

THE VEDANTA KESARI

"Let the lion of Vedanta roar."

"Let me tell you, strength, strength is what we want
And the first step in getting strength is to uphold
The Upanishads and believe that 'I am the Atman,'"

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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PRAYER.

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सर्वस्मिन् सर्वभूतस्त्वं सर्वः सर्वस्वरूपधृक् ।
सर्वं त्वत्तस्तत्तत्र त्वमेवं सर्वात्मने नमः ॥
सर्वात्मकोऽसि सर्वेशः सर्वभूतस्थितो यतः ।
कथमामि ततः किं ते सर्वं वेत्सि ह्यिस्थितम् ॥
सर्वात्मन् सर्वभूतेशसर्वसत्त्वसमुद्भूव ।
सर्वभूतो भवान् वेत्सि सर्वसत्त्वमनोरथम् ॥

Lord! Thou abidest in all, Thou art all, Thou assumest all forms, all are from Thee. Hence Thou art the Soul of all. Salutations unto Thee.

Thou art the Soul of all, the Lord of all, the One Dweller in all. What shall I speak unto Thee who art seated in my heart; and knowest my innermost thoughts and feelings?

O Thou, the Soul of all beings, the Sovereign Lord of all creation, the Source of all that exists, Thou knowest all creatures as well as their desires.

VISHNU PURANA—1-12.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(At the Naya Bazar Bunglow, Bhadrak)

GOD is the *Kalpataru* (the mythical tree that grants whatever a man desires sitting under it). From Him one gets what one asks for. Having obtained the rare privilege of human birth, man does not care to direct his mind towards the lotus feet of the Lord. Instead, he drowns himself in the deep ocean of *Samsara*, and exclaims, "How happy am I!" God also allows him to remain in that state undisturbed until tossed about on the waves of sorrow and misery, he repents for the past and cries, "Alas! what have I done!" Then He makes him feel his mistake. Man is, as it were, sitting under the shadow of the *Kalpataru*. If he wants to be a God, so can he be; and if he wishes to be like a brute, that also he may become.

The Lord has given man both *Vidya* and *Avidya*. *Vidya* means discrimination and renunciation. With its help man may attain the grace of the Lord; while *Avidya* which implies lust, anger, greed, infatuation, egoism and envy, degrades man to the level of the brute. The culture of *Vidya* destroys *Avidya* and makes man fit for the Supreme Bliss. But the growth of *Avidya* strengthens the idea of "I" and "mine," and binds him more and more to the world; he is taken further and further away from God, and has to suffer many sorrows and difficulties. Man has been endowed not only with *Vidya* and *Avidya* but also the power to discriminate between the two. And on the nature of his choice depends the success or failure of his life.

It is a great mistake to hold God responsible for your sufferings. You chose a path according to your sweet will and pleasure, and now enjoy its consequences.

How can you blame God for this? For a moment's pleasure you forgot everything else: you did not pause to consider what was right or wrong. If you put your hand into the fire it will naturally get burnt. Is it the fault of the fire? No. You alone are responsible for it. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "A lamp is burning. Some may read Bhagavatam in its light while others may forge a document or do some other mischief. The lamp is not to blame for it." The Lord has placed before man the two paths—good and evil. Now choose the one you please.

As you think, so you become. By the help of discrimination and renunciation, realise God and become heir to the Infinite Bliss. But if you run after worldly things, you may no doubt enjoy sensuous pleasures for some time; but be sure your future will be dark and gloomy and you will have to pass through endless sufferings. The world is so constituted that, if you want pleasure, you must undergo pain as well. Whether you like it or not you cannot have one without the other.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "When the Malaya* breeze blows, all the timber trees are converted into sandal trees, while the bamboo, the plantain and other trees remain what they are. Similarly there are two classes of men in this world. Persons belonging to one of these are easily influenced by spiritual teachings which awaken in them *Viveka* and *Vairagya*. They regard the world as worthless and yearn for the grace of the Lord. They are determined to realise Him and solve the mystery of existence even at the risk of their life. With such a firm resolution they begin their *Sadhana*

* Name of a mountain range in the South of India abounding in sandal trees: Poets usually represent the breeze from the Malaya mountains as wafting the odour of sandal trees and other plants growing thereon.—V. S. APTE.

and succeed in the end; while the people of the other class can never be awakened either by the sorrows and miseries of life or by any lofty spiritual ideas. They think they are going to live eternally and fondly imagine that without them the world cannot go on. "What I have got in hand, I must enjoy to the full; otherwise I shall be a fool"—thinking thus they drag themselves into the depths of ignorance and suffering

What is it that you want—the sweet perfume of sandal or the stinking smell of filth? Do you want peace or unrest? Decide exactly what you want and follow the path for its attainment. Time is flowing like a swift stream. It will be of no avail to cry over the past, when it is too late. Make the best use of the present, without wasting a single moment. Train your mind in such a way that you may constantly think of God and nothing else. Your days are numbered; they are fast running out. So do not spend your time in vain.

Pray to the Lord with all your heart and soul—"Lord! give me wisdom and make me Thine own." Give up all ideas of "I" and "mine". You have suffered enough on that account. Replace "I" and "mine" by "Thou" and "Thine". Is there anything that you can call "your own" the moment you die? Nothing you cherish as yours will accompany you. Those whom you hold very dear will pass away when their time comes without caring for you at all. Leaving everything behind, one will have to go to an unknown place. The more you think of "I" and "mine", the more you fetter yourself. What is there in this *Samsara* for which people spend their whole life-time? Can this worldly life help you to cross the ocean of birth and death? Will it save you from the troubles that may attend you in after-life? What greater misfortune can befall you than leaving unfulfilled the purpose for which you have

taken this birth! Make a strenuous effort and pray to Him with earnest devotion that you may reach the goal.

Havn't you heard what Sri Ramakrishna used to do at Dakshinেশwar? How bitterly he used to cry for a sight of the Divine Mother, saying, 'Mother, one more day is gone and Thou hast not yet blessed me with Thy Vision?' Call on Him with an intense yearning. What is this world but an abode of misery? You have spent most of your days here in sorrow and trouble; and do you wish to do the same hereafter as well?

You have come under the shelter of Sri Ramakrishna; know that you have also been blessed by him. Make a good use of the grace you have received. It will be really very unfortunate if you fail to do so and to solve the riddle of life and death, and obtain Eternal Bliss. You are the men of this age,* and have caught its spirit. Don't miss to take full advantage of it. No one in any age has shown the path in such a simple and easy manner as the Master has done now. If you miss this opportunity you will have to suffer long.

Spread the sails of faith and devotion, and with the aid of the spiritual breeze that is blowing push on to your goal. Do it, and your boat shall be swiftly carried to its destination. He is waiting for you. Arise! Awake! Infinite capacity is within you. Have firm faith in yourself and say, "I have heard His name, I have taken shelter under His feet; fear and weakness can have no place in me; by His grace I will attain to Him—in this very life." Don't look back. Go ahead. Be blessed with His vision; and thus fulfil the mission of your life and partake of the Infinite Bliss.

* The reference is to the advent of Sri Ramakrishna.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Speciality of India's History

The history of India differs in certain respects from that of all other countries of the world. It is not a sad record of bloody conquest and reckless exploitation of the weaker races by the strong. It is, on the other hand, a wonderful chronicle of the evolution and progress of Hindu civilisation not only throughout the length and breadth of India but also in foreign countries that collectively came to be very rightly called "Greater India." Even when the ancient Hindu monarch desired, in the words of Aitareya Brahmana, "to attain to superiority, pre-eminence and overlordship among all kings, to acquire an all-embracing authority by attaining all forms and degrees of sovereignty, to achieve the conquest of both space and time and be the sole monarch of the earth up to the seas," he had before him not only the ideal of a political, but also a cultural conquest—the conquest of Dharma—an ideal later on proclaimed all over the land by King Asoka "the beloved of the Gods." Centuries before the advent of Bhagawan Buddha, this conquest by religion and spirituality was begun in right earnest in unknown lands and among aboriginal peoples. This peaceful penetration of Aryan ideas and ideals was proceeding slowly and steadily, bringing into existence a new synthetic civilisation, predominantly Aryan in tone, but formed of the union of both the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures. The great task before Lord Buddha and his followers was to hasten this process of Aryanisation so wisely inaugurated by the early fathers of the Hindu race.

Influence of Buddhism

The story of the rise and spread of Buddhism forms a most glorious chapter to the interesting history of the

cultural unity of Bharatavarsha. The advent of Buddha marked a new epoch in the religious history of the world. "India scattering his message over the Eastern world," says Sister Nivedita, "became the maker of nations, of churches, of literature, arts and scientific systems, in countries far beyond her own borders. But within India proper, the life of the great teacher was the first nationaliser. By democratising the Aryan culture of the Upanishads, Buddha determined the common Indian civilisation and gave birth to the Indian nation of future ages." True to the command of the Master, the inspired missionaries of Buddhism carried as early as the third century B.C. his great message of "mercy and charity, truth and purity, kindness and goodness" to the different parts of India and Ceylon, and even to the Hellenic Kingdoms in Asia, Africa and Europe. The noble teachings of Buddhism, rational and humane at the same time, exerted a great influence on peoples within and outside the bounds of India. Unlike the Semetic faiths, Buddhism never attempted to destroy other religions, but instead, tended to fulfil them by all means in its power. And everywhere in place of dead forms and ceremonies, meaningless austerities and penances, it held before mankind a course of practical ethics of which the Master himself was the highest embodiment. It tried to break down the invidious distinctions between class and class, race and race, and gave to one and all the opportunity to grow in spirituality and culture. And so widespread became the influence of Buddhism that "contemplative fraternities" came to be established even in distant countries like Egypt and Palestine. At the time of the birth of Christ there existed on the western shore of the Dead Sea, the Essenes - a hermit clan to which John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ are said to have belonged,—a brotherhood "marvellous beyond all others in the world, without any women, without the joys of domestic life, without money." It was a society which

was resorted to in large numbers by men driven through weariness of existence and surges of ill-fortune.—a community in which none was born but which nevertheless lived on perennially. Buddhism established itself wherever it went, but its power was felt more in the Eastern than in the Western part of Asia.

Foundation of Greater India

The expansion of Hindu culture in foreign lands began long before the spread of Buddhism. Enterprising Hindu traders crossed the seas and mountains, and carried to distant countries not only the commercial products but also the religion and culture of India. Many of these commercial groups founded small colonies particularly in Indo-China and in the islands of the Indian archipelago. By virtue of their superior civilisation they exercised great influence and became the ruling powers at many places. But none of these colonising enterprises was founded on brute force and supported by the ruthless subjection and even extermination of the aborigines, as has been and is still being done by the modern European colonists in different parts of the world. The policy followed by the Hindu adventurers was the same as was adopted in India itself. It was racial and cultural re-conciliation and assimilation which allowed each community to maintain its distinctive individuality and proceed along its own law of growth. Following in the wake of Hinduism came its "rebel child" Buddhism. Like the Mother faith, it too became the carrier of India's religion and philosophy, art and architecture, learning and literature. This cultural expansion undertaken by India was, to quote the apt words of Sri Arambinda Ghose, "an invasion of peace and not of war, for to spread a spiritual civilisation by force and physical conquest.....would have been uncongenial to the ancient cast of her mind and temperament.....The ships that set out from the eastern and western coasts

were not fleets of invaders missioned to annex those outlying countries to an Indian empire, but of exiles and adventurers carrying with them to yet uncultured peoples Indian religion, architecture, art, poetry, thought, life, manners." If Hinduism was flowing to foreign lands like a placid stream, Buddhism came as a tidal wave that swept the then known world, especially the eastern part of Asia. And within the sixth century of the Christian era the religion of the Enlightened One came to be established in Ceylon, Java and Bali, in China, Korea and Japan, in Burma, Siam, Tibet, and many other countries. The spirit of Buddhism was the ancient harmonising spirit of India. Its ideals were the universal ideals of the Eternal Religion of India. "Within the era of cultural exchange," observes Dr. James H. Cousins in his *Cultural Unity of Asia*, "India takes the place of originator, not through seniority, nor by force but by the silent and deep pressure of the basic truth which it has been given her to utter, the truth of the unity of all things in the Divine Mind."

Relation between Hinduism and Buddhism

There exists a great misunderstanding about the true relation between the ancient faith and teachings of Gautama the Buddha. Over-zealous Buddhist missionaries are sometimes anxious to prove that the Master founded a new religion with an entirely new moral code. There are also some Hindu scholars who blindly believe that Lord Buddha contributed nothing to the ancient religion and philosophy of India. If he did anything at all, it was to preach a false and atheistic doctrine in order to delude and ruin the enemies of Vishnu ! If we want to form a correct estimate of the two faiths, we should not identify Hinduism with either Vedic rituals or with the religion of the commonalty which consists in following dead forms and ceremonies. Similarly Buddhism should not be confused with the religion of intricate atheistic

philosophies, gigantic temples, elaborate rites and corrupt practices of Tantra. We must go to the very fountain head of Hinduism and Buddhism,—to the Upanishads and the Tripitakas. And when we do that we find that there is a clear continuity between the most ancient Hindu scriptures and the original teachings of Lord Buddha. In fact Buddhism was an open revolt against the ritualism of the Vedic Karma Kanda which advocated the sacrifice of animals and claimed to take the sacrificer to the threshold of immortality. There was nothing altogether new about this “protest”; even in the earliest Upanishads we find bold and sincere souls questioning the utility of the vedic rituals and ceremonies and advocating instead the path of renunciation and knowledge. “The deluded souls,” says the Upanishadic seer, “who think that sacrifices and charitable works are of supreme value do not know the blessed goal. Neither by works, nor by progeny, nor by wealth but by renunciation alone can immortality be attained” In the words of Prof. Hopkins, “One cannot read the Upanishads without feeling that he is already facing an intellectual revolt.... The close and stifling air of ritualism has been charged with an electric current of thought that soon produced a storm. That storm reached a head in Buddhism, but its premonitory signs appear in the Upanishads, and its first out-break preceded the advent of Gautama.”

The Aryan Path

Lord Buddha discovered in his own life the highest ideals of the ancient faith. The path that he pointed out was, as he himself said, the Aryan Eight-fold Path. He called it also the Middle Path which avoided the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification, and advocated “right view, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindedness and right rapture.” Sri Krishna too speaks of the same path and the same ethical and spiritual

culture when he says in the Gita—"Success in Yoga is not for him who eats too much or too little nor for him who sleeps too much or too little. To him who is temperate in eating and recreation in his effort for work and in sleep and wakefulness, Yoga becomes the destroyer of misery ... Humility, non-injuriousness, forbearance, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadiness, self control, constant application to spiritual knowledge—this is the path to Truth." Lord Buddha thus preached the old ideals in their pristine purity with a new power contributed by a personality all his own. Again, the Brāhmin—the Knower of Brahman—the embodiment of the highest spiritual and ethical virtues—has ever been the ideal of the Vedic religion. "He alone is a Brahmin," says Yajnavalkya, "who departs from this world after having realised the Imperishable." In the words of the Gita, "Control of mind and senses, austerity, purity, forbearance and also uprightness, knowledge, realisation, belief in a hereafter—these are the duties of a Brahmin." Lord Buddha speaks in the same strain in Dhammapada—"He who is thoughtful, blameless, settled, dutiful, without passions, and who has attained the highest end, him I call a Brahmana." Besides, he believed in common with the Hindu teachers in the Law of Karma and Re-incarnation. The order of monks that he established was no innovation in India where innumerable spiritual aspirants, having known the Self and "rising above the desire for sons, wealth and new worlds," wandered about as mendicants even in the most ancient days.

Soul, God and Nirvana

The most important conception in the Hindu religion is that of the Atman, and Lord Buddha is said to have denied it altogether. A study of the original Buddhism proves that this is not the fact. It is not the Master but

his followers who are responsible for this negation. What Lord Buddha seems to have denied was the eternal existence of the "ego-entity" to which mortals cling with so inordinate a passion. "Only through ignorance and delusion," says he, "do men indulge in the dream that their souls are separate and self-existent entities. Self is death and Truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual death, while moving to the Truth is partaking of Nirvana which is life everlasting." As to the existence of God, Lord Buddha neither denied nor affirmed it. Like the Sankhyas, he might not have found a place for God in his cosmological system. But his description of the highest experience clearly shows that his ultimate reality was, like that of the Advaitins, a positive state of existence in which all individualities and personalities were transcended. This he calls Nirvana—an experience that cannot be described either as "to cease" or 'to live.'" It is, in the words of the Master, "neither coming nor departing, nor standing still nor death nor birth. It is the end of sorrow. There is an unbecome, unborn, unmade, unformed. Since there is an unbecome unborn, unmade, unformed there is an escape for that which is become, born, made and formed." In much the same language does the Upanishadic sage try to describe the Atman or Brahman—"Having realised That which is soundless, touchless, formless, imperishable and also without taste and smell, eternal, without beginning or end and immutable,—one is released from the jaws of death." The state of one who has attained Mukti or Nirvana even while being in the body has been described in both positive and negative terms. "Like a vessel immersed in the ocean, he is full within and full without. Like an empty vessel placed in the ocean of ether, he is void within and void without." Whether the Vedantic teachers speak of the highest experience as Purna (full) or the Buddhist as Sunya (void)—it is all the same.

Buddha's great Achievement

"The prevalent notion," observes Dr. Rhys Davids, "that Gautama was an enemy of Hinduism, and that his chief claim on the gratitude of his countrymen lies in his having destroyed a system of iniquity, oppression and fraud is nothing but a great misconception. This is not the case. Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu ... There was not much in the metaphysics and psychology of Gautama which cannot be found in one or other of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books. Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adapted, enlarged, ennobled, and systematized that which had already been well said by others; in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers." The greatest achievement of the Master lay in his practical application of the eternal truths embodied in the Upanishads. To the grand philosophy of the Vedanta he added what may be called Buddhistic humanism. To the life of renunciation he joined the ideals of service which already existed in a limited form in the ancient scriptures. This path of service as emphasised by Lord Buddha was a sure means for preventing the life of meditation from lapsing into dry intellectualism or morbid inactivity so very dangerous to spiritual life. Besides, by democratising the highest Aryan culture, he brought it within the easy reach of all, irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality. "It was the glory of Shakya Muni," says Swami Vivekananda, "that he had the large-heartedness to bring out the truths from the hidden Vedas and throw them broadcast all over the world. He was the first in the world who brought missionarising into practice,—nay, he was the first to conceive the idea of proselytising. Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism nor Buddhism without

Hinduism. The separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmanas is the cause of the downfall of India. That is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmana with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the great Master." This happy union of Hinduism and Buddhism—of head and heart, renunciation and service, meditation and activity—is sure to bring about the awakening and regeneration not only of the Hindus but also of the Buddhists, and unite India with the Buddhist countries of Asia by the common bond of culture. Such an alliance, if properly established has the immense possibility of founding a world-federation on the spiritual ideals of Asia, which India represents so faithfully more than any other country in the world.

NEED OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

By Swami Atulananda.

"The path of wisdom," says Sri Ramakrishna, "is very difficult. Much easier is the path of love and worship and devotion towards God." Well may we consider this before we look down upon those who practise with all sincerity what are called lower forms of worship. Perhaps there are many things we can learn from those who practise the simplest methods of worship.

Once a great Indian scholar and philosopher passed by a temple. There he saw a man poorly clad, worshipping an image. Tears of joy trickled from the eyes of the devotee. The scholar seeing the man in the act of worshipping an idol became indignant. "You fool!" he called out, "Don't you know that the idol is made of stone? Why do you worship a piece of stone? Do as I do, and repeat, 'Sivoham! Sivoham!' (I am God) Don't you know that you are the Atman? Throw away your idol". The poor devotee looking up said very humbly, "Yes, sir, I know that I am the Atman. The Lord Who dwells everywhere has in His great mercy revealed this to me. Through this idol He has spoken to me and has told me, that He, my beloved Lord, dwells in me

as my spirit and that he dwells in all beings, in plants and trees and animals and even in wood and stone, for He is omnipresent. He has kindly revealed Himself to me through this piece of stone. Such is His power. And whenever I worship Him before this idol, the stone seems to disappear, and I see my Lord there. He looks at me with smiling face, and talks with me. And forthwith I am transfixed into a state of ecstasy and tears of joy come to my eyes, meeting my Lord here "

Then the philosopher was wonder-struck. He recognized his own poor spiritual condition as compared to that of the simple devotee. He fell at the feet of the devotee, and begged to be instructed by him. And from that day he became his disciple, and through the worship of that same idol reached spiritual illumination.

It is said in the Gita that no effort in the religious life is in vain. Even a little done in the right spirit brings great results. Let us not think that because we have no time or strength to practise much, it is therefore useless to try. Let us do what little we can and the reward will follow.

In the Ramayana is a story which illustrates that if we do according to our strength and means, no matter how little it may be, the Lord is pleased with the attempt. Rama, a prince, and incarnation of God, was building a bridge across the Straits of Ceylon for his army to pass over to rescue his queen Sita. The neighboring tribes, and even the animals of the forest, assisted in this arduous task. The monkeys were especially useful, for they could carry rocks and timbers, which they threw into the sea. And the bears brought stones to fill up the gaps. Now there was a little squirrel. Seeing every one so busy, the squirrel also wanted to help the godly prince. But what could such a little creature do to help in this gigantic undertaking? It seemed a hopeless case. However, the little squirrel was not discouraged. He rolled his body in the sand, ran quickly to the sea, and scratching the sand off his body, threw it into the ocean. Then he ran back to repeat the process. Thus he ran back and forth all day. At last Rama caught sight of the busy squirrel. He watched him for some time. Then his heart melted with love for the devoted little creature. He picked him up, held him to his breast, and striking him gently with his hand blessed him. The little squirrel did what he was able to do, and the Lord was pleased and blessed him.

In the lives of the saints we see how they are always engaged in little acts of devotion, and how pleasing these little attempts are to Him who is so easily pleased. When there is love in the heart, that love must express itself in a thousand little ways. And the Beloved understands and appreciates. "Whosoever offers Me a leaf, or a flower, or a fruit, or even a little cool water," Sri Krishna says, "he is very dear to Me and I accept his love-offering if it is made with a pure heart." It is not the gift, or the act, that counts, but the motive behind it. So it is not difficult to serve the Lord and to please Him, if our hearts are pure. The religious life is not drudgery. It is the greatest joy to serve God with love and devotion.

Saint Rose was a busy woman, but she always felt the presence of God. He was her Beloved. She would snatch short moments during the day, when she would talk to God as one would to a lover. And there would always come a response. Thus she held discourse with God in a very simple and pleasing manner.

One morning she was seated before an open window. Outside, a little bird began to sing at the top of his voice. St. Rose listened for a while. When the bird stopped singing St. Rose said to the bird, "Little friend, how beautifully you have sung the praise of my Lord. Let me also sing a song to Him." Then she sang with great delight. When her song was finished, at once the bird began to sing again. And when the bird stopped, St. Rose would sing. Thus an hour was spent in praising the Lord.

How simple, but how significant are these little stories in the lives of the saints. In this way holy men and women attain to a state of great perfection. Gradually their minds are weaned away from the world, and drawn towards God. This is what is meant by living the religious life. There must be a constant endeavour to approach closer to God. And this we may do, each one in his own way.

The Yogi makes this the only object of his life, so he adopts strong methods. He devotes most of his time in the practice of self-control and meditation. His life is austere, for he wants to become master of his body and mind, of his appetites and desires, of his thoughts. He therefore practises control of breath, he assumes different postures, is restricted in his diet, and lives in solitude. This is his method. And an excellent method it is for those whom it suits.

But we need not feel discouraged if we cannot follow in his footsteps. Sri Krishna says, "Of all the Yogis he who with his inner soul resting in Me with faith worships Me, him do I regard as the highest Yogi." We can all try to think of God, to worship Him, to send out to Him, our loving thoughts and prayers.

And how can we think of God? How shall we worship Him? How to commune with Him? These questions were much discussed before Sri Ramakrishna. And he replied: "God in His absolute aspect is without form but He can and does assume various forms. He can take any form He pleases and these forms are perceived by His devotees. Those who cannot meditate on God as possessing a form, may meditate on Him as Absolute Spirit beyond all forms. But this is not for every one. It is easier to think of Him in the personal aspect and clothed with form. This is just as true as the impersonal aspect, for God is both personal and impersonal, with form and beyond form." And Sri Krishna said, "In whatsoever form man worships Me, in that very form I appear before him." But the worship must of course be very sincere, and must be performed with a concentrated mind.

It is the testimony of great saints that they saw God in different forms, as Buddha, as Jesus, as Siva, as Vishnu, in the form of the image they worshipped, in male and female figures of light, as an ocean of Light, etc. Not only can God take any form instantly, and transform Himself into a divine personality but there are millions of divine forms always existing throughout the vast universe. Jesus, we are assured, is still living; Buddha is still living, thousands of divine Incarnations are still living in celestial spheres. And through intense, all absorbing love, devotion, prayer and meditation these divine souls come and commune with man.

The sceptic will ask, how is this possible? But the true devotee does not ask for explanations. He wants to taste the fruit, he wants to experience the bliss of God-realization, of seeing Him face to face, of conversing with Him, and of losing himself in God in divine union. He does not ask, how or why? He begins to practise.

Explanations are for those who have not yet reached that state of faith where they can set to work and practise devotion. All explanation is only an attempt of the mind to satisfy its doubts. But who can ever hope to explain the mystery of God's working

and power? God is beyond explanation; our mind cannot comprehend Him.

Through faith alone we can know Him, through faith we will be able to worship Him and be united with Him. Through faith we will be able to taste of that state of sublime ecstasy and bliss that comes with true devotion. Let us pray for that faith that will enable us to worship God with our whole heart. Then He will approach us in any form we desire, and He will fill our hearts with His divine presence. We will be filled with joy unspeakable—a joy that passes all ordinary human understanding. This is the promise of all great Avatars, of all the scriptures.

The devotee gives himself entirely to that divine Presence and losing all idea of his little self, melts into the Divine, conscious only of the bliss of existence. For God is bliss, and whosoever merges into Him becomes a conscious part of that supreme Bliss. So it has been said by Sri Krishna, "Fill thy mind with Me, be to Me devoted, worship Me. And taking Me for thy supreme Goal, surely thou shall enter unto Me."

Through practice alone the Goal can be reached. And, "When the Lord is known, all fetters fall off, all suffering is at an end, birth and death are conquered, and the soul enjoys eternal freedom."

"Arise, awake, and stop not till the Goal is reached."

(Concluded.)

THE MEANING OF MAYA

By B. Chandrasekharia, M.A.

The theory of Māyā needs no introduction. It is a problem of first importance, and on it rests the philosophy of the Vedānta, especially the Sankara-Vedānta. It is generally believed that Sankara has held to the unreality of the universe, that only Brahman is real. Brahman is (अद्वितीय) Advitiya, not admitting of a second. It is also common, when this point has to be maintained, to quote the line ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या, etc. (Brahman is real, and the world is unreal, etc.). But I feel that Sankara does not advocate any such view and that the spirit of the above quotation is totally different. In thinking that Sankara formulates the unreality or

falsity (मिथ्यात्व) of the world, we would be ascribing to him what is not found in his writings—either in the Sūtra-Bhāshya or in the Upanishad-Bhāshyas. And also the texts he comments upon do not support the interpretation stated above. It will eventually be shown that the statement Jagan-Mithyā needs, in order to be understood correctly, an important qualification. This qualification, I believe, does no violence to the text. It is on the other hand quite warranted. In suggesting it I will only be expressing what is implicit in the view.

It is clear that the doctrine of Māyā is concerned, whatever its implications, with a type of error in regard to metaphysical problems. It refers to an erroneous view very prevalent in the minds of the ordinary people. This error can according to the Vedānta be construed in two ways—in respect of the cosmos and in respect of the individual. According as it refers to one or the other it gets the name Māyā or Avidyā. This error is explained to be of the nature of darkness, or more correctly, of an obstacle, a screen. It hides the Real, the Self, from one's view. Now, the question at issue is—What is the nature of this entity, Māyā or Avidyā; of what stuff is it made?

The answer to this question is varied, and is a point on which Sankara and his interpreters part company. Put in other words, the question is—Does Māyā refer to an attitude or to an entity? Has it objective or subjective reality? Those who view it in an objective light have logically arrived at the conclusion in the interest of the Self, that the world does not in the final estimate exist; that it is only a shadow without any substance in it; a mere turn of speech (वाचारेभणं विकारो नामधेयं). On the other hand those who regard it as having to do with the subjective standpoint have come to the conclusion that the Vedānta does not repudiate the existence of the world, but that it also is real, though not in the same sense and to the same extent; that it is quite in a line with the Supreme Reality, is its own expression, and has a degree of reality.

One inference however is obvious. In either case the world is denied an independent status. It is admitted on all hands that it has no independent existence, that it is by no means self-supporting. But this assertion can be understood in two ways, namely, that the world is unreal and that it has a relative reality and value. I believe the latter to be the more natural meaning, fully borne out by the texts.

We may examine the first view. It may be objected beforehand that this point involves a digression. It does not; for the answer to the question whether the universe exists or not decides beyond any doubt the meaning of Māyā. The first view, then, affirms on the basis of texts like *नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन* (There is no plurality here) and of instances like *सुक्तरजत* (silver superimposed on mother-of-pearl) *रज्जुसर्प* (snake superimposed on rope) or *गन्धर्वनगरी* (castle in the air) that the world does not exist at all, that it is an illusion, a chimera (*महमरीचिका*), an unsubstantial pageant made of the stuff of which dreams are composed, and that one who takes it seriously is a fool. The reason for this is clear. It is that Brahman is the only real Being and that there is no other rival to It. In the face of it the world has not a jot of reality. Its so-called empirical reality (*व्यावहारिक सत्ता*) is a concession to the popular demand. That is all. Its real nature is that it is only an idea; it has only a "transcendental ideality"; it exists only in one's imagination and is but a projection of the mind. In terms of the infinite, it vanishes into nothingness. And so on. This theory is too well known and popular to be dwelt on at any great length. In respect of this view Māyā means a projection of false appearances, and the world becomes a rainbow world.

This interpretation of Māyā rakes up a few difficulties. It is well that the sole reality of the Real or Brahman is emphasised but it is not good that it should be done at the expense of something else. No one disagrees with a Vedantin for emphasising the sole reality of Brahman. Brahman is One (*एक*), but the enthusiast in the cause of Brahman forgets that Brahman is also described to be without a second (*अद्वितीय*). It is clear that unless the language in this text is tautologous, there is a subtle difference in the meaning. The two words have, I take it, two shades of meaning. The same difference of meaning or emphasis is conveyed to us in the other term Advaita (*अद्वैत*). The motive underlying this mode of description seems to be not to call this world a falsity, but to co-ordinate it with the Real. The first term may safely be taken in its denotation, and the second in its connotation, it being understood the while that the two point to one being, and that, the Infinite *अद्वितीय* (One without a second) appears to be not only a negative mode of statement, but also carries a reference to the universe which is in no way to be opposed to the Real. I am sure that I am not forcing the text at this point. If it be objected that the latter would not be the natural interpretation and that there is no reference to the universe as Brahman's self-manifestation, the

reply would be that there is equally no reference to the unreality of the universe. For when it is affirmed that Brahman is without a second, without an other (अन्य), it does not follow that the world is thereby taken to be abolished. We cannot argue from the unity and supremacy of Brahman to the negation of the world. There is no middle term. We will not be right in saying that unity should abrogate diversity, that identity should rule out difference. It is hardly necessary to mention the commonplace that bare identity is as impossible and meaningless as mere difference exclusive of its undercurrent of unity. Besides, the word अद्वितीय does not mean "not different", i. e., "not having difference", but it means *not having an other*. In "Advaita" there is the same import. I do not know that not to have an other means not to have difference also related to it. Though the self and the other are different the Self and *its own difference* are not different.

The view in question is open to another criticism. It has neglected to take due note of texts which countenance a different theory; texts supporting the existence of the universe have been omitted. The rejection seems to be onesided, if not interested and for that reason exclusive. This onesidedness has produced the consequence of a differentiation between the Nirguna (without attributes) Brahman and Its Saguna (with attributes) form without Its remaining fluid and theoretical. This is strictly speaking untrue and is calculated to patch up the other part to the one the view favours. If inspite of Sankara and the Vedanta Sutras one assumes that Brahman is Nirguna always, one will perforce explain away the universe. The Nirguna form represents the identity-aspect, and to take it to those noumenal heights to which some have taken it, is only to make a fetish of it. Sankara thinks that the two forms are due only to the standpoint adopted; and in the light of this opinion there is no doubt that he does not endorse the view that the universe is in respect of its existence a myth, a dream. Besides, it becomes extremely difficult if not impossible, to reconcile texts like नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन (There is no plurality here) with others like सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म (All this is Brahman) with which the Upanishads, both the earlier and the later, are replete. The term नाना has a totally different import and stands in quite another relation, as will be shown subsequently. I will not anticipate myself however.

I will refer to the second interpretation. According to it the world is in no wise unreal. It is real it holds, but makes a quali-

fication. It is real, but not real enough. And it is not real enough in two senses. In the first place, it does not endure, is not made of permanent stuff. Its forms are ever changing. Secondly, it is not real enough to stand on its own legs. In this respect it is totally dependent. It has not an atom of reality which it can call its own. That is to say, the world is not in itself real. This is the qualification so needed, and the implication which one and all the Vedanta texts on the subject appear to have. Further it is dependent on the Infinite, not as an alien principle kept under control, but as something belonging to it more intimately. The universe is on this interpretation Brahman's self-realisation. The names and forms so characteristic of the world are only modes of this self-realisation. One is here put in mind of Spinoza and his theory. The mode or expression would be imaginary were it not supported by the Real, were it not in short the mode or expression of the Real. This is the same as saying that the world is not real in its own right. To my mind it is just this meaning that is implied in the assertion such as the one cited above. On this view not only can we explain passages of the Upanishads like ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं (All this to be enveloped by the Lord) etc. and terms like विश्वरूप (with universal form) and वैश्वानर (Universal Being) but other passages relating to "Nirguna" Brahman which will also be seen to accord with it. The same is true of passages in the Vedanta Sutra. It may be mentioned in passing that those who interpret the Upanishadic and the Brahma Sutra passages as referring to Mayavada (मायावाद) are but reading into them what exists in their own mind.

The world has a status. It is not unreal, but does not compete with the Real, just because it is not an other. The advocates of the Mayavada (मायावाद) appear to take it for granted that it has an independent status and build their argument on that premiss. They seem implicitly to assume that position. Passages describing Brahman as cause should, I hope, make it abundantly clear to any one that the reality of the world is admitted and that the world follows as an effect from Brahman as both the material (उपादान कारण) and the efficient cause (निमित्तकारण). As emanating from the Infinite (जन्मादि अस्य यतः) the universe is real, but less in comparison since it is changing, just as the dream-world has a lower degree of reality than the world of waking experience. The effect does not exhaust the cause. And to assert in the teeth of these evidences that the world is but a shadow is to play no honest game.

Now, this detailed reference to the interpretations was necessary in order that the meaning or implication of Māyā might be brought out clearly. If it is true that the world exists, then how is "Māyā" to be understood? We have made the qualification that the world as such does not exist, and that to take it at its face value would be a gross error. That is to say, we are not questioning the existence of the world but we are questioning its value or meaning. Is it a plurality (माया) or is it a unity, is the question. It is plain that I incline to the latter view. In other words, we are asking a question about the right attitude. Should it favour the manyness of the Real, or its oneness? Do we see many reals or only one Real everywhere? Such questions indicate the shifting of the view-point. What is our attitude is the crux of the problem. And the term Māyā and Mayavada (मायावाद) are concerned, not with existence, but with meaning, not with the objective aspect but with the subjective one of the question (see Kath Up. 4, 10, and Brihad. Up. ii, 4, 14. The "इव"—as it were—used in these two places refers to the attitude and supports our view). They seek to explain, not so much the falsity of the world in respect of its being, as its falsity in respect of its pluralistic value. And they arrive, I take it, at the conclusion that its manyness is not the last word to be said about the matter: this point will be explained presently.

The upholders of the first interpretation put the cart before the horse. They take up the objective side and the subjective one is neglected. There is a definite method of approach to the problem. Everyone knows that in the Vedānta, just as in the Upanishads there are two editions of the problem—the cosmic and the individual. The problem is viewed in both its aspects—the aspect concerned with the subject, and the one concerned with the object. Of these, the former leads the way. The nature of the cosmos is taken to be built on the same principle as that of the individual. The macrocosm repeats the structure of the microcosm. There is that homogeneity, that unity of principle. But of the two the individual aspect has greater importance. To me this is what Sankara drives at in employing the term शरीरक मीमांसा (Sariraka Mimamsa). "Know thyself first" he appears to say. This assertion of the primacy of the individual is not unfamiliar. One meets it as early as in Rigveda X, 90, and this is the background in which the Upanishadic teaching as a whole is set. The Vedānta emphasises the Ātman, the Jiva, its experiences and psychic states,

knowledge, truth, error, and so on. These terms form part and parcel of the language of the soul or self, and the ideas they convey of the philosophy of the soul. The very term Ātman, the self, whether it means the individual self or the universal self, indicates the drift of ideas. And the concept of Moksha, relevant only in the case of the individual, is a conclusive proof of the primacy of the individual standpoint. The distinction into Saguna and Nirguna Brahman, into Parā and Aparā Vidyā reflects the reference to the subjective attitude.

The doctrine of Māyā is a theory of error. It is to be approached from the side of the individual. Error concerns not existence, but standpoint. That is, it pertains to predication, and that, to false predication. The Vedanta calls it Avidyā. The difference between the ordinary kind and the Vedanta Avidyā is that one is an error of commission, and the other, an error of omission. They are two species of the same kind. In Vedanta the error of omission consists in one's failure to recognise and keep up the truth. When paraphrased thus, it will be seen that this error, Avidyā, is not radically different from the other one. Both lead to the same consequence, viz., false predication. We ascribe in either case to reality a quality, a being or a condition which cannot be true of it (compare Bosanquets's view of error; Logic, Vol X. Also Sankara's definition of Avidyā as अतस्मिन् तद्बुद्धिः— introduction to the Brahma Sutras). We ascribe to the Real qualities and relations which do not obtain in It. (Instances like रज्जु सर्पे युक्ति-रज्जत). The difficulty about finite predication is that at best it is partial; the qualities and relations we think of as inherent in the Absolute are hedged in by their opposites. They are in and fall short of the Absolute (One is reminded of—यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसासह). The Vedanta analyses the case and goes to the root of the matter. It traces error to our ignorance of our true nature. The sum total of conditions and interests acquires the name Māyā or Avidyā. Avidyā is a hindrance (उपाधि). It is like darkness in enveloping the Self. The personal viewpoint obscures the light. Belief colours knowledge. To overcome this ignorance constitutes the goal of one's efforts. On it rests the dignity and worth of the human being.

There is the cosmic edition of Avidyā, Māyā. While under its influence, we take diversity to be the ultimate fact. While it lasts we take things to be real in themselves. Our behaviour is initiated by it. This is a totally false regard, and has its roots in Avidyā. Our

ignorance stretches over the universe, and pushes back or obscures Brahman. Avidyā rendered in terms of the cosmos is Māyā.

So much for Avidyā or Māyā as cause. It is not only a force that creates in us an attitude, but represents the effect also. It is the phenomenal creation as well as its principle. The effect aspect is thrown into relief in the term Māyā. It denotes also the world. The world is Māyā, the *मायावादिवि* (Mayavadim) says. The meaning is that it is an illusion created by a delusion. The world *as the world* is an illusion, an unreality. It dwindles into nothingness if it sets up against the Real in its claims to reality.

The world *as the world*. The qualification makes a difference to facts. Facts are what they are, and what exists cannot be destroyed (cf. McTaggart: Nature of Existence). Everything exists and lays claim to reality. But its claims can be granted only when it claims to be real *through* the Real; when it claims to be a form of expression of the Real. Otherwise it has to be denied all reality. This is exactly the meaning of defining Māyā as *ब्रह्माश्रय* (dependent on Brahman). The force and the effect are both rooted in Brahman. In this sense the world is not an illusion, a fictitious nothing, but an appearance (compare Bradey), a concrete manifestation. Even illusions are made up of facts pieced together (while the illusion lasts the rope is actually taken to be a snake; we cannot say that the experience is unreal, but it is corrected later on). The changing forms are facts: but they do not change or affect in any way the underlying substance, the Infinite. In regard to existence all things are on one level. They are on different levels in regard to meaning, value and reality. The world has a definite amount of meaning, value, and a certain degree of reality.

Jagat is described to be *अनिर्वचनीय* (inexplicable) and *सदसद्विलक्षण* (different from what is real and also unreal). It cannot be classified as real in the absolute sense, for it can in no wise cope with the Infinite Self. It is not unreal because it is a fact; seems to be real. It has a peculiar, and perhaps inscrutable nature. But the significance is that Jagat as Jagat cannot stand. It should be resolved into Brahman. In terms of the Real it is real.

In sum Māyā denotes the view-point, and has an objective reference. The purport of the doctrine seems to be to enjoin on us the change of outlook. Diversity is a false abstraction leading us away from the truth. It is true of the *de facto* level. Outgrow this

level, and reach the Absolute One from which one sees and hears everywhere only Brahman. यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवाद्दृश्यति सर्वभूतेषु च आत्मानम् "He who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings" (Isa Up. 6.) defines the correct attitude. The view of the seers appears to be like this; it does not matter, in the first instance what facts are, but see that you have acquired the true outlook i.e., the subjective side first. And after that, learn that unity, not plurality, is the final word. Of course the two parts of the teaching run *pari passu*: pluralism is to be rejected in favour of monism. The stamp is rejected in favour of the gold. But diversity is not denied thereby. It has been subsumed, interpreted in the language of the universal Self, and has acquired its true meaning and position. For the enlightened, the world does not exist but as Brahman. The life that a Jivanmukta leads is a forceful illustration of the point. He loses sight of the trees for the wood, of the waves for the ocean.

Thus it is the meaning, the importance, not the existence of diversity that is at stake in the theory of Māyā. It is not its unreality, but its finality that is called in question; not the otherness, but the "otherness-attitude". If the world is false or true, it is false or true in reference to its meaning. It is not false in the sense in which शशविषाण (horn of a hare) is false (असत्क). Variety becomes unimportant, not extinct, when the true view is gained.

Editor's Note.

In the last issue of the *Vedanta Kesari* we had the pleasure of publishing Prof. K Sundararama Aiyar's learned article on *Maya* interpreted in the light of Sankara's philosophy. The present article discusses the same topic from a different standpoint. The writer has tried to prove that the world or *Maya* is not an unreality but an eternal reality dependent on Brahman. He thinks that Sankara also holds this view in the *Sutra Bhashya* and *Upanishad-Bhashyas*.

But what the commentator admits is that the world has only a *Vyavaharika* or relative reality. He never allows it a *Paramarthika* (absolute) reality, as the writer seems to do. Sankara is very clear on the point. As such we are at a loss to understand how he can be taken to support the conclusion arrived at in this article. What Sankara holds to be relatively true, the writer takes to be absolutely true.

The writer does not seem to have grasped the difference which Sankara and other Vedantic teachers make between the illustrations

of false knowledge, such as "snake superimposed on rope", "silver superimposed on mother-of-pearl" and "mirage" on the one hand and the impossibles—such as "horn of the hare", "city of the Gandharvas" or castles in the air, "son of a barren woman"—on the other. The former class has a relative reality, while the other is non-existent under all circumstances, and has no basis for superimposition. The mistaken vision of the snake, silver or mirage is dependent on the rope, mother-of-pearl or surface of the desert. Such also is the relation of the world to Brahman, as Sankara distinctly points out :—

"The objects of ordinary life have a relative reality". Taitriya Bhashya—II.13. But "As the water of a mirage is not really different from the surface of the desert, so the manifold world with its objects of enjoyments, enjoyer and so on has no separate existence apart from Brahman". Brahma Sutra Bhashya, II. i. 14.

"In reality there is no second thing excepting that, if there be any, it is nothing but the superimposition of nescience." Brihadaranyaka Bhashya, IV—iv—19.

The world exists in ignorance; it disappears with the dawn of the highest knowledge. Says Sankara—"The entire complex world of phenomenal existence is considered as true so long as the knowledge of Brahman as the Self of all has not arisen, just as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the sleeper wakes," Vedanta Sutra Bhashya, II. i. 14.

"We must remember that the so-called real creation with its ether, air, etc. is not ultimately real. The entire expanse of things is mere illusion. The world consisting of ether etc., however, remains fixed and distinct up to the moment when the soul cognises that I Brahman is the Self of all." Vedanta Sutra Bhashya, II—ii—4.

Commenting on Isha Upanishad, Sloka 7, Sankara says—"Absolute negation of the world which is nothing but an effect, is here stated in so far as the scriptures show, by raising an objection, the impossibility of pain and delusion which are the products of nescience."

Innumerable passages of this kind may be quoted from the writings of Sankara. The great commentator holds that the ignorant man looks upon the world as it appears to be the sole reality; but the man of the highest knowledge experiences Brahman to be

the only Truth, the world having disappeared from his view altogether. Again, when the knower comes down from his spiritual height to the lower plane, he sees the world but knows it to be an apparent existence. This "passing show" may continue during his Jivan-mukti or state of emancipation during life; but it stops completely with the attainment of Videha-mukti or final liberation that comes after the falling off of the body. We would request the writer to read the commentaries and other works of Sankara carefully, and see for himself whether we are justified in our remarks or not.

THE AGE OF THE SUDRAS.

By R. Ramakrishnan, B.A.

The study of History has its advantages; for knowledge is its own reward and it has utility as well. We can, from a knowledge of the past, obtain glimpses into the future—glimpses that might not be far from the truth. However chaotic and apparently unregulated might be the march of progress, everything in the universe is subjected to a great law that never changes and never slackens in its vigour of application. Hence can the future be surmised from the study of the past and the present, and surmised correctly too, because of the 'rule of law.' Two more points we shall have to remember. One is that change is the law of the universe: "The old order changeth yielding place to new" and the poet moralises on this grand truth, that "God fulfils Himself in many ways lest one good custom should corrupt the world." Hence this change is not destroying the old order of things, but evolving out of it a new order that is not different from but is merely the outcome of the old one. This process of evolution and not the thorough-going transformation is in accordance with another universal law—the law of continuity. Inasmuch as this is so, are we to welcome a change or to struggle against it? Certainly the former should be done. Since progress means readjustment; its course is bound to be a bit harsh; it cannot travel on smooth oiled wheels. So, only those blessed with a broader outlook, a larger heart, a more sympathetic vision, could penetrate into the future and welcome this setting-in of the new order. Narrow-minded people cannot but oppose it.

The other point is this—If we look at the world's history as a whole, we find that there is an undercurrent of uniformity in it.

Several nations have had their own peculiar historical developments yet can we find out a similarity and unity amidst the varying kinds of development. We shall try to do this in regard to one sphere—that of the preponderance of one particular class over the others.

It has been the happy task of hostile and friendly critics to find fault with the Indian caste system in season and out of season. But they comfortably forget that this 'peculiar' development is not singular to India but is common throughout the world. It is another testimony to the sound common sense and the practical intellect of our hoary ancestors—whose very names we do not know—that they divided society into four classes—the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra. Nobody denies that the caste system has outgrown its purpose, nor could it be asserted that it has come down unchanged. The centre of gravity and importance has not continued as of old. Further it is an acknowledged fact that the caste system was a practical form of division of labour and served its purpose.

In the beginning the Brahmin held the supreme position in society; the centre of gravity rested on him,—a fact which is not after all unparalleled. The Brahmin represented the highest intellect and the most mature mind. He was the guide of society and the custodian of its spiritual life. He was the 'hero' whom the people followed. He had the honour of all and as he thought, his society thought too. Corresponding to this stage we find a similar state of affairs in other parts of the world. Take Greece for instance. We have Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and a host of 'heroes' who were the real sovereigns of the country in their time. In short, all these as well as the Brahmin formed the aristocracy of talent and intellect. This was the rule of the best few and the benefits of such a rule cannot be exaggerated. Even in the most thorough-going democracy the real rulers who wield all power are only a few. The Brahmins and the Rishis were the Vedic Seers, the authors of the Upanishads, the formulators of the religious code, and the preceptors of the people. They represented the chaste wisdom of the age and it is no wonder that they were in fact ruling the society. It was to them that the people looked up for guidance and advice and they were ever ready at their post of duty to enlighten and lead society to noble ideals. The aristocracy of intellect was the prevalent form of sovereignty in those days

Perhaps it was this order of things that Oliver Cromwell wanted to bring back when he summoned a parliament of the oldest and the most experienced citizens of the land ; but his attempt was doomed to failure since the system had already decayed, yielding place to another.

Ages rolled on and times changed and with them the ideas of humanity. The aristocracy of intellect could not hold its sway any further. The second class of society—the Kshatriya got the place enjoyed by the Brahmin. Then came the day of the warriors ; they began to command the respect and reverence of society. They protected society and ruled it wisely and well. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata sing the praises of India's warrior heroes. Yudhishthira was revered even by Brahmins, though he was only a Kshatriya by caste. The one man who moved the thought of India came from this Kshatriya community. We mean Gautama the Buddha ; he was a Kshatriya and yet won the reverence of the whole of India and was even conferred an Avatarhood. Later came the Rajputs, whose heroic actions are well known to the world. Even the Rajput ladies were heroic and brave. Corresponding to this, we have in the West, the age of the knight-errants and the warrior lords. We have King Arthur and his Round Table ; we have Hereward the Wake and his noble exploits ; we have a thousand others whose heroic deeds are sung by many bards. It was the age of chivalry and of romance, when knights fought with dragons. It was to these men that society looked for guidance and, Society was led by them.

This age also had its day and it has been in turn succeeded by the age of the Vaisya,—the age of commercialism. We are in age to this day but it also is passing away. This age of the Vaisya is the age of capitalism. Capitalists are ruling society everywhere. Commercialism is the dominating factor today. Nations are united on that basis. But the attack has been already begun on this system. Socialism, Trade Unionism, Guild Socialism, Syndicalism, Communism—these are but different phases of the movement against commercialism. We are to-day on the verge of a mighty transformation. The age of the Vaisya is fast ebbing away and that of the Sudra is slowly coming in. A stigma is often attached to the word 'Sudra'. It really means one who serves. Service is not degrading to one's honour. In a sense everybody is a Sudra. The coming epoch is that of the labourer. He is to rule society hereafter. We are slowly marching towards that period ;

and all these agitations—sometimes running to extremes—are working to bring about that end. We are witnessing today the chaos of a transition stage. After this storm shall come peace and order and a regulated course of things.

It is futile to oppose and work against the inevitable. If we are wise, we should try to make its passage smooth and hasten its pace. All our leaders are working for it today. Swami Vivekananda too worked for the poor, the lowly and the down trodden, whom he called the Daridra-Narayanans. He was vehemently against Touch-me-not-ism. Mahatma Gandhi's Khaddar movement is for the betterment of the poor man's lot. Our leaders who are working for village re-construction are also doing the same. The future is assured. We have only to pray that its sway might be an enlightened one.

RAMKRISHNA PARAMHANSA.*

By Nagendranath Gupta

In 1881 Keshub Chandra Sen, accompanied by a fairly large party, went on board a steam yacht belonging to his son-in-law, Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup of Kuch Behar, to Dakshineswar to meet Ramkrishna Paramhansa. I had the good fortune to be included in that party. We did not land, but the Paramhansa accompanied by his nephew Hriday, who brought a basket of parched rice and some *sandesh* for us, boarded the steamer which steamed up the river towards Somra. The Paramhansa was wearing a red bordered *dhott* and a shirt which was not buttoned. We all stood up as he came on board and Keshub took the Paramhansa by the hand and made him sit close to him. Keshub then beckoned to me to come and sit near them and I sat down almost touching their feet. The Paramhansa was dark-complexioned, kept a beard, and his eyes never opened very wide and were introspective. He was of medium height, slender almost to leanness and very frail looking. As a matter of fact, he had an exceptionally nervous temperament, and was extremely sensitive to the slightest physical pain. He spoke with a very slight but charming stammer in very plain Bengali, mixing the "yous" frequently. All the talking was practically done by the Paramhansa, and the rest, including Keshub himself, were respect-

ful and eager listeners. It is now more than forty-five years ago that this happened and yet almost everything that the Paramhansa said is indelibly impressed on my memory. I have never heard any other man speak as he did. It was an unbroken flow of profound spiritual truths and experiences welling up from the perennial spring of his own devotion and wisdom. The similes and metaphors, the apt illustrations, were as striking as they were original. At times as he spoke he would draw a little closer to Keshub until part of his body was unconsciously resting in Keshub's lap, but Keshub sat perfectly still and made no movement to withdraw himself.

After he had sat down the Paramhansa glanced round him and expressed his approval of the company sitting around by saying, "Good, good : They have all good large eyes." Then he peered at a young man wearing English clothes and sitting at a distance on a capstan. "Who is that ? He looks like a Saheb." Keshub smilingly explained that it was a young Bengali who had just returned from England. The Paramhansa laughed "That's right. One feels afraid of a Saheb!" The young man was Kumar Gajendra Narayan of Kuch Behar, who shortly afterwards married Keshub's second daughter. The next moment he lost all interest in the people present and began to speak of the various ways in which he used to perform his *sadhana*. "Sometimes I would fancy myself the Brahminy duck calling for its mate." There is a poetic tradition in Sanscrit that the male and female of a brace of Brahminy ducks spend the night on the opposite shores of a river and keep calling to each other. Again, "I would be the kitten calling for the mother cat and there would be the response of the mother." After speaking in this strain for sometime he suddenly pulled himself up and said with the smile of a child, "Everything about secret *Sadhana* should not be told." He explained that it was impossible to express in language the ecstasy of the divine communion when the human soul loses itself in the contemplation of the deity. Then he looked at some of the faces around him and spoke at length on the indications of character by physiognomy. Every feature of the human face was expressive of some particular trait of character. The eyes were the most important but all other features, the forehead, the ears, the nose, the lips and the teeth were helpful in the reading of character. And so the marvellous monologue went on until the Paramhansa began to speak of the Nirakara (formless) Brahman. "The manifestation of the Formless has to be realised." He repeated the word Nirakara two or three times and then quietly

passed into *Samadhi* as the diver slips into the fathomless deep. While the Paramhansa remained unconscious, Keshub Chandra Sen explained that recently there had been some conversation between himself and the Paramhansa about the Nirakara Brahman and the Paramhansa appeared to be profoundly moved.

We intently watched Ramkrishna Paramhansa in *Samadhi*. The whole body relaxed and then became slightly rigid. There was no twitching of the muscles or nerves, no movement of any limb. Both his hands lay in his lap with fingers tightly interlocked. The sitting posture of the body was easy but absolutely motionless. The face was slightly tilted up and in repose. The eyes were nearly but not wholly closed. The eyeballs were not turned up or otherwise deflected, but they were fixed and conveyed no message of outer objects to the brain. The lips were parted in a beatific and indescribable smile, disclosing the gleam of the white teeth. There was something in that wonderful smile which no photograph was ever able to reproduce.

We gazed in silence for several minutes at the motionless form of the Paramhansa and then Trailokya Nath Sanyal, the singing apostle of Keshub Chunder Sen's Church, sang a hymn to the accompaniment of a drum and cymbals. As the music swelled in volume the Paramhansa opened his eyes and looked around him as if he were in a strange place. The music stopped. The Paramhansa looking at us said, "Who are these people?" And then he vigorously slapped the top of his head several times, and cried out, "Go down, go down!" No one made any mention of the trance. The Paramhansa became fully conscious and sang in a pleasant voice, "What a wonderful machine Kali, the Mother has made!" After the song the Paramhansa gave a luminous exposition as to how the voice should be trained to singing and the characteristics of a good voice.

It was fairly late in the evening when we returned to Calcutta after landing the Paramhansa at Dakshineswar.

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The Paramhansa died in 1886. That was the third year of my stay at Karachi, but, just about that time I happened to be in Calcutta. I followed the bier of the Paramhansa to the burning-ghat. All the disciples, including Vivekananda, were there and Trailokya Nath Sanyal was also present.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

MAHATMA GANDHI ON SISTER NIVEDITA

In a recent instalment of his "*Story of My Experiments with Truth*"—Part III, Chapter XIX—Mahatma Gandhi writes :—

"I then ascertained the place of residence of Sister Nivedita, and saw her in a Chowringhee Mansion. I was taken aback by the splendour that surrounded her, and even in our conversation there was not much meeting ground. I spoke to Gokhale about this and he told me that he did not wonder that there could be no point of contact between me and a volatile person like her."

"I met her again at Mr. Pestonji Padshah's place. I happened to turn up just as she was talking to his old mother, and so I became an interpreter between the two. In spite of my failure to find an agreement with her, I could not but notice and admire her overflowing love for Hinduism. I came to know of her books later."

The above remarks give a very false idea of the illustrious Sister, and do great wrong to her memory. We do not question the sincerity with which Mahatma Gandhi gives expression to his thoughts. But for the sake of Truth we must point out that he has got an altogether wrong impression of the great soul that lived and died for the cause of India. Mahatma Gandhi saw very little of the real Sister Nivedita. And it is no wonder that insufficient knowledge, that is always "dangerous," would create a great misunderstanding.

Mahatma Gandhi evidently saw the Sister at the American Consulate in Chowringhee, where she was temporarily staying as the guest of some of her American friends who came to visit India about the time he met her. Neither the mansion nor the splendour with which he was taken aback were Nivedita's. Her usual "mansion" was a small, old house in a lane in a humble quarter of Northern Calcutta, where, to quote the words of an English friend, she "preferred an ascetic life to the comforts and luxuries of her Western home." And the "splendour" that used to surround her usually at the small girls' school conducted by her came as a surprise to many of her visitors. Thus describes one of her lady students in a short sketch on the Sister—"The school house is far from being healthy or well-ventilated. The rooms are small and the roof very low. During the summer (when the school remains closed) the rooms get so hot that half an hour's stay there will make the head ache . . . There was no fan hung in Nivedita's room. She always used to have a hand-fan about her. The small compartment allotted to her, she decorated according to her own tastes. Most of the day she used to stay in that room buried in her work,"

At the express wish of her Master, Swami Vivekananda, Nivedita dedicated herself to the cause of the school. She used to spend some time in teaching the girls. But the major portion of her time had to be devoted to literary work undertaken for maintaining the school. Sometimes she had to pass through great economic difficulties. On all such occasions the first thing she used to do was to cut short her very limited personal expenses. She would deny herself even the bare necessities of life. And as the result of this hardship she often suffered greatly in health. To those who knew and could appreciate the story of her self-imposed and life-long penance, Nivedita, the Brahmacharini was the very personification of steadfastness and one-pointed devotion. To call her a "volatile" person is not only to misunderstand her but also to dishonour her blessed memory. We do not know who is really responsible for this unhappy expression. But whoever he may be, Mahatma Gandhi's experiment with Truth in the case of the illustrious Sister has not been a success. It would have been a complete failure had he not been able, in spite of his disagreement with her, to "notice and admire her overflowing love for Hinduism."

It is unfortunate that Mahatma Gandhi did not find any meeting point in his conversation with Sister Nivedita. But the idea that there could be no point of contact between them is preposterous. The Sister was a many-sided genius. She was a great spiritual idealist, a passionate votary of her adopted motherland, a vehement champion of Indian culture, a writer of rare literary abilities, an enthusiastic interpreter of Indian life and art, a most forceful leader of the national movement, a humble worker for the cause of Indian manhood, all in one. And many of the greatest sons of India found points of agreement with her, and could be counted as her life-long friends.

But like the greatest men and women of the world, she had her own ways of making friends. A complex personality that she was, she combined a hero's will with the spotless purity, kindly heart and self-sacrificing love of a perfect Brahmacharini. Even in the midst of her sweetness and tenderness, there was something in her character that might be termed militant. And rarely could one be included among her friends without facing an encounter with her. No wonder that after being the object of her sudden onslaught, some felt a sort of disagreement with her. In the words of one of her friends,—Mr. A. J. F. Blair, "Friendship with Nivedita was not a slow growth. It sprang to maturity at the first meeting, or not at all, and I do not know that any one was ever privileged to know the depths of her womanly kindness without first being subjected to that moral test." But to one once admitted to her friendship she would open her heart and give herself without any reserve. Often after an apparent disagreement there would come a great understanding, and one could feel that "no kinder-hearted woman ever breathed." It was not given to all, as has been the case with Mahatma Gandhi, to fully discover "the inexhaustible mine of gold" that Sister Nivedita really was. Why it was so seems to be beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals.

SHIVAJI AND RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

The tercentenary of Shivaji—the great Mahratta hero—was celebrated all over India during the last week of April and the first week of May. This widespread celebration is a clear proof of the new spirit that is swaying over the country, bringing together peoples of different parties and provinces, castes and denominations, in their worship of the great national heroes of India. There was a time when the Indians literally believed the alien historians, who through ignorance, bias or motive, described Shivaji as a dangerous brigand and freebooter. But thanks to modern researches, the real greatness and glory of the Mahratta King is being revealed and appreciated all over the land. This changed attitude is described by Rev. Dr. Macnical—a sympathetic Christian missionary—“Shivaji belongs to no class or caste; he is a national possession. He may be said indeed to have come to rebirth in the hearts of his countrymen, not of Maharashtra alone but of all India in the national awakening of the last twenty years.”

Shivaji was an embodiment of the spirit of freedom and independence. And in spite of his great struggle with the Mughal power, he possessed a unique religious toleration that was in fact an inseparable part of his noble nature. He fought against the Delhi Emperor not because the latter was a Mussalman, but because he was a menace to the religious and political freedom of the people whom the great Mahratta wanted to save and protect. Shivaji employed numerous Mohammedans in his army and navy. His first military governor of Phonda was a Mussalman. Several admirals of his fleet were Mussalmans. He confirmed all religious service grants for mosques within his territory, and even endowed them liberally. His treatment of Mohammedan prisoners of war and of women was marked by high chivalry.

Shivaji gave expression to his religious catholicity in his famous letter to Aurangzeb, protesting against the imposition of the “infidel tax”—“Even in the Koran, God is styled as the Lord of all men, and not the Lord of the Mohammedans only. If it be a mosque the call to prayer is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it be a temple the bell is rung in yearning for Him only. To show bigotry for any man’s creed is really altering the words of the holy book.”

Shivaji was a Hindu of Hindus. He was an ardent disciple of the Great Mahratta Saint Ramdas, and a devout worshipper of the Divine Mother Bhavani. True to the ideals of his religion, he allowed full religious freedom within his kingdom. “He went further,” Says Prof. Jadunath Sarkar in the *Modern Review* for May, “and though himself a pious Hindu he gave his state bounty to Muslim saints and Hindu Sadhus without distinction, and respected the Quran no less than his own scriptures.” Would to God that the zealots and fanatics who are responsible for our communal struggles were inspired by this noble spirit of Shivaji !

NEWS AND REPORTS

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON

Since his coming to the Boston Centre Swami, Akhilananda has been conducting two services on Sundays, and classes on the Gita and the Upanishads on Tuesdays and Thursdays respectively. On January 26th, the Swami represented Hinduism and spoke on "Fundamentals of my faith," at a conference held in the Central Church under the auspices of the Fellowship of Faiths. Nearly a thousand people gathered on the occasion. On February 27th, the Swami spoke on "Co-ordination of Life" in the New Thought Forum. The Hall of the Forum was well crowded. The Swami also attended another interesting meeting organised by the Fellowship of Faiths on the 16th of March, and spoke on "Who is my Neighbour?" in Mount Vernon Church.

The Centre celebrated the birthday of Swami Vivekananda on the 25th of January, when Swami Akhilananda cooked several Hindu dishes and served dinner to the friends present. There was a special devotional service in the evening. The public celebration came off on Sunday, January 30th, when Swami Akhilananda spoke on Swami Vivekananda's contribution to the world-thought. On the 5th of March, the Centre observed Sri Ramakrishna's birthday and Swami Akhilananda conducted the devotional service at 6 p.m. He also gave a talk on the religious practices of Sri Ramakrishna the same night. The public celebration took place on the 13th of March. Swami Paramananda arrived the previous day from the Ananda Ashrama. He conducted both the morning and evening services and spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. At 3 p.m. the same day Swami Akhilananda delivered a lecture on "Sri Ramakrishna's Message of Harmony of Religions."

On the evening of March 29th, the Centre celebrated its 18th anniversary. Many old friends were present along with several new ones. A spirit of love and peace pervaded the whole atmosphere. Swami Paramananda recalled many interesting phases of the past history of the work and also told of the new developments and expansion of the work at Ananda Ashrama. Many spoke appreciatively of the society's activities and eulogised Swami Paramananda for spreading spiritual ideas and ideals and thereby helping to bring about a greater union of the East and the West.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA

Sunday, January 30th was dedicated by the Ashrama to the celebration of Swami Vivekananda's Birthday. Swami Paramananda cooked Indian dishes and invited a number of guests for dinner. He paid a glowing tribute to Swami Vivekananda.

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna which fell on Saturday, the 5th of March, was devoted to meditation and other spiritual practices. A special service was also conducted by the Swami. The

public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday came off next day when several hundreds of people congregated for both the morning and evening services. At noon two hundred people took part in the dinner and several were entertained later on. It was a real Indian feast-day. The Swami delivered two impressive lectures on the life and influence of Sri Ramakrishna. The Ashrama members arranged special music which was much appreciated by all present.

Since the opening of the new broadcasting station at La Crescenta, Swami Paramananda spoke on Wednesday evenings on "Rhythm of Life," "Man, the Maker of his Destiny" and "Faith in Humanity." After his departure for Boston on the 7th of March, Sister Daya with other members of the Ashrama has been continuing the broadcasting of the message through speech, poetry and music.

On his way to Boston Swami Paramananda halted at Chicago and delivered a lecture at the request of local friends.

OPENING OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, DELHI

A new Sri Ramakrishna Math was opened with great solemnity and enthusiasm at Gariston Road, Delhi on the 4th May last. Swami Sharvananda came to the imperial city from Kankhal especially for the occasion. The installation ceremony was performed in the morning. Swami Ambicananda conducted the Puja with due rites, ceremonies and offerings. A large number of devotees partook of a sumptuous feast at noon. A public meeting attended by more than three hundred of the local gentry, was held in the evening. Swami Ambicananda entertained the audience for an hour with his charming music, both vocal and instrumental. Swami Sharvananda next spoke on the ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission. The meeting terminated with the distribution of Prasad.

Swami Nirgunananda, who will be permanently attached to the Math, will hold at present three weekly classes—one at the Math and the other two at Raisina and Timarpur. The Math has removed a long felt want, and is sure to spread its beneficent influence among the students and the general public.

LECTURES BY THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SWAMIS.

Under the auspices of the Y. M. H. A., Nawalapitiya, Ceylon, Swami Avinashananda of the Ramakrishna Mission delivered two public lectures in the Kathiresan school Hall on the 5th and 7th May. On the first day the Swami spoke in Tamil on "Education." He clearly pointed out the superiority of the ancient system in which the pupil imbibed true culture and developed character through constant personal contact with the Guru to the present day system which did not help him much in this respect, but depleted the pockets of the parents. The Swami appealed to the parents and teachers to take a living interest in the type of education that is to be imparted in schools, and to live exemplary lives, which always influence children more than precepts. The next lecture was on the "Service of Man." The Swami spoke in English this time, and began by saying that true manhood lay not in talks but in action.

It is through properly directed activities that practical experience and real knowledge could be gained. Service of Jiva or man he said, was in reality service to Siva—the God in man. Through service to humanity undertaken without the expectation of reward, name or fame, one could attain to the realisation of the Omnipresent God, and in that lay the secret of Karma Yoga. After the lectures the Swami also gave suitable replies to questions from his listeners.

Under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta, Swami Vishwananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Khar, Bombay, delivered a public lecture on the Sanatana Dharma at the Theosophical Hall, College Square, on Saturday, the 7th May. The Swami very lucidly explained the grand principles underlying the Hindu religion which was much appreciated by the audience.

Swami Saswatananda, Warden, Sri Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras, gave a series of seven lectures on the Cita at Ootacamund between the 8th & 29th May last. The meetings were organised by the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama and were held at the Ashrama on Sundays and at Sri Venugopala Swami temple on Wednesdays at 5-30 in the evening to suit the convenience of the audience. The lectures have created a great interest among the local public.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA LIBRARY, PURI

A public meeting was held under the auspices of the Library on the 12th May at Sasi Niketan, Srijiat Rasik Mohan Vidyabhusan presiding. A large number of ladies were among the audience. Srimati Swarnalata Devi spoke eloquently on the message and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Siddhananda and Srijiat Lalit Mohan Ghosal appealed for funds for the Library.

BUDDHA DAY AT RAJKOT

The newly started Ramakrishna Ashrama at Rajkot observed the last Vaisakhi Purnima, rightly called "the thrice blessed day", with due solemnity. In the evening of the 16th May, select people of the place who love and admire Lord Buddha gathered at the Ashrama premises and spent two hours in quiet thought and communion.

The proceedings of the evening began with a song appropriate to the occasion, after which Swami Vividishananda gave a short discourse in English on the life and teachings of the Master. While narrating the inspiring life he brought out the keynote of Buddha's personality—his large heart that felt even for the meanest of living things, and showed the special significance of his advent. "He came to fulfil and not to destroy the Mother Church," said the Swami. His work was one of reformation and reorganisation. And this he did by democratising religion—by giving the higher moral and spiritual ideas to all irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. He made Vedanta practical by emphasising the love and service of men and beasts as a cardinal virtue. He did not give anything that was altogether new. He presented the Sanatana Dharma with added force and made it living. Although Buddhism as a separate Church is not to be found in India, the land of its birth, Buddha

continues to receive from the Hindus the same homage and worship as they show to Rama, Krishna and other incarnations." The Swami spoke also about the renaissance that followed in the wake of the Buddhist revival in India—the renaissance in art, literature, philosophy and higher learning.

Mr. H. N. Pandya, Pleader, Rajkot and another gentleman of the place also spoke a few words about the Master in Gujrati and touched the hearts of the audience. With "Rama Nama Sankirtan" the celebration came to a happy close.

SWAMI VIPULANANDA'S EVIDENCE BEFORE THE TAMIL
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Invited by the Tamil University Committee Swami Vipulananda—of the Ramakrishna Mission,—who is now working in Ceylon, gave evidence before it at Madura, on the 20th April last. The Swami said that he was not sure, about an actual demand for a separate Tamil University. As long as the Madras University supplied the needs of the Tamil country there was no necessity for a special University for the Tamil districts. He would have a well equipped Tamil academy or academies in different districts for the study of Tamil literature and philosophy with provisions for the comparative study of other languages, especially Sanskrit as a sort of research work. Such institutions should have common syllabus and must be recognised both by the Government and the University. He observed that a first class University college for oriental studies and research work, affiliated to the Madras University would satisfy the present demand for the preservation and study of Tamil.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, PATNA

We are glad to receive the first general report of the Ashrama from its inception in June 1922 to December 1926.

Ever since it was started the institution has been rendering valuable service to the inhabitants of Patna in various ways—by holding religious classes in different parts of the city, arranging special lectures by distinguished speakers, rendering relief to the distressed, etc. The Ashrama maintained with great efficiency its Vivekananda Night School for the education of the labouring classes and Vivekananda Association for the moral, physical and intellectual culture of its members. It also conducts a library and the English weekly 'The Morning Star' which is popularising the institution both inside and outside the province.

It is regrettable to note that during the period under review the Ashrama had to meet a deficit of Rs. 370, the total amount of subscription received being Rs. 3,639 and the disbursement, Rs. 4,009.

The Ashrama requires a commodious building of its own with a permanent fund sufficient for its upkeep. This is estimated at Rs. 80,000 of which Rs. 9,701 have been till now donated. An appeal has been issued on behalf of the Ashrama by some of the prominent gentlemen of Behar. We hope the large-hearted public will help the Ashrama liberally and enable it to be of greater service to the country.