

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

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Let thy worship, thy hymns of praise, be the eternal solace of my life
Let my life brim over with songs of thy adoration, thoughts of thy Divine Grace
I shall see Thee, Mother, in the wide open sky, with wistful eyes.
I shall not ask for any boon, say not a word; I shall only lay myself down at thy
Foot with tears of bliss.
I shall rove about in thy endless expanse of heaven, scattering songs like flowers
representing thy glory
I shall steep myself in thy bliss, chanting thy holy names and sending their echoes
throughout the Universe
All my actions, all my thoughts of religion are thy worship.
Oh Mother, give me bhakti, firm faith, so that I may make thy "Feet the steel-
anchor of my life."
-- "Payalar Gan", Bhairji (Sri Gyatish Chandra Roy)

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MATRI VANI

Mataji said : "Write to my friend" and tell him that he must become a traveller on the path upon which peace is found. He will certainly have to undertake the pilgrimage to where no death exists and no decay, but where everything is ever present. Who is it that dies and who that appears in the guise of death? Unless these things are known by direct perception there can be no release from this ocean of misery. Let my friend strive without ceasing to abide in the presence of Him, the remembrance of whom for ever puts an end to sorrow."

* * * * *

While one is still guided by reason there is always the possibility of straying from the right course. So long as one has not realized that He and He alone is manifest in all modes of being, in all forms and in the formless, single-mindedness and unswerving faith are indispensable. Such one-pointed devotion must have for sole aim the revelation of the Beloved. Living among your people in a spirit of service be helpful to everybody.

* * * * *

Keep your mind ever surrendered at the Guru's lotus feet. The quest after Truth and to be truthful is man's duty. Do your utmost to remain anchored in truth and spend much time in contemplation of the Lord in a quiet, secluded place.

* * * * *

In everything and in everybody is but the One Himself. Try to be constantly aware of the fact that whatever is perceived at any time, in whatever way, are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being. How can the perceiver be excluded? Exclusion and non-exclusion are also none but He. Even the feeling of the absence of God is his manifestation—so that His Presence may be realized.

* * * * *

Man may find himself in all kinds of surroundings, yet he must not allow himself to be driven hither and thither helplessly by their influences. It is his duty under all

*. Mataji calls all children and unmarried people Her friends and all married people Her fathers and mothers.

circumstances to preserve his individuality and strength of character intact. To drift with the current is easy enough, but to stand firm as a rock is difficult. He who is able to do this will keep his head without wavering even among a dozen people of different points of view and lines of approach. This surely is the attitude that befits a human being.

When in one's heart of hearts one is seeking God—although unconsciously—it is but natural that worldly life should seem savourless and that polite, sweet sounding social conversation should jar upon one's ears. However, wait a little longer and see whether these feelings are permanent or only temporary. How can disbelief arise in one who has firm faith? The activities that invoke the presence of God such as japa, meditation or the reading and perusal of Sacred Texts will grow more and more attractive to you.

* * * * *

Every moment belongs to God. Endeavour to keep your mind dedicated to His feet. God, the Ocean of Mercy, who ever blesses the world, pours out His Grace at all times. It is incumbent on man to consider everything that happens to be for the best : 'For the best' denoting what is most helpful towards the realization of the Divine, the realization of the fullness of Bliss.

* * * * *

Twice daily when performing your morning and evening worship (*sandhya*) dedicate your *japa* to the Lord by the prescribed formula. At other times of the day when doing *japa* to further your spiritual progress such dedication is not necessary. But when at any time you decide to do a certain previously fixed amount of extra *japa*, then this should be formally consecrated to Him after completion. While walking or moving about, while eating or sleeping, while doing no matter what, try to sustain in your heart the remembrance of God in the shape of your *Mantra*.

* * * * *

It is the pure, undefiled flower that finds a place at the feet of the Lord and nowhere else. Take great care to spend your life in spotless purity, worthy to be dedicated in worship to the Lord. Speak about Him, meditate on His Glory, try to see Him in everyone, Him who is the Self, the breath of life, the heart of hearts. You feel lonely? In very truth you are not alone. Does the Supreme Friend ever forsake his friends?

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**PAGES FROM
"MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG"**

[Translated from Bengali].

-Prof. A. K. Dutta Gupta

Dhaka, Ramna Ashram, 18th March, 1943

I went to the Ashram again after supper along with Jatin, my affectionate relative. I had the desire to ask Ma in private about the incident that happened today with relation to Siddha Ma. Kirtan was being sung in the Ashram at that time. Ma was lying down on Her small cot. Sometime after Ma was taken for Her meals. After finishing Her meals Ma came and sat on the verandah of the Smriti Mandir. At this time ladies came one after another and began to talk to Ma about their private affairs. It became past 12 in this manner. I thought that if this thing goes on then even if I wait in the Ashram for the whole night I won't have Ma in seclusion. So I told Khukuni didi- "Didi, I have also something to talk to Ma in private. When Didi conveyed that to Ma, She replied- "All, right, ask Baba to come and sit." After finishing the conversation with those who were talking to Her Ma called me. Jatin and I myself went and sat near Ma.

Ma - Will others move away from here?

I - Not needed. I have not such type of secret matter.

Ma seemed to be waiting for me to ask.

I - Did Siddha Ma bring fruit with her from her home?

I - Why this talk again? Did you think otherwise?

I - The way you behaved that made everyone to understand that she brought the fruit beforehand just to dupe the people.

Ma - What other explanation can there be? Well, anything more?

I - Yesterday You had told that whatever She had spoken about Her feelings She had revealed the true facts in a frank way. But how can there be any harmony between yesterday's words and what has happened today?

Ma - I had told yesterday that whatever she had spoken about her feelings She had revealed was true and was expressed frankly. You did not pay heed to my words - 'whatever she had revealed'. (looking at Swami Paramananda) Is it not that so?

Swami Paramananda - Yes.

Ma - And what else I have said today?

I - Even if a person, who is caught with stolen goods, is not called a thief, will anyone consider him as a *sadhu*?

Ma started laughing.

Ma - Well, what else?

I - I have always heard you speaking that you would never say anything hurting anyone's feelings. You are also aware that a number of people are proceeding on the religious path through Siddha Ma. Have not their devotion and faith been shattered by what has been done by You today?

Ma - You cannot put blame on me for this. Have I done all this intentionally? Did I ask her to do all that by coming here? You have seen that I did not want her to touch. It was she who allowed me to touch her. When asked if I could touch her during her period of trance she had told to touch her. After that all that has happened happened automatically. Perhaps it was God's will.

I - When Siddha Ma was lying in trance then what did you see by pressing her body?

Ma - I had not pressed her body.

I - Perhaps I had seen like that.

Ma - Shall speak something to you in secret.

I - Well, speak.

By saying this I took my ears near Ma's mouth.

Ma laughingly said - "What will happen by bringing your ears near my mouth. Everyone will listen what I speak."

Hearing this two or three went a bit afar and stood there, but many continued to sit there. Seeing this Ma said - "Let's go. Then I should not speak."

Sometime passed in this manner. Suren Babu then said - I always used to see with a doubtful eye the matter of '*Prasad*' - giving by Siddha Ma. But She said many things correct during the period of Her trance. She had forecasted before that youngsters will burn Post Offices, etc. during Gandhi movement.

Ma - There is no doubt that a sort of trance happens. You have noticed that Ma's eyes are also unnatural. (To me) Did you not notice that I saw something by focusing the torch? Then I saw Ma's knotted hair. The knot of her hair has been prepared in an artificial way".

Khukuni didi came at this moment. Ma began to say laughingly to her - "Khukuni, listen what Baba is saying, that I have hurt the feelings of all by doing all this today. What have I done, Khukuni?"

We began to laugh heavily seeing Ma's mode of saying. For sometime the laughter went on. After stopping the laughter Ma spoke to me - "Well, if anyone is adored and worshipped by considering him as a God, what is the effect of that? Again, if a person is done accordingly even considering him as a human being, what is the effect of that also?"

I - If anyone adores and worships someone as God, then the person who does, obtains higher life (after death). And if anyone does the same thing considering as a

human being that leads to bondage.

Ma - Yes, if anyone is worshipped in the form of God that leads to higher life, but you should know that to consider any human being as God is very difficult. If that could be done then that is all right. One who can do that can even surpass his human *guru* and go to the higher world. But that is not possible for ordinary persons. In this state if any-one continues to worship and adores someone then he will imbibe all the merits and demerits of that person. That's why it is forbidden to touch or do *pranam* to all and sundry.

"You can question, then why *Kumari puja* is performed? Why puja of the stone piece in the form of Narayana is done? In these cases also the chance of danger is there. But in answer it can be said that the Name or in the form of He is worshipped, and called that also will be fruitful because the Name and the being that is called by that particular Name are one. Therefore, there is also the rule to do *pranam* and do *puja* of all considering them as the God.

"Again, you have said that this body does never do anything which may hurt one's feelings, that is also not correct. You have heard that this body did the same thing even in the case of Mouni Baba of Nabadwip. Mouni Baba used to sit silently inside a room. It looked after seeing him as if a stone image was made to sit. No portion of his body even slightly move. Baba's devotees and disciples told us that Baba sat in this manner whole day and night. Food was almost nil. He used to drink a little milk after fifteen days. But his appearance seemed to be quite hale and hearty and skin very soft. Infact there was no sign of fasting at all. It was further told that he did not talk to any one. But used to talk a little with those who seemed to be very keen. Nevertheless he talked to me at length and seeing this everyone there became surprised. They remarked that they had never seen Baba talking so much. Everyone used to consider him as an unusual great soul. His door used to remain open only for a few hours in the morning and after-noon when he used to give *darshan* to all. At other times the door used to remain closed.

"Arrangement was made for this body to stay in that very house. God's *Ila* (play) was as such that Baba's room was visible from the room in which this body was asked to stay. Baba's room was not bolted at times from inside and used to be only kept shut. One day during noon hours this body out of its own *Kheyala* entered Baba's room. It was banned to have Baba's *darshan* during this hour for all. Entering the room it was seen by this body that Baba was lying down comfortably upon a fine mat. He was wearing a fine costly dhoty, whereas when Baba used to give *darshan* to the general public then only a piece of torn cloth used to be wrapped round his waist. Baba was reading a letter in lying down position putting one leg upon the other one. Seeing this body suddenly in that room he became surprised. Afterwards he said to this body that he did not want to cheat people in this manner. But the landlord of that house compelled him to act like that; because the house has gone to someone else's

hand because of pressure of debt or some other reason. The landlord believed that if he (Baba) could be kept in that house in this manner for sometime then the house would not go out of his hands. Whatever may that be when we went to Navadwip again afterwards it was found that *Baba* was no more there. So you see that when *Baba* was exposed in that manner it became beneficial for him. What has happened this day that will also ofcourse be beneficial".

While discussing all this it was found that it was past 2-30 A.M. Ma asked me - "Baba, won't you go home?"

I - "I can leave if you say so.

Ma smiled a bit on hearing this. After a while Ma was taken to Panchvati for her to lie down. Standing in the Ashram compound I was just thinking what to do. Just then Jatin told me that he was feeling much unwell, so I immediately came back home along with him.

Sri Ma leaves Dhaka - 19th March, 1943

Ma will leave Dhaka today. Efforts were made to keep her atleast till the Holi. But, we were unsuccessful.

I went to the Ashram at about 9 A. M. Many have gathered in the Ashram since morning. Pramatha Baba Nibaran Babu, Charu Babu and others were found there. Ladies were talking loudly with Ma in the 'Nam Ghar'. Making no attempt to go near Ma in the midst of this crowd we sat in the verandah of Baba Bholanath's Memorial Temple and were talking together. The non-Bengali devotees who had come with Ma came to bid goodbye to us. We also expressed our affectionate regards to them after talking a few words with them.

At this moment Kirtan commenced in the 'Nam Ghar.' Considering that Ma had got the Kirtan started by the ladies we also went there. We saw that Ma was singing with Kartal by sitting on her small cot. Ladies and gentleman were all singing together. Ma was singing-"Narayana, Narayana, Om, Om." There was mild smile in her face, the deepness of the song seemed to spread over her whole body. Devotees too were singing loudly with their hearts along with Ma. After sometime Ma was taken for her meal. We also came out of the 'Nam Ghar'.

Seeing that it was about 10 a. m. I left for the station along with Manoranjan Babu. The Calcutta Mail was to leave at 11 A. M. It was arranged that Ma will be taken upto Narayanganj in Jatin's saloon. Jatin therefore was waiting at the station instead of coming to the Ashram. Ma was first taken to the I class Waiting Room. Within a moment the room was so much crowded that there was no scope to even enter the room and do a *pranam* to Ma.

After sometime Ma was taken to the saloon coach; many members of our home were in that train. My daughters put a garland around Ma's neck. Ma began to talk smilingly with devotees by sitting near the window. We went and got up in the adjoining compartment. The train started.

When the train reached Dolaigang Station Ma called us to her saloon. Manoranjan Babu, Jatin and myself went to Ma's compartment. Seeing me Ma told me - "Yesterday I wanted to tell you about one thing there. Now I can tell that. This opportunity has arrived now perhaps because it was to be revealed to you." Saying this Ma asked those who were near her to move a little distance and called me more near to her. I put my ear near Ma's mouth. Ma started talking - "Last night you had asked me what did I see by pressing the body of Siddha Ma. As a matter of fact this body did not press her body. When she fell down on the ground this body saw that one of her hands was under her back in an awkward way. For that this body while trying to put her hand in proper position found that she was trying to keep a fruit tight by pressing her palm. This body ofcourse knew from before that she had a fruit with her. Even then she was trying hard to keep the hand in that position so that the hand would not move. You see, if the trance was genuine then why she would be trying hard to keep her hand in that manner? Ofcourse, leaving apart her matter, even in the midst of trance one's palm could also be kept very tight. That is a different thing. I am telling you whatever this body did yesterday that was not done intentionally. Everything has happened automatically out of nature. This body knew everything. Even then it was asked if her *asan* could be touched by this body and she gave consent. If she had objected then this body would have sit at a distance and watch everything quietly. Nothing would have been revealed.

I—Ma, in your case is there any difference between that what happens of its own and what is done intentionally by you?

Ma No. But sometimes when I say anything may be spoken from one side just for the point of speaking. Yesterday you had said that in this matter others may feel hurt. Infact there was a stage when this body could not say or could not do anything which might hurt any one's feelings. In such condition all of this body used to be shaken because such a thing would hurt this body itself. If in the case of *Siddha Ma* this body would have such feeling then you would have seen this body even crying - 'Alas, such a thing, has happened through this body and thus this body would have cried to the maximum. But no such thing happened yesterday. Whatever has happened that day happened of its own. Nothing is revealed out of this body keeping in mind what anyone will do. Perhaps you might have been hurt by seeing what happened yesterday and might have thought that it would have been better if such thing would not have happened. Looking from the ordinary point of view it is felt like that. Even in a thing which may appear to be evil seen from the ordinary point of view there also may remain something beneficial deep inside the same. But you are unable to comprehend that. But I say unto you, try to accept with regards whatever good you may find in anything. Donot try to find out fault in others. Because, you should know

that what a person does to acquire knowledge is done almost as in a state of paralysis. They have no other option.....to do. Not to speak ill of others. About whom will you speak ill? Everything is the form of God. Good and bad everything is His revelation. When you desire to be honest and pure then you should accept with veneration wherever you may find anything good. If you see anything which is not praisable then you should pray to God — 'O lord, I donot want this sort of your revelation. Such a thing may remain in you.' Try to accept everything in this manner (These last words Ma meant for all).

Manoranjan Babu now raised a new topic. He asked - "Ma, what is *diksha* (initiation)?"

Ma (to me) — "When did your *diksha* happen?"

I — When I was 15/16 in age.

Ma — What is meant by *diksha* ?

I — What do I know?

Ma (laughing) — O, your *diksha* has happened so long back and you donot know what is *diksha*.

Ma asked Suren Babu also, the same question. Suren Babu answered - "*Diksha* is the way to attain God.

Ma— What is the need for that to us? We donot know God, Himself, What is the need to know the path to attain Him?

Suren Babu kept quiet.

Ma— The means or the way to know oneself is called *diksha*. To know oneself is to know God. God shows us the means in the form of the *Guru* so that we can know ourselves. Either through *Mantra* or through some power He makes available for us to know our own selves. That is *diksha*.

Manoranjan Babu— The *Guru* gives a certain *Mantra* or Name and we have to repeat the *japa* again and again. Why shall we do that? God has many Names. If I adopt any one of them which may be of my liking at times will there be no result by that?

Ma—One has to repeat the same Name. You know how is that? You take many things to make your body strong. Daily you take rice mixed with new type of vegetables. Vegetables and *dal* may be different but rice remains the same each day. Otherwise the body doesnot become strong. If you take only vegetables that won't do. Similarly there might be different Names and different *japas*, but all names and all forms are not meant for all. As for example your spect will not be fitting to the eyes of another and other's spect will not be fit for your eyes. Similarly each and every persons' God is also different. Of course when one reaches the final goal then every

one's God becomes his God. But before reaching that final stage each one's God remains different and he has to proceed with what the *Guru* has given to him.

Manoranjan Babu — Because of these different *Names* and *forms* there arises quarrels between different sects, as for example quarrels between the *Vaishnavas* & *Shaktas*.

Ma—This body is not saying anything of that type, I am saying that even those who worship Shiva their gods are also not one. Every one's Shiva is different. The *Shiva*, who is worshipped by you is not the same *Shiva* who is adored by another. The same thing with *Kali* and *Vishnu*. These is one *Vishnu* in numberless *Vishnus*, one *Kali* is numberless *Kalis*. That is why *Guru* gives that *Mantra* to a person which will lead to his salvation. There is no difference between *Guru* and the *Mantra*. As you can see the nose, ears and face of the *Guru* similarly you will find the same even in the *Mantra*. In fact *mantras* are nose, ears and face of the *Guru*. If one thus proceeds he will be able to know in time God or himself.

At this time the train reached Narayanganj. We got down from the train. Ma said to Manoranjan Babu - "Baba, nothing could be said about *diksha*. That can't be said in such a short time."

We took Ma to the Steamer and slowly came back to respective homes.

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ON MA ANANDAMAYEE

[Continued from before]

—M. M. Gopinath Kaviraj

We hear of a general complaint that Mother's language is not intelligible. The complaint is unfounded in so far as it relates to the language used by her in ordinary correspondence and conversation. The language of *Mātri Vāni* extracted from letters written rough Mother's dictation is, for instance, simple, graceful, straightforward and luminous. The complaint is perhaps true when we consider the language employed for interpreting profound experiences and transcendent truths. But it should be remembered that supramental truths do not easily lend themselves to an expression on the lower or even on the higher mental levels to which alone our language is adapted. It seems to me that what appears to the average reader with his logical bent of thought-structure as a riddle is a plain truth on a higher level of consciousness and has been recognized as such by eminent philosophers and saints. What looks like contradiction in logic and on the finite plane of mind, is verily a truism when the threshold of consciousness is lifted and we are face to face with the Infinite.

I propose, therefore to analyze some of Mother's well-known utterances which are apparently meaningless, and try to see if we can discover any great significance in them. Out of a large number of sayings we have chosen a few by way of illustrations. This will give an idea of what for want of a better word we might call Mother's outlook on life and reality.

(a) *Yāā* (य'त्त) : This expression cannot be easily rendered. The usual rendering would be something like 'It is what it is'. These words are often uttered by Mother when She speaks of the Absolute. It is difficult to say what it exactly stands for. One may equate it with the conception of Pure Being, Non-Being, Self, the Infinite, the Ineffable, the Universal, the Immaculate, the Immutable etc. according to one's point

*. The context refers to the life of the young queen Chudālā who realized Self-knowledge through yoga and jñāna and converted her ignorant husband Sikhidhvaja. It was asked how Chudāla could possibly conduct the affairs of the world after her Self-realization instead of keeping herself as the witness of all that happened in nature's course. Mother said in reply that true knowledge burns out the worldly life and with that the body also.

of view. It is the Nameless referred to under different names and the Formless under different forms. She also speaks of it as *Charam Param* (चरम परम) in the sense of Ultimate Reality. As for the implications of this enigmatical expression we may compare the following sayings of Mother Herself :—

(i) आछे, नाइ, नाइओ ना, आछे ओ ना, तारओ-आगे - या बल ताइ। (ii) दुइ बल, एक बल, अनन्त बल, ये या बले सब ठीक। (iii) देओयाल थेकेओ नाइ, ना थेकेओ आछे ऐ प्रकाशे। (iv) नाइ आछे तार मध्येइ सम्भव। (v) तिनि रूप धरुन ना धरुन या' ता' इ। (vi) सेइ स्थितिते ऐ भिन्न आर किछुइ नाइ - या' ता'।

- (i) Whether you say it exists or does not exist, or that it is beyond both existence and non-existence, or even beyond that—as you please.
- (ii) Whether you call it the One, the Two, or the Infinite, whatever anyone may say, all is well.
- (iii) When this is possible the wall is not there, although it exists, and even if no wall exists, yet it is there.
- (iv) For the Supreme it is possible to be everything and yet nothing.
- (v) A state of being exists where it is immaterial whether He assumes a form or not— what is, is He.
- (vi) In this state of complete poise nothing at all is any longer apart from Him, what is, is the Thing Itself.

This shows that in it there is no difference at all— not even between Being and Non-Being, between Light and Darkness, between Good and Evil, between Motion and Rest and between Personal and Impersonal. All is one— one is all. Even the equation is not possible, for True One is where there is no sense of the one. All this sounds paradoxical, but it is the highest truth. Nāgārjuna says :

“शून्यमिति न वक्तव्यमशून्यमिति वा भवेत्।
उभयं नीमयं चेति प्रज्ञाद्यर्थं तु कथ्यते।”

It means that it cannot be described as void or non-void, nor even as both void and non-void simultaneously, or as above the two modes of statements. Whatever is expressed in language is only a thought and appeals only to the thought level of human consciousness.

We have a similar description of the Supreme Reality by Mañju Śrī when he refers to *Dharma Kāya* of the Buddha. Thus Mañju Śrī says :

यो नैकोः नाप्यनेकः स्व-परहित-महासम्पदाधारभूतो, नैवाभावी न भावः खमिव समरसो दुर्विभाव्यस्वभावः।
निर्लेपं निर्विकारं शिवमसमसमं व्यापिनं निष्प्रपञ्चं, बन्दे प्रत्यात्मवेद्यं तमहमनुपमं धर्मकार्यं जिनानाम् ।

The Body of Truth is neither one nor many; it is the foundation on which the great

wealth of individual or universal good is based. It is neither Being nor Non-Being; it is a state of balance like the *Akāśa*; its nature is beyond man's power of imagination; it does not allow itself to be attached to anything and be soiled by it; it is free from change; it is auspicious; it is equal as well as unequal at one and the same time; it is all-pervading and transcendent.

We have an utterance in a similar strain from the great *yogī* Abhinava Gupta of Kashmir in a still later age. The following lines are addressed by the *Guru* to the disciple who has attained to Supreme Realization :

भावानां न समुद्भवोस्ति सहजस्त्वद्-भावजा भान्त्यमी
निःस्तयामपि सत्यतामनुभवभ्रान्त्या भजन्ति क्षणम्।
त्वत्-सङ्कल्पज एव विश्वमहिमा नास्तस्य जन्मान्यतः
तस्मात् त्वं विभवेन भासि भुवनेष्येकोऽप्यनेकात्मकः॥
यत् सत्यं यदसत्यमल्पबहुलं नित्यं ह्यनित्यञ्च यन्
मायामिर्मलिनं यदात्मविमलं चिद्-दर्पणे राजते।
तत् सर्वं स्वविपर्श-संविदुदयद् रूपं प्रकाशात्मकं
ज्ञात्वा स्वानुभवाधिरूढमहिमा विश्वेश्वरस्त्वं स्मर॥

"Things do not emerge of themselves—they appear only when they are thought out by Thee (projected by Thy imagination). They are unreal and yet for a moment seem to be real due to experience which is only apparent. The glory and grandeur of this creation is the result of Thy will and has its source nowhere else. It is for this reason that Thou, though one, shinest in all these worlds as many by virtue of Thy self-multiplying power.

"Whatever shines in the mirror of consciousness—be it true or false, small or great, eternal or temporary, defiled through *māyā* or pure by itself, all these experienced on the dawn of the Supreme Wisdom as of the nature of *Prakāśa* (प्रकाश) and marked by reflective self-knowledge Thou, the Lord of the world, realizing Thy greatness through personal intuition, wilt preserve in Thy memory."

The yogins speak of two-fold *Samādhi*, viz. *Nimilana* and *Unmīlana*. In the former aspect One alone shines in its unity—undifferentiated unity and one may say that the sense of unity is absent. One is, but it is not aware of itself as one. This means that *Śakti* does not function. In the other aspect *Śakti* is unceasing in its movement producing in consciousness a sense of one, many-in-one, one-in-many and many. And yet the two aspects are mysteriously one and the same in reality. They are co-eternal, and truly speaking, they represent a single truth. The Great *Prakāśa* infinite in its extension is wonderful—all contradictions are solved in that Light and it seems as if darkness and light have lost their difference in meaning in that unity.

[To continue]

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MY VISITS WITH THE JOY-PERMEATED MOTHER*

-Daya Mata

February 12, 1959, was a wonderful day in my life, for on it I met a holy personage, the joy-permeated Ananda Mayee Ma! Many years ago, in Los Angeles, California, U. S. A., my blessed Gurudev, Paramahansa Yogananda showed me a photograph of Ananda Mayee Ma and said to me : "Strive to become like her." That memory has remained these many years in my heart, and on February 12th I met at last my Ideal in the mother-form.

A small group of us came to India from America in October, 1958 to look after some organizational affairs of our Yogoda Satsang-Society, founded in 1918 by Paramahansa Yogananda, with headquarters at Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar. Knowing that Ananda Mayee Ma also has an Asram very near Dakshineswar, I secretly hoped that she might visit it during my stay in Calcutta. That desire was fulfilled, for on February 12th, I attended the Saraswati Puja at her Asram, filled with expectancy. As my eyes first beheld the blessed Mother, it seemed that a great dart of love went out from her and struck my heart, leaving me transfixed. I remained in that state for some moments, eyes locked on the Mother, feeling great waves of love surging within me.

Later our party was asked to go to an open tent where the Mother was already seated on a dais. We were motioned to sit next to her. I could not take my eyes away from her sweet face, so enchantingly full of love. My tears flowed. She tossed flowers to our party. Sri Prabhas Chandra Ghose, Vice-President of Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society, then introduced me to Ananda Mayee Ma. The Mother placed a garland of yellow flowers around my neck and I was plunged into an ecstatic state. When I opened my eyes the Mother gazed long and lovingly into my eyes. What sweetness—what blessing! I can say no more. She is a divine being.

We were served with *prasad*, while the Mother rested in her room; then we were told to go to the verandah where she would see us. I touched her in deepest reverence

*. Courtesy : Ananda Varta, Vol. VII

and love, just to have the blessing of her sacred hand. She put her hand over mine and gently stroked it. It seemed that my heart would burst with the love and joy that filled it. My tears could not be stemmed in this holy presence that so tangibly reminds us of the great Universal Mother of us all.

On the morning of February 13th our party again visited the Mother. She was seated on a wooden bedstead. Our group made their pronams and left gifts in front of her. I said, "O Ma, we offer you these fruits and flowers on behalf of all the disciples of our Gurudev, Paramahansa Yogananda, as a token of our deep reverence for you. They are but an outward expression of the deep devotion we feel for the formless Divine Mother that dwells in you."

Later in the afternoon Ananda Mayee Ma was out walking on the lawn facing the Ganges. Some of our party went forward to take her picture. I remained in the background deeply absorbed in that bliss within. As our group prepared to leave, I knelt silently on the grass, inwardly praying to the Lord within Ananda Mayee Ma for a blessing. I opened my eyes and saw her blessed tiny feet beside me. How tightly I held those feet within my mind and heart! I could not take my gaze away from them, because for months I had been inwardly crying to the Divine Mother to let me see Her Blue Lotus Feet. She had answered my prayer through Her child, Ananda Mayee Ma.

During one of our visits, Swami Kriyananda and I went to the main hall where the Mother meets the devotees each morning at eleven. The Mother was resting. Chitra, the young devotee who travels at times with the Mother, came and sat with us, asking questions about our work in America and about our way of life. I explained to her about our Gurudev's training and how he had taught us to control the body and mind through yogic techniques so that we can go deep in meditation—that whenever we had stirred unnecessarily he would say: "Is your love for Divine Mother so superficial that you allow outer distractions to take your attention away from Her?"

After a time Ananda Mayee Ma came in and took her seat on the dais. We sat quietly meditating while she listened to the people who had come for a darshan. How sweetly she smiled on each one! At times her laughter rang out merrily. She is like a divine child.

Our party visited the Ashram of the Mother every day that she remained there. Later she went to Calcutta and on the evening of February 20th we went to the home where she was staying, to show her a motion picture film of herself and our *Guruji*, taken during his visit to India in 1936. Paramahansaji first met her then, in the

Bhowanipur section of Calcutta. Later she visited him at his school for boys in Ranchi, Bihar.

Gurudev wrote a chapter about her sacred life, in his book, "Autobiography of a Yogi." That book has now been translated into many Eastern and Western languages, and thus readers all over the world have come to know and revere Ananda Mayee Ma.

On February 21st our group attended a *kirtan* at the Calcutta home where the Mother was staying. Her devotee, Chitra, told me that after the *kirtan* the Mother would see me in her room. When the chanting was over I went to her room. After a time the Mother entered, and as I opened my eyes to behold her, I noted her arms outstretched carrying a sari. How thankfully I received this blessing from her—one of her own cloths. She looked at me lovingly while I told her that I sought no counsel, I wanted nothing except love for the Universal Mother, to serve Her and my Gurudev until the last breath in my body. She smiled sweetly and replied, "Think of the Divine Mother in the morning, all day long, and the last thing at night."

During this visit I said that I felt selfish that she had given me so much love and attention. She answered gently :

"No, that is not selfishness at all. It is selfishness when one's attention is on the body, but your attention is fixed on this Self. It is not selfishness at all." What utter tranquility my soul felt in her presence!

Our final visit with the Mother was on February 23rd. She was to leave Calcutta early the next morning, and so a vast crowd, wishing for a *darshan* of her holy form, was present. The Mother had invited our group to see her at the home of devotee. We went there and sat in front of her, meditating. I found, in Her holy and loving presence, that my consciousness became immediately withdrawn, centered upon the Beloved Mother. On this occasion, as I sat on the lawn, absorbed within, suddenly I felt a tremendous spiritual experience in my spine, centering at the heart chakra. A feeling enveloped me of great, expanding peace, spiritual fulfilment and oneness with the Universal Mother. It seemed, too, that my heart would burst with the great surgings of love that flowed through it the sweetness of which flooded my eyes with streaming tears. After a time Chitra came up to me and said that I might now present to Ananda Mayee Ma the offerings I had brought, red and pink roses and a silk chaddar. As I placed them at her feet, she removed from her neck a string of small rudraksha beads. She put them about my neck said with great tenderness: "This daughter of yours ever lives in your heart."

During March and April our party from America travelled to North India. While we were in that area we made it a point to visit the blessed Mother again, this time in Rishikesh. During the "Week of Self-Restraint." How wise is the Mother to have inaugurated such a period every year, when devotees from far and near can gather about her to receive more concentrated spiritual nourishment from her motherly heart divine. I had opportunities to see the beloved Ma during this stay in Rishikesh, and above all, to meditate deeply in her presence. On one of these occasions I told her, "You have captured my heart." How sweet was her reply, when, like a tiny child, She said, "And I won't give it back!"

During our visit to Rishikesh it seemed that the Mother could not do enough for us, through her wonderful devotees who looked after us. The more I saw of them the more I was impressed with their selfless spirit and devotion.

It happened that I was asked to speak before the gathering one evening. I was told that Mother would give me part of her time in the program. I was introduced to the assembly as a disciple of Pitaji Yogananda. I told the audience about Master's limitless love for the Divine Mother, about his great task in the West to spread the message of Yoga. Then I dwelt on the duty of disciples—the duty to take up the mission of the Guru with ever-increasing zeal and selflessness. Having seen in India how devoutly saints are worshipped, I reminded the gathering that it is not enough to praise these saints and to seek their *darshan*; that we, the devotees and disciples, must use our lives rightly by striving to follow in their footsteps. Only by constant meditation and good actions may we become divine. The best way, by which we can truly appreciate what the great ones like my blessed Gurudev and Ananda Mayee Ma and other holy ones have to give us, is to become like them. I finished by saying that the only mission of such holy beings is to rouse in us the desire to find the Beloved within ourselves.

The next morning, after the meditation in the large hall with the Mother and her devotees, she placed around my neck a beautiful garland of roses. As she gazed at me with the tenderness she showers on all, my eyes filled with tears. I was burning with the divine desire for the Divine Mother and with longing to serve my own beloved Gurudev's work better and better, with greater humility, love and wisdom. All other thoughts were gone and my soul was afire. How can I ever forget those treasured moments spent with the Mother, and the words she uttered during our meetings, which are forever etched on my consciousness. Never can I forget her words, uttered at our last meeting, "The same spirit (*bhāva*) that I saw in your Master, I see in you.

With all of you who are devotees of Pitaji Yogananda, one feels here as if you were from his own Ashram." How deeply was I touched as she spoke of her regard for my Guru.

As we were leaving the Ashram, beholding for the last time the Mother's soft, loving gaze, I thought of my blessed Guru, who had chosen, as an eternal example for us, this flower of divinity, Ananda Mayee Ma, through which we have beheld the spirit of the ancient, Holy India, he loved so much which we too have come to love.

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"Perfect resignation gives the deepest joy of all. If you bear this in mind you will be ever at peace."

—Ma Anandamayee

THE UNINTERRUPTED REMEMBRANCE OF GOD'

[Akhandā Bhagavat Smṛiti]

If the current of our life is to be diverted from the surface of things and directed towards the depths within, we must keep the Goal ever before us and exert ourselves with our whole being, body, mind and heart, to advance steadily towards it. This effort constitutes everyone's individual *sadhana*.

Its main purpose is to awaken from self-forgetfulness, ignorance and confusion to full self-realization. The nature of each person's *sadhana* varies according to the instructions given by his Guru or spiritual guide, or he may proceed by the light of his own discrimination. Our approach may thus be along the paths of action, yoga, devotion or enquiry (knowledge). If our endeavour is to bear fruit, it will have to be continued with great patience and unswerving confidence over a prolonged period of time. Unless our practice is constant and uninterrupted we cannot hope to attain to perfection. It is of the utmost importance that everyone of us should individually endeavour to sustain the constant remembrance of God, throughout the day and night, by any means or device within his reach. If the combined effort of a whole group of aspirants lends its additional power to each individual *sadhana*, then by the Grace of God, success ought to be assured.

We therefore feel that if each one of us sets apart 15 minutes out of every 24 hours to be dedicated to the contemplation of God or to meditation on the Supreme Self and if by this method the perpetual remembrance of God throughout the day and night can thus collectively be achieved, the hope does not seem unfounded that each participant may reap the benefit of this uninterrupted stream of Divine thought. Everyone of us will have to take special care to adhere regularly and punctually every single day of his life to the 15 minutes he has chosen for himself. To change the time at one's own discretion or to be irregular in one's practice and miss it off and on is not permissible, since the current of meditation would thereby be broken.

In order to keep up uninterrupted meditation by this method, at least 96 persons will have to co-operate; how-ever it does not seem wise to depend on this number

Note : This was first circulated as per Mataji's special instructions more than fifty years before. Being reproduced again for the benefit of all new devotees--Managing Editor

either, for due to some accident, misfortune or other serious reason people may occasionally be prevented from carrying out the duty they have undertaken and their particular time would then remain unprovided for. We therefore propose that each 15 minutes should be chosen by not less than 5 persons; consequently at least 480 individuals will have to co-operate in order to ensure perpetuity. When we put this proposal before Sri Sri Ma, She seemed to welcome it with great joy and enthusiasm, saying: "By your constant dedication, by your continual offering of oblations a perfect sacrifice (*yajna*) will be performed uninterruptedly." Everyone without exception may take part in this combined effort and Mataji encouraged us to get busy in this respect. She further said: "It is a matter of great joy that all of you have decided to set apart 15 minutes each at a particular hour every day for the concentration on God's Name. In order to overcome occasional obstacles and difficulties in abiding by this decision one has to be adamant and persevering. The particular 15 minutes of every day that have been fixed should be dedicated to the thought of God for the whole of one's life. Once the time has been chosen it must never be altered again, but remain for ever reserved for the remembrance (contemplation) of Him. When a seedling has taken root it grows and spreads far and wide. By keeping regularly and punctually to a particular time one's *sadhana* will, as it were, take root and there is hope that it may gradually extend over the whole of one's days and nights. Each participant is free to meditate in his own way: it may be *japa* of a *mantra* or of any of the names of God with the help of a rosary or in rhythm with the breath; it may be the contemplation of his *Ishtha* or of the Void; it may be Self-inquiry, and so on. One is not bound in any way except to meditate at a particular time.

As a rule one should sit still in a meditative pose during those 15 minutes, but if this be impossible on occasions, one must at all events strictly refrain from speaking and concentrate the mind on God's Name: whether at home or in the street; sitting, standing, lying or walking, riding in a train, bus or aeroplane; in sickness and bereavement, in anger and distress, while nursing a patient, cooking or serving food; whether one be clean or dirty—under all circumstances whatsoever—those particular 15 minutes must be used for the remembrance of God. Without firm determination nothing can be accomplished, much less can one become free from conditioning (*Samskaras*). One has to make an unshakable resolve and try one's utmost to abide by it tenaciously. It is imperative to keep up the practice of those 15 minutes with regularity and devotion, so that it may ever continue without missing a single day—in the midst of extreme rejoicing as well as in times of severe perplexity and restlessness. Just as birds call regularly at fixed times throughout the year according to the laws of nature, prompted by some invisible power, so by virtue of prolonged practice the

remembrance of God will come to you automatically during the chosen 15 minutes. By sustained effort anything may be achieved. Amidst the tumult, the hustle and bustle of fleeting things, those few minutes should be kept apart for the invocation of Him who is Eternal Joy. The more time one can give to Divine contemplation the better, the aim being the unbroken absorption in the thought of God. This body addresses you as father, mother, or friend, it may therefore well request from you those 15 minutes once daily—surely, everyone gladly fulfils the desire of a near and dear one! But from those who look upon this body as a stranger, it begs those 15 minutes as gift given in charity."

Fired by Mataji's enthusiasm we request all who wish to co-operate in our scheme and dedicate 15 fixed minutes out of every 24 hours to meditation or to *japa* of God's Name, to communicate their name, address and the time they have chosen to the address given below. This will then be recorded in the register of the Ashram. Every man and woman without distinction of religion, sect, nationality, caste, profession, age, etc. etc. is invited to contribute his or her share in this attempt at an uninterrupted remembrance of God.

In order to ensure the continuity of this meditation we politely request every participant to kindly inform the Varanasi Ashram 4 times a year whether he or she is attending to the chosen time punctually and regularly. This will give us the chance to enrol new participants wherever necessary and thus to avoid breaks in the meditation.

Dates on which the information should be sent :

- (1) Mataji's birthday in the first week of May.
- (2) August fullmoon (*Jhulan Purnima*)
- (3) November full moon (*Kartik Purnima*)
- (4) January 14th (*Paush Sankranti*)

All letters should be addressed to :

Sri Panu Brahmachari,
Ma Anandamayee Ashram,
Bhadaini, Varanasi, U. P.

*

HOW I MET ANANDAMAYEE MA

— His Holiness Syed Hazrat Talattuf Hussain Sahib

Meeting with the Lama

From the early days of my life I was inclined towards Sufism. For this reason I always went to see every mahatma, sadhu, faqir, saint or divine I heard of. But none of them could pacify my soul. When I felt very uneasy I left my home in Dehra Dun and travelled to Bhootan, Nepal and Tibbet. In 1919, at Lhasa in Tibet, the land of the *Lamas*, I met the great Lama. I felt some spiritual comfort in his company and requested him to make me his *chela* (disciple). He refused, put a *tasbih* (string of beads) into my hand, held one end in his own and remarked : "Both of us are beads of the same *Tasbih*".

Turning point in my life

After this disappointment I went to Assam to pay homage to the late Hazrat Shah Jalal Sahib, a great Divine. One night when I was near his tomb I was advised to go to Baghdad Sharif.

My journey to Iraq

With great difficulty I managed to reach Iraq and then to the dargah of Piran-i-Pir, Dastgir Ghausul Azam Hazrat Mohiuddin Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (the greatest Muslim Divine). Then I began to look for a *Pir* (spiritual guide) and at last met Sheikh Sayed Sahib. I decided to stay in Baghdad for ever and requested the Sheikul Islam to make me his *murid* (disciple). But he refused saying : "You cannot stay here and should go back to India, as you will have four more children. You will come across some lady with great spiritual power and derive much benefit from her."

I came back to India and began to look for *Majzoob* (women who are absorbed in the love of God to such an extent that they seem mad). I met many such women, but realized that I had not yet found the right person.

My first meeting with Sri Sri Ma

In 1936 in Dehra Dun when I was going somewhere, a man came running to me and said : "You are wanted by Mataji". I responded to the call. She received me at the door and enquired whether I had been to Iraq and whether the Sheikul Islam had

refused to become the spiritual guide. I replied in the affirmative. She then advised me to correct my pronunciation of the Arabic words I used in the *wazifa* and to start offering *ishraq* (after sunrise prayers). This was my first meeting with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee.

After that I used to visit her off and on and in view of my old age she always addressed me as "Pitaji". After some time I began to have visions of gods, goddesses, prophets and divines while I was awake. I owe all this to Mataji.

Distribution of prasad

Whenever I happened to be in Mataji's room and somebody brought sweets. Mataji asked me to distribute them to all present.

One day an orthodox Hindu gentleman was present who did not like to take sweets from the hands of a Muslim. I sensed his feelings although he did not utter a word. I reported the matter to Mataji and She explained to the man that She did not follow any particular religion and that all were equal in Her eyes. This impressed me very much and consoled me to a great extent.

My early meetings with spirits

Once I complained to Mataji that although I could see spirits, observe their lips moving, yet could not hear their voices. She advised me to be patient and wait for some time. I followed Her advice and the faculty to converse with spirits was vouchsafed to me at last.

The Function at Solan

In 1946, the Raja of Solan held a big function which was attended by sadhus and mahants from all parts of India. At the request of Mataji I also was invited.

One day the sadhus began to ask each other what they had achieved in the spiritual field. Somebody said : "Let us also ask the only Muslim in this congregation". The question was put to me, but as I said I was not allowed to disclose my secrets. When almost all of them including the Raja insisted that I should give an answer to their query and Mataji also asked me to do so, I related some of my experiences. I told them that Rama Chandraji, Krishna Kanhaiya and Durga Ma (Hazrat Rabia Basri) were all present before my vision. I told them what sort of clothes they wore, that Kanhaiya was standing under a tree and playing on his flute and that Durga Ma was wearing a crown. On hearing this I was greatly cheered and applauded by the audience. Everybody looked with appreciation at me. I would have never given away these secrets, had not Mataji herself asked me to do so.

Separation

Physically I am far a way from Mataji now, but spiritually I am not. I am always by Her side and recite the following verse every now and then :—

O' Mother if I could get near Thee
I would praise Thee day and night,
I would touch Thy feet and worship Thee,
O' Mother! O' Mother! O' Mother!

میں جو جانتی ہوں کہ میں تم سے دور ہوں، لیکن روحاً میں تم سے
شروع کرتی ہوں کہ میں تم سے دور ہوں، لیکن روحاً میں تم سے
میں جو جانتی ہوں کہ میں تم سے دور ہوں، لیکن روحاً میں تم سے

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"I am in all beings
All beings are in me.
This is the whole truth,
Nothing to embrace,
Nothing to relinquish,
Nothing to dissolve."

MOTHER— A Symbol of Higher Life for Man

—Prof. Gangacharan Das Gupta

When we sit before Mother we feel we are dwelling in a Divine atmosphere of peace and repose. She sits like the morning star heralding a new dawn in the east. We move freely, breathe freely. All the cares of our worldly life drop away for the time being. The whole outlook of our life undergoes a "Sea change into something rich and strange", in the warm Mediterranean of Her mind.

With filmy eyes and yet with a heart full of humility and devotion we watch Mother's ways. We realise She has drawn us very close to Her and the welfare of each one of us is Her great concern. When She talks, Her words shed a Divine grace and lead us away from the dirt and smoke of our material life.

Her voice is soft, low, mellow in timbre like that of a violin-cello; it wafts us away to regions where the forces of Heaven mould human destiny, where we cease to feel ourselves as isolate units, where with invisible ties, all beings feel united in one Composite Being-God. We come to live beyond the petty restrictions of our selfish daily routine. Her life radiates the glory, the joy of serving One Master who pervades all creation.

Those of us who feel life burden-some and bitter to the point to tears, find great relief in Her presence, when we notice in Her a child-like tender quality, always eager to listen to our woes and cares and to give aid whenever needed. Her words act as a balm to our lacerated hearts. It then becomes as clear as daylight how poisonous and foolish and petty were our squabbles for individual little happiness in the face of the menacing events of the present age. Her smiles at the corner of Her tender and sharp lips indicate Her great sympathy for our follies and errors as men. She points out with unerring fingers that our only path of escape lies in and through God. Compassion for suffering souls produces a moist glitter in Her eyes, while Her hair tied on Her head in a knot with stray curls fluttering and breaking away from it gives Her a look of the Mother Divine.

The way She talks to Her children will be best illustrated by a few extracts from a diary of one of her devotees.

*. Shakespeare—The Tempest.

This is the English Translation of the gist of a conversation in Bengali between an old man and Mother :—

Etawah, 15.9.50.

Q.— Mataji, is a Vision of God possible in these days?

Ma.—Why in these days? It has always been possible.

Q.—I mean direct vision with our eyes.

Ma—A vision as clear as day-light. There is no doubt about it. It is His Nature; if you call Him, He is ever ready to appear. He manifests Himself clearly; it is on this account that there goes a saying that *Bhagawan* (God) is at the disposal of His *Bhakta* (devotee). It is the nature of a living being to create life. So human soul is called *Jivatma* and not *Paramatma*. *Jiva* moves in a closed curve of birth and death. In a stagnant pool germs of life thrive and these develop into living beings Strain that water through a filter and it will be pure. But there was pure water at first and it becomes pure again. So *Jivatma* is by nature *Paramatma*. It is *Atma* all along before and after.

“The belief that God does not exist in you is the chain by which the *Jiva* is bound : it is the smoke-screen called *Maya*, that covers your real Self. Remove it and God will stand revealed in all His glory.

“Pitaji, there is no peace in the world. You get just a drop of happiness in your family life and your face beams with joy. When it is gone there come sorrow and doubt and despair. A child is born and there are shouts of joy. When it passes away, darkness clouds our mind. All our joys are turned into mourning. Pain and pleasure go together like your body and its shadow. Such is human life!

“How to avoid this dilemma ; this swinging of the pendulum, between happiness and misery? You lose yourself in the little happiness you obtain in your worldly life but care not at all to discover the source from where all happiness springs—which is called Supreme Bliss. How long will you move in a vicious circle in this way? Choose one line of action. Can you hope to have all the enjoyments of the world and capture at the same time, the supreme source of joy by living a worldly life?

“But there must be a way to find the source of supreme happiness. You all desire it. *Ananda* is the very essence of your life; you are by nature immortal and pure; intelligence (ज्ञान चित्) is the sole basis of your being.

“You don't want ignorance and affliction, nor decay and death, because you are by nature their opposite. You don't desire what you possess already. But the course of events in the world gives a different turn to your life and this causes your pain and despair. You are not asked to retire to the forest or to become inert, unresponsive like a stone to what goes on about you.

“You have to start your life from the position God has placed you in. Be His servant. If you repair to the forest let your mind feel that it is your own home for the time being. From there the way will be open to higher life. Look upon your child as *Balgopal* (Sri Krishna in His childhood), your little daughter as *Kumari Uma*, your wife as *Griha Lakshmi*. Don't do any harm to anybody. Let the little attachment you have developed to people about you, continue within its minimum limit. When the call will come for your final exit, all the ties of life will have to be snapped up and you won't have a moment's delay. Why do you weep? Judge it yourself this world is but a *Dharmasala* (Traveller's inn). We meet people there who are on the way. The goal of your final re-union is the *Atma* or Self. Forgetting this, you look upon your body as your own self and that is the root of all bondage, of all the miseries of life. This world means perpetual motion; you yourself are in the chains of the Ego. So you want to know your birth right. You desire to be free, to throw off your chains. Try to enquire from where you have come. When there is serious disorder in the body, the thought of your son, wife, friend or brother vanishes. You are engrossed with the sole idea of saving yourself. So you find that your self or soul is the highest object of your love. Self is none other than Ram who dwells in every one of you. Lower animals pass their lives enjoying only food and sleep. But how do you pass your days as a rational being?

“Just as there is a veil of ignorance over you all, there is also a way of escape. Gird up your loins and say, “I must try my best to find a way out.” This will-to-be-free is your sheet anchor. “God is and I must find Him” should be the motto of your life. See that not a single breath be wasted in the pursuit of this aim. What you spend after things of the world is a sheer waste.

“*Hari Bhajan* or worship of God is choosing one line of action, one way that would lead you to His presence. It does not mean that there is only one way. You can go to the station from every house in the locality. What is important is to stick fast to one way and march. Let truth be your refuge. For God is Truth. Abide by Truth in all ways of life and God will stand revealed. He is Truth, Intelligence and Beauty. You have such a lovely body; God forbid that such an asset be not wasted with the poison of the feeling of enjoyments of the world!”

Mother continued,— “This little girl of yours, Pitaji, implores you all to choose one way, here and now. You must not nibble away your time in idle pursuits Trust not a single breath of your life. It may pass away any moment. At all times think of Him. This will give you peace. When we desire little things of the world, we obtain them easily. But in your quest for Him, don't expect anything from Him, except His Grace. He is One, Indivisible, Perfect, - the one goal of all men.”

Here Mother narrated a parable in Her own exquisite way :—

There was a great devotee. He spent years in prayers, but could not get a vision of God. Full of grief and despair, he decided to tour about the country, but kept up the spirit of search after God. 'The more I shall labour for Him', though the 'The more His unfailing mercy will destroy all obstacles in my path'. He developed such concentration of mind that the remembrance of the Divine came to him without any effort.

He soon met a fellow traveller. The two started together on this journey. On the next evening they came to the mansion of a house-holder who entertained them lavishly with food and drink served in golden vessels. They informed the host that before dawn they would be away and would not meet him. So before they left at dawn the stranger companion stole one golden cup. This caused some surprise to the devotee, who asked the companion, "Is this the reward for such hospitality?" The reply was prompt,—"You do your work, let me do mine."

Next they went to the house of another person on their way to another village. They were driven out from every house of the village. Some said, "Both of you are stout and strong; why don't you work and earn your living?" Both were suspected of being thieves or dacoits. However, with great difficulty they were given shelter for the night in a corner of the cow-shed. Before dawn when they left that place, the said stranger companion left the golden cup in the cow-shed.

The devotee felt some relief, they retired for the night to the house of a pious worshipper of Ramji. The husband and wife with a baby, few months old, were the only inmates. Both the guests were cordially entertained. But when they left before dawn, the associate of the devotee throttled the baby to death. The devotee expressed horror at the strange conduct of his companion. At this the latter replied as before, "You do your work, let me do mine."

The devotee seriously thought of shunning the company of the stranger, when they got to a river-crossing. There arrived a young handsome boy with a letter in his hand. On seeing him the heartless companion of the devotee hacked the lad to pieces. This was too much for the devotee. He screamed out,—“You must be a demon in a man's shape. Get away from me.”

But the fellow traveller said in a calm and unruffled voice :—“I stole a gold cup in the first village. Because all persons in that village were so lavish in their hospitality to the *sadhus*; was a great snare and harmful to their spiritual uplift; it fostered a love of show amongst the house holders too. To all saints there is no difference between gold and a clot of earth. But my theft of the golden cup would make them change their conduct towards ordinary *sadhus* who should shun entertainments like

poison.

"In the second village people were totally indifferent to sadhus. Finding a gold cup as a reward for giving shelter to two sadhus will lead them to change their attitude."

"In the third village, both the husband and the wife had almost reached their goal by the worship of Ramji. The attachment to the new born babe had drawn away half of their devotion away from Ram. With the child gone, the intensity of their *Vairagya* (non-attachment) to earthly objects, will increase a hundred fold."

"In the fourth case the boy was the son of the Chief Minister who was carrying a letter with instruction to kill the young prince about to succeed the king his father who only recently died. The minister was plotting against the life of the prince to instal his own son on the throne. In which case there would have been misrule and bloodshed, and many persons would have suffered in consequence."

The devotee was struck dumb with astonishment. When he requested the stranger to disclose his identity, he replied—"I am your *Ista*—God for whose vision you have yearned so long. I have been with you all along watching the course of your life."

After telling this story Mother continued the thread of Her conversation. "Look here. No action, done from a good motive, is in vain. The fulfilment of his desires came to the devotee in this shape. What little you will do day after day will lead you on the goal and shorten your path."

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"As you sit in the Samyam (Saptaha) doing japa, practicing *dhyana* for the revelation of what? —For being bondless. Try to accept that bond only, by adopting which you may become totally free from all other bonds."

—Ma Anandamayee

RELIGION AND SCIENCE*

—Lama Anagarika Govinda

“On a planet more than a thousand million years old it is hard to believe—as do Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Buddhists—that the most important event has occurred within the last few thousand years, when it is clear that there were great civilisations before that event. It is equally difficult to doubt that many events as significant for humanity will occur in the future. In that immeasurable future the destiny of humanity dwarfs that of the individual. If our planet was created a few thousand years ago to end a few years or a few thousand years hence, it is conceivable that the main purpose to be worked out on it is the salvation and perfection of individual human beings. No religion which accepts geology can regard such a purpose as being but subsidiary. If we define religion as our attitude to the universe as a whole, the new time-scale will make us humbler as individuals, but prouder as a race.” (J.B.S.Haldane, “Possible worlds”)

It certainly is true that the destiny of the individual appears to be utterly insignificant in view of the vastness of the universe and the immeasurable future destiny of humanity. But where does the notion of the immensity and harmony of such a universe and of the eternal destiny of humanity spring up? Certainly not in the human race as such or as a whole, but in single individuals in moments of higher vision on or through persistent concentration of their mind upon problems detached from the interests of daily life. And is it thinkable that an individual as a momentary, insignificant phenomenon should be able to grasp (or to invent) the vastness and harmony of the universe, and to perceive time-spaces of many thousand million years (as in astronomy), if it were not linked up with something that outlasts the existence of the individual and even the human race, and which at every moment goes beyond the confines of individual consciousness? The individual, therefore, is more than its momentary form of appearance. It is the meeting-place of the perishable and the imperishable, the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite, of which neither can be experienced (or, in fact, can, exist) without the other. If salvation or perfection is possible at all, it can only take place in the individual and not in the ‘human race’, the very concept of which is the creation of, and only exists in, the individual mind.

Whether the salvation or perfection of individual human beings was the main

* Courtesy: Ananda Varta, Vol. VI.

purpose to be worked out on this planet or not, the fact that this is the only goal worthy of the human mind to strive for, cannot be denied. Whatever the purpose of our planet may be (if one can speak of a 'purpose' at all), there is no other way left to the individual human being, than to develop all its inherent qualities to the highest possible state of perfection.

The attainment of this state of 'salvation', however, implies the overcoming of all narrow individual limitations and the recognition of super-individual realities within one's own mind. Thus salvation, if we agree to define this term with Julian Huxley as the achievement of harmony within ourselves as well as with the world around us, and as "an extension of our narrow core to include in a single grasp ranges of outer experiences and inner nature"—this salvation or enlightenment, as we might call it, is no more an exclusively individual concern. It is the most universal experience the human mind can attain, and from the very outset it demands a universal attitude; for he who strives for personal salvation, without regard for his fellow beings, has already deprived himself of the most essential means for the realisation of his aim. Whether we are able to liberate others or not, if we are not ready to contribute to the best of our capacity towards this aim, we have no chance of progressing on the way of salvation. This is not a philosophical, but first and foremost a psychological question, a question of our practical attitude towards life.

As there are no absolute individuals and no rigid boundary lines between one form of life and the other, because each centre of consciousness influences, penetrates and thus partakes in the other,—it is clear that each form of life is intrinsically connected with all others, a fact which becomes more and more obvious to the individual in the course of spiritual progress. The more man liberates himself from the illusion of being a separate entity, the more he experiences himself as the totality of all that exists, and it is in this experience that he no more thinks of liberating 'himself' but the 'whole world' which has become conscious in his mind. This is the Great Way, the Mahayana, the Great Vehicle.

A religion which accepts such an outlook is neither impressed by geological time-scales nor by astronomical figures in the measurement of interstellar space, nor can it regard the perfection of individual human beings as subsidiary in view of the immensity of such time and space dimensions. On the contrary : that such discoveries were possible and that the human mind was able to grasp such immensities, proves that individual human beings are indeed capable of higher development.

Furthermore, the Buddhist conception of time and space is really an anticipation of the discoveries of modern science. The Buddhists never thought that the advent of Gotama Buddha was the first of such events in the history of the world,—as Chris-

tians, Jews, and Mohammedans thought with regard to their respective religious leaders. Just as there have been Enlightened Ones in the past, so there will be enlightened beings in the future. There is no limit in both direction. And similarly with regard to space, the Buddhist never confined his universe to this terrestrial world, but admitted the possibility of innumerable worlds. True to Indian tradition, he was accustomed to think in dimensions which even in this our scientific age arouse an almost superstitious and primitive fear in the average western mind.

Indian thinkers never lost their sense of proportion. They neither overestimated the importance of man in relationship to the universe, nor did they underestimate his value, as modern science is inclined to do in the face of those newly discovered spatial and temporal dimensions. Even the scientist is apt to be impressed by size and duration, as if any particular value were inherent in them or attached to these properties. He feels small and insignificant in the vastness of space and time, because he forgets that these properties are the creation of his own mind. And even if they could exist independently of him, would it not be even more astonishing and significant (and pointing towards a higher value) that a mere 'speck of dust', like man, should be able to conceive and to contemplate the enormous dimensions and qualities of the sun, or even of innumerable solar systems? I very much doubt that the sun of any other of those gigantic celestial bodies, if they were gifted with consciousness, would be able to be aware of man. Man, probably, is as much bigger than the atom as the sun is bigger than man.

Thus, man takes a middle position in the scale of dimensions, and apparently it is this position which enables him to be aware of the microcosms as well as of the macrocosms. The 'smallness' of man, therefore, is no proof of inferiority but perhaps a positive advantage, and the same may hold good with regard to his shortlivedness.

A thousandfold longer life would perhaps imply a slowing down of his rhythm of consciousness, which would result in a lesser degree of sensibility and alertness, while a considerably shorter life might deprive him of that relative stability which is necessary for comprehending causal connections on a bigger scale.

At any rate it is futile to attach any value to size or duration as such, because the smallest fractions of time and space hold as many wonders and incomprehensible infinities as the biggest solar systems and spiral nebulae. And, after all, we could just as well regard smallness as a criterium of perfection. By reversing one's standpoint and by seeing the world from the other end, we become aware of the relativity of our habitual notions, theories, and unshakable 'facts', which we mistake for 'eternal truths'.

There are many spiritual exercises—especially among Tibetan aspirants of yoga—which "aim at destroying habitual notions accepted by routine and without personal

investigation. The object is to make one understand that other ideas can be put in their place. It is hoped that the disciple will conclude that there cannot be any absolute truth in ideas derived from sensations which can be discarded while others, even contradictory to them, take their place." (David-Niel, "With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet", p. 253).

The doubting of theories was a characteristic feature of Buddhism from its very beginning. The Buddha himself said, that he held no theories, neither about this world nor about the next, neither about God nor soul. Thus Buddhism, even in this respect, has forestalled science, of which Haldane says that it "owed its wonderful progress very largely to the habit of doubting all theories, even those on which one's action is founded." (Op. cit. p. 224).

But it must be said that doubt, as much as faith, must be founded on discrimination and insight : without these positive qualities no creative progress is possible.

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"Come, come, obtain such a thing by achieving which all your craving will cease, and there will be no more craving to fulfil your desires."

—Ma Anandamayee

A UNIQUE PERSONALITY

—Akshay Kumar Datta Gupta

To many people Mother Anandamayee is not only a wonder but an enigma. Even in her early youth she was a wonder to all when she performed all her household work with a knack and neatness much beyond her years, but a puzzle when she frequently went into a condition resembling swoon which not being like ordinary hysteria or epilepsy, they were all too slow to recognise as *samadhi*. Next, to their awe, many things (to use the Mother's own expression) came to pass through her physical being without any apparent effort on her part, in fact without her will or wish. They were, as she explained long later, *Yogic* states or experiences of various sorts coming spontaneously. This indeed is a unique feature, especially as no *Guru* or other directing hand, visible or invisible, is acknowledged, nor any previous birth admitted in which they might have been gone through so that residual impressions were left to germinate and fructify in this incarnation. Has anything like this been seen or heard of before?

The *Yogic* states and experiences spoken of above, be it noted, were not merely symbolic or partial, but as thorough and complete as they could well be. To give an example : One day Mother asked Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj, a very high authority in such matters, how many forms of *trataka* was he aware of? On his modestly replying : Only four, the Mother proceeded to demonstrate some thirty forms of *trataka*, needless to add, to the unspeakable astonishment of the great Pandit.

Uniqueness clings to the Mother like the beauty or complexion of her person, and is evident in all her words, bearings, and proceedings. They are never insipid, trite, or humdrum, but always bear the hall mark of superior wisdom and genius.

The Mother has no affiliations so to speak, a feature which differentiates her from all saints and godly characters that we know of. She never acknowledge having formally practised any creed or cult (much less all, as in one well known case) for any length of time, and, therefore, never betrays any fondness or partiality for any in her words or recommendations. Nor does she repudiate any creed or cult honestly pursued by any individual or class or devotees. Votaries of all creeds and cults find in her a ready and sympathetic listener. Not dignified toleration but perfect understanding marks, and indeed adds strength and weight to, any advice or guidance that she readily gives to those troubled by doubts or indecision.

Another unique feature of the Mother is that she never owns having a will or

wish (*ichcha*) for anything. All her proceedings are said to be unplanned and unpremeditated. Now *ichchha* in the sense of desire (Sanskrit *kama*, *trishna*, Pali *tanha*) so far as it implies a sense of want is a sign of imperfection and dependence. This may conceivably be absent in her as it is said to be absent in *Jivanmukta* persons, that is, those liberated from the shackles of *Maya*, though still in the flesh. But does she, people ask, also without any *ichchha* on her part exhort people to live purer and more spiritual lives, practise *samyama* (abstemiousness, continence etc.) herself prescribing the modus operandi, and do other things likely to promote their welfare spiritual, sometimes also temporal? Here is an enigma.

To be absolutely free from wish is not in conformity with the theistic, or at any rate Puranic conception of God-Even in the Yoga Philosophy (Patanjala System) we are told by the great scholar Vyasa that though God (*Isvara*) has no axe of his own to grind (I am merely giving the sense and no translation of his actual words), He has still a concern viz. to help those who strive for *Kaivalya* that is complete dissociation from Prakriti the material nature. A concern is not very different from will, though God is perfect, in all respects.

Sruti also uses such words as *aikshata*, previewed, *akamayata*, desired, when speaking of Brahma intent on creation. And Brahma is without question perfect and independent in all respects.

In Tantrika poetic thought (e.g. the well known song) the great Mother of the Universe is described as *ichchhamayi*, *ichchha* being conceived as Her nature.

How to conciliate all these views with the Mother's repeated affirmation of the complete freedom from *ichchha*?

The Mother often likens herself to a harp which requires to be struck in the proper way to elicit the desired tune. The greater the skill of the performer, the more perfect and varied is the tune. She is yet more cryptic when she says with reference to any of her acts, whatever comes to pass at any moment passes. It is apt to convey the idea (wrong as we believe it to be) that all her acts and proceedings are but reactions of outside forces on a perfectly vacant, though sensitive, mind.

According to a very Great Yogi, *Maha Sakti*, the highest and ultimate entity, has only one definable trait which he described as *spandana*, vibration. It is from this *spandana* that creation proceeds. It is no mark of any sense of want or imperfection or dependence on Her part but of perfection and independence.

Do Mother Anandamayee's proceedings result from some such *spandana* essential to her nature?

The above is not offered as an explanation but a very humble and no less diffident suggestion.

But explanation or no explanation, the Mother remains a wonder. Even her supposedly enigmatic words are delivered with a charm that is truly angelic. Wonder holds its ground, enigma gives way.

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**SHRI ANANDAMAYEE —
A SIGNIFICANT MANIFESTATION OF ECSTATIC
GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS**

—Swami Sivananda, Rishikesh

Shree Anandamayee is one of the finest flowers of the Indian mystical life; she is the best image to contemporary consciousness, of the silent and radiant greatness of a God-intoxicated individual. In her we find the brooding East brought into a dynamic realization, in everyday life, of the transcendental states of spiritual awareness and being. She is one of the most shining diamonds in the luminous crown of contemporary Indian spiritual life. May She live amidst us, longer and yet longer and continue to spread by the very mere act of her living, abundant joy and peace! May the Almighty Lord grant her health and strength and preserve her amidst us, for many many more summers to come!

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MOTHER IN SOUTH INDIA

[Continued from before]

Pondicherry (Sri Aurobindo Ashram) 3rd November, 1952

At the request of some of the inmates of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, who were known to us, it had been decided that Mataji* and the mahatmas with the rest of the party would pay a visit there on 3rd November, 1952. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, the well known writer, singer and disciple of Sri Aurobindo had sent us a Bengali poem written for the occasion (a free rendering of which is given below).

"Ma Anandamayee! You have come to this remote part, O pure and holy one, so that we may see you. You will speak with accents of love, charged with joy and sweetness. We will touch the dust of your hallowed feet and sing our songs before them. We offer our devout salutations, O Mother, with fervent gratitude."

We reached Pondicherry at 9 A.M. on 3rd November. Some of the inmates of the Ashram who were known to us, had helped to make arrangements for our stay. Our party was accommodated at the guest house near the sea. At 11 A.M., Mataji and the rest were taken round the Ashram. We went first to the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and seated ourselves by its side. It was a very beautiful spot. The Samadhi had been finely decorated with flowers. A branch of a nearby tree overhangs the Samadhi as if forming a canopy over it. A number of people had gathered there to see Mataji. Shortly after, some one came along to take us to *Mother*. We were first led to Sri Aurobindo's room and seated there. Then we were escorted to another room where Sri Aurobindo used to sit. As we entered moving aside the curtain, we saw *Mother* standing there. As Mataji approached her, *Mother* stood gazing at Her fixedly, occasionally smiling a little. Mataji too stood there looking at her steadily. After a while, *Mother* placed in Mataji's hands a rose and a 'beli' flower with two pieces of chocolate. Mataji gave her back the rose and one piece of chocolate. *Mother* kept the chocolate but again offered the rose to Mataji who now returned both the flowers. In this way when the two flowers had passed from hand to hand two more times, *Mother* tore off a bit of the 'beli' flower and gave the rest to Mataji which She handed over to me as She usually does. *Mother* then left the room and we all returned to the guest house.

* In this account of our visit to Pondicherry Ashram, Mother (Ma Anandamayee) will be referred to as 'Mataji' to avoid confusion with the *Mother* of the Pondicherry Ashram.

At 4 P.M. we were taken to the spacious play-ground near the sea to see the games etc. *Mother* was playing with the younger boys and children. At 5 P.M. we went to the gymnasium where *Mother* was awarding marks to the children taking part. We were then shown the workshop where the inmates make articles for their own use. One thing which struck us was the equality of the sexes in matters of dress, games and other activities. At 4 O'clock the ladies had come out dressed in half-pants, shirts and white shoes with a piece of cloth round their heads and went about freely taking part in games and other activities.

At 7 P.M. Mataji was taken to see the inmates at their exercise-- marching in step and moving the limbs all in unison. A little way off a man was telling them what to do from a room fitted with a mike. Owing to this habit of regular exercise, we learnt that there were but few cases of illness among the inmates. At this time the lights went out and everybody there became silent and motionless just as they were, sitting or standing. We learnt that this was the time for meditation. After a short while the lights came out and the exercise continued.

When this was over, Mataji was taken to the place where *Mother* was, who also had been present there all the time. A man was standing by her side with some fried groundnuts in a wooden vessel. *Mother* gave a spoonful of these to Mataji with a wooden spoon. Mataji looked at these and smiled a little. Later *Mother* began to distribute these groundnuts to the many children present there. Mataji asked the inmate who was accompanying us to tell *Mother*, "This little child (pointing to Herself) was the youngest of the lot." When this was translated to *Mother*, she smiled a little and said in English to this effect, "Ever a little child." We then came away. We were shown the dining rooms or halls where the inmates take their meals. We were told that there are about 800 inmates in the Ashram.

At 8 P.M. Mataji was taken to the apartment of Sri Dilip Roy at the latter's request. He had expressed his desire that he would sing before Mataji for an hour. A number of people were also present. Dilip Kumar introduced a Punjabi lady named Indira Devi as a disciple of his. We were told that she would go into a trance like state and in that condition see in vision Mira Bai from whom come songs which she takes down. A collection of songs composed thus was presented to Mataji.

Early next morning i.e. on 4th November, we left Pondicherry for Aruanchal, the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

A week or so afterwards when we were at Srirangam, we happened to meet a gentleman who had been to the Pondicherry Ashram shortly after we had left. From him we learnt that some of the inmates of the Ashram were disappointed at the shortness of Mataji's stay there. It was then explained that this could not be helped as the

Mahatmas were anxious to continue their tour. Our programme was fixed almost entirely according to their wishes and convenience. As regards Mataji Herself, there was no question of preference of any kind whatsoever. When Mataji heard about it. She said with a laugh, "Whatever comes to pass is right. This was to be on this occasion."

Chidambaram, 4th November

Leaving Pondicherry in the morning we halted at Chidambaram to see the famous temples there on our way to Arunachala. We went to the ancient temple of Kartika and later to that of Shiva, where there was an image of Shiva in 'Tandava' dance, with the left leg raised well over the head in His famous dance pose. It was known as the space-image of Shiva because He dissolved into space (*Vyoma*) while engaged in the dance. In other places of South India there were images of Shiva corresponding to the rest of the elements viz. earth at Shivakanchee (Ekameshwar Shiva), water at Jambukeshwar, fire at Arunachal and air at Kalhasti. Adjoining the temple was a huge image of Vishnu lying stretched in *Ananta Sayya*. The images in many of the temples of South India were artistic and beautiful beyond description. We also went to the 'Nritya Sabha' where there were, besides other images, 108 female figures in various dance poses according to the Bharat School of dance.

Arunachal, 5th and 6th November

We then proceeded to Arunachal where we reached at 11 A.M. The Ashram was situated at the foot of the hill. It was a very quiet and peaceful spot. Mother stayed in the guest house built by the Raja Saheb of Morvi while the Mahatmas and the rest of the party were accommodated in the guest house within the Ashram itself. Shortly after our arrival, Mother went to the Ashram. Mrs. Taleyar Khan took Her to the Samadhi of the Maharshi and also to the room where he stayed for nearly 22 years continuously and where later he received 'Nirvana'. Mother then returned to the guest house.

At 5:30 P.M. Mrs. Taleyar Khan brought Mother to the Ashram. Five Brahmins were seen engaged in reciting the Vedas near the Samadhi of the Maharshi as they do daily at this time. The daily satsang was held on the spacious grounds near the Samadhi.

Mother spent the day looking over the Ashram. In the afternoon we went to the Ishan Math founded by Sri Ishan Swami. We also went to the house of Sri Arabinda Rose, who was not at home at the time, as we had sent no intimation of our visit. He

* Maharshi Raman used to stay at different places on or near the hill on his first arrival here. Later he lived in the Ashram when it was built. He used to say that the Arunachal hill was his father and mother both. He saw Shiva and Parvati here and used to say that they were always present here.

hastened to see Mother shortly after. Mother said to him, "Your house has been stolen", and began to laugh.

Sri Bose—"Why steal the house only, Mother, steal me also."

Mother—"Well, when one's house is stolen and one has no place to go to, consider where he will stay."

Mother then was shown the cow-shed, kitchen, dining rooms, store rooms, etc. in the Ashram. Every thing was neat and well-appointed. On Mother's return to the guest house, Mrs. Taleyar Khan introduced a middle-aged Sadhu saying that he had been the personal attendant of Maharshi since his boyhood. Maharshi rarely or never slept in the usual manner but passed the nights sitting or half-reclined. This Sadhu used to sit up with the Maharshi and accompanied him when the latter moved about the place with a torch when others had retired to sleep. The Sadhu said in Tamil, which was translated into Hindi by Mrs. Taleyar Khan, that he had a few words to say to Mother. "The Bhagwan (meaning Maharshi Raman) is no longer here. But I notice many similarities in Mother with the Bhagwan in talk and manner." Several other inmates of the Ashram were also heard to remark to the same effect about the similarity between the Maharshi and Mother. In fact, the wonderful spirit of regard and affection with which Mother was received among them left an indelible impression on all of us.

Mrs. Taleyar Khan was looking after Mother with whole-hearted devotion as if she had no other care or thought. We learnt that the Maharshi looked on her with particular favour and kindness. We also met the brother of the Maharshi, Sri Sarvadhikari.

The foundation laying ceremony of a temple of the Maharshi was performed in our presence. After Puja and other ceremonies were gone through, Mother was asked to lay the foundation stone. She touched the piece of stone which was then placed in position. The members of the Ashram committee were present. Someone read out an address to Mother in which they expressed their joy and gratitude at the visit of Mother on this occasion. Mother was garlanded and presented with fruits, etc.

In the evening a lady, the wife of a Madras barrister, sang before Mother to the accompaniment of Sitar, Mother too began to sing with her as if She was learning the song. Mother asked me to take down the words of the song which I did. Mother sang the song over and over again with relish. The correct tune too was captured and reproduced.

In the morning we visited the temple of Trivikram and several others. In the afternoon we went to a temple which was the second biggest in South India, the biggest being the temple of Madura. Intimation of our visit had been sent earlier by Mrs. Taleyar Khan. As we reached the temple, music began to play. An elephant, gaily decorated, saluted Mother with raised trunk. A large number of people had

assembled with flags and big umbrellas to receive Mother and the Mahatmas. We were taken to the temples of Ganesh and Shiva. The latter temple had a courtyard with a thousand pillars. The upper part of the temple had been redecorated by Sri Tarapore of Madras at a cost of about Rs. 20,000/. The image of Shiva known as Jyotirlinga was seen in a dark cave-like spot. Near it, the devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi pointed out a corner where the Maharshi used to sit. Large pictures of the Maharshi and of the places where he stayed had been placed near the spot. Adjoining the temple was a well and a wooden street where under a tree the Maharshi used to practise austerities till his body came to have a thick coating of earth and dirt. It is said that when the Maharshi came to this part, he went straight to the temple and spoke thus before the image of Shiva, "Father, I have come to You. You have brought me here. Do now as You will."

We next went to the Devi temple, also a very big one with beautiful figures of goddesses with different poses.

Kumbhakonam, 7th & 8th November

We set out for Kumbhakonam on 7th in the morning via Srirangam (Trichinopoli) and Tanjore, a distance of 175 miles from Arunachal. At Kumbhakonam Mother stayed in the Hari Om Ashram on the bank of the Kaveri. It was a very quiet spot with plenty of cocoanut trees and banana plants. In these parts one often comes across places where these plants stretch as far as the eyes can reach.

In the afternoon we visited the temple of Saranga Pani. There was a big gathering at the daily satsang.

Next morning we went to the famous temple of Kumbheshwar, where the image of Shiva was of a peculiar shape like that of an earthen vessel placed upside down. We also went to the temple of Sri Rama where we found large images of Rama, His brothers and Hanuman in black stone. In the front were gold images which are taken out in procession during festivities. In the afternoon we went to the temples of Vishnu and Shiva at Mayavaram 20 miles off.

In the evening satsang, a girl put the question to Mother, "Mother, the body grows old; but why does not the mind remain young and childlike?"

Mother—"Do not wish to be like the ordinary child of the world. Be a child who never grows up. The only reason why the childlike state does not last is desire".

Q—"How to acquire the childlike state?"

Mother—"Seek the company of the pure and the godlike and obey the Guru and the elders. This will lead to the spontaneous unfolding of the true childlike state."

[To continue]

*

"I am ever with you."
—Sri Ma



With most humble pranams from

**-Jacques Vigne,
Almora**

