

# MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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## MATRI-VANI

As to self-surrender : by constantly endeavouring to live a life of self-dedication, it will come about one day. What does self-surrender mean, if not to surrender to one's very own self.

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*Jagat* (world) means ceaseless movement, and obviously there can be no rest in movement. How could there be peace in perpetual coming and going ? Peace reigns where no coming exists and no going, no melting and no burning. Reverse your course, advance towards Him, then there will be hope of peace.

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The natural impulse to have faith in something, which is deep-rooted in man, develops into faith in God. This is why human birth is such a great boon. It cannot be said that no one has faith. Everyone surely believes in something or other.

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A man's belief is greatly influenced by his environment ; therefore he should choose the company of the Holy & Wise. Belief means to believe in one's self, disbelief is to mistake the non-self for one's self.

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Man thinks he is the doer of his actions, while actually everything is managed from 'There', the power-house. Yet, people say : 'I do', How wonderful it is !

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The light of the world comes and goes— it is unstable. The Light that is eternal can never be extinguished. By this Light you behold the outer light and everything in the universe; it is only because it shines ever within you, that you can perceive the outer light.

All paths are good. It depends on a man's *sanskaras*, his conditioning, the tendencies he has brought even from previous births. Just as one can travel to the same place by plane, by train or by car, so also there are lines of approach for different types of people.

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What is *dharma* ? Those actions which are conducive for attaining to Him, who is desirable for everyone. This is also the natural way of life. Sorrows are due to unnatural ways. So that is *adharma* .

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Regular prayer purifies the mind and the heart. Set apart at least ten minutes for your daily prayer at a fixed hour. You may even go on doing your usual work during this period, but observe silence and meditate on Him in any way you like. See that throughout your life there should be no slackness in regularity and punctuality.

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Exert yourself to the limits of your power, however feeble. He is there to fulfil what has been left undone.

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Don't sit idle. Always be engaged in doing something useful. Either chant God's name in silence, or read a good book, or discuss a good topic. But don't waste your valuable time in idle gossip.

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Discipline of the tongue and other sense organs will help the mind to withdraw from other things and will turn it inwards.



## TWO INCIDENTS

— Sri Vijaiananda (Dr. Weintrob)

We have frequently heard Mother say that She does not go anywhere; yet we see Her travel from place to place. Being all-pervading and therefore everywhere at all times, Her body and its movements have significance only for us. Mother has assured us that She will never leave us, no matter where we may go or what we may do. I feel convinced that She is the all-pervading Divine Consciousness, for whom there is no limitation of space and time, for whom the word 'impossible' has no meaning. However, for most of us; this knowledge is only on the level of the spoken word. Many just repeat it from hearsay. But those who have for a longer period of time lived under Mother's guidance, have experienced in a variety of ways the benediction of Her presence, and are able to understand that Her blessings and Her divine love are the same, whether we are far or near Her physically. But our mind is like a stupid child that has to be taught his lesson again and again, because he keeps on forgetting it, until it is hammered right into his brain. On occasions something happens that impresses deeply on our foolish minds the evident fact that Mother is ever with us, seated in our own hearts, guiding us constantly, removing obstacles, saving us from dangers. It is to this that I want to refer here.

### (1)

In 1954 Mother's birthday celebrations took place in the Almora ashram. I was then staying at the Varanasi ashram and proceeded to Almora to attend the function. Already for three years I had enjoyed the good fortune of living under Mother's direct guidance. During the first half of this period I had constantly travelled with Mother, accompanying Her wherever She would go. To leave Her even for a single day was a source of almost unbearable mental suffering to me. This is how Mother at first attracts us towards Her physical presence, in order to wean our minds from all worldly attachment. Love for Mother—although it is still *moha*—purifies mind and heart, awakens, and greatly increases our yearning for the Divine. What may be achieved after long years of struggle by the practices of pranayama, japa, or selfenquiry, is accomplished within a short period of time, effortlessly as it were, by pure and intense love for Mother. In fact, intense, pure and selfless love for

Mother is in itself a most powerful *sādhana*. This love has then to be expanded progressively to 'the all-pervading presence. Thus Mother leads us stage by stage.

Some temperaments may actually feel Mother nearer, while far away from Her in space. This may sound a paradox, but can be explained as follows: When we are with Mother physically, Her sweetness and kindness, Her childlike simplicity may make us at times forget Her divinity. While far away, if the mind is capable of rising beyond the physical aspect, we have perhaps a greater chance of grasping that which abides in the heart.

When talking of Mother's divinity, it may not be out of place here to draw attention to some misunderstanding, not uncommon with Westerners. For people in the West, grown-up in the belief of one of the Semitic religions, to worship God in the form of a human being is considered a great sin, a blasphemy. In the Occident, it is the dualistic doctrine that prevails—God being worshipped as the Lord or Creator of the universe, while the individual soul is conceived as remaining ever separate from Him. In India, on the other hand, the doctrine of Advaita is accepted commonly by the educated. According to the advaitic teaching, the ONE, who is beyond all thought and description, is the 'Being par excellence', the substratum of everything; without Him nothing can exist, in fact, He alone really exists, the phenomenal world being but a surface play, like the waves of the ocean. In a perfect Being, this Divine Consciousness, this Eternal One is present in His full effulgence, without any covering veil. Therefore it is quite natural to look upon such a Being as the Divine Incarnate.

But let me again take up the thread of my story. During the second half of the three years that I had spent travelling with Mother, I could bear to remain without Her for short intervals; but never (as far as I remember) had I been without Mother's *darshan* for more than a month. When I came to Almora for the birthday celebrations, the yearning for Mother's physical presence had come again, even stronger than before. The infinite Love of the Guru is quite different from what is usually called 'love'. Real Love knows no weakness. It may even appear hard and merciless on occasions. The grown-up child was clinging to the toys of the baby, and Mother most probably knew that the time had come for him to shake off the habits of the infant.

Mother's skill in seizing the psychological moment is wellknown. At such a moment I was made to promise to remain in the Almora Ashram for one whole year, without travelling anywhere. One whole year without seeing Mother ! It seemed like eternity to me. Previously, even after fifteen days of separation, I would count the days and wait for Mother's return, like the well-known *chatak* bird for the rain.

Mother stayed for more than two months at Almora that summer. Whilst She was there, a number of improvements were made in the Ashram, which thereby became a place provided with modern comforts, such as electric light, tap water, etc. Only too soon the inevitable day of Mother's departure came. I was standing by the road-side, looking at Mother's car that was ready to start. It was beyond my imagination that Mother, knowing my state of mind, could leave me behind for such a long period of time. Before starting She called me, gave me Her blessing, and uttered a few kind and soothing words. The car began to speed down the road to Kathgodam. I followed it with my eyes until it vanished out of sight. All kinds of childish ideas flashed through my mind. I thought that Mother was just testing me and soon would send back someone with a message for me to join Her. But the time passed and nobody came. My mind was overcast by sadness, as the sky by dark clouds. I felt helplessly despondent and depressed. Of course, I was not compelled to stay on. ( I have never witnessed Mother exercising compulsion for anyone). I could have easily followed Mother to the plains— She would probably have laughed the matter over, as had in fact already happened on a former occasion, and waited for a better opportunity to make me stay in solitude. But then I had given my word and moreover, my mind having matured in the meanwhile, I understood that it was necessary for me to practise *sādhana* and lead a secluded life. I thus tried to divert my thoughts from their painful one-pointedness, keeping myself engaged in some work or other. During Mother's sojourn at Almora, I had temporarily occupied a room near the tank of the Patal Devi temple, since the Ashram had been overcrowded. Now I had to shift to the Ashram. So I began to pack and arrange my belongings. But my sorrow would not leave me. I was slowly ascending the narrow path leading from Patal Devi to the Ashram. The sky was spotlessly blue, the air fresh and light. In the plains, I mused, there must be broiling heat, heavy with dampness. Here, at Almora, was the calm stillness of the Himalayan mountains with their majestic beauty. In the plains I would have been in the midst of the buzzle and noise of the towns. Travelling with Mother means to endure all kinds of hardships and inconveniences. Here I had every facility, almost as in my own home. But of what value were the beautiful sceneries, the bracing climate, physical comforts and all the rest, when the main thing was lacking, namely the happiness I found in Mother's presence. It was a happiness that did not depend on any outer circumstances.

With eyes veiled by tears, I was gazing at the gorgeous range of mountain peaks in the direction of Kasar Devi. All of a sudden something extraordinary happened. My whole being was flooded with joy. Mother was there ! Here, present



before me ! Yet, not in Her physical form .....But how to describe what cannot be put into words ? There was no form—yet I could see Her long black hair floating along the mountain ridges, although it was not to be beheld with these eyes. There was no face, although I could distinctly perceive Her divinely sweet smile filling my heart with inexpressible joy and peace. Glued to the spot I stood like a small child gazing in awe and wonder at Her majestic features. She was outside and also inside of me—verily, She was my life-force, my *prāna* having taken shape, nay, She was the *prāna* of my *prāna*. No sound could be heard, but in the depths of my heart I understood the meaning of Her silence. It was telling me, "Why do you lament, O fool ? I have not gone far away from you ; I am ever with you, ever present in your heart, I am your Real Self." This experience lasted for a few minutes only, but it sufficed to disperse the clouds of my misery, to chase away the heavy mists that had obscured my understanding.

( 2 )

Not only in times of distress is Mother present; She is ever watchful, even where the small details of our daily routine are concerned. The following is an instance of how we are sometimes made aware of this fact.

It happened at the Varanasi (Benares) Ashram. That Ashram, apart from its sanctity, is one of the beauty spots of the city. Even tourists often come to see it. It is situated right on the banks of the Ganges, built on an elevated foundation, overlooking the river. The terrace and the roofs command an extensive and inspiring view over the Ganges.

Here, perhaps more than elsewhere, the Ganges has a great natural beauty. In the rainy season it becomes flooded and gives the impression of a huge lake. To the left, the crescent of the ghats up to the bridge spreads out. In the dark of night the funeral pyres may be seen burning at the *Manikarnika Ghāt*, standing out like sign post, to remind us in the eternal city of the impermanence of all that is born. To the right, on the opposite river bank, is visible the small but picturesque town of *Ramnagar*, with the palace of the Maharaja of Benares. Opposite *Ramnagar* lies ever green *Lanka* and the Hindu University. At the time of which I am telling, the Ashram was much more charming than it is now. Its beauty was enhanced by a large semi-circular terrace, protruding over the river, with two small, finely built temples on either side. The spacious hall below the terrace was used for religious gatherings, such as Kirtan, devotional singing, discourses or discussions on religious and philosophical topics, and so forth. To the right and left of the hall were a few rooms to accommodate Ashramites or guests. The whole Ashram front

with the terrace, the hall, the exquisite little temples and the guest-rooms, had to be demolished a few years ago, since they were in danger of collapsing, due to damage caused by high floods.

At the time to which my story refers, some threatening cracks had already appeared. The hall could not anymore be used for public gatherings, and visitors were not allowed to go downstairs. Only a few inmates occupied some of the side rooms. I happened to be one of those fortunate ones. I say 'fortunate', for I enjoyed the great privilege of living in solitude, right in the midst of that crowded Ashram. My room, facing the Ganges, was near "Anandamayi Ghat". In the stillness of night I frequently would sit in the hall near a window that opened out unto the river.

Next to the Ashram, on top of the *ghat* is a small shrine dedicated to Sri Ganesh. Every year the community of fishermen who live in the vicinity, organize a function that continues for five days. The celebration begins on the fourth day of bright moon of the month of *marga shirsha* (November-December). On this occasion a raised platform is erected over the *ghāt*, the upper part resting on the steps of the ghat, while the lower is supported by wooden posts and beautifully decorated. Every evening, when their day's work is over, the devotees assemble in the pandal, where *kirtan*, devotional singing and the recitation of scriptures continue until late at night.

During one of those nights, I was as usual sitting in the hall, looking down at the river. Mother was not at Varanasi at the time. I could distinctly hear all that was being said or sung at the function on the *ghāt*. Frequently, *sādhakas* who start engaging in regular spiritual practice and live a secluded life, become very sensitive to the vibrations of their surroundings. This was also the case with me at that time. But the loudness of the function did not disturb me at all, so long as it was of a religious nature. On the contrary, I listened with great joy and appreciation to the Nāma kīrtan and the *bhajans*. But all other kinds of sound or noise would sometimes considerably upset me.

That night I could observe that the mood of the people on the platform was gradually changing. Although I was unable to understand the words of their songs, yet the tunes and the laughter of the audience gave me the impression that the celebrations had taken a worldly tune. It was perhaps quite harmless and moreover, my impression might have been wrong ; but that night I seemed particularly sensitive, felt quite disturbed. In a prayerful mood, I said mentally : "In holy Kashi, on the banks of the Ganges, next to Sri Anandamayi Ashram, how can one possibly indulge in vulgar songs ? They should at least sing the *Mahamantra* !"

No sooner had this prayer taken shape in my mind than I heard a mighty sound—I could even say that I 'saw' the sound. It is a well-known fact that sound and form are intimately connected. There is a level of perception where the two mingle. The sound I heard was not uttered by any human voice, it had its own living personality. It came like a huge wave from the terrace of the Ashram, flowing down into the hall and finally enveloping the platform where the function was in progress. Although the wave had no definite shape, I somehow felt that it was connected with Mother's physical presence. The sound wave was uttering once only "*Hari bol*" (Which means "repeat the name of the Lord"), but not in the tune in which Mother usually sings these words. Here the voice was mighty and stern, like a rebuke or severe command. No sooner had the wave engulfed the platform, than the people present stopped singing instantaneously. A blank silence prevailed for a few minutes. Then, without any transition, they began to chant : "*Hare Rām, Hare Rām, Rām, Rām, Hare, Hare*", which is the first verse of the *mahāmantra*. They continued with this for some time, without singing the second verse ( *Hare Krishna etc* ). Later they sang "*Sitarām, Sitarām*" and, as far as I remember, the remaining part of the night was spent in *Nāma kīrtan*.\*

My prayer was a childish one and hardly deserved such supernatural response. But very likely it was one of those psychological moments, a moment of conjunction, brought about by the interplay of various factors, in which the lesson so frequently forgotten, could be hammered into the mind of the above mentioned child.

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\* The aforesaid is written from memory and therefore may not be quite precise in all details.

## FROM THE DIARY OF A EUROPEAN

—MELITA MASCHMANN

*(Translated from the German)*

(III)

**Vindhyachal, October, 1963.**

Today Mataji saw me standing near her trellised window and suddenly broke out into ringing laughter. Just as she had calmed down, a second fit of laughter came over her and then a third. Her laughter is something very mysterious. For me it is quite irresistible. Even when I have no idea why she is laughing, I am forced to laugh with her. This morning I had for the thousandth time just asked myself the question: "Who is Mataji?" Her laughter came as a reply, but when I try to translate it into my language I notice that I have not understood it.

In the evening we again sat in her room, while she was dictating replies to letters. One of them was from a South Indian Christian, who asked whether it was true that Christians were not liked much in Mataji's Ashrams. Ma said: "Write to her: Under whatever name anyone many seek God, this little child most heartily welcomes him."

Later Mataji suddenly said to me: "Melita, sing a German song to us!" I objected vehemently. How could I explain to her that I am unable to sing in tune? Indian music is so fundamentally different. Never in my life have I sung to anyone. I like to sing to myself, but I know that it is out of tune. Mataji was adamant. "Why should you not be able to sing? When you talk your voice sounds so nice. But whether you have a beautiful voice is not at all important. What alone matters is the feeling with which you sing. Or, are you not in a mood to sing today?" — "When I am with you I am singing constantly, but without sound." — "Then sing now with sound!"

We fought on for a little while, finally I gave in. I sang three couplets of a German song about the moon (grateful that no European was there to criticize). Mataji slightly bent forward and listened attentively and lovingly. Then she said: "It was very beautiful. You have a sweet voice." I felt amused and embarrassed. "No,

of course not, but it is sweet of you to say so" — "You find me sweet only because you yourself are sweet."

This may sound like an exchange of rather cheap compliments. But there is more behind it. According to Mataji, we see in the people with whom we deal, that which is in ourselves. If they seem wicked to us, it is but our own wickedness that we find reflected in them. Consequently: Be good and those around you will be good.

Is this really so?

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Today I had a long personal talk with Mataji about prayer. Panuda translated with great care, putting many counter questions. I want to note one question which is as European as it is Asiatic.

"Again and again it occurs to me that I should stop praying altogether. Whether intentionally or not, our prayer usually becomes a petition. Does this not amount to some kind of interference with God's will?"

Mataji: "You should pray, in fact you can never pray enough. And you may also ask for something, but ask only for God Himself, for His advent. When the time comes for you to cease from praying, you will stop of your own accord. Then the question whether you should pray or not will not arise anymore."

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For many years a record has been kept of Ma's life and her sayings. A small portion of it has been published also in English translation.\* Amongst those reports I have found an account that states something very interesting about Mataji's deep cosmic understanding, or perhaps I should say "cosmic love". This is a feature of her being that I often sense very strongly, although I have really never observed her in a corresponding situation. Her relationship to the sky, to air, water, earth, sun, the stars and so forth is different from ours. One can recognize this when watching her gaze over the Ganges or at a flower.

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\* In four English books.

Except in very rare moments of mystic union, nature for us ever remains "the other life": foreign to human existence. For Ma, nature is the same one life : All life is rooted in the Self, there is nothing outside of the Self. The distinction between nature (*prakriti*) and spirit (*purūsha*) is annulled in the Self in which she lives.

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Today I had a very impressive talk with Mataji. I was assisted by an excellent interpreter, an elderly lady who teaches English at the Allahabad University. She is not only intelligent, tactful and well educated, but also has for years been at home in Ma's spiritual world and can translate correctly even hints of Mataji.

No doubt, my personal contact with Ma gains intensity every time she talks to me. I feel that she listens with ever growing attention and her answers are more and more closely adapted to my individual approach.

Today she sat on the very edge of her bed, slightly bending forward—and while at times one has the impression of being watched through a telescope turned upside down: (although the picture remains clear-cut it yet seems very remote)—this time I feel under her gaze life in the focus of a magnifying-glass. I am convinced that she sees everything. In fact, I should prefer to remain silent, for she anyway knows what I want to ask or say. But this would be against the rules of the game.

I am not noting down the personal problems that were discussed. Only a general query: Misfortune—for instance in the history of peoples or in the lives of families and individuals, seemingly senseless destruction—how are these facts compatible with the idea of God, whom we should like, not only to fear but also to love?

*Mataji:* Do you believe that God is the creator of the world and therefore its Lord?

I : Let us anyway in our discussion take this for granted.

*Mataji :* Very well. If God is the Lord of the world, He can do with it as He pleases. Suppose you have grown beautiful flowers in your garden, but decide to plant fruit trees in their place, won't you have to remove the flowers? If you have a fine house, but wish to build a larger and better one on the same plot you will be obliged to demolish the old one. The freedom that is yours in small things, God

wields in great ones. In both is He, in destruction as well as creation. The history of nations, families and individuals is the great *Līlā* (play) that He stages with Himself.

*I* : What about evil in the world?

*Mataji* : When you have realized God, then good and evil are like two ways of dressing your hair. (While saying this, Mataji pulls her hair first to the right and then to the left side of her forehead.) Good and evil do not exist for you anymore when you have realized your union with God.

I cannot grasp the simile with the hair dress, I do not see what it intends to convey. So I say : "Probably I do not understand rightly what you have told me about good and evil. Do you mean to say that I should refrain from fighting the evil in my surroundings ?

*Mataji* : Serve human beings as much as you can; but do not identify yourself with their wants and needs. You must go beyond all this and seek God.

*I* : Where does the source of evil lie ? If Brahman is all in all, as Hinduism teaches, then evil must also derive from Him and occur within Him.

*Mataji* : Good and evil are distinctions that arise in human thought and experience. Only when entering the world of duality we begin to distinguish between good and evil.

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Evenings are lovely here. We either sit in Mataji's room or on the veranda in front of it. When sitting outside I find a place from where I can see Mataji. On the verandah there is only the light that the moon sheds. In the room a dim kerosene oil lamp is burning. Sometimes there is singing for hours together, with short intervals. I never get tired of listening to the beautiful songs that often transport the audience.

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Twenty or twenty-five men and women sit scattered over the verandah. Rarely does one hear anyone talk. Probably most of them are praying or meditating; many hold a rosary in their hand. For the first time here something like a community feeling arises in me. I never missed it, as I was not intent on finding it. But I often ask myself whether it exists in the people with whom I am together here, and if it does, of what substance it may be. That I sense little of it, is only natural. I can

hardly talk to the people and very rarely understand their conversations amongst themselves and what concerns them under what circumstances.

In general, as far as their religious life is concerned, the individualistic element among men and women here seems much more dominant than with us Westerners. What we call a community does not appear to exist here. Everyone has his own personal relationship to his Guru and proceeds along his own path. Temples where congregations assemble are the exceptions here. Nevertheless, some kind of community feeling seems to develop. It is too dark to distinguish anyone's features. Everyone abides undisturbed in his own contemplation and everyone knows of the others that soul and spirit are open to the common centre. Of course, in a very individual manner. Many of my companions must be praying to Ma as in the West one prays to Christian saints or to the Christ Himself. I am not praying, neither do I attempt to meditate, and even if I try to reflect over a question, my thoughts soon stop. I just keep still and absorb something that is as mysterious as the beauty of a landscape, the radiation of a sublime thought or the charm of lovely music.

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This afternoon we went for a walk with Mataji for the first time. Nobody seemed to have known it beforehand. The girls were as usual barefooted and had to perform a painful dance on the path that was strewn with thorns. But apart from this we all enjoyed it immensely. At first Mataji advanced at great speed so that we found it difficult to keep pace with her. Later she slowed down. On the way there was much laughing and joking. When we passed a high solitary house, the men amused themselves by waking the echo from its slumber : "Jai Ma, Jai Ma !"

It was dusk by the time we returned. Mataji ascended the platform that had been built over the foundation of an ancient temple, and for a long while walked up and down in silence. We remained standing on the edge. In the West the evening sky was flaming as if the jungle were on fire. In the East it was already night. Venus hung above us, glittering brightly. Somewhere nearby a peacock screamed again and again. "Do you hear", said one of the men, "this is Krishna's bird." Later we all sat on the platform and it became a wonderful night. A lengthy conversation ensued, interrupted at intervals by laughter or by silence. Everyone who had something to say participated. Then Mataji told us about her childhood and about her pilgrimage to Mount Kailash from which Bhajji did not return.





## THE FIRST MEETING

—Late J. N. Talukdar, I.C.S. (Retd)

I came to hear of the Holy Mother first in 1928. She had come to a town in East Bengal where I was then serving, and was staying in the house of a brother officer hardly a furlong away. Yet I did not go to see Her; my time had not come.

Many years passed. I was working in Calcutta in the early fifties and became friendly with Sri S. N. Sopory, a great devotee of Mother. She paid a visit to Calcutta. At his suggestion, I went to see Her in a house in Alipore where many devotees had assembled under a pandal specially erected for the occasion.

She was seated there in their midst. She spoke little. I sat some distance away, a silent spectator. I was struck by the serenity of Her countenance and nobleness of her bearing. I came away feeling an urge to see her again.

Shortly afterwards, I went to the house in Ekdalia Place, Ballygunge, where she was staying. It was dusk. She was on terrace upstairs with a small gathering seated round her. She was talking to them on spiritual matters; I stood at one end. The profound truths of philosophy which have been taught in the Geeta and the Upanishads were coming out of her lips in simple, homely language. I was filled with wonder, as I had heard that she had little of our formal schooling. Where did she get this knowledge?

On my return, I spoke of my impression to my friend Sopory. He said I must talk to her. He made an appointment with her at 2.30 p.m. on a day shortly afterwards. He took me to the house in Ekdalia Place at the appointed time. It was a hot day in April; the sky was spouting fire. We were told that Mother had returned a little earlier from Santragachi after a heavy programme and was tired and resting. No one was being allowed to see her; a crowd of ladies was besieging the entrance. I felt embarrassed; I told Sopory that we should come on another day and not disturb her now. He would not hear of it. He went up to Her room and on returning called me up there. I went into her room; it was semi-dark. She was lying on the bed. After *pranama* I sat on the floor on a mat. I apologised to her, "Mother, I am feeling guilty for disturbing you when you are resting after so much fatigue."

Promptly she replied: "Whose fatigue, baba, not mine but of the body". I was amazed at this answer. I had read that only those rare souls who had realized the Self (Atman) could think themselves separate from the body and were not affected by its caprices. I felt too small to talk on any spiritual matter. I only said, "Mother, I cannot turn my mind towards God; other things then come in my mind". She said, "You will have to take medicine for a long time for your cure". I withdrew soon after this.

I am still not cured. When will my treatment be over ?



**"To attain the Truth one has to endure all hardships.  
It is the obstacles that give birth to patience.**

**—Ma Anandamayee**

## PAGES FROM MY DIARY

—Gurupriya Devi

(Translated from Bengali)

**Bangalore, 16th July, 1961.**

This evening at about 5'clock Mataji arrived here from Poona. She has come at the invitation of the Chief Justice Sri Subodh Ranjan Das Gupta (Kohinurda), an old devotee of hers, who was very eager to have her in Bangalore for a few days. Sri S. R. Das Gupta, his wife, the Rajmata of Mysore and lots of others received Mataji at the railway station. With the utmost reverence Kohinurda welcomed Mataji in his house. He had erected a lovely hut made of palm leaves for Mataji's use. When Ma entered it, she remarked: "What a beautiful little house!" In South India people are especially skilled in preparing garlands. Kohinurda's wife Beladi put a huge garland round Mataji's neck and performed āratī to her. Later in the evening a few people came for Mataji's darśana. Sri S.R. Das Gupta has made excellent arrangements with a view to letting Mataji have a good rest.

**Bangalore, 17th July, 1961.**

This morning's paper brought some bad news. Last night the Maharaja of Gwalior suddenly breathed his last in his house at Bombay. When being told, Mataji said: "This body also had the *kheyāla* that his death was sudden." The Maharaja had been ill for some time. Already when Ma was in Gwalior last April he was bed-ridden due to heart trouble. It was not unknown to Mataji that even then anything might have happened at any moment. But at the time of the consecration of the temple and during Mataji's visit this would have been very painful indeed. We therefore were firmly convinced that the Maharaja would get over the crisis.

He had not been connected with Mataji for long. Even in that short time everyone came to appreciate his gentle and straight forward personality. It was really surprising to see his deep devotion and faith in Mataji. Maharani Vijayaraje was herself marvelling, as the Maharaja had never before bowed to any sādhu or mahātmā, neither had he shown any interest in spiritual things. But towards Mataji

he behaved like a little child. We feel sincerely grieved at the Maharaja's passing away. It is as if one of our own people has left us. God's inscrutable dispensation is beyond our grasping capacity. In her great anxiety the Maharani had again and again sent messengers to Poona soliciting Mataji's blessing. Ma's līlā is beyond the ken of human understanding.

**Bangalore, 18th July, 1961.**

Today Mrs. Feroza Talyarkhan came to see Mataji. She is a disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi and singly devoted to Mataji. She has for many years lived in Sri Ramanashramam in Tiruvannamalai. When Mataji visited South India in 1952 together with Sri Haribabaji Maharaj and Sri Avadhutaji Mrs. Talyarkhan took great trouble to make arrangements for Mataji's stay in several places. Today she brought the Chief Minister of Mysore and his wife for Mataji's *darśana*. In the course of the conversation Mataji said: "Just as the cow absorbs all the dirt of her calf into herself by licking it clean again and again, so also God removes the faults and shortcomings of His children and makes them pure and holy. Try to engage in selfless service with utter purity of heart."

Then again Mataji said: "Endeavour to remain immersed in God's name as much as ever possible. Just as when you have a friend in the world you can pour out your heart to him, so, if you establish a contact with the Supreme Friend, He will reveal His real Being to you. When you see the waves of the sea will you refrain from bathing? In the midst of the tempests and difficulties of worldly life try at all times to sustain His remembrance and the repetition of His name."

**Bangalore, 19th July, 1961.**

This evening Kohinurda took Ma in his car to see Bangalore. While driving, Mataji said: "The atmosphere of this place is very good, one feels at peace. The expression on people's faces is beautiful and the trees look fresh and green." Mataji much enjoyed seeing Lalbagh. Bangalore is really a wonderful city, its natural charm is quite outstanding.

During the satsang at night, Mataji said: "He, the Self, the Mother, having permeated everything, He remains, He Is. When man calls out to Him with desperate yearning the One becomes revealed. A mother knows when her child cries from his heart and then she leaves her work and hurries to her darling."

About the World-teacher and the bestowal of power by the Guru to the disciple, Mataji said: "A World-teacher is one in a billion. Who is a World-teacher? He who redeems the world. When an ordinary Guru gives a mantra no transference of power takes place. Yet, the mantras revealed by Rshis who were seers of mantras, have come down to us through the lineage of Gurus and therefore contain power. Thus the mantra that has been communicated to you is a vehicle of power. Depending on one's innate disposition this may develop. And where power has been bestowed, there a contact has been established. However, even without initiation by mantra the Guru's power can be communicated."

**Bangalore, 20th July, 1961.**

This evening during the satsang, Mataji gave the following reply to a question: "Prarabdha Karma has to be enjoyed and suffered even by a Jivan Mukta, but it is not the same as in the case of ordinary person; it is comparable to an electric fan that goes on revolving for a short while even after the switch has been turned off. The fire of Supreme Knowledge consumes the Prārabdha as well as the *Sanchita Karma*. If it can burn up everything, why not the Prārabdha as well?"

Later Mataji said : "God, the Spirit, is a concrete eternal Presence. You are indeed perishable. Where birth and death is, there is spiritual aspiration and the desire for fulfilment Sādhanā should take one beyond the fulfilment of want. Where the eternal concrete Presence is, there nothing is perishable (na Iṣṭa). Can the pilgrimage to God be undertaken against His Will? The question you asked is also an expression of His Will. Your question and its reply are tools in God's hand. He Himself is the solution and the non-solution. To believe that God is far away causes evil-mindedness, misunderstanding and distress. The means to destroy these is the contemplation of THAT which is. The death that is the outcome of desire and passion must be made to die. For if you leave this world with a return ticket you have to come back again. When by some special good fortune the death of death is achieved, then you, who are pure, enlightened and free, will stand revealed.

"The hour that is gone returns not. A man is one who has become fully conscious. Don't waste invaluable time, don't be a Self murderer, but realize your Self, the Ātmā. Try to discover in yourself the eternal servant of the Lord. Find out that the paths of knowledge, devotion and service are one. All names are God's

Name and at the same time He is nameless and formless. When one arrives at the end of the worship of any particular form, one comes to see that all are one. Man and woman are equally capable of Realization. It is man's duty to use to his best the rare boon of birth in a human body, or else there is further incarnation and death."

On July 24th Mataji is expected to leave for Calcutta. The devotees of that city have voiced their special request to have Mataji in their midst on Guru Purnimā day.

### **Vrindaban, 25th August, 1961.**

Mataji has come here for Jhulan Purnimā. Today her new house was inaugurated. The Rani of Mandi built this house for Mataji in the Ashram grounds. The Raja and Rani of Mandi with their son and daughter have arrived for this occasion. Since dawn kirtana has been kept up without interruption. Mataji entered the new house together with the Mandi family. Then Swami Paramananda, Swarupananda and all the other sādhus and myself followed. I did pūiā in Mataji's room. Before the yajna was completed, Sri Haribabaji Maharaj, Sri Prabhudatta Brahmachari, Sri Chakarpaniji, Sri Sharananandaji; Sri Vishnu Ashramji and other Mahatmas visited the new building. Mataji and all of them sat in it for some time. The Sādhus were presented with fruits and clothes and some of them took their meal in the Ashram.

### **Dehradun, 4th September, 1961.**

The day before yesterday Mataji arrived here from Hardwar and today she is due to leave for Delhi.

A Punjabi devotee, the retired Railway Engineer Sri Rupchand Sood built a beautiful large house for his family and himself only a few years ago. It is situated near the Jakhan Mandir, half a mile below the Kishenpur Ashram and commands a wonderful view over the surrounding hills and over the Doon valley. It is equipped with all accessories as well as a garage and in the midst of a large fruit and flower garden. A short time ago the gentleman offered his whole property at Mataji's feet. Having no heirs, it is his wish to spend the rest of his life as a Vānaprasthi in the same house. It has now been called: "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Sadhan Ashram."

Today Mataji was present at the opening ceremony of the new Ashram. The girls of our Ashram recited the *Bhagavad Gita* and sang *kīrtana*. How happy Sri Sood is today ! At long last the desire of his heart has been fulfilled.

In the evening Mataji left for Delhi. Sri Aga is nowadays Inspector General of the Railway Protection Force. He and his wife came to Dehradun for Mataji's *darśana* and took her to Delhi in their saloon.

***New Delhi, 5th September, 1961.***

This morning Mataji reached the Delhi Ashram. In the evening Srimati Indira Gandhi came to see Mataji. When Mataji was here a fortnight ago Indira had wanted to pay a visit to Mataji, but could not find the time. Thus, when she heard that Mataji had arrived here she came at once. After seeing Indira alone for some time, Mataji called Pushpa and asked her to sing two songs to Indira. Nobody was present except the three of them. Indira remained for quite a long while until at last she did *praṇāma* and took leave from Mataji.

***New Delhi, 8th September, 1961.***

Today is the anniversary of the death of Indira's husband, Sri Feroze Gandhi. At Indira's request Pushpa, accompanied by Shanta and Kamal Brahmachari went to the Prime Minister's house to sing religious songs. Mataji said to Pushpa: "Certainly, go to Indira Ma's house. To bring joy to people by singing the praises of God is the greatest service." I was afterwards told that Indira was much impressed by Pushpa's songs that day.

In the course of the conversation Mataji related that when she came to Dehradun for the first time and stayed in Anand Chowk, Pandit Nehru's wife, Sm. Kamalaji used to come to Mataji very often. She could meditate with great concentration. Mataji told us that Kamalaji would even have visions of Sri Krishna during her meditation. She used to spend whole nights with Mataji and at 5 a. m. sharp leave for her home. Sometimes she would come in the morning with a tiffin carrier full of food for her husband and leave punctually in time to bring him his lunch. Later when Sm. Kamalaji lay ill in the Bhowali Sanatorium, Mataji went to see her on her way to Almora. Since Kamalaji was seriously ill, the nurses tried to prevent Mataji from going near her. But Kamalaji said, if they did not allow Mataji to see her, her health would deteriorate still more and she would also feel very dejected. On her way down from Almora Mataji paid another visit to Kamalaji. This was their last meeting. A short time later Kamalaji was taken to Europe for treatment and she never returned from there. Before passing away, she gave to her daughter Indira the *mālā* (rosary) which she had received from Mataji. Indira is preserving it to this day with great veneration. She had also got a pillow and a bed-cover that had been used by Mataji.

## 'SIVANAND'

—Late T. Sadasivam

Sri Atmanathan, editor of my children's fortnightly in Tamil, 'Gokulam', is one of my colleagues. In January 1972 Ma Anandamayee graced my premises, the Kalki Gardens with Her luminous presence continuously for three days. Sri Atmanathan's wife Saroj was then bearing her second child in her womb. Saroj and Atma then decided between themselves to name the child, if it was born a male child, after Ma and me, taking 'Anand' from Ma's name and 'Siva' from my name. By the grace of Ma, Saroj delivered a male child on 25th March, 1972 and the child was named 'Sivanand'.

Though Sivanand was a fairly large baby weighing about 10 lbs. at birth, he had bronchial trouble even from the third month and he suffered acutely with suffocation in the lungs every now and then. One morning in the month of October 1972, all of a sudden Atma noticed Sivanand staggering to stand for a while. Sivanand was then six months old. Atma thought at first that Sivanand was just feeling sleepy and could not stand erect. But Atma kept a close watch on him and found that Sivanand was under the spell of mild fits and that the fits lasted for a minute every one hour from then. Each time the fits affected Sivanand, his face and limbs stiffened and his rosy lips became blue and eyes fixed. Sivanand would get out of the spell of fits with a long sigh of relief and he would be normal for the next one hour. It was agonizing to see the six months old child suffer like this every one hour. The child was rushed to the Paediatric Specialist Dr. A. T. John, who was attending on Sivanand and the doctor advised the child to be admitted in a nursing home immediately. I looked upon Atma as my own son. Naturally as the grandpa of Sivanand, I was very deeply moved and I could not control my tears every time I went to see Sivanand at the nursing home.

The doctor tried a few medicines on Sivanand to bring the fits under control but the child did not respond to the treatment the whole day and the fits continued even the next day. Then the doctor decided to do the fluid test by making a puncture in the lumber for the six month old Sivanand to enable him to decide on the further course of treatment. We were all very much worried over this decision. Atma thought of soliciting Ma's blessings and grace for the baby but later dropped the idea because he felt he had no right to ask for any special grace from Ma. But without knowing Atma's thoughts on the above lines, I telephoned to Sri Narayana



swamy (whose pet name is Nanu in New Delhi) and asked him to proceed to Ma who was then camping at Haridwar or Vrindavan and Nanu apprised Ma in person of the condition of the child and sought Her blessings for Sivanand. Ma is understood to have told Nanu through sister Chitra that the Doctor could even perform an operation on Sivanand if he deemed it necessary and that Sivanand was constantly on Her Kheyal and that all would be well with the child. So, the doctor did the lumbar puncture for Sivanand the next morning and prescribed usual medicines in such cases. To everybody's joy Sivanand was back to normal. We strongly believe that it is only Ma's grace that saved Sivanand who is now spreading joy and light in the Kalki Gardens.

I must also mention here that at the time when we were all anxious about Sivanand, my wife Subbulakshmi had a vision of Shree Ma in her dream one early morning, perhaps a couple of hours before dawn. Naturally, Subbulakshmi was also deeply concerned about Sivanand's condition and she was praying within herself to Ma to save Sivanand from the crisis. Subbulakshmi herself narrated her dream in the following words :

"I was standing before Ma with a child in my arms praying for Ma's blessings. The child was none other than Sivanand. Ma's vision in my dream was so real that I could not believe it was a dream and felt that Ma had physically come within our proximity to save Sivanand from the crisis in response to our prayers."

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**Note :** This small article from the pen of late Sri T. Sadasivam, a very famous person in the South, who was also the husband of Sm. M. Subbulakshmi, the renowned singer, is published as a tribute to the great personality who passed away only very recently.

## **NATURE**

**-'Shobha'**

**BREEZE OF FRAGRANCE IS THE EMBRACE OF MY LOVE  
TOUCHING NOT THE GROSS BODY BUT THE SUBTLE BEAUTY OF THE SOUL  
WHISPERS SWEET NOTHINGS FILLING THE VOID  
OF SILENCE WITH SMILES UNSEEN**

**KISSES AND CARESSES WITH THE FONDNESS OF THE MOMENT  
LEAVING ME TO FLOAT WITH THE VASTNESS OF THE SKY**

**MY LOVE ABIDES IN THE BEAUTY OF THE NATURE  
PEEPING AND GLANCING THROUGH THE FLOATING CLOUDS  
SHADOWS OF THE SUN AND THE MOTION OF THE BREEZE  
HIDING AT TIMES IN THE DARKNESS OF DUSK**

**TO COME AGAIN TO LAY ME IN COMFORT  
WHEN I AM FRIGHTENED TO FACE THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT**

**WAKES ME TO THE FRESHNESS OF DAWN  
TRAILS ON THE DEW DROP BLADES OF GRASS  
CAREFUL NOT TO TRAMPLE THE WILD DAISIES  
THAT OPEN THE DEW LADEN BUDS TO THE RISING SUN**

**OPENS THE RUFFLE SAILS TO THE WESTERLY WINDS  
TO SET ME SAIL THROUGH THE GLORY OF MORN  
SWOONING ALOUD FROM THE VASTNESS OF SKY**

**FLYING WITH THE GULLS AND SWANS  
I AM HERE MIDST THE BEAUTY AND JOY OF NATURE  
I AM THERE WHERE YOU SET YOUR SAILS TO FLOAT**

## OLD DIARY LEAVES

—Atmananda

### On Bereavement.

In summer 1948, a lady from South India had come to Kishenpur with a party from Rishikesh. The lady seemed absentminded and was obviously deeply distressed. She asked for an interview with Mataji. She said : "First my husband passed away. I was upset, but I could bear it, because I had my only daughter, a lovely, talented child. When she was 12 she fell ill and died. Since then I cannot find peace of mind. She was all I had, so beautiful and promising. When she had hardly begun her life she was torn away from me. Why did she have to leave me ? Why ? I cannot understand.

"For some time I worked in an orphanage. I thought, if I have no child, let me at least serve motherless children. I got attached to those orphans and they to me. But my heart is still broken.

"My guru says : 'Go on with your *sadhana* and gradually you will find consolation'. But I cannot concentrate. All the time I am pining for my darling. Nothing appeals to me. I want my child back. What am I to do ?"

*Mataji* : First of all : Sorrow comes from the sense of 'I' and 'mine', You say : 'My daughter dies' and so you grieve. But who are you ? Find out who you are ! She was the fruit of your body. As long as you are identified with the body, there must be pain, it is inevitable. So many boys and girls die, young and beautiful, yet it does not affect you deeply. You only *think* that this one child was your own and you have lost her.

Then there is another thing to be learnt : all sorrow is due to the fact that one keeps apart from God. When you are with Him, all pain disappears. Let your thoughts dwell on Him. Remember that your daughter is now with Him. The more you think of God, the nearer will you be to Him. If you must shed tears, cry for Him.

Just as some blossoms fall off without bearing fruit, so some human beings die young. For a while God had entrusted the child to your care and then He took her back unto Himself. Now He Himself is looking after her. One day you will go there too. Until then keep your mind on God and you will also be with your child.

How do you know that your daughter is not much better off where she is now ? How much trouble and distress life has brought you ! Would you have desired a similar fate for her ?

Then again, on the level where there is only one Self, there is no question of birth and death. Who is born ? Who dies ? All is One Self.

The same mind that identifies itself with the body can be turned towards the Eternal, and then the pain the body experiences will be a matter of indifference. Since the body is bound to get hurt at times, there must be suffering as long as one is identified with it. This world oscillates endlessly between happiness and sorrow, there can be no security, no stability here. These are to be found in God alone. How can there be both, the world and the ONE ? On the way there seems to be two, God and the world, but when the Goal has been reached there is only One. What the worldly life is you have seen. Who is yours ? Only your Guru, your *Iṣṭa*, in Him you will find everything and everyone—I am your child.

Several months later the same lady came to Varanasi for Mataji's *dar'sana*. She looked younger and happier. "I have got over my grief", she told us. "I am now reconciled to my fate. When Mataji said : 'I am your child', her voice was my daughter's voice. My hair stood on end and I had a wonderful feeling which I cannot describe in words. From that moment the wound in my heart began to heal. I have gained an inner conviction that my child is happy where she is. I am finding ever greater peace and am able to attend to my meditation. Now I am planning to go on a pilgrimage to Badri and Kedarnath. I only wish all bereaved mothers could be comforted as I have been."

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**Question :** Is it good to repeatedly call a dead person by his name, to keep his picture and remember him ?

**Mataji :** If one mourns for the person, regretting the loss of worldly enjoyment one has had together, it is bad both for the departed and for oneself. If, on the other hand, the remembrance be an act of worship, as for example, since it is a wife's duty to regard her husband as God, she thinks of the deceased and keeps his picture with this attitude of mind, it may well be beneficent both for her dead husband and herself.

A couple once came to this body, who had lost their only daughter just a few days before she was to be married. They were broken-hearted. The girl's mother started wearing widow's dress and her husband also deeply grieved after his child and gave up many things he had been accustomed to enjoy. They had a life-size

picture of their daughter made and lived only in their memory of her. Before eating they would place the food before the picture, and so forth.

This body told them : 'Just as some flowers blossom and fall off without bearing fruit, so your child passed away young and pure, without having formed any attachment. Look upon her as the servant of the Lord, keep a picture of Him near hers, burn incense in the room and set it apart for worship and meditation.'

Neither the husband nor the wife were religiously inclined, but by taking their loss in this manner they gradually developed in that direction. This body then said to them. "Your daughter has become your Guru, it is she who has made you turn towards God." This is a case where a whole family was benefited.

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The following true story Mataji sometimes relates to bereaved mothers who refuse to be comforted and keep on crying.

When this body stayed in Bengal, it used to visit Tarapith about once a year. One day a woman came, weeping at the loss of her daughter who had died at the age of seventeen or eighteen on the eve of her marriage. The woman had a younger daughter, aged about ten or eleven. This body enjoined on both of them to turn to God for comfort and the little girl also started practising *japa* regularly every morning and evening with the help of a rosary. She became very fond of this practice, and even when she fell ill would keep her rosary under her pillow and continue her *japa* with great regularity. But as fate would have it, she succumbed to the illness and died. When this body returned to Tarapith the following year, the woman was again in mourning. Having lost both her daughters, she was naturally disconsolate. I told her that her grief would react on her children, keeping them tied to the earth instead of letting them proceed unhampered on their upward path. After much talking she finally promised to try her best to remain cheerful. She made a sincere effort, but often she could not help longing for her children. One evening she was thinking dolefully : "Not even in dreams am I allowed to see my little darling." That night she dreamt of her younger child, who appeared to her dressed in white, with a wreath of flowers in her hair, looking radiant and beautiful. She motioned to her mother to follow her and led her to a place where many girls of her age were singing the praises of God.

All were dressed like herself and decorated with flowers. A venerable old man with a long white beard, who looked like a Rishi, seemed to instruct them. They all appeared full of joy and peace. When the woman awoke from her dream, she had a distinct feeling that her little daughter was happy where she was and she made up

her mind not to disturb her. However, after some time the lonely woman started pining again for her lost children. One night her husband had a strange dream. His younger daughter came and put her arms round him, saying : "Mother is so sad and lonely without me. I can't bear her crying anymore, I am coming back to you". In his dream the father took the child into his arms and placed her into her mother's lap. Ten months later a baby girl was born to them. When I came to Tarapith the next year, the woman brought the tiny infant and placed her before this body. The child grew up and is now a woman. In this way it may happen that the grief of their loved-ones drags souls back to this world, but it is better to leave them free to progress in their own way on their upward path. God alone knows what is best for everyone and provides for it.

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A couple who had recently lost their son came to Mataji and asked her, what was the sense of a child dying before he had lived his life.

*Mataji* : Everything happens according to one's *karma*. It was your *karma* to serve your son for a few years, and his *karma* to accept your service. When it was over, God took him away. It is all God's Play. Some flowers fall off without bearing fruit. Similarly the child was given to you by God for a time. This is the nature of the world. There is bound to be loss and bereavement.

*The bereaved father* : From where is one to take the strength to bear all these troubles and tribulations ?

*Mataji* : Remember that the *Ātmā* of the child and your own *Ātmā* are one. The *Ātmā* was neither born nor will it die, it eternally IS. The body, like a worn garment, falls away. Endeavour not to be attached to the body and not to cry for it. Cry for God alone. Remember Him, repeat His holy Name, contemplate Him, and regularly read scriptures such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Rāmāyana*, and so forth and you will be comforted. Your grief will become much lighter. Let your life be a dedicated life. The householder's ashram is also an ashram. Blows come in order to remind you to turn your mind to that which is Real. Someone who had lost all his six sons found much solace by reading the *Bhāgavata*.

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Two ladies from America came to Mataji. One of them told us that she had enjoyed an extremely happy life, adored by her husband and her children, until about one year ago her husband suddenly passed away. In a moment fate had

destroyed her happiness and she now felt at a complete loss, wishing that she could have left this world instead of her husband, who had been a renowned surgeon. Mataji said to her : "We must always remember that we are God's children and that it is therefore right for us to contemplate Him and to try to realize Him. God does not give sorrow. He is the one Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved and Husband. But there certainly is sorrow in this world. A beloved person leaves us and we are grief-stricken. As long as we keep in mind that we are God's children and turn our thought to Him, we shall be happy. But when we forget Him, He sometimes gives us a slap to remind us of Him, just as a fond mother at times slaps her child for his own good. 'World' (*duniya*) means duality, the world consists of the pairs of opposites and so there is happiness and sorrow alternating. Without searching the Supreme none can find lasting peace and bliss. Your husband's body is no more, but his Self (*Atmā*) is one with you eternally. He is not separate from you. Just as you discard worn clothes and get new ones, so the body has to die in order that you may realize THAT which is eternal and can never be lost. Your husband has not really left you, his body only is gone, so that you may lose your attachment and find the real Self in which you are one with him.

It is natural for human beings to weep. If you shed tears for worldly things it only increases your attachment to them, and more and more impurity accumulates. But by crying for God all impurity is washed away. You should ever keep in mind that God has removed your husband's body, to show you the path of *Brahmacharya*, so that you may realise your husband's true Being and thereby know that you are one with him eternally. Happiness and misery are of the mind. When the mind merges into the One, then you have reached beyond them. In order to find true and lasting happiness, man has to contemplate the Supreme. Happiness that depends on anything, be it a person, money, comforts, fame, cannot endure. If we are deprived of the comforts we are used to, we feel troubled. But if we accept cheerfully whatever comes, we shall always be at ease.

## IMPRESSIONS OF MA

-Late Subimal Dutt, I.C.S. (Retd)

It is impossible to faithfully describe the feeling one has in Mataji's presence. To call it one of deep elation would be inadequate. One might call it a mystical experience. But this expression has been debased in popular parlance by associating it with the display of supernatural powers. If such is the standard. I must say I have had personally no such experience.

Yet to watch Ma in action is an experience by itself. Nothing is too insignificant for her. She gives the same attention to, say giving direction as to how a particular vegetable should be prepared in the kitchen, as to the elaborate ceremonials to be observed at a Puja or to the service of a Mahatma. And it is not uncommon to see her go into a sudden discussion of abstruse philosophy while engaged in an apparently routine conversation. One has the conviction that she is in constant communion with the Divine and is a vehicle of expression of the Divine will. This to my mind is the real meaning of the word '*Kheyal*' which Ma so often uses.

One common experience with Mataji is that she answers questions and resolves doubts unasked. I can recall many incidents of this kind within my experience. In the early days before I knew Ma well, during a visit to the Baghat House at Haridwar, I thought it very odd that some foreign devotees were served food in the court-yard while the rest of us were having ours on the temple *verandah*. The same evening Ma suddenly turned to me and said that she did not believe in discrimination of this kind personally (I have seen foreign devotees putting sugar puffs into her mouth), but many Mahatmas believe in restrictions of this kind, and if these were not observed in the *ashram*, we would lose the privilege of visits from them and their company. I found a complete answer to my unspoken doubt.

Often and again it has been my experience that Mataji's company has such an elevating effect for the time being that one feels one can face all the problems of the world with the greatest ease and nothing in the world need daunt one. Equally it has been the experience that away from Ma the old doubts begin to assail us again. Swami Paramanandaji rightly says that we should charge our batteries from time to time in Mataji's company. Does Swamiji know that many of these batteries are old and contain ingredients of poor quality? All the more reason for frequent resort to that fountain-head of inspiration.



# TANTRA IN BUDDHISM

## II

—Dr. M.K. Agrawal

*Aksobhya*, who symbolises the pure consciousness, is called *Vajrasattva* in Tantric Buddhism. This *Vajrasattva* is not merely of the nature of *Śūnyatā*. It is a non-dual state of *Śūnyatā* and *Karuṇā*, to empty that the void consciousness is also of the nature of an identity of both *Śūnyata* and *Karuṇā*, *Akṣobhya* is marked by the *Vajra sattva* <sup>1</sup> Thus the *Vajrasattva* is identified with *Bodhicitta*. It is said that when *Prajñā* or the *Śūnyatā* knowledge commingles with universal compassion, there remains no thinker, no thinkable, no thought; this is the state of non—duality. This is called the *Bodhi citta*. This is the advantive truth, this is *Vajrasattva*, the perfectly enlightend one (*Sambuddha*), this is perfect wisdom.<sup>2</sup>

This *Vajrasattva* or *Vajradhara* is also described in Tantras with his consort variously called *Vajrasattvātmikā*, *Vajra vārāhi*, *Prajñā*, *Prājñā Pāramitā* etc. and his *bija* mantra is *hum*.<sup>3</sup>

In the Buddhist Tantra the word *Bodhicitta* implies the Mahayanic sense of the unification of the two elements of *Śūnyāta* and *Karuṇā*, widely termed *Prajñā* and *Upāya* respectively. *Śūnyatā* is called *Prajñā* simply because it represents perfect knowledge which is supposed to be static or negative because it separates the individual from the world of suffering beings. *Karuṇā*, on the other hand, acts in one's mind like a dynamic force. The moral inspiration that prompts one to find oneself universalized in an emotion of deep compassion. It is *Upāya* that draws our attention to the world of suffering and inspires one to sacrifice one's salvation for the removal of the miseries of the suffering world.

The union of *Prajñā* and *Upāya* has variously been expounded in Buddhist Tantras under various imageries. In the *Hevajra Tantra* *Upāya* and *Prajñā* have been described under the imagery of the *Yogin* and the *Mudra* and the *Bodhichitta* is the perfect union of this *Yogin* and the *Mudra*, who stand for *Karuṇā* and *Śūnyatā* respectively. In all classes of Buddhist Tantras the most important thing is the stress on the union of *Prajñā* and *Upāya* either in the Philosophical sense or the

1. *Pancarātra Advayavajra Samgraha* p. 34. Quoted by S.B.Dasgupta in Introduction to Tantric Buddhism p. 88.

2. *Prajñā Pāya-viniścaya-Siddhi* -ch.IV verse 17.

3. *Heruka Tantra*-P.28.

esoteric yogic sense. In the *Prajñopāya-viniścaya-siddhi* it has been said that the truth is both *Prajñā* and *Upāya* combined together, for it is *Prajñā* as it is the absence of all phenomenalization, and it is compassion, because like the wish yielding gem it does everything for the good of the beings. Supportless is *Prajñā* and supportless is the great compassion; they should be united like the union of the sky with the sky. In that state there is no thinker, no thought, nothing to be thought of; there all seeing of sights, hearing of sounds, muttering, laughing, enjoyment, doing of all deeds all become yoga for a man.<sup>4</sup> In the *Subhāsita-Saṅgraha* also it is stated that Buddhahood is to be attained neither through *Prajñā* alone nor through *Upāya*; but if the essence of both *Prajñā* and *Upāya* becomes of the same nature, if the two become inseparably connected, become united into one, then and then only a Sādhaka becomes entitled to the highest reality which is at once enjoyment and liberation. Now, it has become evident that *Prajñā* is conceived as the absolute Knowledge, which is negative and passive, whereas *Upāya* is a positive and active principle. *Prajñā* is conceived as the female element, while *Upāya* is conceived as the male element.

There are certain points which seem common in both Hinduism and Buddhism. The old Hindu Tantric texts explain the five faces of Lord Śiva, representing his five aspects as *Vama deva*, *Tatpuruṣa*, *Agora*, *Sadyojāta* and *Isāna*, each of which is a frequent epithet of Śiva with slightly varying modes of meditation prescribed for each of them is the Saivite texts. The five Dhyāni Buddhas have also different colours and directions ascribed to them separately. These arrangements in numerically identical groups indicate the equation of the two mythologies.<sup>5</sup>

But we should notice here a very important point of difference between the Buddhist conception of the two aspects of the Truth and that of the Sāktas, Śaivas as well as of the Taoist's. In Sakta Tantra the passive subjective aspect of the ultimate reality is conceived as the male, whereas the active counterpart has always been conceived as the female and the conception of passivity as the male and the active counterpart as female is found in many of the systems of Indian Philosophy as represented in the Tantras. The *Puruṣa* of the Sāṅkhya system and also *Brahman* of Vedānta are absolutely quality-less and inactive, while *Prakṛiti* and *Māyā* which are supposed to be feminine, symbolize the active counterparts. The point of difference has been very nicely depicted by Agehananda." The Hindu

4. *Prajñā-Pāya-viniścaya-Siddhi* ch. iv verse 10-16.

5. Pranom Bandhyopādhyaya, *The Goddess of Tantra*, ch. Buddhist Tantra P. 319.

assigned the male symbol apparatus to the passive, the female to the active pole; the Buddhist did the opposite; the Hindu assigned the knowledge principle to the passive male pole, and the dynamic principle to the active female pole; the vajra yāna Buddhist did it the other way round."<sup>6</sup>

In Hindu Tantra the Supreme deity is known as Śakti, but she is always associated with Śiva; Śiva and Śakti are inseparable. As Śiva is purely passive, in absence of Śakti, Śiva is like a dead body (Sava). The same idea has been depicted by the Buddhists, but the order is reversed. The world-appearance as a result of dependent origination is the grand bridegroom; had he not been there, the bride Śūnyatā would have been dead as it were. But on the other hand, had this beautiful bride Śūnyatā been separated for anytime from the bridegroom, he would remain eternally under bondage. So the relation between Śūnyatā and Karuṇā is like the relation of inseparable conjugal love; the love between them is the most natural love (*Sahaja Prema*) and so it is inseparable.<sup>7</sup>

The primary concern of the Buddhist Tantra is not to establish a definite system of metaphysical thought. Buddhist Tantras on the basis of the Mahāyāna principles dictate practical methods for the realization of the supreme goal. These Tantras are primarily concerned with the Sadhana or the religious endeavour, but not with any system of abstract philosophy. The Tantras lay stress on the esoteric methods for the realization of Truth or Reality.

Like all other Tantric systems the Buddhist Tantrikas also believe in the theory of *Cakras* or the lotuses. Buddhists believe that there are four *Cakras*. The first is the lumbar plexus *Cakra* situated in the navel region. The next is the Cardiac plexus in the heart. Third is the laryngeal and Pharyngeal plexus at the junction of the spinal cord and the Medula oblongata. The last and the most important is the cerebral plexus called the *Uṣṇiṣa-Kamal* (the lotus in the head). In Hindu Tantras, there are six plexuses in addition to the *Sahasrāra* or the highest cerebral plexus. The most important thing in Buddhist conception of the *Cakras* is the location of the three *kāyās* viz. *Nirmānkāyā*, *Sambhogakāyā* and *Dharmakāyā* in these *Cakras*. The *Nirmān Kāyā* is represented by the lowest *Cakra* is the navel region; the *Cakra* in the heart is identified with *Dharma Kāyā* and the *Cakra* just below the neck is said to be the *Sambhogakāyā*. The *Sahaja Kāyā* is located in the *Uṣṇiṣa-Kamal* or the *Sahasrāra* of the Hindus. It is called the *Mahasukhcakra* or the *Mahasukha Kamal*, being the seat of great bliss.

There are innumerable nerves within the body, of which thirty two are vital. Of these are most important, the two symbolizing *Prajñā* and *Upāya*, called *Lolanā*

6. Agehanand Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition* P.19.

7. *Advaya-vajra-Samgraha* P.24 Quoted by S.B. Dasgupta in Introduction to Tantric Buddhism P. 96.

and *Rasanā* are on either side of the spinal cord and in between them is one which is known as *Sahaja* or *Avadhuti*. In the Buddhist Tantras we find that the nerve *Lalanā* starts from the neck and enters the navel region from the left side, and from the navel again starts the *Rasanā* and enters the neck from the right. Within these two and passing through the lotus in the heart is the *Avadhuti*, through which flows the *Bodhicitta*. and this *Avadhutika* leads to the *Sahaja* bliss. Here, *Lalanā* and *Rasanā* are identified with *Śūnyātā* and *Karuṇā*, *Prajñā* and *Upāya* and *Avadhuti* with the goddess *Nairātma* or the *Sahaja*. The Buddhist Tantras, like the non-Buddhist ones, lay much emphasis on the importance of guru or preceptor, who is compared to the highest *śunya*, because without an expert the yoga path is impossible to follow.



"Merely to assume the robes of a *sādhu*, while the spirit of renunciation is lacking, will not do. Taking *Sanyāsa* and becoming a *sanyast* spontaneously are certainly not one and the same thing."

—Ma Anandamayee

## A LETTER FROM A DEVOTEE\*

The understanding that everything has been manifested because of Ma - is not easy, but is the most comprehensive in its simplicity and purity. Only for the person with unlimited trust in the God and Truth it is possible to step into Ma's Universe where everything is at its place and purpose, where nothing can abuse you and nothing can be happened without the reason.

Ma is looking after each of us in any form we could have. For the bird as well as the flower or human, every existence is Her Own and Her alone.

Ma takes Her children back when they are ready and when they really have to come back to their Home—Immortality in Ma's presence.

Ma Herself is That manifestation as well as formless, as a thought or the substance of Love. Yes, and many more. Yes...at every moment—Ma and Ma alone.

It is a very subtle and silent experience to witness the Grace of Ma's presence. Nothing to compare and nothing else to long for. Only That Bliss—Indescribable as the sky above the clouds.

To be with Ma, to speak about Ma, to sit near Ma's photo for months, years and decades, without thinking of time is absolutely normal state of mind, when it was purified as the butter in the fire of Ma's presence. And the ability to be with Ma everywhere and at anytime is nothing else but an existence identical to the form of life without body.

It is great and also natural to become a member of Ma's family to continue to dissolve in Ma more and more, getting the Knowledge of Her and Her only.

I am more than fortunate, now I know that I was born again by Ma and only now I recollect that Ma is my own nature, my own meaning of life without body.

Formless existence-as well as in the form-is a balance for every soul. She is in this body as well as in everything around, small or big, that is moving or still, cold or warm, bright or dark, in each particular aspect of time and space, spiritual or material, full of sense or not, all that is She and She alone, Ma Herself.

Many people asking me have I been in India, and I have to say not, but as well as Ganga is the source of all waters in the world in the same way the dust from

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\* Excerpts from a letter from Mr. Valentin Mazlov, an ardent Russian devotee, who has not even met Ma physically.

Kheora (Ma's birth place) is a source of all our bodies, lands, houses and possessions.

Being absolutely dissolved in Ma alone, each being, each creature in the particular time and space has its own identity, but that identity is nothing else but Ma Herself and Ma alone, but even then, it is not enough. Ma is repeating "*Hari Bol*"—without stop and each time new soul starting to exist in its pure form of sound of Ma's voice or thought if the repetition is silent. Ma herself does it now, which is always Now for Her.

But for us, who are bound to *Maya* and Instrumental Ego, there is only one way to appreciate our own existence, to repeat back Ma's "*Hari Bol*" to Her and to her alone. Only by that repetition we can merge back into Ma and to attain the unlimited Peace, *Mahashanti* or, some say—"*Nirvana*" or "*Mahasamadhi*".

Why this peace is important? This question makes me laugh all the time. For how long anybody can make waves in the lake? Time comes, when it is important to leave the lake alone. Then water becomes still, as it was before. Many people come from Ma's mouth, but all of them will go. Being a human being, specially Ma's devotee, has its own qualities, but these qualities are Ma's qualities and Her alone; only very close attention to that subject can disclose the nature of Ego and lead human being to the formless existence—in the presence of Ma and Ma alone.

How it is possible to exist without body? Another question. Ofcourse, how it is possible without Ma's presence? Being without body and without Ma is it possible ? And answer goes by itself to the mouth, because of Ma's presence in everything questions arise and because of that the knowledge can be attained. But that knowledge is nothing else but Ma Herself and again, Ma alone.

As Sun is the source of all manifestations in the Solar system, but does not require any attention from them (manifestations), in the same way, Ma Herself does not need anything from outside of Herself. and that is the answer, that is the form of Knowledge.

In the way when it is possible to understand that simplicity itself can be unlimited, there is also possible to understand that the Knowledge may be perceived as a form, and that is more important, that form is only one, Ma Herself, Ma alone.

One who is bound to understand, is the same as the form of understanding as well as the subject of understanding, that makes three One.

Absolutely the same formula explains the phenomena of existence how Ma Herself is dividing Herself, Herself alone into numerous forms of beings, who will

merge back into Her by one way or another as the waves will merge into the surface of the water.

But Ma will not leave the lake !!!

*Narayani* makes waves all the time, for *Narayani* only now exists and no time to come to the lake or leave it. Ma makes waves by repeating "*Hari Bol*". It is only one force in the Universe, Being Ma Herself, and Ma Alone.

*Om Tat Sat, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti,*

"If pray you must for things of the world then pray to Him; but the most excellent prayer is for God Himself."

— Ma Anandamayee

## FROM THE NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—'Kirpal'

### 8-1-1960, Vindhyachal Ashram

A resident of Ceylon has come for Ma's *darshan*. He had some doubts on religion.

**Sri Ma :** What is written in the scriptures must be accepted. That one has faith in some matters and not in others, that is not the proper attitude. The unrevealed the action and the fulfilment are all He Himself. But what is propounded by lecturers is a different matter. Some agree with them and some may differ.

### 24-1-1960, Kumbh Mela Camp in Allahabad.

Swami Kriyananda of the Self Realization Fellowship has come to meet Ma.

**Sri Ma :** Each and everyone is a child of the Divine, manifested from the Divine.

**Question :** from where is one to proceed ?

**Sri Ma :** God alone exists. There can be no question of misfortune. The relation with the Divine —*Ishta goshti*. *Ishta* means the Divine embodiment and *goshti* means the Family. If you accept the theory of *Ishta goshtih* then everyone in the world is one's own sister, brother. All are brothers and sisters. the Divine Mother, the Divine Father, the Divine Friend and everyone in this world are sisters and brothers. All are from the One. Though coming from various countries they are all from the one source.

Spiritual disciplines and yoga practices are the paths to remove the feeling of antagonism towards others and the feeling of being a separate entity.

### Sri Ma to Dr. Pannalal :

Five days ago when Sri Avadhutji was giving lecture during *satsang* this body saw the form of fire right in front of this body. Words came out— 'Do not proceed further, do not proceed. Let it be confined.' The time was just before the silence period 8-45. P.M.

Next day it was learnt that a terrible fire had engulfed part of the mela ground, but miraculously it was halted from further progressing.

A *hathā* yogi has come for Sri Ma's *darshan*. It was declared that he can be buried for a couple of days without any outside sustenance, he can eat mercury, has



his under tongue cut off for various yogic postures. But he now wants to leave all these.

**Sri Ma** : Baba, why do you remain in the midst of all these ?

**The Yogi** : I am a *sādhaka*.

**A devotee** : While one is still on the path, is it proper to preach to others ?

**Sri Ma** : When a tree dies it leaves the seed and other tree springs forth out of the seed. Thus there is the end and also the eternity at the same time. The path to God is endless. The revelation from the mantra (seed) is also eternal. As in a tree no two leaves are exactly identical, no two fruits are exactly similar, death and eternity co-exist. There are endless paths of realization. There is no one save God alone. There is a stage when realization happens effortlessly. The entire universe is one's preaching area. One should preach to others only with guru's orders.

As long as one does not tread the path to supreme realization one is on the path to death. The desire for worldly satisfaction leads to a 'return ticket' to the world to fulfil the unfulfilled desire. If you intensely desire to be born in a big city you will nodoubt be born as such in the next birth.

God is not far away from you, not also apart from you. The longings and desire are all within you. So, try to proceed on the path of self realization. If you still have wordly desires there will be death and re-birth. But you are the scion of immortality, the eternal divinity, the eternal servant of the Lord. So turn towards Him, turn away from worldly longings back to your own home. This constant coming & going, birth & death. entail great suffering & misery. One is redeemed by knowing one's own self.

**A devotee** : One is in the wilderness.

**Sri Ma** : When you are living in the wilderness try to clean up your environment, turn the bushes (desires) and remove the thickets (worldly attractions) with love for Him. Try to turn the worldly attractions with self-knowledge. Do it quietly. He is your very own.