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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By M.

Inscrutable are the ways of God—Master's humility—Master's visits to different devotees—Opinions are but paths—Various classes of devotees.

Sunday, July 21, 1883. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when Sri Ramakrishna, with Ramlal and one or two other devotees, started from Dakshineswar for Calcutta in a carriage. When the vehicle came outside the gate of the Kâli temple, they met M. coming on foot with four mangoes in his hand. The carriage was stopped and M. saluted the Master. Sri Ramakrishna was going to visit a few devotees in Calcutta.

Master (to M., with a smile) : ‘Come with us. We are going to Adhar's house.’

M. joyfully got into the carriage. Educated in an English school, M. did not believe in the tendencies inherited from previous births. But he had admitted a few days before that it was on account of Adhar's good tendencies of the past that he showed such great devotion to the Master. Later he had thought about this subject and dis-

covered that he was not yet completely convinced about inherited tendencies. He had come to Dakshineswar that day to discuss the matter with Sri Ramakrishna.

M. : ‘I haven't much faith in rebirth and inherited tendencies. Will that in any way injure my devotion to God?’

Master : ‘It is enough to believe that all is possible in God's creation. Never allow the thought to cross your mind that your ideas alone are true, and those of others false. Then God will explain everything.’

‘What can a man understand of God's activities? There are infinite facets in God's creation. Therefore, I do not try to understand it at all. I have heard that everything is possible in God's creation, and I always bear that in mind. Therefore, I do not give a thought to the world, but meditate on God alone. Once Hanumân was asked,

“What lunar day of the month is it?” Hanuman said, “I don’t know anything of the day of the month, the position of stars, and all such things. I think of Râma alone.”

‘Can one ever understand the work of God? He is so near, still it is not possible for us to know Him. Balarâm did not realize Krishna as God-incarnate.’

M. : ‘That is true, sir. You referred to Bhishma also in connection with this.’

Master : ‘Yes, yes! Tell me, what did I say?’

M. : ‘Bhishma was weeping as he lay on his bed of arrows. Thereupon the Pândava brothers said to Krishna, “How amazing it is, friend! Such a wise man as our grandsire weeps at the thought of death!” “Why don’t you ask him the cause of his weeping?” Krishna replied. On being questioned, Bhishma answered, “I am weeping to think that I haven’t been able to understand anything of God’s actions. O Krishna, You are a constant companion of the Pandavas. You are protecting them at every step. Still there is no end to their danger!”’

Master : ‘God has covered all with His Mâyâ. He doesn’t let us know anything. Maya is lust and greed. He who sets aside this Maya to see God, can behold Him. Once, when I was explaining God’s actions to someone, He suddenly revealed to me a tank at Kamarpukur. Thus I saw in a vision a man removing the green scum and drinking the water. The water was clear as crystal. God revealed to me that Sachchidânanda is covered by this moss of Maya. He who sets aside the moss can drink the water.’

‘Let me tell you a very secret experience. Once I had entered the wood near the pine grove, and was sitting there, when I saw something like the hidden door of a chamber. I couldn’t see the inside of the chamber. I tried to bore a hole in the door with a pen-knife, but did not succeed. As I bored, the earth fell back into the hole and

filled it. Then suddenly I made a very big opening.’

Uttering these words, the Master remained silent. After a while he said, ‘These are words of very high realization. I feel as if someone were pressing my mouth. . . . I have seen with my own eyes that God dwells even in the sex organ. I saw Him once when a dog and a bitch were engaged in sexual intercourse.’

‘The universe is conscious on account of the consciousness of God. Sometimes I find that this consciousness writhes about, as it were, even in small fish.’

The carriage came to the crossing of Shovabazar in Calcutta. The Master said, continuing, ‘Sometimes I find that the universe is saturated with the consciousness of God, as the earth is soaked with water in the rainy season.’

‘Well, I see so many visions, but I never feel vain about them.’

M. (with a smile) : ‘That you should speak of vanity, sir!’

Master : ‘Upon my word, I don’t feel vanity in even the slightest degree.’

M. : ‘There once lived a man in Greece, Socrates by name. A voice from heaven said that he was wise among men. Socrates was amazed at this revelation. He meditated on it for a long time in solitude and then realized its significance. Thereupon he said to his friends, “I alone of all people have understood that I do not know anything.” But everyone believes that he is wise. In reality all are ignorant.’

Master : ‘Now and then I think, what is it I know that so many people should come to me? Vaishnavacharan was a great pundit. He used to say to me, “I can read in the scriptures all the things you talk about. But do you know why I come to you? I come to hear all these words from your mouth.”’

M. : ‘Yes, sir. All your words tally with the scriptures. Navadvip Goswami also said that the other day at the festival at Panihati. You told us that day that by repeating the word, “Gita” a number of times, the word is reversed

and becomes "Tâgi", which means renunciation, the essence of the Gita. Navadvip Goswami supported this statement from the grammatical standpoint.'

Master : 'Have you found anyone else resembling me—any pundit or holy man?'

M. : 'God has created you with His own hands, whereas He has made others by machine. All else He has created according to law.'

Master (laughing, to Ramlal and the other devotees) : 'Listen to what he is saying!'

Sri Ramakrishna laughed for some time, and said at last, 'Really and truly I have no pride, no, not even the slightest bit.'

M. : 'Knowledge does us good in one respect at least; it makes us feel that we do not know anything, that we are nothing.'

Master : 'Right you are! I am nothing. I am nobody. Do you believe in English astronomy?'

M. : 'According to the laws of Western astronomy, it is possible to make new discoveries. Noticing the irregular movements of Uranus, the astronomers looked through the telescope and discovered Neptune shining in the sky. They can also foretell the eclipse.'

Master : 'Yes, that's true.'

The carriage went on. They were coming near Adhar's house. Sri Ramakrishna said to *M.*, 'Dwell in the truth and you will certainly realize God.'

M. : 'You said the other day to Navadvip Goswami, "O God, I want Thee. Please do not delude us with Thy world-bewitching Maya. I want to realize Thee."'

Master : 'Yes, one should be able to say that from one's innermost soul.'

Sri Ramakrishna arrived at Adhar's house and took his seat in the parlour. Ramlal, Adhar, *M.*, and the other devotees sat near him. Rakhal was staying with his father in Calcutta.

Master (to Adhar) : 'Haven't you informed Rakhal of my coming?'

Adhar : 'Yes, sir. I have sent him word.'

Seeing that the Master was eager to see Rakhal, Adhar at once sent a man with his carriage to fetch him. Adhar had felt a great yearning to see the Master that day, but he had not definitely known that Sri Ramakrishna would come to his house.

Adhar : 'You haven't been here for a long time. I yearned to see you to-day. I even shed tears for you.'

The Master was pleased and said with a smile, 'You don't say so!'

It was dusk and the lamps were lighted. Sri Ramakrishna saluted the Divine Mother with folded hands, and sat quietly absorbed in meditation. Then he began to chant the names of God in his sweet voice, 'Govinda! Govinda! Sachchidananda! Hari! Hari!' Every word he uttered showered nectar upon the ears of the devotees. Ramlal sang a song praising Kali, the Divine Mother.

He sang again :

I have heard, O Consort of Shiva,
That Thy name is the slayer of terror ;
And so on Thee I cast my burden.

* * *

Adhar served Sri Ramakrishna with fruits and sweets. The Master left for Jadu Mallick's house.

Sri Ramakrishna entered the temple of the Divine Mother in Jadu's house and stood before the image which had been decorated with flowers, garlands, and sandal-paste. The shrine seemed to be filled with a heavenly beauty and splendour. Lights were burning before the pedestal. A priest was seated before the image. The Master asked one of his companions to offer a rupee in the temple, according to the Hindu custom.

With folded hands, Sri Ramakrishna stood for a long while before the blissful image, the devotees standing behind him. Gradually he went into Samâdhi, his body becoming motionless and his eyes still. With a long sigh, he came back to the world of the senses and said, still intoxicated with divine fervour, 'Mother, good-bye.' But he

could not leave the place. He still stood there. Addressing Ramlal, he said, 'Please sing that song; then I shall be all right.'

Ramlal sang :

O Mother, Consort of Shiva, Thou hast
deluded this world!

* * *

The Master was going to the drawing-room with the devotees. Every now and then he said, 'O Mother, please dwell in my heart!' The Master took his seat in the parlour, still in an ecstatic mood, and sang :

O Mother, ever blissful as Thou art,
Do not deprive Thy worthless child of bliss!
My mind knows nothing but Thy lotus feet.

* * *

Coming down to the normal mood a little, the Master said, 'I will take some of the Divine Mother's Prasâd.' Then he ate a little of it.

Jadu Mallick was seated near him with several friends, among whom were a few of his flatterers.

Master (with a smile) : 'Well, why do you keep these buffoons with you?'

Jadu (with a smile) : 'Let them be. Won't you redeem them?'

Master (smiling) : 'The water of the Ganges cannot purify the wine-jar.'

Jadu had promised the Master that he would arrange a recital of the Chandi in his house. Some time had elapsed, but he had not yet kept his promise.

Master : 'Well, what about the recital of the Chandi?'

Jadu : 'I have been busy with many things, and so I couldn't arrange it.'

Master : 'How is that? A man gives his word and doesn't take it back. "The words of a man are like the tusks of the elephant. They come out, but do not go back." A man must be true to his word. What do you say?'

Jadu (with a smile) : 'You are right, sir.'

Master : 'You are a calculating man. You do a thing after much calculation. You are like the brahmin who selects a

cow which eats very little, gives plenty of dung, and yields much milk.' (All laugh).

After a while he said to Jadu, 'I now understand your nature. It is half warm and half cold. You are devoted to God and also to the world.'

The Master, with a few of his devotees, was served by Jadu with sweets and fruits, and then the party left for the home of Khelat Ghosh.

Khelat Ghosh's house was a big mansion; but it looked deserted. As the Master entered the house, he fell into an ecstatic mood. M., Ramlal, and a few other devotees were with him. Their host was an old man, a Vaishnava. He had stamped his body with the name of God, following the Vaishnava custom, and carried in his hand a small bag containing his rosary. He was the brother-in-law of Khelat Ghosh, and used to visit the Master at Dakshineswar. But most of the Vaishnavas held narrow religious views. They criticized the Vedantists and the followers of the Shiva cult. Sri Ramakrishna soon became engaged in conversation.

Master : 'It is not good to cherish the attitude that one's own religion alone is true, whereas that of others is false. God is one only, and not two. Different people call Him by different names, some as Allah, some as God, and others as Krishna, Shiva, and Brahman. It is like the water in a lake. Some drink it from one landing place and call it "Jal", others from another place and call it "Pâni", and still others from a third place and call it "water". The Hindus call it "Jal", the Christians "water", and the Mussulmans "Pani". But it is one and the same thing. Opinions are but paths. Each religion is only a pathway leading to God, like rivers coming from different directions and ultimately becoming one in the same ocean. The truth established in the Vedas, the Purânas, and the Tantras is but one Sachchidananda. In the Vedas It is called Brahman, in the Puranas, Krishna, Rama, and so on, and in the Tantra, Shiva. The same Sachchida-

nanda is described as Brahman, Krishna, and Shiva.'

The devotees were silent.

A *Vaishnava devotee* : 'Sir, why should one think of God at all?'

Master : 'If a man truly knows that, then he is verily liberated though living in the body.'

'All by no means believe in God. They simply talk. The worldly-minded have heard from someone that God exists and that everything happens by His Will, but it is not their inner belief.'

'Do you know what a worldly man's idea of God is like? It is like children's swearing by God when they quarrel among themselves. They have heard the word while listening to the quarrels of their elderly aunts.'

'Is it possible for all to comprehend God? God has created the good and the bad, the devoted and the impious, the faithful and the sceptic. All these exist in His creation. In one place there is a greater manifestation of His power, and in another a lesser. The sun's light reflects better in water than in earth, and still better in a mirror. Again, there are different levels among the devotees of God, superior, middling, and inferior. All this has been described in the Gita.'

Vaishnava : 'True, sir.'

Master : 'The inferior devotee says, "God exists, but He is very far off, up there in heaven." The devotee of the middling type says, "God exists in all beings as life and consciousness." The superior devotee says, "It is God Himself that has become all this; whatever I see is only a form of God. It is He

alone that has become Maya, the universe, and all living beings. Nothing exists but God."'

Vaishnava : 'Does anyone ever realize this state of mind?'

Master : 'One cannot attain this state unless one has seen God. But there are signs of God-vision. A man who has seen God sometimes behaves like a madman; he laughs, weeps, dances, and sings. Sometimes he behaves like a child—a child five years old, guileless, generous, without vanity, unattached to anything, not under the control of any of the Gunas, always blissful. Sometimes he behaves like a ghoul. He doesn't differentiate between pure and impure; he looks alike on the clean and the unclean. And sometimes he is like an inert thing, and stares vacantly. He cannot do any work. He cannot strive for anything.'

Was the Master thus hinting at his own states of mind?

Master (to the *Vaishnava devotee*) : '“Thee and Thine”—this feeling is the outcome of knowledge; and “I and Mine” is ignorance. Knowledge makes one feel; “O God, Thou art the Doer and I am Thy instrument. O God, to Thee belong all—the body, mind, house, family, living beings, and the universe. All these are Thine. Nothing belongs to me.”'

'An ignorant person says, “Oh, God is there—very far off.” The man with knowledge knows that God is right here, very near, in the heart, that He has assumed all forms and dwells in the hearts of all as their Inner Controller.'

'Earnestly pray to Him that you may receive the love of His name. He will Himself fulfil your desire. Cry unto the Lord with a longing and yearning heart, and then you shall see Him. People would shed a jugful of tears for the sake of their wife and children! They would drown themselves in a flood of tears for the sake of money. But who cries for the Lord!'

RESURGENT HINDUISM

II. THE MORAL AND CULTURAL APPROACH

BY THE EDITOR

O friends, march on unitedly and act heroically following in the footsteps of Indra, the indomitable conqueror, who wields the thunder, splits mountains, multiplies cows, and completely crushes the enemies through his valour.—*Rigveda*, X. ciii. 6.

No one really stands in our way. It is we who have made ourselves low, and it is we who are keeping ourselves perpetually on the retreat. It is now time that we turn round and take a firm stand to do or die. It is we who can really save ourselves, for all strength emanates from the Self. The *sine qua non* for any programme of Hindu revival is that we must dehypnotize ourselves and believe that we are not foredoomed, we have a mission to fulfil. We have to stir and look around to understand our present position so that we may devise ways and means for getting out of the rut.

The Hindus possess a rich heritage. The soil is fertile beyond imagination. An India that produced men of action like Chandra Gupta, Ashoka, and Samudra Gupta, politicians and scientists like Brihaspati, Chanakya, Varahamihira, and Sushruta, philosophers like Gautama, Kanâda, and Bâdarâyana, poets like Vâlmiki, Vyâsa, and Kalidasa, and spiritual giants like Sri Krishna, Buddha, and Shankara, has not certainly exhausted herself. A Sri Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda, a J. C. Bose, a Tagore, or a Mahatma Gandhi is only an indication of the vitality that lies still untapped. It is upto us to determine how best we shall utilize the rich heritage that cries aloud for being harnessed to the needs of a modern life.

The soil that has brought forth the mango and the palm, ought not to be degraded to producing only gourds and vetches. And similarly the land of the Vedas and of Jnâna-yoga has no right to sink into the role of mere critic or imitator of European Letters. (*Aggressive Hinduism*, by Sister Nivedita).

The Hindus must have a clear vision of the vigorous and honourable part they have to play in the world drama. Short of this they may as well be wiped off the face of the earth. Mere passivity will not do. We are not for ever to suck in Western ideas like sponges, nor are we to remain self-satisfied by idealizing our actual life, ignoble though that is. Our children must be taught to think in terms of action, assimilation, and creation, and not merely submission, imitation, and acceptance.

Aggression is to be the dominant characteristic of the India that is to-day in school and classroom,—aggression, and the thought and ideals of aggression. Instead of passivity, activity; for the standard of weakness, the standard of strength; in place of a steadily yielding defence, the ringing cheer of the invading host. Merely to change the attitude of the mind, in this way, is already to accomplish a revolution. (*Ibid.*).

II

But this 'aggression', this life of creative vigour and inspiration must not be confined within the schoolroom alone. The cheer, ambition, and confidence of youth must spread their contagion in all fields of life. We must not remain satisfied with things learnt at second hand. We must evolve our own methods of approach and find adequate solutions of our own problems. Let us look more closely at the evils consequent on waiting ever for what others have to say.

We learn our history from Europeans,—it is their interpretation that holds the field. And so we learn and go on repeating parrot-like that the Indian

civilization began really with the advent of the Greeks in the North-West, previous to which there were only vain rites and ceremonies guided by meaningless incantations; that the Aryans were bent on extirpating the non-Aryans, the aftermath of which clash is still in evidence in the conflict of the higher castes and the so-called scheduled castes and of the North and the South; that geographical conditions are such that the Hindus are doomed to perpetual foreign domination, which is in evidence in every page of the Indian history; and that the Hindus are and were caste-ridden and divided into innumerable races, which fact makes of India only a geographical unit and not a political entity.

Western sociology and political philosophy teach that the Hindus have fallen back as a natural consequence of the law of evolution which is working inexorably, lifting up the Western society at every turn; that the Hindus have no political acumen, and have to learn their lessons for hundreds of years at the feet of more advanced nations; that the Hindus are naturally fitted only for agricultural pursuits, industrialism being not in their grain; and that unless they serve their apprenticeship for a pretty long time they will fall an easy prey to other aggressive nations or launch into interminable civil strifes.

Western philosophy tells us that might is right; that the Hindus who plead for forbearance and toleration, only apotheosize their own inherent weakness; that spirituality is only a pastime for the weaklings; that God is a figment of the brain set up by designing people to hoodwink others; that reason is the ultimate test of truth; and that utility is the surest determinant of values.

Western science decries Hindu discoveries as nonsensical, and pooh-poohs the Hindu medicines, astrology, Yoga, and metaphysics. Hindu artistic productions are appraised as curios rather than loved and assimilated as creations of intrinsic worth. Hindu music is condemned as decadent and unimpressive. Hindu architecture is described as

clumsy, grotesque, and uninspiring. In fact everything Hindu is considered fit for the museums of the West rather than accepted as modes of expression of a highly cultured life. The Hindus had their days; but now they have to learn from others—that is the verdict at the bar of Western society.

The Hindus must tear themselves away manfully from the baneful effect of such lying propaganda. But this cannot be done to any advantage so long as we do not provide ourselves with a better and more positive plank. Hindu talent and scholarship must enter all these fields with a determination to master them and give them a more realistic bent in keeping with facts and the high idealism of India. In one word, all fields of learning and activity must be Hinduized. This does not mean that theology must reign supreme once again. It only means that the sciences must be freed from their racial and imperialistic bias and propagandist stunt, and the arts must have a Hindu ethos and be expressive of the Hindu mind.

We are aware that there are movements on foot for Hinduizing our outlooks. For instance, there are artists dealing in Hindu subjects in a Hindu manner. There are dramatists and film producers drawing on Hindu lives and traditions. There are attempts at revival of architecture and resuscitation of ancient dance forms. So far as they go they are quite welcome. But such attempts should be more intensive as well as extensive. Not only should our talented people create new beauties, but there should also be formed an appreciative public opinion. Besides, our artists must take up their works as *Sâdhanâ* with a view not only to raising their own spiritual status, but also to helping their co-religionists on the way. Unlike in the West, in India morality and spirituality must rule over mercenary considerations. Nay, when aesthetics come into conflict with higher values, it is the former that must take a secondary position. Short of this no art

can be called Hindu. The one peculiarity of the Hindu mind is that it lays a greater emphasis on purity of motives than on material achievements. And unless this is kept in tact in our new movements, we cannot be said to be helping the cause of resurgent Hinduism. The new movement must be both intensive and extensive—intensive in its spirit, and extensive in its appeal and effect.

III

But if we have freed ourselves from the Western lures and pronounced ourselves only in favour of the best elements in that civilization, if we have succeeded in separating the precious jewels from the dirt and dust of the Western culture, we have got safe only over one of the hurdles. The other, and most often a dangerous and deceptive one, is still ahead: we mean the unthinking acceptance of the past. 'There are two great obstacles on our path in India,' said Swami Vivekananda, 'the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European civilization.' Of course, if one is offered a choice between the two one would unhesitatingly vote for orthodoxy,

for the old orthodox man may be ignorant, he may be crude, but he is a man, he has a faith, he has strength, he stands on his own feet; while the Europeanized man has no backbone, he is a mass of heterogeneous ideas picked up at random from every source—and these ideas are unassimilated, undigested, unharmonized.

After a contact, however, with European culture for about two hundred years, we are now in a position to attempt striking a lasting balance. We have found that we lack many things which we can profitably learn from the West. There are many drawbacks in our cultural outlooks which are the result of centuries of foreign domination which forced us to think more in terms of defence rather than that of progress, and which cultural trailings, therefore, can now be profitably discarded, or better still, if that is possible, given a new orientation. The problem of resur-

gent Hinduism is, therefore, twofold—to accept some things cautiously from the West, and reject some others manfully from the East.

But if we plead for things Western, it must not be supposed that they are totally foreign to our nature. For, if properly scrutinized, cultural and moral values will be found to be fundamentally the same for all races and times. Maybe, we have neglected some of them or lost sight of the true meaning of certain institutions, whereas the West has developed them or kept them in their proper perspective, and as such they are more effective and energizing in their new attire. This is, however, a side-issue; and we refer to it only with a view to disarming all suspicion about denationalization. That when we eulogize the West, we have in mind only the basic, universal moral principles, will be apparent to the readers as we proceed.

What have we to take from the West—ships, railway, engines, aeroplanes, motor-cars, radio-sets, football, cricket, factory, election campaign, military strategy, imperialism? We are not much concerned about these. The nation will pick and choose as best as it can once it is in full possession of a vigorous moral life. These are only the outer expressions of an inner moral urge that is of a more abiding character and that is creating and will create instruments and institutions for the welfare of the Western world so long as it remains unimpaired. We speak of an effective recognition of this underlying urge. We are in need of a fresh supply of that physical vigour that ancient India kept in the foreground through the worship of Mahāvira and the idealization of heroes like Bhima and Arjuna. We entreat the Hindus for that mental energy that placed ancient India at the vanguard of civilization. We are solicitous for that statesmanship and practicality that made the mighty Indian States what they were. We plead for that obedience to leadership that the Yadus and Pândavas ungrudgingly rendered to Sri Krishna and Yudhish-

thira. We hanker after a fellow-feeling that the Marhattas and the Rajputs felt for one another, and that the Sikhs still feel for their co-religionists. We urge for that faith in ourselves which made the Aryans say,

Mighty am I, superior by name upon the earth; conquering am I, all-conquering, completely conquering every region. (*Atharvaveda*, XII. i. 54).

We crave for that acceptance of business principles in our dealings that made India what she was in her heyday. We seek for Shraddhâ and the giving up of the pernicious habit of ridiculing every new venture. We are eager for those indomitable adventurers and constructive spirits who will dare and die with the Mantra on their lips :

There flows the stream of life over a bed of boulders. O friends, advance heroically and unitedly. There foams the rough stream of life. Friends, stand up and cross it. May we cross all the hurdles and live for a hundred years among our heroes! (*Atharvaveda*, XII. ii. 26-28).

We pine for a love that prompted Shibi to offer himself for saving a mere pigeon. We implore our countrymen for that faith in the Self that made the poor Sannyâsin defy the order of the all-conquering Greek hero. We advocate the cause of that intrepid inquiry that enriched the India of the Mauryas and the Guptas. We pray for that organizing capacity that spread the Hindu message over the then known world. We beseech the Hindus for that self-help that made Rana Pratap stand single-handed against the mightiest emperor. And last, but not least, we beg for a unity of purpose and a co-ordination of efforts which halted the Greek conquerors at the gate of India and resisted for years the unconquerable Mohammedan cohorts. Are these Western virtues? Yes, they are. But were they not the embellishments of the Hindu mind as well?

Faith in God and in one's own self, self-sacrifice, purity, patience, and devotion to truth and service, intense feeling of love and sympathy for the country

and its people, are virtues which are not the monopoly of any nation. Some may have it in abundance just at present, but it is no shame for others to take a leaf out of their book.

IV

This moral reorientation or reinvigoration must proceed hand in hand with a stabilization of our religious background and intensification of our spiritual fervour. We have to unify the sects, establish the ideal of oneness of things, and dispel all weakness, without which Hindu solidarity is a mere chimera. Unless and until the moral, religious, and spiritual atmospheres are cleared of all disrupting and weakening influences, the Hindu cause cannot be adequately advanced.

In short, resurgent Hinduism stands in need of strength in every walk of life; and for this strength we have to ensure for the Hindu society a full view of the light shining behind the veil of rites and customs, ceremonies and dogmas, priest-crafts and incantations; we have boldly to carry our society beyond dogmatic blindness and traditional immobility to the very fountain-head of its inspiration, to the galvanizing messages of the Vedas and the Upanishads. In the words of Swami Vivekananda :

Let me tell you that we want strength, strength, and every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mines of strength. . . . They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the downtrodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects, to stand on their own feet and be free; freedom—physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads. . . . If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon the masses of ignorance, it is the word fearlessness.

We are infinitely indebted to our Purânas which expound and popularize the bold teachings of the Upanishads. But this invaluable service has been greatly neutralized by interpreters and commentators, who virtually claim that the Puranas supplant rather than supplement the Upanishads. Besides, design-

ing people have hermetically sealed the Vedic lore from the masses and interpolated into the Puranas long dissertations on the merit of worshipping the priests whose satisfaction, it is propounded, is a sure passport to heaven. The net result is that the Hindu masses lose all spiritual and moral initiative, depending, as they do, on other's benevolent intervention : and along with that is lost much of the social drive. Furthermore, the Puranas most often miss the synthetic view of the Upanishads. The unitary view is sacrificed at the altar of sectarian aggrandizement. The emphasis on rites and ceremonies miserably fails to strike the most inspiring string of spiritual life. And to crown all these drawbacks Hindu society has now lost touch even with these scriptures of secondary value, and all that it is left with are an ignorant priesthood and a mass of local customs. It is the crying need of the time, therefore, that we go back to the Upanishads, not to copy the society found depicted in their pages, but to fill our pitchers from the fountains which made that society pulsate with life and vigour.

But vigour alone will not do unless it expresses itself through universally acceptable ideas and ideals. Needless to say that the Upanishads will supply us with that common plank as well. For from Colombo to Almora and from Karachi to Kamakhya there is not a single Hindu who does not bow down at the mention of that sacred word Veda. Therein has been envisaged and actually accomplished a synthesis that is still a wonder to the modern world : 'Truth exists as one, but the seers call It by various names.' That one sentence pours oil over all troubled waters and resolves all conflict. Once the Upanishads are given their due importance, we may differ as regards our Ishta, our Chosen Ideal, but we are still of the same Hindu family. We can live as brothers under the same roof, even though our

tastes differ. Unity in variety—that is the watchword of the Upanishads.

Vigour and unity, again, must be backed by a higher aspiration, a struggle for progress, individual and social. That idea, too, is not lacking in the Upanishads. The Aryans were, above everything else, bold adventurers not only as founders of new kingdoms and empires but also as spiritual explorers. Their aspiration rose higher and higher till they aimed at identification with Brahman or Reality Itself.

Nachiketâ, a stripling of indomitable courage, stood in his unsophisticated simplicity before Death to make him divulge all his hidden secrets. Death was awed at such intrepidity and not only parted with all the secrets but also made the lad immortal. That way, too, lies the immortality of the Hindus—to stand before Death with their hearts in the palms of their hands, dressed only in the sincerity and simplicity of their purpose, and demand from Him either to open the portals of his kingdom or divulge the invigorating and immortalizing message of the Spirit. To live a worthy life or die forthwith—that must be the watchword.

We may follow the analogy further. Before Nachiketa dared to go to Death, his father was engaged in a lifeless ceremony that lacked all spiritual reality. But as a result of the boy's self-sacrifice was ushered into the world a knowledge that revived all ceremonies for all ages to come : before that questioning boy stood revealed the mysteries of all the sacrifices. Our customs and formalities, our institutions and organizations, too, can be revitalized by our unquestioning self-sacrifice in the cause of truth and higher synthesis. We do not plead for discarding ceremonies. But these can attain meaning only when a new spirit is wrung out from Death and breathed into them. That can come only from a sincere pursuit of the Upanishads and from nowhere else.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND A RELIGION OF EXPERIENCE*

BY PROF. R. C. ROY, D.Sc.

There is no doubt that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsadeva was one of the most notable figures in the religious development of modern India. His renowned disciple, Swami Vivekananda, and the great band of Sannyâsins who followed him, bear an indisputable testimony to his inherent greatness. Vivekananda says, 'Religion consists in realization—not in reasoning about its doctrines but in experiencing it.' Two ideals that can be found in this religion of realization are, first, renunciation and, second, the unity of all religions. It can be affirmed of Sri Ramakrishna that he was the embodiment of renunciation as well as of religious universalism. In the early days of their acquaintance, Vivekananda asked Sri Ramakrishna, 'Have you seen God?'—and the reply he received was, 'I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense.' This is what the restless spirit of man is constantly seeking.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna demonstrates that the religion of personal experience of God is of greater importance than a religion of mere belief in God. Religious technique alone is like a ship without rudder, a lamp without light, a violin without music, a religion without faith. He has shown that the intuitive and devotional method of attaining realization is essentially identical with the method of reasoning. The aim of both is to reveal life within things, the soul within matter; to mirror life not at its surface but at its deepest roots. The devotee worships God as the spirit of beauty, the philosopher pays homage to Him as the ideal of truth. Starting from different points, they

travel towards the same destination. A truly spiritual man must hear harmony in the babel of noise and conflict of the world, and must see uniformity in manifold and seemingly perplexing diversity. A true Bhakta is convinced that the end of all is peace and atonement, and not discord and despair. A true Jnâni is just as strongly convinced that all discord is harmony not understood. There is no opposition between the two, for beauty is truth and truth is beauty. When a man neglects the true aim of religion, and follows the form rather than the substance, he contents himself with evanescent shadows rather than permanent realities, with chaff instead of wheat. It is only when the experience of God and the moral sense are strengthened, that the ideal of divinity takes full possession of the soul, which then, possessed of purpose and vision, is saturated with disinterested love of the universe.

There are two views of religion: religion as belief in God, and religion as experience of God. The first is organized, established, or public religion; the second is personal or private religion. The difference between the two is of vital importance because of their social consequences. The religion of belief in God posits an objective Deity, whose existence is to be demonstrated by various proofs, and belief in whom is to be inculcated in various ways. This Deity calls upon some persons to be His intermediaries and interpreters to man, thus giving rise to a priestly class whose divine duty it becomes to instruct mankind in the will of this Deity and whose divine privilege it is to intercede for man with this Deity. This view of religion must give rise to a variety of religions, each holding a certain view of

* Speech delivered at the 108th birth-day anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna.

the nature of the Deity, His will, His relation to man, and each proclaiming itself, directly or indirectly, as being the one and only true religion. The social consequence is division among men, enmities, suspicions, propaganda, dogmatism, and intolerance.

Religion as experience of God is, on the other hand, the religion of creative experience of God—that creative spark in man which urges him on to grow in creativeness, in manhood. In this religion there is no room for sin other than ignorance of one's real Self, and no room for virtue other than knowledge of this Self. So God becomes the highest Self of mankind, in whom man is to find his real welfare. According to this view of religion, salvation for man is not attained by accepting certain beliefs and engaging in certain mysterious practices, but it is to be sought for constantly within oneself; for that spark of divinity, as it is being found, transforms its finder into itself. For this religion, God has no being apart from man, and man has no being apart from God. A scientific approach to religion shows that, from the standpoint of human nature, the religion of belief in God is a distortion of religion, because it is a distortion of man, spreading confusion and enmity among men, while the religion of experience of God is true to human nature, for if it were in operation it would spread peace on earth and goodwill among men.

Paramahamsadeva's religion was clearly of the second type. Even a cursory reading of his life reveals the fact that he began his experiences of God from his childhood. His communion with the Infinite increased both in intensity and frequency with advance of age. There is no doubt that his personal experience of God and his religious universalism brought so many educated persons of his day under his influence, because these are the factors which appeal to the reason of man. Sri Ramakrishna's vital doctrines were intuitions, not ratiocinations. He won his way to truth by moral and spiritual

struggle rather than by intellectual research. He was a religious artist, not a religious scientist; but when he gave rich, beautiful, and poetic form to truth which convinces, was it less true because it had been reached by the intuitional mode of the poet or the devotional mood of the anchorite rather than by the intellectual technique of the philosopher? It was the simplicity of his views and the spell of his personality that drew to himself great numbers of those who were looking for a guide to lead them out of their perplexities.

To understand the spiritual discord of the times, it is necessary to have some conception of the atmosphere prevailing in the country in those days. The period of docile submission to the forces that for some time had been invading India was passing. Restlessness and self-questioning were stirring the minds of many, but with as yet little confidence as to the direction in which advance should be made. It was then that Sri Ramakrishna appeared with his creed of Universal Man and the absolute and inalienable sovereignty of the Self. It was, in fact, a combination of the two old Indian doctrines of Jñâna and Bhakti or, in Western terms, it was the combination of an absolute monism which affirms that all is one and a devout approach to a God who could be worshipped.

To a critical reader of the views of Sri Ramakrishna as set down in the writings of his disciples, it is clear that, like the great Shankaracharya, he had two levels of religious living, the austere and passionless Advaita on the one hand and the worship of Kâli, the Mother, on the other. He realized that the dark and the terrible, because they are elements in life, must also be elements in religion. If God is all, then the most revolting things must be included in His being. Thus he found in this grim Mother an object of worship that could satisfy his whole heart.

Sri Ramakrishna also believed in the unity of all religions. This follows naturally from the view that everything

is God. The religions of the world, therefore, are but different phases of one eternal religion. He did not hesitate to contemplate the vision that 'all three are of the same substance—the victim of the sacrifice, the block, and the executioner'. With this way to 'harmony' Vivekananda, who inherited from his Master the belief in religious universalism, was in complete agreement. 'I accept all religions that were in the past,' he writes, 'and worship with them all.'

Man is not satisfied by bread alone; he also seeks something which will minister to his spiritual needs. Life should not be one long fever and yearning for possession and conquest, for sensation and excitement. Life to-day is a hydraulic power without direction, a noise without significance, a speed without accomplishment. It is men like Sri Ramakrishna who show us that life should be alert and not inert, spiritual and not mechanical, mindful of peace and not of power. The supreme goal of life is to link the finite with the Infinite, Self with the not-Self, to emphasize the relation of one to all, and to feel the unbroken continuity of the inner with the outer world. The current of life which runs through our veins night and day flows through the stem and the leaf and the flower, the rivulet and the mighty ocean. The song of the world and the 'music of the spheres' both give expression to the divine harmony. The beauty of Nature and the noblest work of man are but different notes to give completeness to the divine symphony. What is the end of man? It is the realization of the Infinite in him. The

finite represents the road by way of which man is to rise to spiritual power. The struggles of life are but concrete representations of the tension which accompanies the attempt to pass beyond the finite. The human spirit must travel along the path of the finite in order to arrive at and pass through the gates of the Infinite.

Paramahamsadeva showed us that in order to realize Godhood we should direct our minds to the conscious endeavour and planned scheme for understanding our own inner divinity, for recognizing and tracing the factors that tend to keep us back from realizing this divinity, and for correctly determining and successfully adopting the means which will enable us to throw off and free ourselves from the obstacles and encrustments which conceal our own real nature from ourselves and thus prevent us from experiencing God in the actual, practical, everyday life from moment to moment.

Amidst sorrowing disciples, with mind unclouded and concentrated on Him whose reality and beneficence no one had comprehended better than he, the great Ramakrishna found the release, for which he had taught every one to work and pray, on 16 August 1886 at the comparatively young age of fifty. By precept and by personal example he had shown, in his own life of dedicated service to God and human redemption, how His qualities could be wrested from Him. Sri Ramakrishna's abiding significance lies in what he accomplished among his own people, kindling a flame from the dying embers of the past and awaking in them hope for their future.

'If one acquires the conviction that everything is done by God's will, then one becomes only an instrument in the hands of God, one is free even in this life. As dry leaves are blown hither and thither by the wind, without any choice of their own, so those who depend upon God move in harmony with His will, and leave themselves in His hands with perfect non-resistance.'

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S LINK WITH THE PAST*

BY PROF. V. K. R. V. RAO, PH.D. (CANTAB.)

It seems to me that if we consider the teachings of the Paramahansa, we can find three or four distinct features in them, which have been found severally in the teachings of other great religious teachers, which, perhaps, have been expounded individually with greater force, and which possibly commanded much larger and wider audiences; but I do not think that you will find all these teachings combined in the same person and in the same manner as you will find in the Paramahansa.

To begin with, he made it very clear, right from the outset of his own religious experiments and subsequent messages, which he gave to the world, (and I think this is where the Hindu in the Paramahansa comes in, and that is why I think the Ramakrishna Mission will always be a branch of Hinduism and it will be a Hindu mission), because he saw, like all Hindus, whatever part of the country they may belong to, that you cannot have the conception of God in an impersonal, abstract, and theoretical manner. That if you want to know God, or see God, or walk with God, or experience God, you cannot do it merely by thinking of a God, who is nameless, colourless, and smellless, who is everything and who is nothing, and so on. You know the series of phrases which are used in the Upanishads to describe what is indescribable. You cannot approach God by thinking of Him as a philosophic abstraction. You can approach Him only if you think of Him in concrete, material, personal terms. It does not matter in what personal terms God may appear to you. You can think of Him as Mother, in which form God appeared to the Paramahansa. You

may think of Him as any one of the gods, and you know there are a large number of them with whom we who come from different parts of India are familiar. If I may illustrate, to some of us who come from the South, God is known as Venkatachalapati of Tirupati; some others may like to think of Him as Ranganâtha of Sri Rangam; some others may think of Him as Vishwanâtha of Kashi; some others may think of Him as Purandara Vittala of Pandarpur. It does not matter what name you give Him as long as you try to approach the conception of God in a personal manner. And I think it is this approach to the knowledge of God, this approach to religion, which is typically and peculiarly Hindu, which has been misunderstood by all other religions, or which, at any rate, does not form part either of the Christian faith, or of the Muslim faith, or of the Buddhist faith. We think of God as a living person whom we can feel, touch, see, enjoy, rejoice over, love, and lose ourselves in. It is exactly this which seized Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He could get into ecstasies of transport; he could talk, sing, dance with joy at the sensation created in him by the approach, touch, and the feeling of the Mother whom he worshipped. That, I think, is one of the most characteristically Hindu parts of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

At the same time, he did not say his particular God was the only God. He did not say, 'You can think of God only in terms of Mother, or only in terms of a particular deity whom you are accustomed to worship,' but he only said, 'You may approach God through the particular deity with whom you are familiar.' When foreigners come and say, 'You have got so many thousands of gods. How can you reconcile all

* Speech delivered at the 108th birth-day anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, New Delhi.

these thousands of gods with the truth that there is only one God?'—it only shows that foreigners are not able to go beyond the superficial elements of the Hindu custom and belief. Our individual gods are only a means of approach to God who exists not only in the temples but also outside the temples. He exists not only in places where He is worshipped, but also in places where He is despised. God exists everywhere, in air, in water, in the atmosphere, in man, in woman, in children, in animals, in plants, in birds, in everything that is living and that is non-living. This universality of God is another cardinal, fundamental creed of the teachings of Paramahansa. He said, 'you cannot think of God as an impersonal entity or as having a place where you cannot go to see Him without showing or sending in your visiting card. If you want to think of God, if you want to know what is meant by God, you must think of Him in terms of a person who exists here, there, and everywhere.' Logically, the moment you begin to accept the view that you recognize God in every place, in every living animal, in every living thing, it follows that you have got to treat all creation in the same manner.

Just try and draw the practical inferences from this conception of the universality of God. The moment you see that God is present everywhere, in everyone, there can be no such thing as untouchability, there can be no such thing as caste, there can be no such thing as specially privileged priests, there can be no such thing as inequality. There can be nothing excepting the simple acceptance of the fundamental principle that all living things are equal in the sight of God. If all living things are God, then all living things obviously must be equal. That, of course, is the philosophy which has been preached by a number of Hindu philosophers. You find it in the Hindu philosophy, you find it in the Hindu mythology. The famous story of Prahlâda and Narasimha is familiar to most Hindus, where, you know, it was supposed to have been

proved concretely that God could be found even in a pillar.

Everybody knows that the Hindus believe in the universality and the presence of God. As a matter of fact, not only do we believe in the universality of God but according to the teachings of the Gita, we are asked to dedicate ourselves completely to God, in everything that we do, whether it is an act of worship, whether it is an act of *Punya* or prayer, or anything that we do. Even when we pray to God, at the end of the prayer we have got to say, 'All merit that might have been acquired by this prayer is not for me but is given to that God.' That is nearly the same thing which every Hindu is taught from the beginning. Even when he takes food, to him it is religious. There is a religious element in sleeping; there is a religious element in marriage. Everything that a Hindu does has got to be coloured by the fact that everywhere there is God and that whatever he (the Hindu) does has got to be done as a dedication to the service of God.

That is another characteristic teaching of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, which leads to the philosophy of love, love of all creatures. You know, for example, it has been related in the life and teachings of the Paramahansa that latterly he became so sensitive to others' pain, such an embodiment of this principle of the universality of love, that even if somebody living somewhere was punished, he would actually see the lashes on his own body. That was only a symbolic way of pointing out how thoroughly Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had imbibed and typified and concretized the philosophy of the universality of God.

Not only did he combine these two things,—which to someone would seem to be inconsistent,—that one should approach God in a personal manner and that God is here, there, and everywhere, but he also went further and did a thing which no religious teacher has done before. At any rate, it does not seem to

have been done effectively before, looking at the way in which their teachings have been practised by the followers. He said, 'Don't think for one moment that there is one patented way of approaching God; don't think that there is one regular, royal, well-marked, and well-planned route which is the only route by which you can approach God.' Time and again, he made it clear in his own life, in his own religious experiments, and in his teachings and sayings, that all religions were but different methods, different ways of approach to God, by whatever name He might be known; and that is something which appeared very easy for the Hindu to grasp, because, even if you take hold of a Hindu at random, you will find that he does not recognize God by one name. If you go to one part of the country, God will be known by a particular name; if you go to another part, even in a neighbouring district or in the same street, perhaps, even in the same house, you will find God being addressed by different names. Nobody is more familiar than the Hindu is with the multiplicity of names by which you can recognize God and you can approach Him. It is this, I think, which makes tolerance, and the acceptance of many ways of knowing and approaching God, so fundamentally and naturally a part of the teachings of Hindus and of Ramakrishna. He says, 'Whether it is a question of Islam, or Christianity, or any other religion, do not for one moment think that a person is an infidel, irreligious, and condemned to eternal perdition, simply because he does not follow your way of approaching God.' He contended in different ways, by parables and by homilies, that all religions were nothing but different paths, or ways, or means for achieving the same object, and in doing that, of course, he necessarily preached the philosophy of tolerance, and the equality of all religions. He also did something much more important. He, as far as his aims and his teachings were concerned, made it clear that no person could be denied

the right of salvation or could be put into a category of non-savable souls simply because he did not follow the belief that one particular way was the only correct way of knowing and approaching God. That again is associated with his personal approach to God and with the fact that he knew, from his own experience, that if one wants to know God, one has to think of Him in one's own natural way. And if one thinks of Him sufficiently devotedly and with intensity of concentration, sooner or later one begins to feel the identity of oneself with God.

These three tenets have been preached earlier, and I do not say they are new philosophies; but they have not been all preached by the same man, nor have they been brought together to form a consistent whole. And even more important than that—and that is something which particularly Hindu religion requires—is the pointing out that salvation was not a personal affair, that salvation did not mean withdrawing oneself from all worldly responsibilities and obligations. You know that the ideal which had been most popular not only in the East but also in the West, had been the ascetic ideal—the ideal of a person withdrawing himself from all surroundings and social obligations and wishing one's salvation in the complete withdrawal of oneself from life in general. The Paramahansa definitely discouraged his disciples from taking this attitude to life. He himself returned from the Samâdhis into which he frequently fell, because all the time he was conscious of the fact that one cannot bring about a reform in this wise. As you know, he was a person who refused to give his chief disciple permission to get into a state of religious and spiritual ecstasy where he would become lost to human life in general.

I do not think it is really necessary for me to say anything more about the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. But I can think of no more complete a set of philosophy and

religious practice that can be easily understood by the man in the street, particularly if he has a Hindu background, and that can effectively lead

him to a discovery of his spiritual self than is embodied in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

THE ENJOYMENT OF BEAUTY

BY PROF. K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR, M.A., D.LIT.

Excepting when we use the words 'beauty' and 'beautiful' merely thoughtlessly in a mood of mental laziness, we desire to convey through these words the fact that we have gone through a particular type of pleasurable experience—an experience which, when intellectually formulated, turns out to be the perception of a delicate balance between seeming opposites like form and disorder, light and darkness, unity and diversity, harmony and disharmony. Sometimes the perception comes to us in the nature of a piercing gleam; instantaneously we are moved to our depths; we think about the experience only afterwards. At other times, beauty insinuates its meaning into our hearts more slowly, more laboriously; we read sentence by sentence, we assimilate the details one by one, we piece them together in the chambers of our memory—and then only the beauty of it all makes its full assault upon us. But be the process long or short, once beauty has been experienced, we can see how beauty arises from something akin to a stable equilibrium, the varied details and discordant forces delicately balancing about a central point, the many cohering into a significant one.

However, the enjoyment of beauty is neither a simple nor a uniform experience. The personal equation looms large in evaluations of particular exhibits of beauty. It is in our everyday experience that two different persons, A and B, often differ in their assessments of C's beauty. The Negro's meat may be, after all, the Belgaumkar's poison. Even the Taj Mahal has had serious detractors like Mr. Aldous

Huxley. And who does not remember Vararuchi's pointed answer to the Paishâcha: 'The most beautiful woman? Every woman is to her lover the most beautiful of women!' What is the true index of beauty—of C's beauty, for instance? Is there a reality about C's beauty wholly independent of A's and B's and Mr. Aldous Huxley's and a deluded lover's personal and unique predilections? Or is all appreciation of beauty merely relative, personal?

No doubt, the same object is likely to move different men and women to different degrees of appreciation or depreciation. Let us consider this analogy. A stone weighing forty pounds will be deemed a heavy load by a puny weakling of a man: but the same stone will appear very light indeed to a heavy-weight champion. Is the stone, then, heavy or light? We can tell both the weakling and the champion, in Pirandellian language, 'Right you are (if you think so)!' And yet, quite apart from what these two people think about the load, do we not know that the stone is just forty pounds in weight? Or again, is not the identical question-paper described as 'easy' by the scholar and as 'difficult' by an average student,—although the paper is neither 'easy' nor 'difficult', but just covers the prescribed syllabus? Of course, we cannot measure beauty in as precise a manner as we can the masses or weights of various bodies. It by no means follows, however, that all is lawless in the realm of beauty. Notwithstanding deaf and colour-blind people, beauty will continue to be asso-

ciated with good music and paintings. A defective equipment may make one, not only deaf or colour-blind, but indeed blind to beauty itself. If such a person says that he can discover no beauty in *Shakuntalâ* or in Mona Lisa or in the Taj Mahal, we can but politely reply: 'Yes, there may be no beauty in them—for you!'

Nor is this all. When we say that a picture is beautiful, we *see* it; when we say that a song is beautiful, we *hear* it; likewise we smell, we touch, we taste various beautiful things. Is beauty, then, merely objective—is it a something that should only be felt by our senses? At the same time, do we not, just when we see a beautiful thing, experience as well certain emotions—love, jubilation, ecstasy? Do we not think about the rhythms, the curves, the combinations, the colours, the notes? In other words, do not *feeling* and *thinking* enter into our evaluations of beauty?

Consider, again, this analogy. Although various dishes and drinks like Hâlwa, Shirâ, coffee, and tea may be sweet, we know that they all acquire their sweetness from sugar (how sugar itself happens to be sweet we need not trouble to know!); similarly, is it likely that there is such a thing as Ideal Beauty—a reservoir of heavenly beauty—from which the beautiful things in the world get supplies, even if the supplies should be somewhat irrationally rationed? Have we had *this* measure within ourselves to judge particular exhibits by? Is beauty, then, one of the archetypes in heaven, autonomous and eternal like truth and goodness? Is beauty indeed the Universal Voice of Immanuel Kant? We have thus to decide whether the enjoyment of beauty is an objective or subjective or transcendental experience; we have to decide whether, in regard to beauty, we are materialist monists, idealist monists, or transcendental monists, or whether we are dualists of one type or another, or whether we are really trinitarians.

Superficially it would seem that we perceive beauty through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. If that were really all, an ape should be able to appreciate beauty as much as we cultivated human beings can. An interesting experiment has been recorded in a book entitled *The Ape and the Child*, published by Professor and Mrs. Kellog about ten years ago in America. The Kellogs experimentally brought up together a boy named Donald and a little chimpanzee named Gua. One day a film was shot as they were eating some fruits; some days thereafter, the film was shown on a screen in front of Donald and Gua. But whereas Donald glowed with surprise and animation and disinterestedly watched the film projected in front of him, the chimpanzee merely mistook the fruits in the picture for real fruits and started licking the screen in earnest. It is clear from this experiment that sense activity in man is a prelude to feeling, thinking, and contemplation; but in animals sense activity is simply a prelude to eating or to the satisfaction of some biological urge or other. Man too is obliged to satisfy his biological urges, but inner life is not rooted out altogether; on the contrary, civilized man has learned more and more to value the importance of his inner life—the life that is marked by sessions of sweet, silent thought, by the delectable explorations of the human soul. The raw stuff of beauty may often be perceivable through the senses; its meaning, however, can only be deduced by human intelligence.

The appreciation, the enjoyment, of beauty is thus, not merely a sensory experience, but also brings into play our intellectual and emotional faculties. We see and hear, we think and feel, we respond with our whole being. The sounds that constitute a song may make an assault upon our senses; but the same sounds also rouse certain appropriate emotions. Besides, we cannot help thinking about the song in terms of technique as well. Here was a diffi-

cult and complicated task, and the musician has so successfully accomplished it! Thus also with a picture like Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*: the glow of colour at once vanquishes the senses, but the assault on the emotions is no less vital. What is the picture? Isn't it the eternal feminine—in all its mystery and glamour—reduced to art? Pater saw the picture and gave free rein to his imagination; and other beholders do so in greater or lesser measure. The picture seems to be many things—it seems to contain multitudes; it seems different things to different people; it becomes even, in a meditative mood, the starting point for a chain of inferences and similitudes that tends almost to embrace the whole universe. A good song, a good picture, a good poem, these can stand these superstructures of thought and feeling. Beauty, great beauty, thus integrates a thousand similitudes and resolves a thousand dichotomies; it fuses matter and spirit, and it spans earth and heaven; and, as we grasp it all clearly, we seem to touch beauty's core and peep into the land of our heart's desire.

From sensory perception we naturally proceed to emotional and intellectual exhilaration—indeed, we hardly notice the transition, for the experience seems to be one and indivisible in its richness and vitality. In the fullness and at the height of such experience, may we not ask with Browning:

What if Heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?

May not the contemplation of a beautiful object transport the human soul—if only for a while—from its unsavoury prison-house? May not Beauty give its reverent beholder faith and felicity enough to affirm with Sri Aurobindo:

A Bliss surrounds with ecstasy everlasting,
An absolute high-seated immortal rapture
Possesses, sealing love to oneness
In the grasp of the All-beautiful,
All-beloved.

Thus are we trinitarians, after all; and beauty is not only a quality of the subject, but also one of the archetypes in heaven, as autonomous indeed as truth and goodness.

CULTURAL FELLOWSHIP OF BENGAL

BY SISIRKUMAR MITRA

I

A comprehensive account of the cultural achievements of Bengal throughout the ages is yet a desideratum in Indian historical literature. And whatever treatment of the subject is available is confined to a survey mainly of the political affairs of the country, in which adequate attention is scarcely given to every other equally, if not more, important expression of Bengal's creative soul. It is unfortunate that many standard works on Indian history, too, should suffer from this defect and have thereby been responsible for spreading ideas about India which are

anything but wholly true. That the spirit and forms of culture evolved in Bengal from very early times are not always properly appreciated is largely due to the paucity of authentic literature which will be history in the deeper and wider sense of the term, revealing every aspect, no less than the significance, of the movements that took place in the inner and outer life of the people inhabiting that ancient land and mothered by her as 'the flesh of her flesh, the bone of her bone'. There is no doubt that lack of reliable materials has sometimes made the historian's task apparently difficult, but he has very little to say against the charge that he

has been rarely found to tap and explore and make proper and systematic use of the sources that are traceable, though not very easily, in the traditions, customs, religious and spiritual practices, in literature and in other folk-forms of culture, whose discovery would require a great deal of patient and continued investigation.

We shall in the present instance try with the help of the glimpses so far afforded by recent researches into the past of Bengal to have some idea of the cultural fellowship that had started to grow in that country from early days and continued even to the medieval and subsequent times when conditions, notwithstanding the shock of a foreign invasion, did not appear to have been unfavourable to the development of friendly cultural relations among the different communities through contacts mainly in the world of religion in which they seem to be diverging so wide apart to-day. If the view is allowed that this feeling of fraternity in the realm of culture was only a beginning in its past expressions, it must at the same time be admitted that it was a great beginning and not always the result of any conscious effort but a free natural growth fostered by all the wealth of the Bengali heart. When sufficient light will be thrown on the early history of Bengal it will be found that a most self-forgetful people inhabits that country to-day devoid of a complete knowledge of its great past, of the romantic story of how its forbears had been helping through all their religious and social endeavours to lay the foundation of a syncretic culture that might easily seem to be the goal towards which Bengal has been moving almost from the very dawn of her history. Some of the facts and events pointing to it are recounted in the brief objective study that is presented here for the general reader.

It is generally held that her late Hinduization is one of the chief reasons why Bengal was able to acquire traits that distinguish her from the rest of

India giving her the stamp of her individuality not a little of which, however, she also owes to her love of freedom in the body politic which she cherished with the States and kingdoms of old into which the whole Northern India was divided. But what marks her out is her genius to make bold experiments which Bengal carried on for centuries towards the building up of a composite culture. And among these creative efforts more remarkable were her inward adventures which led her to evolve a number of esoteric cults of spiritual humanism which are peculiar to Bengal, proving her passion to discover the secret of life so that it might unfold itself as a field of mystical experiences whose flowering would lift the seeker into higher realizations of which, it was believed, man with all his limitations is capable in his terrestrial existence. It is while engaged in these deeper quests that the seekers of Bengal were vouchsafed the vision of the truth of humanity and of its essential oneness in the world of the Spirit. They, therefore, felt urged from within to give more importance to the collective aspect of the spiritual life so that the progress towards the goal might also grow into a uniform social phenomenon in the community life of the people. The early schools of Upanishadic mysticism, the Tântic Chakras, the Buddhist Sanghas, the Vaishnavite Goshtis, or any of similar other circles or orders in Bengal were not bound by any rigid rules with regard to the admission of new entrants into them. Caste, creed, or birth was not to them the criterion of judging a man's spiritual seeking. They, therefore, each in its day, were open to all, the low as well as the high, the neophyte as well as the advanced, and their teachers were eager to help the true aspirant, the aim always being to spread the message of their respective schools. Thus these centres of inner culture developed into meeting-places of men and women of all denominations, who by their adherence to a common ideal were united into a kind of spiritual brother-

hood, which was almost a marvel in human relations, although its purity, especially where opposite sexes came in contact, could not for obvious reasons be maintained all through. It is true that these cults of Bengal had each its secret conclave, but its object was to preserve the basic truth—the seed Mantra—of its respective discipline, and that as nothing more than a nucleus round which the order would grow drawing its inspiration from it. They were not like the similar institutions of orthodox Hinduism confined within parochial grooves, admission to which was stipulated by birth or pedigree. It is not yet known what exactly was the extent of success that each of these schools achieved, but there is no gainsaying the fact that they effected a wonderful fusion of many castes and communities which *per se* might be taken as an important factor in the social and cultural progress of the people.

An excess of emotion is no doubt another distinctive characteristic of Bengal. It has given her that unbounded ardour and warmth of her heart, that impassioned longing for the comradeship of others not only in her cultural pursuits but also in her search for the ultimate truths of life. It is this emotional bent that has helped Bengal to widen into a catholic outlook and inspired to a great extent her efforts to bring together men of all castes, creeds, and races under the banner of one religion, the religion of love, which is a true Dharma of her soul. And if to it might be traced one of the causes that were responsible for her failure to achieve all the high aims of her religious movements, it has to be acknowledged as having given Bengal that readiness and enthusiasm with which she broke into those movements and thereby promoted fellowship of a unique kind. The *Chhândogya Upanishad* speaks of a Parâvidyâ—higher knowledge—which was the exclusive possession of the Kshatriyas. It was from the Kshatriyas that the brahmins obtained this knowledge. They taught the

supreme necessity of self-culture even to the brahmins. This esoteric philosophy had its origin in Mithila: it spread to Magadha but achieved a fuller development in Anga and Banga (Bengal). Thus the early Kshatriya mystics of Bengal were among the pioneers in giving a new form of inner culture to the teachings of the Upanishads, and their success in that direction has yet to be properly assessed as one of the remarkable contributions of ancient Bengal in the domain of Indian thought. The object of this intrinsic spiritual endeavour was truth that is realized in the soul and not mere knowledge that is acquired by the intellect for its own sake. Yet knowledge there was, but it was cultivated by them so that the mind might grow into an instrument of intuition as the emotions were heightened by them into that intense aspiration which was at the back of all their inward seeking.

It is said that the cult of Bhakti, which thrives well in emotional natures, had been prevalent in India even in pre-historic times. That it was there at the time of the early Aryans is suggested by the Vedic hymns and invocations addressed to various gods. But it took a more definite form in the later Upanishads in which was developed out of the Pranava ('Om') the philosophy of the Pancha-upâsanâ, or fivefold worship, viz, the worship of Shiva, Devi, Sun, Ganesha, and Vishnu. These cults, based on devotion, started to spread all over India and helped in absorbing into the Aryan fold the new communities of men, the 'non-Vedic hordes and races', who were seen in India after the Kurukshetra War. The Vedic orthodoxy, confined within its religious formalism and social exclusiveness, was not only unequal to the task but was positively against the movement initiated by the liberal exponents of these schools with the object, among others, of quickening the process of Aryanization that had begun long ago but could not make much progress owing to the obscurantism of the Vedic priests. The origin of

the Tantras is traced to this fivefold worship. Bengal, emotional by nature, felt an instinctive disposition for Tantric Sâdhanâ. And she gave her whole soul to it so as soon to be able to make important contribution to the formulation of its doctrines, the worship of Shakti in them having appealed to her more than the other forms. Tantricism in Bengal does, therefore, emphasize a whole-hearted consecration to Mahâmâyâ as a fundamental principle of its practice. It is well known that over a long past Bengal has been a recognized seat of Tantric culture, and she is so deeply imbued with its spirit that she may be said to have received from it the very character of her spiritual being. For whatever might be her religious aspirations, in her inmost soul Bengal knows only one truth, the truth of the Supreme Shakti. But the Shakti does not awake in Her human vehicle unless and until its heart, the centre of emotions, opens to Her Light. It is held that the Mahayana Buddhism as prevalent in Bengal was largely derived from the Bengal school of Tantricism in which knowledge as well as devotion blended into a wonderful practice of inner discipline that rose to heights scarcely attained by any spiritual effort of mankind. Similarly, her devotional nature is one of the reasons why Bengal welcomed with all her heart the Mahayana form of Buddhism which upholds Bhakti and allows the adoration of the personality of the Tathagata and various gods and goddesses; but she felt no attraction for the Hinayana, the orthodox path, which forbids these, encouraging only an ethical idealism and ascetic denial of life. In the Mahayana path also devotion and knowledge coalesced to make of it that popular religious cult which flourished so remarkably in the soil of Bengal owing mainly to its being fertilized by an abundance of emotion. Yet there is much truth in the view that an excessive reliance on emotions was to a certain extent responsible for the corruptions that crept into both Tantricism and Buddhism. In their raw and

unregenerate state emotions do not all through stand the seeker in good stead as a pure, powerful, and unfailing urge. And the help that he gets from them and his continuing to depend on it have often been found to involve the risk of his being subjected to conditions in which emotions linger in the form of impulses that demand their satisfaction through ways which are rather of life than of the spirit, detracting thereby from the integrity of the seeking, and exposing the seeker to the attacks of the lower nature. What happens as a result of this is that he finds himself invaded by many downward tendencies including the one to deviate from the path of knowledge which is held to be of equal importance in both these forms of religious culture. In their later developments, comprising various sectarian schools, the high idealism of Tantricism and Buddhism was lost sight of, and a gravitation was perceptible in their followers towards vital and, therefore, unspiritual pulls, which betrayed themselves into the obscurity of dark practices, the perversions of the emotional nature of man. Almost for the same reason Vaishnavism, too, had to remain far from a complete realization of its great ideal of spiritual humanism, which also figured, but more prominently, as the professed aim of the Tantric and Mahayanist cults evolved in Bengal. Once in her history, however, more notably than on any other occasion, Bengal seemed to have realized that emotion to be wholly effective must be steadied and disciplined by knowledge. But the expected result she did not have from the attempt she made by an exclusive exercise of her mind to rationalize the speculations of her peculiar idealism. A system of logic she was no doubt able to build up and a great school of philosophy of all-India fame; but an inordinate emphasis on intellect threatened to dry up her heart and wither the natural springs of her emotional being. Happily, however, this was confined to the upper classes and the intellectuals; and when partly

as a reaction to it the sweeping tides of Vaishnavism began to flood the country from end to end and even beyond its borders, Bengal rediscovered her soul and reopened her heart. It is emotion again that largely was the cause of her being able to respond to the call of Sri Chaitanya and thereby rekindle the flame of her Bhakti.

The variety of her religious predilections may not be understood to mean that Bengal had no fixed ideal to follow, no one end to strive for. Hindu Sadhana is based on the idea that though each man has, according to his nature, his own individual line of spiritual development, yet for the supreme perfection of which he is capable he will have to rise to a higher consciousness in which he will see the essential oneness of all the different ways of approaching the Divine, realizing at the same time that each of them has an aim to fulfil towards the growth of man's whole nature into that perfection.

That is why we find the great Yogis of India trying to attain the consummation of their Sadhana by a systematic pursuit of all these paths in their own life. But as that is not practicable in the short life and unfit receptacle of the ordinary human individual—though in a deeper sense every one of them is believed to have in him the essence of all others—it tended to become a real phenomenon in the long and vigorous life of Bengal's collective being which may be said to have gone through all these ways of discipline in different epochs of its history in order, it would seem, to achieve the fullness of its spiritual experience, and thereby grow in its readiness to blossom forth into a newer perfection, a vaster freedom, and above all, into that sublimer harmony of the future, which is the only solution of all the problems that afflict mankind to-day. Thus while a Vedantic zeal for knowledge enraptured by the passion of her devotion runs through them all like a golden thread, all these paths, each representing an upward impulse of human nature, com-

bined to create the Bengal that in her spiritual life she is to-day. Vedanta opened her spirit to the Supreme Reality. Through Tantricism, a more practical form of Vedanta, she endeavoured to flower in all the members of her being by receiving into them the Light of the Supreme Shakti. Buddhism, a restatement of the Vedanta in more particular terms of the mind, nourished and provided a wider scope for the fruition of her ethical nature. The culture of the Nyâya logic drilled her intellect into a rationalistic exactitude. In Vaishnavism—whose founder is claimed by the Bengal Vaishnavas as the real exponent of the Vedanta—and in the cults derived from it she poured out her whole heart with all the force of her life whose sublimation she attempted in a manner at once striking and singular. These great successes apart, her failures, too, are not without their meaning: since they are not merely warnings against the repetition of the wrong steps but they also add to the colour and richness of her experiences on which the future will be built. Bengal, as we know, did not reject life and its values as illusion. Rather, she tried in the above ways—each in its day a great unifying force—to discover their secret significance, accepting life as a field of spiritual unfoldment with the result that an abundance of creative energy was released, and impelled by it, she took to those corporate activities that throughout her history have given their unflinching impetus to the growth in her collective life of a unique form of cultural fellowship through which Bengal became one, and realized her oneness with others, with all, with the whole of India, and even with countries outside her, opening thereby into the vision of that harmony, her supreme ideal, that came more clearly to the seeing intuition of her religious consciousness and towards which the soul of Bengal through all its expressions seemed to have been moving from ages past, as if willed by the Dispenser of her destiny.

CHANGING BACKGROUND OF SCIENCE

BY PROF. B. V. THOSAR, M.Sc.

Three centuries ago, in 1642, in a small town in Lincolnshire in England was born a genius whose life devoted to researches in physics and mathematics was to have profound influence on man's knowledge of the universe. His name was Isaac Newton, a name that a freshman at college studying science soon encounters and learns to associate with increasingly wider and deeper discoveries as he reads his calculus, mechanics, optics, and other branches of higher physics. To the popular mind Newton is known as the man who discovered the law of gravitation, the law that explains why an apple released from the tree falls to the ground. A large body of astronomical records and observations became intelligible on the basis of this law, which embraced within its scope the entire material universe.

Newton applied his genius to many and diverse fields of physical science and discovered facts and laws of outstanding importance. These discoveries gave great impetus to researches in these specific fields of knowledge. But the real importance of Newton's achievements lay in the profound influence exerted by his scientific method and his view of the universe on the whole history of human thought as it progressed after him for nearly three centuries. His work has been an inspiration to all those who believe in experience and experimentation as the only valid method of extending man's knowledge, and regard all speculation as of secondary importance and, at times, even misleading. His was the 'mechanistic' view of the universe, which regards the working of the universe to be subject to definite laws, which could be completely understood by human intelligence from the results of experience and experiments. The working may be complex and the laws of Nature may become intelligible

only after patient, laborious, and apparently interminable scientific endeavour. But the belief in attaining such a comprehensive knowledge of the universe was there in the background and hence the unbounded optimism in scientific pursuits.

The basis of the Newtonian outlook on science is what is commonly called 'objective'. Philosophical considerations have no place in physical science. The complete scheme of the universe and the natural laws governing it can be known without bothering oneself about epistemology or metaphysics, i.e., the theory of knowledge and the philosophical discussion of the relationship among the knower, the known, and the process of observation. This approach to the study of physical science yielded wonderful results for over two centuries, till the recent advances in modern physics introduced types of considerations in physical theories, which constitute a significant departure from the Newtonian method.

The theory of relativity and the quantum theory form the basis of the new outlook in physics, a basis that has caused, according to Sir Arthur Eddington, a revolution in modern scientific thought. Eddington is an eminent Cambridge astronomer and one of the foremost relativist mathematicians of the world.

The foundation of the theory of relativity, he points out, is that the velocity of ether cannot be observed or put differently; we have no means of ascertaining the 'simultaneity of events' taking place at a distance. This inability to observe the velocity of ether or 'distant simultaneity' does not spring from the physicist's inability to devise suitable instruments or from any lack of ingenuity in experimentation. It has an epistemological origin, that is, this unobservability is inherent in the process

of observation and the sensory and intellectual equipment of man, by means of which he 'observes'. The knower and the known are so related that direct observation in the Newtonian sense of distant simultaneity is not possible. Similarly, the basis of the modern quantum theory that has to be invoked to explain all the phenomena of atomic physics is the concept of the distinction between observables and unobservables introduced by Heisenberg. This inability of the observer to know exactly the position and velocity of a particle in the atomic world has again an epistemological origin—it is connected with the natural limitation of the observational equipment of man. This consideration is not a mere aspect of the quantum theory. It is an integral part of the theory, for, without it, the quantum phenomena could not be united by a coherent system of mechanics, the wave-mechanics, and Planck's constant 'h' would remain a mystery.

This incorporation of the consequence of the inherent limitation of man's observational equipment—sensory and intellectual—into the scheme of the fundamental laws of physics is a development having far-reaching effect on physics and philosophy. The overlapping of the two over a common field of thought will prove to be not just a side-issue of little importance to the physicist but may well be the beginning of a new orientation of physical science.

Eddington regards the introduction of epistemological reasoning into physical theories as a revolutionary change. He takes the rather extreme position that one can have *a priori* knowledge of all the fundamental laws of physics including the basic physical constants from epistemological reasoning alone. The fundamental laws of the physical universe according to him are wholly subjective and can, therefore, be deduced from the study of the process of observation. Our knowledge of the objective universe is the result of 'subjective selection' applied in the process of observing it. This philosophical view-point he names

as 'Selective Subjectivism'. Eddington shows that even the cosmical number, the number of particles in the universe, can be traced to an epistemological origin. It is not a constant belonging wholly to the objective world as a special fact and might well have been different—it results from the nature of the process of observation, which is wholly subjective.

To an Indian who knows something of the ancient Hindu philosophical thought, the present metaphysical status of modern physics has an element of piquant humour. The proud Westerners got hold of the scientific end of the stick and groped laboriously along its length for centuries to find at the other end a venerable old Rishi of Vedic times chuckling under his luxuriant beard, 'Did I not tell you so?' When Swami Vivekananda, speaking before a London audience on *Mâyâ and Illusion* said, 'Maya is a statement of the fact of the universe, of how it is going on', he made exactly and completely the point that Sir Arthur Eddington is at pains to demonstrate to-day before the scientific world. Sir Arthur's thesis that the scheme of modern physical science is (and is bound to remain) inviolably limited by the sensory and intellectual equipment of man and is, therefore, only a glimpse of the Total Reality obtained through his 'subjective' window, is only a scientist's restatement of what the old Indian Vedantist really meant by Maya. After realizing the present metaphysical status of modern physics as brought out by Eddington, one cannot fail to read a much more potent meaning in the words of Swamiji uttered in London nearly fifty years ago. He said :

So we see that our explanation of the universe is not the whole of the solution. Neither does our conception cover the whole of the universe. . . . Such a solution of the universal problem as we can get from the outside, labours under this difficulty that in the first place the universe we see is our own particular universe, our own view of the Reality. That Reality we cannot see through the senses; we cannot comprehend It.

Now, scientific endeavours are undertaken from two motives. One is to understand the forces of Nature and their working with a view to utilizing this knowledge for advancing material prosperity. This gives birth to technology and large-scale production of goods and the enhancement of the material comforts of civilization. The other motive is more general and philosophic—the quest for pure knowledge—knowledge of our universe and Reality. It is this aspect of science that should be of deep interest to Indian philosophers in the light of the metaphysical content of the recent advances in physical science. It is interesting to feel, with Eddington, that there is an inviolate limitation on the sensory and intellectual equipment of man—the limits of Maya—to the knowledge that can be gained through the scientific method alone. This knowledge of Reality that the scientific philosopher gains is essentially incomplete; and if he is still bent on obtaining a true knowledge of the Total Reality, he must of necessity follow a different way—a way that will take him out of his present limitation, his sensory equipment. Such a scientific philosopher, looking out for ways of extending knowledge of Reality beyond its scientific frontiers will no doubt turn to the ancient Hindu sages, who taught and practised the methods, Yogic systems of developing states of consciousness, leading progressively nearer to the complete understanding of the Ultimate Reality. It is an inescapable conclusion reached scientifically that if we can no more gain knowledge through our present sensory and intellectual equipment, we must do something to change or modify the equipment or discard it altogether to replace it by a higher one that will yield ever deeper and truer realization of the Reality. We read again Swamiji's words forcing through a well-reasoned argument, exactly the same conclusion on a Western audience, namely,

We see, we must first find the universe which includes all universes; we must find

something which, by itself, must be the material, running through all these planes of existence, whether we apprehend it through the senses or not. . . . We first, therefore, want to find somewhere a centre from which, as it were, all the other planes of existence start, and standing there we should try to find a solution. That is the proposition. . . . This, the *Katha Upanishad* speaks in very figurative language.

It may, however, be as well to bear in mind that the conclusions of Sir A. Eddington regarding the philosophy of physical science are by no means acceptable to many leading present-day scientists. There are some who do not share his views about the possibility of deriving epistemologically some important physical principles and constants already derived or yet to be derived by the usual scientific method. There are others who do not at all concede that there is anything of radically new philosophic import in the recent advance in physical science to necessitate a fundamental change in our outlook. Thus while Sir James Jeans says that if Eddington's conclusion is right it is of 'tremendous consequence to physics, philosophy, and to humanity', he does not agree with that conclusion. Prof. Whittaker has recently discussed the position of the controversy on Eddingtonian philosophy of science and given his opinion on this as 'not proven'. It is hardly to be expected that an epoch-making thesis in science would be accepted without a thorough discussion and inquiry or without some modification. The purpose of this article has been to bring out the enormous significance of this thesis, if finally accepted, to the Hindu philosophical thought.

The Western philosopher, through the scientific method, has, therefore, probably reached the same conclusion about the scientific knowledge of the universe that our ancient sages announced centuries back. There is, however, one important difference in the two approaches to the same conclusion. The West, during its scientific pursuits, mastered details and developed technology and achieved great successes—aeroplanes,

submarines, radio-sets, and empires; these, the philosophic East, brooding over generalities, has missed.

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ASHOKA PRIYADARSHI

BY SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKERJI, M.A.

Ashoka Maurya, son of Bindusara 'Amitraghata', and grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, followed his father on the throne of Magadha. We know nothing definite about his earlier years. Tradition has it that he was a hard-hearted fiery youth. Ashoka served his apprenticeship in the art of Government as the Governor of Ujjain during his father's reign. Local guides point out Bhairogarh at Ujjain to be the site of Ashoka's fort. It is said that Ashoka killed his brothers for the throne. We cannot, however, vouchsafe the truth of this.

Many scholars are of opinion that Ashoka's coronation took place four years after his accession to the throne. The proof and arguments adduced in support of this view do not seem very sound. Nor can they be dismissed lightly.

Roughly speaking, Ashoka ruled the destinies of India for more than thirty years in the middle of the third century B.C.

The Rock and Pillar Edicts of Ashoka are our principal source of information about him. Fourteen major Rock Edicts and seven major Pillar Edicts have so far been discovered. Besides, six minor Rock Edicts and several minor pillar Edicts have been brought to light.

Rock Edict XIII says that Ashoka conquered Kalinga in the thirteenth year of his accession to the throne. This conquest definitely extended his empire from Dehra-Dun and Nepal

Terrain in the north to the Nizam's dominions and Chitaldurg in the south, to Girnar and Sopra in the west, to Kalinga in the east, and to Hazara and Peshawar districts in the north-west. Ashoka might have now easily carried his victorious arms beyond the borders of India.

But that was not to be: Fate had decreed otherwise. The sword that had carried death and devastation to the peaceful plains of Kalinga was sheathed at the moment of victory—never to be drawn out again. War drums were silenced all on a sudden and the victor spent the rest of his life in propagating the message of love and friendship—the gospel of the all-renouncing prince-prophet of Kapilavastu—and in doing so he immortalized himself. Ashoka gave up the idea of any further conquest, the 'Bherighosha' was stopped for ever in his kingdom; he ceased to take part in hunting and other sports entailing the slaughter of animals and dedicated himself to the service of humanity.

Despite the lapse of more than twenty centuries the whole world cherishes the memory of Ashoka even to-day. It is not his noble lineage nor his extensive empire that has immortalized him. Missionary zeal and service of humanity have kept his memory evergreen.

The Rock and Pillar Edicts of Ashoka are an index to his character. They give us a vivid picture of the man. They are so living, so full of solicitude for the welfare of the world that they

stir the heart to its depths. Ashoka was a dutiful and affectionate king. His affection led him to think of the temporal as well as spiritual well-being of his subjects. He looked upon his subjects as his own children. Taxes realized from them were to him nothing but a loan to be paid off by serving them. Ashoka was wide awake to his duties to all—children, relatives, subjects, and neighbours. He reminded his officers that just as the father entrusts his children to efficient nurses so also had he charged them with the welfare of his subjects. The 'Prativedakas' (reporters) were enjoined to report to him the condition of his subjects at all times and in all places.

The Kalinga war reacted powerfully on Ashoka. The thought of countless men and women rendered destitute by the war filled him with remorse. This remorse again showed him the path of peace. He realized that greed does not lead to happiness, nor violence to peace. Renunciation, self-restraint, and non-violence lead to happiness—spiritual as well as temporal.

Had Ashoka been intent on his own happiness alone he might have it easily by renouncing the world. But he did not for a moment lose sight of the duty of the father to his children, of the king to his subjects and above all of man to man. This is why he launched a missionary propaganda on a scale unknown before or since.

Ashoka's propaganda had far-reaching social and cultural influences. Thus, the meat-eating brahmin and Kshatriya aristocracy of the pre-Ashokan era, addicted to strong drinks, had in the post-Ashokan age begun to condemn both meat and liquor. Culturally, the predominance of the Buddhist thought in the universities of the land must have had a great influence in substituting scientific investigation of cause and effect for a blind acceptance of scriptural authority.

Ashoka's aim like that of President Wilson was to end war for ever. But the idea remains unrealized. Pacts and

propaganda notwithstanding, the world is in flames to-day. Let us hope and believe that the present armageddon is definitely 'the war to end war'.

An endeavour so noble and mighty as that of Ashoka cannot, however, be altogether ineffective. True, it did not put an end to war, but, to quote Havell, It profoundly affected the psychology of Asia and made India what she remains to-day—the most religious country in the world.

Ashoka is without a parallel in history. At a time when his power was at its height, he, instead of attempting to win fresh military laurels, dedicated himself to preaching the message of love and friendship, and, what is more, to the service of humanity.

An analysis of the Ashokan inscriptions shows that he laid special stress on charity, kindness, truthfulness, purity, tenderness, honesty, little expenditure and little accumulation, restraint, sincerity of purpose (Bhâva-shuddhi), gratefulness, strong devotion, and attachment to the law of piety. All these attributes are connected with one another. Thus, self-restraint leads to attachment to the law of piety (i.e., religion) which in its turn culminates in strong devotion, which again goes hand in hand with sincerity of purpose. Purity, tenderness, and truthfulness are attainable through sincerity of purpose alone. When these have been acquired, other virtues such as kindness, charitableness, gratefulness, and honesty will follow as a matter of course. But for self-restraint, man is given to excess in expenditure as well as in accumulation.

Religious practices are as much necessary for the purity of the heart as physical exercise is for the development of the body. These practices, according to Ashoka, are—obedience to elders, the preceptors, and the higher castes; respect for the teacher; proper treatment to brahmins, Buddhist monks, kinsmen, slaves and servants, the poor, friends, acquaintances and companions; charity to brahmins, Buddhist monks, agnates, and elders; restraint on inflict-

ing suffering on lower animals and non-violence and non-injury to all living beings. This is but the positive aspect of religion as conceived by Ashoka. He has repeatedly advised his subjects to abstain from five sins, viz, fierceness, cruelty, anger, pride, and malice. Religion, in his opinion, is abstention from sins. Dread of sins springs from attachment to religion. Respect for the spiritual guide and self-analysis are necessary for this. In the scheme of religion as preached by Ashoka a very high place has been given to toleration. Rock Edict XIII says that nobody should speak ill of others' religions. None realized better than Priyadarshi that all religious doctrines aim at the same thing and he practised what he preached.

It is evident that the religion of Ashoka is not a mere religious system but religion itself. It is above communalism and narrow sectarianism. Independent alike of theology and ritual, it is the religion of man of all ages and all climes. No religious system worth the name is in conflict with that of Ashoka. On the contrary, the principles emphasized by him constitute the bed-rock of all current religious systems.

Ashoka felt the necessity of religious instruction for the awakening of the religious sense of his subjects. With this end in view he ordered the 'Yuktas', the 'Râjjukas', and the 'Prâdeshikas' to make tours and impart religious instructions all over the kingdom every five years. This order was issued in the sixteenth year of his accession. In the same year the first religious Edict was inscribed. The following year saw the appointment of the 'Dharma Mahâmâtras' who devoted themselves to the service of man in the provinces of the empire and among Yonas, the Kambojas, the Gandharas, and Rashtrikas on the frontiers. 'Stryadhyaksha Mahamatras' were charged with the supervision of feminine morals. It was thus that king Priyadarshi gave up conquest by force

of arms and launched upon a career of conquest through religion.

Mere extolling of non-violence does not make man non-violent. It has to be practised. Ashoka, therefore, forbade in the thirtieth year of his reign the slaughter of the parrot, the duck, the bat, the mother of ants, the tortoise, the porcupine, the rhinoceros, and various other birds and beasts. The killing and sale of fish on the full moon day of the month of Paush were stopped. A royal decree made illegal the killing of she-goat, ewe, and sow while carrying and that of animals under six months. Nor could bulls, goats, sheep, and boars be castrated on auspicious days. Earlier, the slaughter of animals for the royal kitchen had been minimized with an assurance that it would be stopped altogether in the future (Rock Edict I).

Public festivals, which, perhaps, fostered immoral practices like the fairs of to-day, were banned by an imperial ukase. But Ashoka was no Puritan, and he knew how important sports, pastime, and amusements are for stimulating the national life. He, therefore, organized some festivals which had the object of making his subjects religious through amusements. Arrangements were made for displaying celestial cars and elephants, resplendant spectacles and divine forms.

Religious dissensions in the Buddhist Church had already raised its head. Ashoka summoned a great Buddhist Council—the third of its kind—to reconcile the different sects of the community. The Council met at Pataliputra. Though next to nothing is known of the proceedings of the Conference we have reasons to believe that they injected a new vitality into Buddhism.

Ashoka's untiring efforts bore ample fruit. The Gospel of the Blessed One spread through the length and breadth of the land and even crossed the frontiers. Ashoka's missionaries visited and made recruits in Syria, Egypt, Macedon, Cyrene, Epirus, Ceylon, and the Chola-pandya country. They made innumer-

able converts among the Yonas, Kambojas, Nabhaka-Navapantis, and Andhra-parindas—peoples living on the outskirts of the Maurya Empire. Buddhism, formerly one of the local religious systems of Eastern India was thus transformed into a world religion, and it is more than justifiable to assume that the Egyptian Buddhist missions of the Ashokan era prepared the soil wherefrom centuries later, sprang Christianity as well as Islam.

The philanthropic activities of Ashoka constitute a unique chapter of history. Trees and groves were planted by the road-side and wells dug every eight miles. Rest-houses were built under royal orders and their numbers were many. Ashoka believed—quite naturally—that the subjects would follow the sovereign's example. His philanthropy, however, was not confined to his own people. We have it on the authority of Rock Edict II that he set up hospitals—both for men and animals—all over his own empire as well as in the Chola, Pandya, and Satyaputra countries, in Tamraparni (Ceylon) and in the kingdoms of Antiochus and his neighbours. Medicinal plants and herbs and fruit trees were planted where these did not formerly grow. It is thus apparent that Ashoka's solicitude for the welfare of his subjects was transformed into that of humanity, nay, of all animals, man and beast alike. History has yet to produce a peer of his in this respect.

Ashoka's religion is nothing if not an echo of the eternal message of India. The hoary seers of India had said long before,

Practise religion. Nothing is better than religion. It is like honey to all beings. Let your mother be a deity unto you. So let your father and preceptor be. Deviate not from truth and religion. Nor stand off from your welfare.

This is exactly what the burden of Ashoka's message is.

Plans, however grandly conceived and ably executed, must have defects, and Ashoka's scheme of bringing happiness to all was no exception. His propaganda encouraged many to imitate the

Blessed One in the minutest details and was directly responsible for the downfall of the Mauryas. As a result of his missionary activities the idea that peace, amity, and non-violence are the noblest virtues, struck deep roots into the popular mind. But such an idea by its very nature gnaws the foundations of empires. The Indian army which under the Nandas struck terror into the hearts of the ever victorious legions of Alexander the Great, the India of Chandragupta which beat Seleucus into submission, the India of Bindusara which was courted by crowned heads of different lands, could not after the demise of Priyadarshi hold its own against the Bactrian chiefs from Central Asia.

Ashoka was a believer in the life hereafter, and in his Edicts there are not a few references to the life after death, welfare in the next world, and heaven. Rock Edict X, for example, says, *inter alia*, that king Priyadarshi does everything for well-being in the life after death. In laying an exaggerated stress upon the reward of virtue in the next world as an incentive Ashoka was—unconsciously perhaps—driving the Buddhist logical position to a compromise with brahminism which finally made an Avatara of Buddha. The necessity of popularizing Buddhism and making it comprehensible to the masses may have required this emphasis on the next world.

Ashoka has been compared among others with the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (fourth century A.C.) and with the Mogul Emperor Akbar (sixteenth century A.C.). A little reflection reveals that such comparisons are untenable, nay odious. Those who compare Ashoka with Constantine the Great say that their endeavours transformed Buddhism and Christianity, respectively, into world religions. But they overlook the fact that while pre-Ashokan Buddhism was but one of the religious systems of Eastern India, Christianity by the time of Constantine's assumption of power

had become a force to reckon with in the Roman Empire. He simply harnessed it to imperial purposes and tried to make it a bond of union to hold his empire together. More than 1,500 years after Ashoka, Akbar founded a new religion—Din-i-Ilahi—which was an eclecticism. Here was thus an attempt, insincere and futile though, at religious synthesis. But it was a diplomatic move pure and simple. What sacrifice for ideals has Akbar to his credit? Akbar as well as Constantine were politicians *par excellence*, and all they cared for was the permanence of their empires. Ashoka, on the contrary, wanted to do away with envy, jealousy, hatred, and slaughter and to establish a kingdom of perpetual peace, a veritable kingdom of God on earth. Service of the whole animal world was his ideal. The seers and sages of India also believed that no good can be done to humanity if the lower animals are left out of consideration. The blessings uttered in the sylvan retreats of India in the days of yore have excluded none—neither the animate nor the inanimate. India's firmament, her atmosphere, once reverberated with

Peace be on the sky,
Peace be on the atmosphere,
Peace be on the earth,
Peace be on water,

Peace be on trees,
Peace be on all gods,
Peace be on Brahman,
Peace be on all!

Ashoka took up this Sâdhanâ of the eternal soul of ageless India. Here lies his speciality, his greatness. H. G. Wells remarks and quite appropriately at that,

Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of History, their Majesties and Graciousnesses and Serenities and Royal Highnesses, the name of Asoka shines and shines almost alone, a star. . . . More living men cherish his memory to-day than have ever heard the names of Constantine and Charlemagne.

The world is aflame to-day. Destruction runs amuck on land, on water, and in the sky. Where is peace, and how far? Will not another Priyadarshi appear on the storm-tossed, death-devastated scene? Let us hope and believe that

the deliverer will be born in this poverty-stricken country and from the East his divine message will go forth to the world at large and fill the heart of man with hope, and we

look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his (Man's) history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises. Another day will come when the unvanquished Man will retrace his path of glory, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage. (Rabindranath Tagore, *Crisis of civilization*, pp. 9-10).

THE DOCTRINE OF SHUNYATA IN MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

BY PROF. SUJITKUMAR MUKHOPADHYAYA

The doctrine of Shunyatâ has been much misunderstood and misrepresented by scholars, specially in Europe. They have termed Shunya as void and the doctrine of Shunyata as Nihilism. No doubt, the literal meaning of Shunya is void, but the literal meaning of a word does not always convey its inner meaning, nay, sometimes it even altogether misrepresents it, as in the present case.

The inner meaning of Shunyata may

be expressed by the word relativity and not by voidity. Scholars, not only in modern times, but even in ancient times, assuming voidity or non-entity to be the inner meaning of Shunyata wrongly accused the Shunya-vâdin.¹

¹ 'The meaning of the word Shunyata does not correspond to the meaning of the word Abhâva (non-entity). Having assumed the sense of the word non-entity (Abhava) to be the same as that of Shunyata, in vain indeed you accuse us.' *Mula-madhyamakâ-kârîkâ* (of Nâgârjuna), 24-7.

The doctrine of Shunyata is the refutation of the relative or the appearance.² The Shunya-vadin has not described the Absolute, because

it cannot be described or made the object of our intellect. It is above the range of all perception, and, therefore, beyond conception, as well as the reach of language. Words are but the expression of our ideas, but that which is beyond all ideas, how can that be expressed by words?³

'How can the ordinary thermometer measure the heat of the sun?' So the Vedic Rishis said:

Words cannot express It, language cannot describe It; eyes are unable to see It, the mind is unable to conceive It. We do not know nor understand how to instruct It or expound It.⁴ *Taittiriyaopaniṣad*, 2-4, 9; *Kena*, 1-3; *Katha*, 6-12.

The only way then, of expressing something about the Absolute, is to say,—'It is not this, not this, not this'. And this is what the expounders of the Shunya-vada have done. They say:

It is neither existent nor non-existent, neither truth nor untruth, neither permanent nor impermanent. It is neither pleasure nor pain, neither pure nor impure. It is neither soul nor non-soul, neither void nor non-void, etc. All these attributes are but for the things of the relative world. They are not applicable to the Absolute.⁵ It is inexpressible, imperceptible, unknowable, inconceivable, undescribed, unrevealed.⁶ *Bodhi*, pp. 366-7; *Shikshā-samuchchaya*, p. 256.

² 'For the cessation of the entire phenomenon, Shunyata is being instructed. So, the aim of Shunyata is the cessation of phenomena. Where is nothingness or non-entity (Nāstitya) in Shunyata? So (it is clear) you do not know or understand Shunyata.' *Ibid.*

³ *Bodhi-charyāvatāra-panjikā*, 9, pp. 363, 366-7.

⁴ Bāskali put questions on Brahman to Bāhva. The latter answered his questions by keeping silent. *Vedānta-darshana (Shankara-bhāshya)*, 3-2-17.

Manjushri inquired about the non-duality, and it was described by different disciples (of Buddha) in different ways. But when Vimāla-kirti was asked about it, he remained silent. Manjushri exclaimed: 'Well done! Vimāla-kirti, it is you who have really realized it.' *Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. IV. 1927; pp. 177-83.

⁵ 'That which is beyond all attributes cannot be made attributable.' *Mahābhārata, Shanti*, 315-1.

⁶ 'The Unseen, Unheard, Unthought, Incomprehended'. *Brihadāranyakopaniṣad*, 3-7-23.

The ancient Rishis of the Upanishads, while attempting to express something about the Absolute, or Nirguna, as they termed It, also followed the same method. For illustration and comparison, we quote below some of the passages of the Upanishads etc., as well as the scriptures of the Shunya-vadin:

It is neither gross nor subtle, neither long nor short, neither red (like fire) nor fluid (like water). It is not shadow, not darkness, not air, not ether, not adhesive, odourless, tasteless. It is without eye, without ear, without speech, without mind, without light, without life. It has no entrance, no measure, neither within nor without. *Brihadāranyakopaniṣad*, 3-8-8.

That which has not a before nor an after, nor a beside nor a without. *Ibid.* 2-5-19.

Unborn, Undecaying, Undying, Immortal, Fearless. *Ibid.* 4-4-25.

That which is without sound, without touch, without form, which does not waste, which is without taste, which is eternal, without smell, without beginning, and without end, beyond Mahat and eternal in its fixity. *Kathopaniṣad*, 3-15.

The All-pervading, the Bright, the Bodiless, the Scatheless (or Invulnerable), the Sinewless, the Pure, Untainted by sin. *Ishopaniṣad*, 8.

The Invisible, the Transcendental (or Imperceptible), Unseizable, Uninferable (incapable of proof), Inconceivable by reasoning, Undefinable, (or Uninstructible), whose only proof is the belief in the soul, (or who is to be realized or attained by one's own self, i.e., without other's help), the Cessation of phenomena, the peaceful and the blissful One. *Māndukyopaniṣad*, 1-7.

That which cannot be touched or grasped, the unseizable One, which is not white, not dark, not red, not yellow, without colour, or form, the sky-like One, pure in Its nature. *Nairātmya-pariprichchā*, pp. 14-20.

That which is neither cold, nor hot, neither hard nor soft, nor long nor short, nor circular nor triangular.

Neither gross nor subtle, nor changing, the Brilliant, Colourless, Formless, Imperceptible, Tranquil. *Ibid*, pp. 14-20.

There is neither destruction nor production, neither annihilation, nor persistence (permanence). *Māndukya-kārikā*, 2-32, 4-57, 59.

If it be so, then where is persistence or annihilation? *Mahābhārata, Shanti*, 219-41.

No destruction, no production, no annihilation, no persistence, no unity, no plurality, no coming in, no going out. *Mula-madhyamaka*, 1-1.

⁷ Cf. *Apara-pratyayam, Mula-madhyamaka*, 18-9. Chandrakirti explains it: 'That which cannot be realized or attained by other's help or instruction, i.e., to be attained by only oneself.'

The Cessation of phenomena, the tranquil and the blissful One. *Mandukyopanishad*, 1-7.

The Cessation of phenomena, the blissful One. *Mula-madhyamaka*, 1-1.

There is no effect for Him or a cause (or, no action or organ of His is found), who is without parts, without action, who is tranquil, blameless and spotless. *Shvetâshvatara*, 6-8, 19.

He is without action, without a cause (or, He has no action or organ). *Bodhi-charyavatara*, 9, p. 367.

It is neither existing, nor non-existing, neither joy nor suffering, neither void, nor non-void, etc. *Ibid.* pp. 366-7.

Brahman is neither joy nor suffering. *Mahabharata, Shanti*, 250-22.

Brahman who is without a beginning, can neither be called existing, nor non-existing. *Vedanta-darshana (Shankara-bhashya)*, 3-2-17.

Without beginning, without end, without between beginning and end. *Mahabharata, Shanti*, 206-13.

Thus, the passages quoted here, from the Shunya-vada, could be easily taken to be some passages from the Upanishads.⁸

Although the Shunya-vadin is always saying, 'not this, not this, not this,' and carefully avoiding answering positively the question—'What is It?' yet, perhaps, unconsciously, in some places, he has spoken out that, It is 'pure', 'tranquil', 'blissful', 'brilliant', etc.

To show that Shunyata is not Nihilism or a negative philosophy, but a positive one, another passage may be quoted here, from the famous commentary of Chandrakirti

The nature of Reality is bliss. It is the cessation of perception, characterized by bliss, free from all sorts of assumptions or

⁸ Regarding most of the translations of the Upanishadic texts, the writer acknowledges his debt to:—

Dr. H. E. Hume, Dr. E. Röer, and Mr. Srish Chandra Vasu.

imaginations, devoid of the knower and the known. Reality is *undecaying, immortal*, devoid of phenomena, the nirvana, which is symbolized by Shunyata. The ignorant people do not see this, because of their ignorance, and adherence to the attributes of existence and non-existence.⁹ *Mula-madhyamaka*, 5-8.

Thus, the doctrine of Shunyata refutes the relative, the phenomenal, and aims at destruction of attachment—not only attachment to the objects of the senses, in general, but also attachment or obstinate adherence to all sorts of views, dogmas, or doctrines, i.e., all 'isms', whether they be theistic, atheistic, positive or negative, or of any other kinds. The Madhyamika doctors remark that 'attachment to the doctrine of Shunyata is most dangerous'¹⁰; for 'the doctrine of Shunyata is like a very strong medicine for purging all internal impurities of a man; but if after driving out these, it itself obstinately remains within, then the case becomes fatal'¹¹.

⁹ 'Brahman who is without a beginning, can be called neither existing nor non-existing.' *Vedanta-darshana (Shankara-bhashya)*, 3-2-17.

'The ignorant people cover Reality (i.e., cannot see It), by attributing to It existence, non-existence, existence and non-existence, and absolute non-existence; from their notion of change, of changelessness, of combination of both these, and of non-entity.' *Mandukya-karika*, 4-83.

Nagarjuna defines Reality:

'The One that cannot be realized or attained by others' help, or instructions (i.e., which is to be realized or attained by only oneself), the tranquil One which is not expressed by words, the One that is beyond all sorts of assumptions and imaginations or ideas, without variableness is Reality.' *Mula-madhyamaka*, 18-9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 13-8; *Chatuh-shataka*, 16, p. 272; *Bodhi*, 9, pp. 359, 414-5.

¹¹ *Vide, Mula-madhyamaka*, 13-8, p. 248; *Chatuh-shataka*, 16, p. 272.

THE ROMANCE OF MOHEN-JO-DARO

BY U. C. BHATTACHARYA, M.A.

Mohen-jo-Daro is situated in middle Sind, about twenty-five miles to the south of the headquarters of Larkana

District and is at a distance of eight and a half miles from Dokri Station on the Ruk-Kotri Branch of the North Western

Railway. There are good reasons to believe that in ancient times the mighty river Indus flowed near about this city. In course of time, however, it has forsaken its old bed and at present it flows at a distance of about a mile from the ruins of the forgotten city. Like many other great rivers of the world, the Indus has contributed in no small measure to the rise and growth of Mohen-jo-Daro, and some scholars even attribute the decay and final desertion of this famous place to the constant erosion caused by this mighty river.

Prior to the year 1922, the existence of this city was not known to anybody. The whole site occupying more than a square mile had nothing but a number of rolling mounds (just like so many hillocks) covered up with brick-bats, potsherds, thorny shrubs, etc., upon the highest of which stood the ruins of a Buddhist Stupa of the Kushan period. As the topmost portions of this Stupa were only visible, Mr. R. D. Banerji started diggings around it with a view to exposing it more completely. In course of these excavations walls after walls were laid bare and people could see before them not only this entire Stupa but also a magnificent monastic establishment meant for the residence of the monks, arranged around an open quadrangle. But that was not all. When the foundations of these Buddhist structures were fully exposed, earlier walls were also laid bare at a much lower level. As those walls were not connected with the upper buildings, diggings had to be continued with a view to examining their nature and extent. The result was that even at this lower stratum beneath the Stupa area were uncovered houses, streets, lanes, wells, bath-rooms, etc. These buildings were quite separate from the Buddhist remains on top; and from a study of the objects recovered from them, it became quite apparent that they pre-dated the Buddhist Stupa by at least twenty-five centuries. In fact these were the remains of a hitherto unknown civilization pertaining to the prehistoric age of

India which can be assigned to a date earlier than the date of *Rigveda*.

Before proceeding any further, I should explain the meaning of the name Mohen-jo-Daro. It is ordinarily put in Urdu as Mohen-ka-Dara. 'Daro' in Sindhi means a high place or a mound and 'jo' is nothing but a genitive suffix. So Mohen-jo-Daro literally signifies a place or mound of 'Mohen'. Now what is the meaning of the term 'Mohen'? Some say that 'Mohen' in Sindhi means dead or departed and hence Mohen-jo-Daro implies nothing but 'a place of the dead'. But others will take it as 'Mohan', a proper name—and Mohen-jo-Daro according to them is 'the place of one named Mohan'. Now, throughout the whole of Sind stories of a bad ruler named Mohan are quite well known. It is said that Mohan did something extremely sinful for which God became angry and sent a cyclone accompanied by a terrible earthquake for the destruction of the city—the abode of this sinning tyrant. In a single night this beautiful and populous city lay buried together with its bad ruler Mohan.

The account given above is nothing but a story pure and simple, and like many other stories should not be accepted as authentic history. Similarly we need not take Mohan as meaning Krishna, as Krishna had probably no association with this place.

Recently a third meaning has also been suggested. The old name of Dokri Taluka in which the ruins of Mohen-jo-Daro are spread, is 'Labdarya', which according to some means near the face of the river. According to them Mohen-jo-Daro also means exactly the same thing being near the Darya or river. But be that as it may, it will be better to take Mohen-jo-Daro as a place of the dead as explained by distinguished scholars including Sir John Marshall.

I have already explained how diggings were commenced at Mohen-jo-Daro in the year 1922. As the excavators' spades were daily bringing out finds of prime importance, the operations had to be continued from year to year. The

credit of conducting the most extensive and successful operations at Mohen-jo-Daro goes to Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, who by means of trial excavations throughout the whole length and breadth of this area put before the scholars the vast possibilities of what an excavator's spade can achieve in this place. The diggings went on and under the expert guidance of Messrs Vats, Hargreaves, Sahani, Mackay, and others more than half of this forgotten place was exposed to view. The remains so far laid bare pertain to as many as four cities superimposed over one another. A good number of mounds as yet remains untouched and when they are also fully excavated many more interesting discoveries are likely to result.

Who were the people who built Mohen-jo-Daro? At the present stage of our knowledge no definite answer can be given to this question, though it is certain that they were a pre-Aryan race who preceded the Aryan civilization as depicted in the *Rigveda*. Now it is generally agreed that the date of the *Rigveda* should be placed in the second millennium before the Christian era; and so the remains at Mohen-jo-Daro, so far discovered, can safely be placed between 2000 and 3000 B.C.

These pre-Aryan people were in some respects better civilized than the Aryans who conquered them. We all know that the Aryans were a nomadic people whereas these pre-Aryans built even cities like Mohen-jo-Daro and Harappa and successfully resisted the Aryan domination for a considerable time, for which they were painted by the Aryans in the darkest possible way. It is a mistake to call these enemies of Aryan culture non-Aryans if by that appellation is really meant a barbarous, brutal, and uncivilized people. The terms of derision (*Dasyus*, *Dâsas*, etc.) as used in the *Rigveda* were nothing more than abuses heaped by the Aryan conquerors upon these subjected people. The discoveries at Mohen-jo-Daro even go so far as to indicate that much of what was

good in this prehistoric civilization, the conquering Aryans had to accept.

The city of these pre-Aryans, as brought to light at Mohen-jo-Daro, was very excellently planned. Streets and roads run from one end to another, and lanes and by-lanes branch off from them dividing the whole city into separate blocks. In each block there are a few separate houses some of which are self-contained. We find inside such a house compound—a well, a bathing place, an open courtyard, and a number of rooms built around it. The houses have entrances from small lanes, and except shops few houses have openings on the main streets. This was probably due to the prevailing insecurity; it being easier to protect a house opening on the small lane than one having a door on the broadest street. The drainage of this ancient city is also interesting. Underneath every street and lane run drains receiving small tributaries from the houses on either side. There are also cesspools on the streets where the drains from houses empty themselves. From these cesspools water was probably thrown out by persons specially employed for that purpose. It is interesting to note that the final opening of one long drain is as big as to allow a man to get inside it for occasional clearance. The existence of so many bath-rooms in each area is also not without significance. It proves that cleanliness was one of the leading characteristics of the people residing at Mohen-jo-Daro. A Great Bath which was probably used for ablution purposes or possibly as a reservoir for sacred fish, crocodiles, etc., also deserves notice here. It measures thirty-nine feet in length and twenty-three feet in width and was very carefully built, bitumen being used to make it damp-proof. Two broad flights of steps at its northern and southern sides are still visible. Sir John Marshall remarks,

We are justified in seeing in the Great Bath and its roomy and serviceable sides and elaborate system of drainage, evidence that the ordinary townspeople enjoyed here a degree of comfort and luxury unexampled in other parts of the civilized world.

Let us now pass on to seals, which are the most important finds from the excavations at Mohen-jo-Daro. The seals, of which about two thousand have been recovered, have lines of pictographic writing, which is engaging the attention of the leading philologists. Just below these pictographs many seals have representation of animals. The animal which is most commonly represented on the seals, is a large one-horned beast, which has been termed unicorn. Other animals upon the seals are short-horned bulls, powerful Brahmani-bulls, rhinoceroses, tigers, buffaloes, elephants, antelopes, etc. Besides, a few seals bear even representations of deities, human beings, composite animals, etc.

So far none has been able to decipher these pictographs on the seals. Professor Langdon compares these pictographs with the Brahmi alphabet and makes out a strong case in favour of Brahmi being derived from this Indus script. In this connection I should better quote a distinguished scholar who remarks,

When their (of pictographs on seals) meaning can be definitely established . . . , a long step will be taken towards clearing up the mysteries of Mohen-jo-Daro.

Almost similar seals with animals and pictographic characters have been found in such distant places as Elam and Sumer. It has, therefore, been suggested that the people of the Indus valley were probably in touch with those places in course of their commercial intercourse.

A good deal of light is thrown on the religious life of the people of Mohen-jo-Daro by what has been found in course

of diggings. They worshipped the Mother-goddess or the Goddess of Earth (Prithvi Mâtâ). She was probably transformed into Prakriti or Shakti in later times. Side by side with the Mother-goddess, Shiva in His form of Pashupati or the Lord of beasts, as represented in a few seals, was also adored. The phallic emblem received much veneration. We can also conclude from other finds bearing on religion that the worship of trees, animals, snakes, etc., was also widely prevalent in the prehistoric period.

A word regarding the games and amusements of this pre-Aryan people may be noted here. They delighted in the use of dice of which both cubical and tabular specimens have been found. Marbles were also played, and another curious game probably consisted in knocking down miniature ninepins by means of a striker. A good number of chess-men were also found together with game-boards in form of bricks incised with lines. Of the amusements mention may be made of cock-fighting, animal-hunting, and fighting of the bulls, specially reserved for that purpose.

Thousands of other objects of exceptional interest including a very fine collection of jewellery, precious stones, shell ornaments, etc., have been recovered from the excavations which give us an idea of the greatness and prosperity of the pre-Aryan people who were in occupation of the Indus valley about 5000 years ago. The excavations at Mohen-jo-Daro have really pushed back the beginning of Indian history from the *Rigvedic* age by at least another one thousand years.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

Dr. R. C. Roy of the Patna University and Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao of the Delhi University have contributed two illuminating articles on the life and teachings

of Sri Ramakrishna. . . . Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *The Enjoyment of Beauty* is a beauty to be enjoyed and thought over. . . . Mr. Sisir Kumar Mitra begins his study of the *Cultural*

Fellowship of Bengal which is thought-provoking and scholarly. . . . Prof. B. V. Thosar argues that *Science is Changing its Background*, and the day may not be far off when it will openly acknowledge the soundness of the Indian metaphysical standpoint. . . . Mr. S. B. Mookerji contributed two articles last year. This time he comes with his *Ashoka Priyadarshi*. . . . Prof. Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya proves with apt quotations that the *Shunyatâ* of the *Mahayanists* was no new thing in India. . . . The pre-historic city of *Mohen-jo-Daro* has not lost its *Romance* as yet, and its story grows newer by every repetition, as Mr. U. C. Bhattacharya's article demonstrates.

THE PSYCHIC AND THE SPIRITUAL

Writes Mr. Aldous Huxley in the *Vedanta and the West*:

At present there is a lamentable tendency to confound the psychic with the spiritual, to regard every supernormal phenomenon, every unusual mental state as coming from God. But there is no reason whatever to suppose that healings, prophecies, and other 'miracles' are necessarily of divine origin. Orthodox Christianity has adopted the absurd position that all supernormal phenomena produced by non-Christians are of diabolic origin, while most of those associated with non-heretical Christians are gifts of God. It would be more reasonable to regard all such 'signs' as due to the conscious or unconscious exploitation of forces within the, to us, strange but still essentially psychic world. . . . As things are, there is a tendency in the West to identify the merely unusual and supernormal with the divine. The nature of spirituality will never be generally understood until this mental confusion has been dispelled.

Indian readers, we suspect, will pity these Westerners and feel a certain amount of elation at their own superior spiritual insight. But are Indians really free from such hankering after miracles and identification of the supernormal with the divine? It is not unusual to find the Western educated gentry, who are proud of their intellectual veracity, running after mystery-mongers and craving for the unusual like children. Nay, this expectancy of the supernormal has become a national sin, so much

so, that people in every walk of life expect divine intervention, without stopping to think if they are really fit for such free gifts.

THE ETHICAL FOUNDATION OF BRAHMINISM

Mr. E. Washburn Hopkins shows in *The Modern Review* that the connection between every form of religion and ethics has always been peculiarly close. But this connection manifests itself through different mental attitudes in different communities. Besides, the moral sense evolves. Thus the gods of Homer appeared immoral to a later age. Christianity inherited the 'laws of God' from the Hebrews and added thereto the personal example of the life of its founder. The Christian did not and could not argue any question of morality touched upon in his divine laws. He simply said, 'It is a command.' With such an ethical theory as his mental background, the Christian missionary, coming to India, naturally concludes that the brahminic religion has no ethical foundation.

The missionary to India is naturally impressed with this when he enters upon his field of work and is apt to say that he brings to India a religion in which for the first time ethics is placed upon a religious basis. He is apt, too, to go further and say that in Hindu religion there is no recognition of any ethical authority, no divine law and hence no religious law of right.

The writer after adducing sufficient proof in support of his thesis that the brahminic religion is highly ethical, concludes:

In every aspect, then, from the earliest period to the latest, India has recognized ethics as inter-woven with or based upon religion, whether that religion be expressed in terms of personal or cosmic powers, gods or abstract ethical necessity. . . . Brahminism has had its inspired teachers and its divine law-givers of morality, but it has also discovered that ethics is based on a foundation more stable even than its gods, on the very constituents of sentient life; and if, as Brahminism also teaches, this life be a form of the highest divinity, then, according to this teaching, ethics is itself an expression of that highest; and man as he is more moral, is the more divine.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE BHAGAVADGITA AND MODERN SCHOLARSHIP. By S. C. Roy, M.A. (LONDON), I.E.S. *Published by Luzac & Co., 46 Great Russell Street, W.C.1, London. Pp. 270. Price paper-bound 7s. 6d., cloth-bound 10s. 6d.*

This is the first of a series of three volumes—the other two to be published later are *The Bhagavadgita and its Background* and *Interpretation of the Gita in the Light of Modern Thought*—in which the author intends, in the light of his own researches, to determine the origin, composition, background, and meaning of the Bhagavadgita. The first volume under review embodies the author's views on the origin and composition of the Gita, which he develops by way of a critical survey of the results of earlier researches on the Gita made by Indologists, both Western and Indian, since the beginning of Indic studies.

Some of the notable conclusions, arrived at by the author, that mark the book out as a distinct work of original research may be noted as follows :

(i) The *Mahābhārata* was not originally what it is now. It has passed through various stages of development and many of its didactic and philosophical episodes are later additions.

(ii) The Bhagavadgita, which is of older origin than the *Mahabharata*, was woven into the epic at a later stage by one of its editors.

(iii) The Gita, both by language and thought, is an Upanishadic treatise and was 'composed by a Rishi of the Upanishadic age', who presented for the first time a poetic synthesis of the thoughts of the Upanishads, which later on was 'consummated in a ratiocinative manner on the philosophical basis by the author of the *Vedānta-sūtras*'. The Gita thus is the 'second of the three *Prasthānas* of the Vedānta school, the Upanishads and the *Brahma-sūtras* being the first and the third respectively'.

(iv) The Gita is not associated with any sectarian creed like Vaishnavism, or sectarian god like Krishna or Vishnu. It is neither a product of the Nārāyaṇīya cult or the Bhāgavata movement. It is a much earlier work than the Bhagavata episode in the *Mokshadharma* section of the *Mahabharata* and differs substantially in its teachings from the latter.

The author had the distinct advantage over his predecessors in the field in forming,

in some respects, a maturer perspective of the genesis and background of the Bhagavadgita as he could evaluate on a rational-comparative basis the results of researches so far made, and come to his own conclusions. His refutation of the Bhagavata origin of the Gita, contrary to the views of most of the Indian scholars, may mark a departure from the old outlook. The non-sectarian character of the Bhagavadgita, which has substantially maintained its original form all through, is borne out by the fact that, like the Upanishads its authority has been accepted without reserve by the monistic and dualistic schools of ancient and medieval India. Another cogent reason which has led the author to reject the Bhagavata origin of the Gita is the total absence in it of the Vyūha doctrine which is one of the fundamental tenets of the Bhagavat religion. The Bhagavatas may have drawn inspiration from the Gita as many other sects have done, but it does not necessarily follow that it owes its origin to their sect.

The book is a scholarly production. The learned author has brought to bear upon his subject the vast scholarship and critical judgement that he is endowed with, and every statement that he has made has been supported by extensive arguments. The book will throw new light on the history of the origin and growth of the great epic and the Bhagavadgita and their mutual relation.

THE YOGA OF THE KATHOPANISHAD. BY SRI KRISHNA PREM. *Published by the Ananda Publishing House, 3A Lowther Road, Allahabad. Pp. 298. Price Rs. 6.*

Sri Krishna Prem, an Englishman by birth and now a Hindu monk, had come to India as a professor of the Lucknow University. During his professional career he was so much charmed with the sublimity of Indian thought that he dedicated his life to the study, practice, and exposition of its universal verities in a new way. Since then he has retired to his hermitage in the Himalayas and lives there the monastic life of meditation and voluntary poverty. *The Yoga of the Bhagavadgita* written by him some years back and published from London, has already made him known as an insightful thinker and modern interpreter of life's mysteries.

The volume under review which was originally written for his best pupil is now

presented to the public in a book form. It contains a beautiful rendering of the whole text of the *Kathopanishad* with a novel explanation of the verses. The explanation is nothing short of a modern commentary, an original interpretation in the light of both Eastern and Western, ancient and modern thought. He has shed a new light on the deeper meanings of the verses of the *Kathopanishad*. The view-point of this modern commentary is that the *Kathopanishad* is not to be taken for mere philosophy but that there is a world of rich and vivid experience lying hidden behind the words of the text. 'Kathopanishad', observes the learned author, 'is a practical treatise to help us to achieve a very real end. It is an exposition of the ancient road that leads from death to immortality, a road which is as open to-day as it was when the text was written, a road which is known to a few all the world over.' With his vast range of study and comprehensive outlook, Sri Krishna Prem shows that this Upanishadic way is the road that is described in the sacred writings of the older races, the Sumerians, Egyptians, and ancient Indians, as well as in the teachings of the great world teachers, Pythagoras, Plotinus, Hermes, Plato, Buddha, and others.

The book is a commendable attempt to harmonize Eastern and Western thought, old and new wisdom, and will greatly enlighten people with ancient as well as modern outlook. The book rightly deserves a perusal by the students of the Upanishads.

S. J.

SECRETS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE. BY DR. MOHAN SINGH, M.A., PH.D., D.LIT. Published by S. H. Singh, 26 McLeod Road, Lahore. Pp. 175. Price Rs. 2.

Dr. Singh is well known as the author of *Goraknath*, *Kabir*, *Mysticism of Time in Rigveda*, and other works. And now comes from his pen a valuable treatise in 407 Sutras on spiritual life. This work is primarily the expression of mystic experience, and as such can be best appreciated by those who have tasted the bliss of such experience. The novice is to approach the study of this work with Samidhas, for there are many things in the super-sensuous realm which ratiocination is incompetent to grasp.

The Life on the Spiritual plane envisaged in this book is described in terms of symbols, pregnant with meaning, but intelligible only to those who move in that plane. A whole range of topics is dealt with in the Sutras of Dr. Singh—God, Self, Love, Prâna, Religion, Mythology, Time, Space, Causation, etc. Number symbolism is constantly breaking in. And in the midst of it all there is a wonderful unity of vision. The

author has amply justified 'the mystics' claim to have known the universe in its wholeness'. The clue to the understanding of the Sutras in their rich variety and significance is to be found in the opening sentence of the author's work on *Time in Rigveda*. Those who approach the study of the *Secrets of Spiritual Life* with this clue in mind will find the Sutras as rich and illuminating as any mystic poetry of the highest order.

P. S. NAIDU, M.A.

WOMEN AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE. BY M. K. GANDHI. Published by the Navajivan Press, Kulupur, Ahmedabad, Pp. 311 +viii. Price Rs. 2.

This volume presents gleanings from Mahatmaji's writings and utterances on women's rights and status, the many social evils from which they are suffering, their contributions to the movements of national freedom and social emancipation, and the ideal they should imbibe. These writings touch on every department of woman's life and can serve as an unerring guide to her in times of stress and strain. In these pages Gandhiji has preached against the wrongs done to them in the name of law, tradition, and even religion. He has spoken very boldly against enforced widowhood, *purdah*, the dedication of girls to temples, prostitution, early marriage, the dowry system, the economic bondage and marital slavery of women. According to him 'man and woman are equal in status'. Here one finds his burning desire to see woman restored to her natural and rightful place in society, as she had it in ancient India.

'Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering'—he declares. He has shown that great strength will come to a country where women have purity, chastity, and equality with men. Gandhiji is not unaware of the many evils of our present women movements. And he warns the leaders of these movements against all such bad elements. He has endeavoured through his writings and utterances to raise the modern girls to a higher moral plane and appealed to woman 'not to sell her birth-right for a mess of pottage'. His words make women conscious of their strength and ability. How one wishes, as Gandhiji once said, that 'women pure, firm, and self-controlled as Sitâ, Damayanti, and Draupadi' rise up again! Let Mahatmaji's call to women for service—better and more devoted—to her own kind, to the country, and to humanity at large reach them.

A CORRECTION

The price of *The Hound of Uladh* reviewed in the June issue is Rs. 5-10 As.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION DISTRESS RELIEF

AN APPEAL

The public is aware of the dire distress in which the poor and the middle class people of Bengal have fallen, owing to the abnormal rise in the cost as also scarcity of essential foodstuffs, specially rice, due to the war conditions prevailing in the country. If one makes a tour round the districts of Bengal, one will be simply moved to tears at the sight of thousands of hungry souls crying for a morsel of food or for a handful of rice.

Innumerable appeals for immediate help to distressed families are pouring in; but as we are engaged in giving relief to the cyclone-stricken people in the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas since October last, and as we are short of funds, we have not been able to do much for their amelioration in spite of our ardent desire. With our limited resources, we have, however, organized some units to supply rice free or at a lower rate, or give monetary help to deserving families through some of our branch centres in mofussil towns and villages. But many more centres are to be opened as the demand is growing by leaps and bounds, and this relief work is to be carried on for some months till the next crop is harvested unless the prices come down considerably in the meanwhile.

We fervently appeal to the generous-hearted persons to rise equal to the occasion, and contribute their mite to alleviate the sufferings of their fellow-beings. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses:—(1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah; (2) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta; (3) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission
2. 6. 43.

CYCLONE RELIEF

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION'S WORK AND APPEAL

The cyclone relief work of the Ramakrishna Mission started in the last week of October, is being continued in 200

villages in the districts of Midnapur and 24-Parganas. For the week ending 9th June our 8 centres distributed 2,362 mds. 4 srs. of rice to 24,684 recipients and also 6 mds. 10 srs. of flattened rice and 1 md. 12 srs. of Gur to patients. About 104 patients were treated with medicine and special diet.

The total receipts up to 15th June are Rs. 3,70,174 and the total disbursements are Rs. 2,50,088 excluding bills for about Rs. 75,000/- due mainly to the Government of Bengal for rice supplied. Besides cash receipts we have received contributions in kind worth about Rs. 1,50,000/-.

We have undertaken the work of hut-construction, and the re-excavation of tanks for the supply of good drinking water which is an urgent necessity. Already 408 huts have been constructed till now and 101 tanks have been cleared. Homeopathic medical relief also is carried on in some of the centres. These types of work have to be carried on extensively and for them large sums of money are required.

Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address:—The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah. Cheques should be made payable to the "Ramakrishna Mission".

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission
20. 6. 43.

SWAMI NITYANANDA

Swami Nityananda, the founder-secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Cawnpore, passed away, at the age of 50, on the 30th May, 1943 at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal where he had been on a short visit.

In his early days he came in touch with the monks of the Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Benares. While at Cawnpore, being inspired by the ideals of Swami Vivekananda he worked for the cause of education of the depressed classes and labourers, and founded several schools for them. He received the blessings of the Holy Mother and was formally initiated into Sannyasa in the year 1937. The Swami was a kind-hearted and indefatigable worker in the cause of alleviation of human misery.