur ; A Friend, through Mr. N. K. Biswas, Calcutta ; The Provident Relief Fund, Calcutta:—Rs. 3,000/- each. Through Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Patna, Rs. 2,250/- ; Sm. Parijat Devi, through Mr. Prafulla Chandra Mukherjee, Calcutta, Rs. 2,000/- ; Through the President, Ramakrishna Math, Madras ; His Highness the Maharaja Saheb of Bansda, Bansda State:—Rs. 1,500/- each. The Ananda Bazar Patrika and Hindusthan Standard Bengal Cyclone Relief Fund, Calcutta ; The Secretary, Cyclone Relief Fund, Monghyr ; The Secretary, Midnapore Flood and Cyclone Relief Fund, Kurseong ; The Secretary, Midnapore Cyclone Relief Fund, Dibrugarh ; The Indian Insurance Institute, Calcutta ; A Friend, Calcutta: Rs. 1,000/- each. The Officers and Employees, E.I.Ry., Asansol, Rs. 932/10/- ; Through the Divisional Cashier, E.I.Ry. Pay Office, Lucknow, Rs. 800/- ; Through the Naval Officer-in-charge, Vizagapatam, Rs. 760/- ; The Bilaspur Cyclone Relief Fund, Bilaspur, Rs. 750/- ; The Secretary, Delhi Banga Mahila Samity, Delhi, Rs. 700/- ; Mr. Mancha Ram Motee, Poona, Rs. 650/- ; The News Papers' Cyclone Relief Fund, Calcutta ; S. K. Gupta, Esq., I.C.S., Krishnagore ; The Midnapore Cyclone Relief Fund, Kulti ; The Staff of Howrah Division, E.I.Ry., Howrah ; Midnapore Cyclone Relief Fund Society, Dacca:—Rs. 500/- each. The Serampur Cyclone Relief Fund, Serampur, Rs. 496/- ; The Staff and Students, Indian Girls' High School, Allahabad, Rs. 446/- ; Contractors, Howrah Division, Howrah, Rs. 408/-.

We convey our grateful thanks to the generous donors whose active sympathy has enabled us to carry on our work so far, and earnestly appeal to the benevolent public to make further sacrifices for helping thousands of our helpless sisters and brothers, who are still suffering much for want of food and water, clothes, and shelter, and are falling a prey to epidemic diseases. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address: The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

Swami Madhavananda,
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.
21-1-43.