

# Ananda Varta

A quarterly journal dealing mainly with the divine life and teaching of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee and with other religio-philosophical topics.



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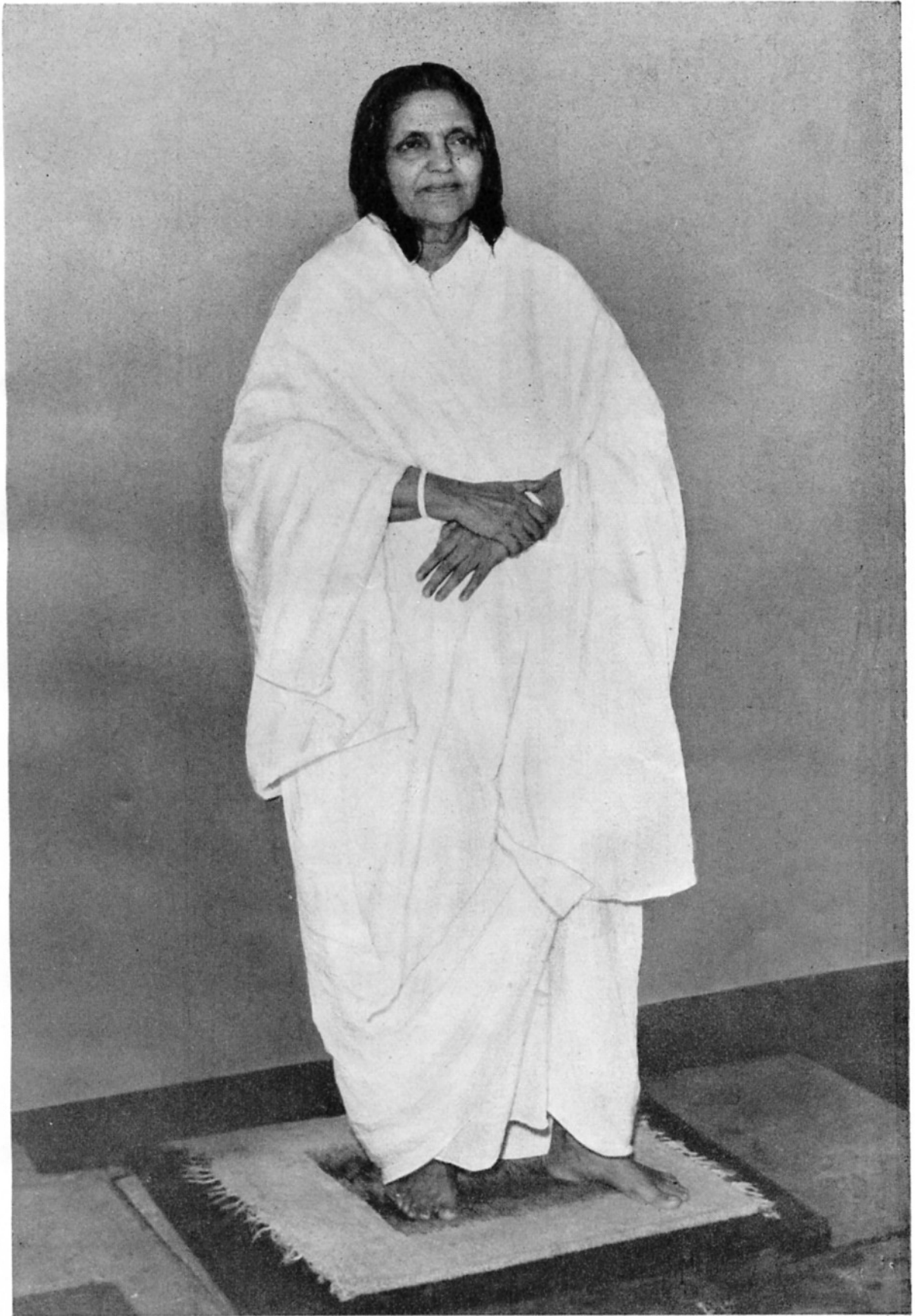
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The ONE who is the Eternal, the Ātman,

He Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,

He is all in all, He alone is.

## MATRI VANH

Leaving one's home one has to go forth and tread the path—then only will one come to know all about that path.

• • •

HE is the destroyer of all sorrow. Try to invoke Him at all times: contemplate Him alone, pray to Him, bow down, dedicating your whole being at His Feet. He is the Fountain of Goodness, Peace itself, all Bliss—and what else? Verily, the life of your life, the SELF.

• • •

At the root of the action of the three attributes of Nature—*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*—that are always in wavelike motion, lies but the primeval life force (*prāṇa*)

• • •

Out of one individual many individuals arise : this is the current of individual development. Again, it is the One Lord (*Iśvara*) who has divided Himself and is present in all sentient beings. This is why it is said : "Wherever a living being (*jiva*) is, there is *Siva* (God)"

\* \* \*

Your body, which is part of and depending on this illusory world, is on the other hand the expression of a hidden inner process. You are yourself the many, appearing in various aspects, forms and modes. Each one of them exists in fact to fulfil a particular need. Yours is the give and take of the universe, yours the need and yet you yourself are the fulfilment, that hidden inner process is generated by you.

\* \* \*

Someone asked Mataji : "Have you seen God ?" Mataji replied without the slightest hesitation : "Why, indeed, He is always visible. Yet again, who sees whom since all are He ? In very truth, nothing exists apart from God"

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# Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

( Translated by Atmananda )

( 9 )

Ranchi Ashram,  
22nd May, 1958.

*Question* : Is this universe an expression of rhythm ?

*Mataji* : It is and it is not, depending on one's angle of vision.

*Question* : Is it the aim of a *sādhaka* to bring the rhythm of his individual life in harmony with the universal rhythm ?

*Mataji* : His aim is to realise that it is in fact part of the universal rhythm.

*Question* : How does the teaching of *Bhagavad Gītā* agree with that of the *Chandi* ? The *Gītā* teaches renunciation, while the *Chandi* advocates prayer.

*Mataji* : The prayer that the *Chandi* advocates is for the ultimate Good. One prays to the World-Mother for the

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• *Chandi* or *Durga Saptā Sati* is a work in praise of Devi, the Supreme Energy (*Sakti*) of the universe.

essence of things, for the Supreme Treasure, for that which, when it is obtained the question of receiving or not receiving has ceased to exist. Moreover, at the early stages it is necessary for the aspirant to have his worldly wants fulfilled. Gradually prayer for the Supreme Wealth awakens in him.

*Question :* So then the Great Mother gives, while the Heavenly Father urges us to renounce ?

*Mataji :* 'Mother' means Being (*satta*) conceived as a woman. Being means Self (*ātma*), which is neither male nor female.

*Question :* Is there a mediator between the individual and God

*Mataji :* In any way you put it, it is all right. Whatever method the Guru indicates is right for that particular person.

*Question :* Have the miraculous stories in the *Purānas* any real significance ?

*Mataji :* Everything is possible. Similar happenings as in the *Purānic* age may occur even now.

*Question :* What evidence is there to prove that the impossible can become possible ?

*Mataji :* If the impossible were not possible, how could this question arise at all ? *There*, everything is possible

from the worldly point of view one distinguishes between the possible and the impossible. Sometimes you definitely decide to accomplish some particular work, yet by the play of *maya* it is made impossible. But where *Iśvara* (the Lord of the Universe) is concerned, this is not so.

*Question* : Can nothing be called false or illusory ?

*Mataji* : There is the false and there is the real. The Supreme truth, however, is that the One alone exists in all forms and beyond form, call Him manifested or unmanifested.

*Question* : How can everything become possible ?

*Mataji* : Put on the spectacles of wisdom and you will be able to see this for yourself.

*Question* : Why is the individual born into this world ?

*Mataji* : To fulfil his own desires, to experience happiness and sorrow.

*Question* : Is it not possible to go beyond desire and experience

*Mataji* : If everything is possible, why should not this be possible as well ?

*Question* : Is there any shortcut towards this goal ?

*Mataji* : By the grace of God such a short cut may sometimes be found.



*Question* : What necessity is there for the *Paramātmā* to take on the guise of the individual, when the individual has to return again to the *Paramātmā* ?

*Mataji* : It is this pleasure. You speak of the whimsical *Sankara*\*, of the playful *Bhagavan*†,—the play is his delight.

*Question* : His delight is pain and trouble for us.

*Mataji* : Where the sense of I and mine, you and yours, he and his is, in other words, where distinctions are, there is misery and distress.

*Question* : How can we get rid of the ego with its sense of I and mine ?

*Mataji* : There is a path for everyone. Take one of them and adhere to it.

*Question* : Are those also reborn who do not believe in rebirth ?

*Mataji* : *Sadhana* is necessary because there is belief and disbelief. Yet the law will act, whether you believe in it or not.

*Question* : What actually do you call faith ?

*Mataji* : When breathing and doubt have ceased there

\* A name of *Siva*.

† The conception of God of the *Vaisnavas*.

is real faith\*. There are two kinds of faith, namely blind faith and real faith. Real faith that is aroused by the touch of an Omniscient Being does not depend on anything. One who has awakened to Pure Consciousness makes you conscious. But blind faith, the faith of the mind is unripe and can be shattered. All the same, real and genuine faith quite often develops gradually out of blind faith. To state an example : A certain *szdhu* had a disciple who was a thief. He would tell lies, since this suited his convenience, and refused to obey his Guru who bade him to speak the truth. One day, the Guru asked him to follow his Guru's orders in blind faith for a certain number of days at least, and be completely truthful. The disciple agreed. One night he broke into the *Raja's* palace and on being caught, spoke the exact truth. The *Raja* was so impressed by his frankness that he not only let him off, but provided for him and his family, so that he was enabled to give up both stealing and telling lies. In this way he gained real faith in truthfulness.

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\* A play upon words. *Vis'vas* means 'faith', *s'vas* 'breath,' the prefix *vi* sometimes 'without'.

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## Sri Thiruppan Alvar

T. KRISHNAJI, M. A., B. L.

The Alvars were the devotees or mystics of South Indian Vaishnavism. All the Alvars lived between the 2nd to 8th Centuries. According to the traditional order they are: 1. Poyge Alvar, 2. Bhutat Alvar, 3. Pey Alvar, 4. Thirumalisa Alvar, 5. Nammalvar, 6. Madhura Kavi, 7. Peria Alvar, 8. Andal, 9. Kulasekhara, 10. Thondaradippodi, 11. Thiruppan Alvar, 12. Thirumangai Alvar. Thiruppan Alvar lived in the 7th century A. D. The Alvars preceded the first Vaishnava Acharya Sri Nāthamuni. Devotees of God are a class by themselves. Caste, learning, wealth etc. mean nothing to them since they care for God only. We find among the Alvars men belonging to all castes, and also women and outcasts. Thiruppan Alvar himself belonged to the *panchama* or *harijan* class.

In Tamil the word *thiru* means Sri, and the word *pan*, a minstrel. Thiruppan Alvar was a minstrel of Sri Ranganatha of Srirangam. Srirangam is the spiritual centre of *Vaishnava* religion and mysticism. The *Bhagavat Purana* says "*Sri Rangakyam maha punyam yatra sannihito Hari.*" In the history of a *S'iva* mysticism and the lives of Nayanmars, Chidambara is a great spiritual centre. Maharashtra mysticism centres round Pandaripur. The famous Harijan Saiva saint Nandanar, by the grace of God *S'iva*, entered the sanctum

sanctorum of the Chidambaram temple and had the unique experience of merging with *S'iva*. Thiruppan Alvar, a Harijan *Vaisnavite* saint, had a similar divine experience of merging into God Ranganatha.

Thiruppan Alvar was a foundling, brought up by a Harijan couple, living at Urayur, a town 2 or 3 miles from Srirangam. He grew up in devotion to God Sri Ranganatha and spent his time on the river bank, singing the name and glories of Sri Ranga to the tune of his lyre. Before dawn, he swept the roads leading to the temple in a spirit of holy service. Often he went into trance and became absorbed in divine consciousness. He pined to have *darsana* of Sri Ranganatha, but he knew that as a *harijan* he was not allowed to enter the temple. The melodious songs of the Alvar greeted God Ranganatha and Sri Lakshmi Devi. Once goddess Lakshmi, the fountain of kindness and grace, pleaded with Sri Ranganatha to bestow His Grace on His devotee Thiruppan. Sri Ranganatha is ever ready to lavish his grace on His devotees.

It is customary for the temple priests to fetch water from the river Kaveri for the temple ablutions. One early morning before dawn, the priests of the temple, led by the high priest Loka Saranga Muni, were carrying water from the river and on their way saw Thiruppan Alvar. They beckoned and shouted to him to move out of their way. Thiruppan was engrossed in divine contemplation and so did not hear the calls of the priests. One of them pelted a stone at him. It hit him on the head and blood flowed from the wound. The Alvar silently went to his quarters and sang his prayers

to God. When the priest Saranga Muni entered the sacred precincts of Sri Ranganatha, he found blood clots on the head of the Deity. He was aghast and prayed for forgiveness. A divine voice was heard commanding that Thiruppan should be brought before Him. Saranga Muni and the priests ran to the *Harijan* quarters. Thiruppan Alvar fled away, protesting against the Brahmin priests approaching him. But *Saranga Muni* ran after him, caught him, put the Alvar over his shoulders and triumphantly carried him to the Holy Presence of God Ranganatha. Therefore Thiruppan Alvar is named *Muni Vahana* or *Yogi Vahana Alvar*. At the sight of the image of God Ranganatha, Thiruppan Alvar's joy knew no bounds. His life's ambition was fulfilled. He went into spiritual ecstasy and surrendered himself to Sri Ranganatha. In his gratitude and joy at the unique Grace bestowed on him, Thiruppan Alvar sang ten verses in praise of Sri Ranganatha, describing Him from His lotus feet to His benign face. The song is called *Amalan Adi Piran*, after the three words with which it begins. *Amalan*, (pure) *adi* (First Cause) and *Piran* (Lord of Father). The verses are full of philosophic import. The Alvar sang

I behold before me the Lord, who is pure,  
 First cause and Father, Sri Ranganatha,  
 Whose lotus feet are worshipped by the  
 Goddess Sri Lakshmi Devi. He abides at  
 the Thirupathi Hills (*Balaji*) and at Sri  
 Ranganam as Lord Ranganatha, pure and immaculate  
 Lord, who made me His devotee.

O wonder : My mind is drawn to the *pitambara* worn by Him at His waist. He who measured the three worlds as *Vamana*. Who with His bow and arrow destroyed the *asuras* in *Dandaka* Forest as Sri *Rama* or *Kakustha*, is delighted with my devotion.

O wonder : He who is worshipped by the gods at Northern Vengadam, where the monkeys frolic by leaping from one branch to another. He Who rests on *Adi Sesa* at Sri Rangam, has drawn my mind to His navel, wherefrom sprouts the lotus seat of *Brahmā*.

He who is of sea blue complexion, ( *Rama* )  
Who conquered *Ravana*, felling his ten heads like the palmyra fruits with His *Brahma astra*,  
He is the Lord Who rests at Sri Rangam. My mind has reached His abdomen or *udara*.

I am weighed down with sins, but, O Ranga  
You have drawn me to you and entered into my heart.  
I know not what *tapas* or austerities I performed.  
My delight knows no bounds at the sight of Thy form, seeing Thy chest. where abides Sri Lakshmi Devi, adorned with pearl necklaces.

*S'iva*, who wears the moon in His braids, you redeemed from wandering as a beggar for the sin he committed.

I behold my Father who rests at Sri Rangam and  
in Whom all the world with the *kula parvatas* abide.  
I behold the throat of my Lord, Who rescued me from the  
net of *samsara*.

He, Who holds the *panchajanya*, and the *sudr'syana*  
emitting fire on foes, Who wears a Crown on His  
head and a *tulasi* garland on His shoulders, Sri  
Ranganatha ; my Father, my Jewel, Thy devotee's  
mind is drawn to Thy coral red lips. O wonder :  
now Thou has captivated the mind of Thy devotee.

When You killed Hiranyakasipu, even the Gods dared  
not approach Thee. O Eternal Being, Ranganatha :  
I am drawn by Thy dark eye lashes and Thy lotus eyes.

Absorbing all the seven worlds, you rest on the  
*vatapatra* as a babe. Your complexion is blue, you  
wear rich gemset pearl necklaces, and  
rest at Sri Rangam. Thy matchless beauty has  
captivated me and drawn out my energy.

Thou wast born with the complexion  
of a deep blue cloud in a family of cow herds.  
Thy coral red lips partook of butter.  
Thou art the saviour and protector of Thy devotees.  
He Who sleeps at Sri Rangam has stolen my  
heart. He is my nectar. The eyes that beheld Him  
shall see none else.

Thiruppan Alvar finished his hymn, and in a flash vanished to the amazement of all who had gathered there. He merged in with the God Ranganatha to abide in Him for ever. Devotee and God are not apart. The devotee who has surrendered himself completely to the Lord has no separate existence. He lives and moves in God. He is so dear to God that *Bhagavan* says "*Aham bhakat paradhina.*" The devotee is the glory of God. The ecstatic prayer of Thiruppan Alvar inspired the great saint, scholar, poet and philosopher Sri Vedanta Desika to compose in Sanskrit 10 verses, called *Bhagavata Dhyāna Sopana*, on the model of *Amala Adi Piran*.

The life of Thiruppan Alvar illustrates that true devotion for God has its rich reward, that the grace of God pours down on all His devotees, irrespective of caste, colour or nationality, and that any injury or harm done to the devotee hurts God Himself. The Alvars like all true devotees of God are the witnesses of His grace and glory; they enlighten the spiritual path. They are the sustainers of the spiritual life, and their memory is sanctifying. Aldous Huxley closes his book "Perrenial Philosophy" with the words: "It is they (mystics) who, dying to themselves, become capable of perpetual inspiration and so are made the instruments through which Divine Grace is mediated to those whose unregenerated nature is impervious to the delicate touches of the Spirit.

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## **Mata Anandamayi has come "to fulfil and not to destroy"\***

**DR. M. HAFIZ SYED, M.A., PH.D., D. LITT.**

Some teachers in the past assumed the role of iconoclasts and ruthlessly criticized the working of traditional institutions and the religious ideals of the people in whose midst they lived. To go no further, in the second half of the nineteenth century eminent teachers and reformers, like Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Keshava Chandra Sen, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others, criticized the traditional customs, rites and religious practices of the Hindus of their time, and turned the mind of some of the uninformed educated gentlemen against their ancestral faith. It was about a century ago that Shri Rama Krishna Paramahansa appeared on the scene of India, and gave a new message, based on his own direct experience. He practised in his daily life the spiritual tenets of various faiths prevailing in India, discovered the essential unity of all religions and preached religious harmony for the promotion of goodwill and amity amongst the contending faiths of our country.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, Mata Anandamayi with all Her spiritual greatness and glory appeared in

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\* This was one of the last writings of Late Dr. Hafiz Syed, who was a very sincere devotee of Ma Anandamayi. We deeply regret his sudden passing away.

—Managing Editor.

our midst in order to guide Her followers. She has been silently and unobtrusively guiding and instructing us to follow the traditional paths of spiritual practice without finding fault with any system of thought. She has been urging on us the utter necessity of understanding the underlying beauty of our own faith and leading our life accordingly. She has been travelling all over India, and Ashrams have been established for Her wherever it was found necessary. Thus, those who came in contact with Her, gained some understanding of their own creed and practised it with faith and devotion. Her services in the cause of religious revival and the spiritual regeneration of our people are too great and numerous to be even mentioned in this limited space.

Her greatest miracle, to my mind, is Her marvellous effort to transform and elevate the lives of those who have come in contact with her. This is the most important service that one can render in the cause of human welfare and national progress in India.

National unity can be achieved only on the basis of spirituality. People of various provinces, castes and creeds live harmoniously in Her various ashrama. Her silence is more eloquent than the speeches of scores of political leaders, who uptil now have failed to bring about national unity and common understanding.

It has been acknowledged from all quarters that the profounder a person's spirituality the more human he is. So

many of us know from experience that, although She is fully established in the spiritual world, She does not disregard or neglect the needs and affairs of human beings. She gives to everyone according to his requirements, understands the nature, weaknesses and faults of every aspirant and extends Her tolerance to all, understanding and elevating everyone, bringing peace and comfort to everyone who looks up to Her for help and guidance.

How many fallen souls She has uplifted ! How many desperate human beings She has comforted ! She has brought light to ever so many aspirants struggling on the path of Self-realization.

She has removed scepticism from the minds of so many doubting souls. Her message of hope and comfort to all mankind is that if we tread the path sincerely and earnestly we are sure to attain to our goal in good time.

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# **Experiences with My Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda**

SRI SRI DAYA MATA

**President, Self-Realization Fellowship of America and  
Yogoda Satsanga Society of India.**

Every human heart craves love. And all forms of human love—that between parents and children, husband and wife, master and servant, friend and friend—come from one common fountainhead : God.

Every heart is also seeking happiness. It is the goal of life. One may say, "My goal is success in business," or, "My goal is to create beautiful music," but through the fulfillment of these specific desires what is it that we are hoping, even if only sub-consciously, to attain ? Happiness. The desire to be happy, to love and be loved, are the motivating forces behind all our activities and ambitions.

Where to find happiness ? The sages of India have said that God is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. They tell us that happiness we seek, the joy that will endure forever and never grow stale, is to be found in God. And where is He ? His divine image resides in every human being as the soul. We do not know the divine peace of soul-realization because we have turned our attention and our seeking toward things of this world. We should remember that the happiness attainable on earth is conditional and fleeting. Only God's bliss is eternal.

We want love and joy, and in their purest form they can be found only in Him. But we seek everywhere else first. Only when we have passed through severe trials of life, seeing our dreams burst like bubbles and enduring much sorrow, do we begin to think of God ; then only do we start devoting a little time to worship—prayer or *puja* or the recitation of a *mantram*. But the time comes when such outer observances do not satisfy us. If the mind is wandering hither, repetition of *mantrams* or practice of *japa* fails to bring the response from God that the soul craves.

In America there is a fruit of great sweetness called "cherimoya." It is round, with a green skin ; the inside is a soft white pulp throughout which are large black seeds. I have described this fruit to you ; but do you actually know what a cherimoya is and how it tastes ? No, because you haven't seen or eaten the fruit ; you have only heard a description of it.

So it is with the Lord. Many saints and *rishis* have described their experience of God, and still, even after reading all their accounts, we have to say that we do not know Him. We *cannot* realize Him merely through the descriptions of others. We ourselves must experience the great state of ecstasy that comes when we are conscious of His presence. That experience comes only by prolonged and deep meditation.

The ordinary man is so busy with the worries and responsibilities of life that he knows no inner peace. His mind is always busy with work and desires for worldly pleasures.

He has never learned how to turn his mind to God in deep meditation. And even though he may set aside a little time each day to give his mind to the Lord and to find peace within, he fails to achieve success because he does not know how to meditate.

Techniques of meditation such as the *kriya yoga* given by Paramahansa Yogananda train and still the mind so that it becomes like a calm clear lake in which may be seen the mooned reflection of God. In this state the devotee sheds the delusion that he is the body and the mind, and realizes: "I am the immortal Self, made in the image of God." The more the devotee experiences of this state of great peace and ecstasy, the more he wants to remain in it. As he dives deeper he finds within a great well of perfect love, of bliss divine.

In *sadhana* a guru is necessary. The guru is one whose mind is always anchored and absorbed in the Cosmic Beloved. Whether he follows the path of *Raja*, *Jnana*, *Karma*, or *Bhakti Yoga*, the consciousness of a true guru is always one with God. All devotion offered to him by disciples he gives to the Lord. He directs the devotee's mind not to himself but to the Heavenly Father.

Such a one was my divine Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda. He wished that his disciples never become attached to or dependent on his personality. He always turned our thoughts to God, and trained us to keep our minds attuned night and day to Him. Our Gurudev wanted us to love and to seek the Lord alone. Whenever he saw our minds becoming

absorbed in anything external, he scolded us. He taught us to keep our minds always drunk with the thought of God, our lips always speaking of Him, our hearts ever singing to Him. In our Guru we had before us a true example of absorption in the Divine.

The last period of Guruji's life was lived in the unbroken ecstasy of God, or *nirbikalpa samādhi*, which began in June 1948. A few of us were privileged to be present at the time he entered this state. It was toward evening and he had called us to come to his room. He was sitting on a large chair and was just about to eat a mango. Suddenly his mind was sucked within in ecstasy and he remained all night in *samadhi*. Witnessing it was an amazing and tremendous experience. We had of course seen him in *samadhi* before, but during this particular experience of Gurudev's a great miracle occurred: he asked questions to the Divine Mother and then She used his voice to reply. Many predictions that the Divine Mother made through Guruji that night about world affairs and about the spread of the Self-Realization Fellowship message have since come to pass.

I had often been a "doubting Thomas," wanting definite proof of the existence of God. That night all doubt was removed forever. My consciousness was set afire with love and longing for the Divine Beloved whose voice we heard, whose love we felt through our blessed Guru.

After that *samadhi* Guruji told us: "I don't know what Divine Mother will do with my life. Either She wants to take me away from this earth or She wants me to withdraw

from organizational work and to remain in seclusion." Guruji went to a retreat in the desert and from that time on he remained for the most part in seclusion, devoting himself to writing and meditation.

In the last week of February 1952 Guruji received word at the desert that he had been invited to speak in Los Angeles at a reception for the Ambassador from India, Sri Binay R. Sen. Gurudev came to our headquarters in Los Angeles on March 1st. On March 3rd we spent many hours preparing under Guruji's directions special sweetmeats and curries for the Ambassador, who was to be a guest at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters the following day.

On March 6th, the night before his *mahasamadhi*, I was walking down the hall with blessed Master. He stopped and sat by the picture of his guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji of Serampore, and spoke so lovingly of that great soul who had guided his steps to God.

Then Gurudev said to me, "Do you realize that it is just a matter of hours before I leave this body?" I said sadly, "Master, what will we do without you? You are the diamond, we are only the setting, or ring. What is the ring without the beauty of the diamond? What will we do without the diamond to shed its light on the world?" Then came the answer from that great *bhakta*: "Remember this: When I am gone, only love can take my place."

Devotees should be absorbed night and day in that love. For lack of such love, the world has become full of miseries.



On the last day (March 7th), when I came into Master's room he was lying very quietly in his reclining chair. When I went over to him he said, "Please, I want no talking in my room today." His mind was much withdrawn, absorbed in God. The whole room emanated a powerful divine vibration of peace and love. In the evening he went to the Biltmore Hotel where the reception for the Ambassador was to be held. That night Guruji spoke with such quiet fervour of love for God that the whole audience was lifted to another plane of consciousness. Surely they had never before heard anyone speak so intimately of the Lord's presence.

Many years before, Master predicted, "When I depart from this body I will leave it speaking of God and my beloved India." And so on this night our Guru's last words on earth were of God and India. He was quoting from his poem, *My India*; "Where Ganges, woods, Himalayan caves, and men dream God—I am hallowed; my body touched that sod." And with this he lifted his eyes to the *kutastha* center and slowly slipped to the floor.

In an instant we were by his side. He had taught us to chant *Om* in his ear to bring him out of *samadhi*. So, although we knew this was no ordinary *samadhi*, we bent over our divine Guru and chanted *Om* in his ear. As I did so I had a most marvelous experience. Suddenly a great peace and joy descended on me and I felt a tremendous spiritual force enter my body. The blessing received that night has never left me.

Such are the blessings of a God-realized guru. We should always strive to keep mental and spiritual attunement

with guru. How? The scriptures of India tell you. Follow the *sadhana* outlined by the sage Patanjali—the eightfold path of Yoga. First comes *yama-niyama*, the spiritual and moral precepts all men must follow in order to lead a life in harmony with divine law. Then comes *asana* or right posture for meditation, with the spine held straight. Right *asana* is important so that the body does not distract the mind that is seeking to go Godward.

Then comes *pranayama*, life-force control, so that breath does not keep the consciousness tied to the body. Next interiorization of the mind or *pratyahara*, frees us from worldly distractions that reach us through the five senses. Then we are free for concentration and meditation (*dharana and dhyana*), which lead to *samadhi* or the superconscious experience of oneness with God.

God has no favourites; He loves all equally. The sun shines equally on the charcoal and on the diamond, but the diamond receives and reflects the light. Most persons have a charcoal mentality; that is why they think God does not bless them. The love and blessings are there; man has only to receive. Through *bhakti* he can transform his consciousness into a diamond mentality to receive and reflect fully the love and grace of God. Then he will have peace and fulfillment in his life. Just a little meditation and sincere love for our Divine Creator will bring peace into our hearts, and then world conditions will truly improve.

First we must give our hearts' devotion to the guru who awakens within us love for God. If we have that kind of

devotion for guru, then we will have love for the Lord, we will know *how* to love Him.

The Cosmic Ruler has given us twenty-four hours each day. We waste much of this time. Can we not set apart some of it and give it to God alone? We say we have so many worries and responsibilities that we have no time for meditation. But what if God said that He had no time for us? All our so-called important engagements would have to be cancelled in a moment.

It is easy to find God through *bhakti*. No matter what we are doing, our mind should never wander away from Him. Talk to your Creator in the language of your heart. Remember there is only one Love that comes to us through various human forms. Just as the lover, no matter what activity he is engaged in, is thinking in the background of his mind of the beloved, be that way with God.

When difficulty comes, run to the feet of the Divine Beloved and pray: "Give me wisdom to see that this world is only a play. Teach me to be anchored in Your changeless consciousness as I behold all the sorrows and joys of life." In this way keep the mind centered on that One alone.

Guruji wrote, "In waking, eating, working, dreaming, sleeping, serving, meditating, chanting, divinely loving, my soul constantly hums, unheard by any: God! God! God!" That is the way to perfect yourself in *bhakti*: be always absorbed in the thought of God—"My Beloved, my Beloved"—and in that consciousness perform all actions in this world.

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## Life Divine-The Aim of Human Existence

JAINATH KAUL

Human life is most precious and should be spent with the greatest care. It is a rare privilege to be in a human form. It is only by the infinite grace of the Lord that a *Jiva* gets "*Manusha Sharir*", a human body. Goswami Tulsidasji says :

बड़े भाग्य मानुश तनु पावा । सुर दुर्लभ सब प्रन्थन ही गावा ॥

Birth in a form is a result of the greatest good fortune. All scriptures say that even the *devatas* (gods) hanker after it. This is not an exaggeration at all, but a statement of fact. The most marvellous thing about it is that it is only in this form that a *Jiva* can realize God. Now, God-realization may have no meaning, or it may seem an impossible goal to many people just as for instance, diamonds may appear like pieces of ordinary glass to people who have never seen and known them. But those who have had the good fortune of having led thoughtful lives in previous births, and who reflect over things in this life also, can appreciate this point.

The innermost hunger and urge of every one is for permanent, undiminishing happiness. Attempts are continually made to experience pleasure by catering to the demands of the senses. The result is heightened excitement followed by its reverse. You cannot get the everlasting unchanging

serenity which is real happiness, indescribable happiness, the deep, rich, unbelievable, permanent bliss—the goal of all existence—by catering to the senses. Sense pleasures are superficial, fleeting and destructive. They make the body, which is the instrument of *sadhana*, unfit for the 'experience of the unruffled, all-pervading, Existence-consciousness-Ananda. In reality, we are this Existence; each one of us, even the meanest of the mean. But our desires for the fleeting, crude things of clay keep us busy. We are never free from thinking of one thing or the other. And our thoughts are generally centered in this mortal world.

The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are all of the gross world. Thoughts also belong to it; they are material. And when we are thinking of things of this world we are caught in *maya*. '*Maya*' is a very difficult term to define. Actually, the *Shastras* call it 'अनिर्वचनीय', i. e., that which cannot be defined in words. It is felt, and it exists only so long as one is in ignorance. It disappears when Self-realization takes place like the darkness of the night vanishing at sun rise. Everything that is connected with the intellect, mind and the body including the objects of senses, i. e., anything that has form, colour, smell etc, belongs to the domain of *maya*. It is only when one transcends the frontiers of the intellect that one enters the region of the Divine, the mover of everything, the Governor, the substratum, the cause of all. But one cannot enter that domain, until the mind is completely silenced. And the mind cannot become quiet so long as the desire for fame, wealth, status and property and attachments of various other types continue unabated.

It is not that these ideas are not known to us. Oh yes, they are well known and yet one cannot get rid of desire. Every one knows that he or she has to leave this world one day, and still the attachments continue, the desires do not relax—this is *maya*. *Maya* is the chief power of the Divine. It has its sway over all except those who surrender to the Divine. The more sincere the surrender, the greater the relaxation of the hold of *maya* over the individual. But one cannot pursue this path unaided. Good books should be read regularly. *Sad Granthas* like the *Ramayana* and *Gita* should be persistently studied over long periods. And more important than this, the company of saints should be sought. Without the *kripa* (grace) of a realized saint, progress in this field is not possible, and the active protection of such a personality means *sure and steady success in due course*.

### The job to be done

Compare a human being with any other animal, say, a horse. A man breathes, a horse breathes; a man has a physical body consisting of blood, muscles and bones, and so has a horse. A man has eyes, nose, ears, mouth, teeth, skin and various organized systems of cells like the heart, the kidneys etc, and so has a horse. A man eats and drinks, and so does a horse. A man sleeps and walks, and so does a horse. A man produces offspring and so does a horse. So long as man only eats, drinks, sleeps, produces children, looks after them, protects himself and his dependants from hunger, cold, heat, rain and other dangers, he is no more than an animal. If he does only this and no more, he does not deserve the human form. He deserves only forms of the lower level, for even in

such forms he can experience these pleasures. It is not necessary to become a jeweller, if even after becoming a jeweller one continues only as a repairer of glass windows and doors. A jeweller must learn to differentiate between jewels and what are not jewels ; he must distinguish between jewels and jewels must be able to evaluate correctly even the most expensive of them and so on, which a repairer of glass windows cannot *even dream* about.

Now, what is it that a human being can achieve which the animals cannot *even dream* about ? In brief, a man can KNOW HIMSELF, while an animal cannot. To know what one is in reality, the real man, the tenant who is temporarily functioning in the space-time-conditioned body-mind-tenement. This cannot be done unless sufficient time and energy are uninterruptedly given to the job to be done and over a very long period. For instance, a period of three years of silence is a usual phase in the lives of those who have achieved the goal. The Infinite pervades everything. He is the Inspirer and the mind is the recipient. So long as one continues with the ego of an independent body-mind individual so long is the Lord completely out of the picture. The moment the individual accepts His supremacy, accepts him as the Ruler, surrenders, becomes sensitive to His presence and His will, he is in tune with Him and the world in a most harmonious manner. Everything appears perfect. No longer does such an individual resist anything or revolt against it, for, everything for him emanates from the Divine, his Beloved. He not only does not oppose anything, but rejoices over every happening as a playful act of the Lord.

A person freed of his ego—the emotional mind—has no likes and dislikes. He is ever at peace with himself and his surroundings, and everyone is as dear to him as himself. By continual surrender he reaches a stage where he is at one with humanity and then he sees himself in everyone and everyone in himself. He becomes the Infinite freed from the shackles of his mortal frame, one who has realized his true being—the infinite, everlasting, immutable and tranquil consciousness which is one-without-a-second. This job is to be done before the end comes to the fleeting physical existence. In brief, one has to REALIZE clearly, firmly and absolutely his immortal Self before the body perishes. If this is achieved, he becomes the *jivan mukta* who has done the job which only a human being can do and no animal. For such a person—one who is completely free from the material encasement—the body dies, so far as he is concerned, even when he is still alive. Therefore, when the body actually perishes it makes no difference to him. He continues to be his Real Self while the world at large imagines him dead.

### Faith—the indispensable condition

*Shraddha* or Faith is the solid, indispensable and completely dependable foundation on which life, Divine is built. Without *Shraddha* NOTHING can be achieved. And *Shraddha* is not only not illogical, the direct outcome of an honest, clear and inescapable conclusion of a pure reasoning mind. The law courts accept evidence, and even hang a man on the basis of evidence. The judges believe, have faith or *Shraddha* in the evidence given by average people. The man of religion does not ask for this; he asks people to have faith



*Shraddha* in the utterances, experiences and writings of those whose names are revered even to-day though they may have lived centuries ago : Shankara, Tulsidas, Gyaneshwar, Surdas, Kabir, Nanak, Buleshah, Mira, Tukaram, Chaitanya Maha Prabhu, Rama Krishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Rama Tirtha, Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and above all our own *Jagat Janani*\* Ma Anandamayee to name only a few who command the respect of millions. Then, there are the Christian Saints and the Muslim Sufis. The evidence is overwhelming. It is only a heightened ego that finds it hard to have faith. The ego knows that *Shraddha* is its enemy and, therefore, puts up a hard fight. Doubts exist only in *maya*. We should brush them aside and emerge victorious powerful men, fully established on the firm foundation of faith and remembering that a complete ever-present living *Shraddha* in His existence as the basic Reality and the world as His manifestation, each form—animate and inanimate—being He Himself and nothing else, is not only the ABC but the end of all *sadhana*.

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\* *Jagat Janani*—Mother of the world.

## New Diary Leaves

ATMANANDA

(8)

Vrindaban, 20th January, 1962.

Two American ladies arrived here four days ago. One of them had come last winter and spent about three months, following Mataji wherever She went. This year she has brought a friend of hers, who, nearly a year ago, lost her husband, a renowned physician, who suddenly died at the age of 52. She showed us her husband's and her children's photos and told us what a happy life she had enjoyed, with all that she could possibly wish for, until this severe blow of fate destroyed her happiness in a moment. Now she feels at a complete loss, wishing that she could have left this world instead of her beloved husband. "I suppose," she added thoughtfully, "when one feels perfectly happy one does not search for anything. We always believed in God and went to church, but I cannot say that we were deeply religious."

I asked her to show the photos to Mataji. When looking at the doctor's picture, Mataji exclaimed: "He seems quite well known to me." This moved the widow visibly.

Mataji was talking to some Gujarati visitors. She then, of Her own accord, turned to the American lady, saying

“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 the world. A beloved person leaves us, and we are in pain. As long as we remember that we are God’s children and give our minds 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’ means duality, the world consists of the pairs of opposites, and so there is happiness and grief alternating. Without searching the Supreme one cannot find lasting happiness and peace. Your husband’s body is no more, but his Self (*atma*) 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 so that you may realize THAT which is eternal and can never be lost. You are 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 cry. If you cry 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 taken away your husband’s body to show you the path of *Brahmacharya*\*, so that you may realize your husband’s true Being and thus know that you are one with him eternally. Happiness and misery are of the mind. When

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\* *Brahmacharya*—A celibate life, dedicated to the Supreme Quest.

the mind merges into the ONE, then you have reached beyond them. In order to find real and lasting happiness, man has to contemplate the Supreme. Happiness that depends on anything, be it a person, money, comforts, and so forth, 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."

Vrindaban, 25th January, 1962.

Four German people are now staying with us. They like it here immensely. This evening, one of them asked what was the difference, if any, between prayer and meditation, provided one did not pray for anything in particular.

*Mataji* : When praying one asks for the fulfilment of one's desire, even though it be the desire to become one with God or to serve Him or realize Him. Whereas meditation (*dhyana*) means to be absorbed in the contemplation of Him. In this there is no room for desire.

*Question* : How can one attain to such meditation ?

*Mataji* : It comes spontaneously. At first you remember Him and ponder over Him and then contemplation sets in of itself. Just as while sitting here the remembrance, the thought of your home and children comes to you, unasked and you cannot help pondering over them. Similarly the contemplation of the Beloved comes naturally, of its own accord.

Vrindaban, 26th January, 1962.

To-day the German lady asked : 'I have read in a book

on meditation that it is good for a beginner to concentrate on some concrete object or on a symbol, such as the cross, a chalice, or the light of a candle, since, to concentrate on the Supreme is very difficult.

*Mataji* : Do this all that the book suggests ? Why not concentrate on Jesus Christ ?

*The Questioner* : I have not got the courage to do this. The Christ is too holy, too sublime. I could only go wrong in trying, I do not feel pure enough to dare this.

*Mataji* : All that you perceive, you behold because there is light. Without light nothing can be seen. There is only one light. Whatever anyone perceives, be he a man or an animal, is seen by that same light. The outer light originates from the inner light, even a blind person is aware of an inner Light. The Light of the Self is present everywhere and in all. Whether you worship Christ, Krishna, Kali or Allah, you actually worship the one Light, which is also in you, since it pervades all things. Everything originates from Light, everything in its essence is Light.

*An Indian lady* : You often say we should constantly think of God, be immersed in Him. But when attempting to do this, one's daily duties in the home will be neglected. Suppose a child comes and asks for something—one will attend to it hurriedly ; or guests arrive and one does not look after them with the care they deserve. What then is one to do, while living a householder's life ?

*Mataji* : If you are immersed in God, why bother about

the world? Let happen what may, you are absorbed in God.

*The Questioner* : But my people find fault with me, they say that I am half here and half there and therefore not successful in any line.

*Mataji* : Oh no, you are not half "there", very much less than half, and with that little bit of other worldliness you can attend to your household duties very well indeed even better than you could otherwise. Keep some hours reserved for your meditation, and for the rest do your work as a service to God. If you think of God all the time and look on everyone as a form of Him, your work will be done excellently and satisfy everyone. When a man is intent on accumulating wealth, he hides what little he has, and even when his treasure grows, it has to be kept carefully concealed. Similarly foster in your heart what little inner wealth you have gained and outwardly occupy yourself with the service of your family. There is no need to make a show of the little you have acquired. But when you become really immersed in the One, so that it is impossible for you to attend to your work, then nobody will find fault with you. On the contrary, people will feel the divine Presence in you and be only too eager to serve you. Even if guests are not looked after, they will not mind it, for they will be happy to be in your company. But that state is quite different from what you know now, the world will then no longer exist for you.

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## Pages from my Diary

GURUPRIYA DEVI

( Translated from Bengali )

20th July, 1957.

Mataji has been in the Kishenpur Ashram at Dehradun for some time now. Her health is not very satisfactory. A young man came and said to Mataji that, since God was all powerful He could surely quite easily stop all the fighting and the misery of the world.

Mataji replied with a smile : "Look, God did not consult anyone when He created the world. Even if He had made it quite different from what it is, your problem would still remain. If you possessed real faith in God's almightiness, a question of this kind could not possibly occur to you."

A gentleman aged 84, who had recently lost his son, cried and lamented a great deal over his bereavement. Sitting near Mataji for some time, he became much calmer. In this connection Mataji related something that had happened many years ago, while Mataji was at Tarapith :

A woman came to Mataji in dee psorrow. Her eldest daughter had died suddenly, just at the time when all the preparations for her wedding had been completed. The woman brought her smaller daughter with her, who was then about 11 years old. When Mataji visited Tarapith again the

next year, the woman gave Her the sad news that this little girl had also passed away. God's will is inscrutable.' It so happened that Mataji came to Tarapith once more the year after. This time the woman was carrying a baby one month old in her arms when she came for Mataji's *darshan*. The woman related to Mataji in detail what had happened in the meanwhile.

After her smaller daughter had left this world, the bereaved mother was simply heart-broken and could not stop crying. One night she dreamt of her little girl. She saw her in a most lovely place, together with many other children of her age. They all looked happy and seemed to be engaged in pray to God. A few days later the child's father dreamt that his younger daughter came to him and told him full of grief that she could not remain in her charming abode any longer, since she was unable to bear her mother's deep sorrow. She would therefore return to her. In his dream the 11 years old girl suddenly changed into a tiny infant, which he placed into his wife's lap. Lo and behold, within a year a baby girl was born to them. This was the child that she had now brought with her to Mataji.

Mataji commented on this story as follows :—

"To weep and lament over the loss of a loved person, at times interferes with the spiritual progress of the deceased. One comes across other stories of a similar kind. It is man's duty to remain steady and calm under all circumstances, and to pray only for the welfare of the soul (*atma*)."



I have heard another story from Mataji that may be repeated here :

A certain pandit was very friendly with a fakir. One day the pandit smelt a distinct scent of ripe jack-fruit, although it was not the season for it. He searched everywhere, trying to locate the source of the fragrance, without any result whatever. He felt extremely puzzled and finally went to his friend the fakir to ask his opinion on the strange sensation. The fakir was somewhat advanced on the spiritual path and had acquired some supernormal powers. He listened to all that the pandit told him and then sat in silence for a while. Thereupon he asked his friend to accompany him. They walked some distance, crossed a river, and again walked until they came to a village. There they found an old Brahmin performing *Shrāddha*\* for his father. In order to satisfy the soul of the deceased, he had offered ripe jackfruit during the ceremony. His father had been specially fond of jackfruit and therefore the Brahmin had taken the trouble to procure some of it, although it was out of season in that part of the country. The fakir explained to his friend : "Look, in your last birth you were the father of this Brahmin. When he offered jackfruit to you in the course of the ritual, the scent of the fruit floated to you, although you were far away, sitting in your own house."

Whether this story is true or not is difficult to say.

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\* *Shrāddha*. A ceremony performed for the dead, which is supposed to help them on their upward path.

Somebody had once related it to Mataji. After telling the story Mataji said: "Whatever is offered to a deceased person in the *Shraddha* ceremony, reaches him in some manner and gives him satisfaction. Nowadays one often hears people question, whether the *Shraddha* really benefits the dead and in what way. In actual fact there are many true stories of a more or less similar type that can establish your faith in the matter. One should not make light of anything."

2nd August, 1957.

Last night Mataji's health seemed to be very unsatisfactory. At about 2 a. m., She suddenly got up and went to the bathroom. Laughing merrily, She said: "Now is the right time to pour water over my head and to clean my teeth. Then nothing will remain to be done in the morning."

Sati and Buni who were in Mataji's room to attend to Her, noticed that the expression of Her face and eyes was not at all normal or natural. Her whole face seemed as if lit up by a supernatural light. Mataji rarely pours water over Her head. When Her two attendants saw that Mataji was pouring cold water over Her head at that time of the night, they were struck dumb with apprehension. But who can prevent the working-out of Mataji's *kheyala*? After having poured plenty of water over Her head, Mataji lay down again on Her bed to rest.

Yesterday afternoon, Mrs. Sabharwal with her son and daughter-in-law came to see Mataji. The young couple are

about to go to England and have come to ask Mataji's blessing for their journey. When they took leave of Her, Mataji gave two fruits to the young woman. Mrs. Sabharwal exclaimed with amusement : "Again these fruits, Mataji !" We at first could not quite understand what was meant by this remark. Later we heard that she was referring to something that had happened many years ago.

A Kashmere devotee who was then working in the Police department of the U. P. had come to Kishenpur with his wife for Mataji's *darshan* on his way down from Mussoorie. On taking leave, Mataji put three fruits into his wife's hands. Why three, Mataji alone knows. They had so far been childless. The surprising thing was that after partaking of those fruits, three children were born to them, one after another. They felt convinced that the births of their children were due solely to Mataji's grace. However, they never breathed a word about this to Mataji. Years later, when the gentleman had become a high police official in Lucknow, Mataji once visited that town. The husband and wife came for Mataji's *darshan*. When Mataji wanted to present two fruits to the lady she folded her hands, saying. "We don't want any more." On that occasion they explained to Mataji why she would not accept the fruits. The other day the same lady came for Mataji's *darshan* and referred to the above mentioned incident while sitting in Mataji's room in Mrs. Sabharwal's presence. Thus, when yesterday Mataji presented two fruits to Mrs. S.'s daughter-in-law, she took it to mean, that two children would be born to her. How many presents Mataji gives constantly to so many people ! The actual fact

is that according to their heart's desire people address prayers to Mataji mentally and what they see as a result depends on their desires.

Now to another incident that took place some years ago. One day Mataji was leaving Benares for some other place. On her way to the railway station, She stopped the car in front of Dr. Gopal Das Gupta's house. The whole family came out to greet Her. When the youngest daughter Radhu bowed to Mataji, Mataji gave her two garlands of flowers. Those who witnessed this were wondering why Radhu had received two garlands ?

A short time later, when Mataji was in Bombay, a letter arrived from Dr. G. Das Gupta to inform Mataji that he had quite unexpectedly found a suitable bride-groom for Radhu and thus arranged for her marriage. At the time when Mataji had given two garlands to Radhu, nobody was as yet thinking of her marriage. But Mataji who is all-knowing, had already in advance given her one garland for herself and the second for her future husband. Similar things happen daily with Mataji. How very few of them we are able to notice.

7th August, 1957.

Yesterday, throughout the night, Mataji's condition of health appeared to be extremely alarming. Her breathing and pulse would become very weak and irregular off and on, Her hands and feet turning ice-cold. At moments Her pulse could be felt only with difficulty and then again there was no pulse at all. Dr. G. Das Gupta has come from Benares, Dr. Balram from Delhi, and a number of other

doctors from various places. After careful examination they all declared unanimously that they could not find any illness whatsoever. Heart, lungs and blood-pressure are satisfactory, in fact all organs are functioning normally. Why, inspite of this, Mataji's condition of health should be so bad, is more than their science can explain. When Mataji Herself was asked to throw light on the question, She only replied : "This body is always very well. Whatever happens, is exactly as it should be." Yet again, one can hear Mataji say on occasions : "If another body were in a like condition, it is difficult to guess, what all could not happen !" When such words come from Mataji's lips, our heart beat stops with fear and trembling. However, no medicine or medical treatment of any kind are possible in Mataji's case. So much so that Her body will not assimilate even the most simple and ordinary remedies. Thus, the one and only thing for us to do is to pray to Mataji to have the *kheyala* to make Her body well.

This morning at about 11-30 a.m., Mataji sat up on Her bed all by Herself. At other times, one has nowadays to support Her for sitting up. She sat quite still for a long time, without saying a single word to anyone, just like a statue made of stone. Her features took on a strange expression and a super-natural light radiated from Her face. More than an hour passed in this way. Not the slightest vibration could be noticed anywhere in Her body. Many of those who observed this, had great hopes that some yogic process was going on in Her body, which would at long last produce a lasting improvement in Her health.

After sunset Mataji's condition became even worse.

Her hands and feet turned ice-cold and seemed to be getting stiff, Mataji was lying straight and still on Her back, Her head was not even raised up on a pillow. The rate of Her breathing was most irregular, Her pulse at times between 110-115 per minute, then again became so slow as to be almost imperceptible. Some felt that the only explanation for these disturbing phenomena could be a state of *bhava*. But I who have had the good fortune of observing Mataji in various *bhavas* at different times, can say that this was totally different. It seemed as if Mataji was letting go and letting go, as if there was nothing to hold Her. Several times She said : "Anything at all may happen at any time. For this body, whatever comes to pass is all right."

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# MATRI LILA

JANUARY 15TH—APRIL 5TH, 1962.

This winter Mataji remained in Vrindaban for an unusually long time. We have already reported about Her stay there from December 4th to January 15th. Mataji did not leave Vrindaban until February 6th. Into the last part of Mataji's stay fell the period that was considered a very inauspicious planetary constellation (*oshta graha*), feared all over the world. Whenever Mataji had been questioned as to Her opinion about the prophecies of world-wide disaster, She either kept quiet or else replied that rather than worrying about such things we should devote our energies to reaching beyond fear. After the bad constellation had passed over Mataji remarked with Her most radiant smile that it had been a singularly auspicious occasion, since it had induced the people of every town and village in the country to pray from their hearts and to give in charity. Even those who proudly declared to be far above such superstitious prayed in secret. For this reason this much dreaded occasion had actually proved most beneficial.

No special function had been arranged in our Ashram to ward off the bad planetary influence, but perpetual japa and meditation was sustained day and night from January 25th until Mataji left Vrindaban. When a German visitor who wished to take her turn in the meditation wanted to

know whether she would be permitted to do *japa* of Christ's name, Mataji replied : "Certainly, there is only One."

For the last two weeks, four German guests were staying with us at Vrindaban. They were well trained in music. When Mataji asked them to sing, they surprised everyone present by singing beautiful old German religious music in 3—4 voices. Throughout their stay a few Christian hymns formed part of our regular daily evening *kirtan*. This was a new feature in our Ashram. It is an example of how minutely Mataji responds to the needs of whoever comes to Her. One day Mataji was asked how She liked those German songs. She said : "Very much."

This reminded Her of the following incident from Her childhood, which She related to us. Once during Her childhood some Christian missionaries came to Mataji's village. They pitched a tent and went about singing Christian hymns very beautifully. Mataji, always sensitive to devotional music, was greatly moved and tears rolled down her cheeks. She could feel the missionaries' religious fervour, which fascinated Her, and She followed them about wherever they went. Being a child, She knew nothing about the difference between Hinduism and Christianity, She only sensed their religious spirit. She remained with the missionaries until nightfall and when they retired to their tent She stood outside. The entrance of the tent was closed and it became quite still. Mataji knew that they were praying inside. At last, when it turned pitch dark, She ran home. Strangely, nobody had noticed Her absence and so She was neither questioned nor rebuked. Little Nirmala



( Mataji ) begged of Her mother to buy for Her one of the Bengali hymn book that the missionaries were selling for 1 pice each.

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On February 6th Mataji entrained for Allahabad where She spent two nights in the Ashram of the late Sri Gopal Thakur at Allengunge. On the 9th She alighted in Vindhya-chal. Saraswati Puja was celebrated there on that day ( *Vasant Panchmi* ). Most of the students of the Kanyapith were then holidaying at Vindhya-chal. After a sojourn of 24 hours only, Mataji motored to Varanasi. From February 11th to 18th a Bhagavata Saptah was held at the Varanasi Ashram. Pandit Nityanandaji of Vrindaban was responsible for both the Sanskrit recitations in the morning and the Hindi explanations in the afternoon. Mataji did not attend very regularly as Her health was indifferent. An unusually large number of foreigners came for Mataji's *Darshan* this time at Varanasi.

On February 23rd Mataji left for Dehradun. She remained in the Kishenpur Ashram for 4 days. Originally She was expected to stay there for a couple of days only, but since one of the Sannyasinis of the Ashram was seriously ill, Mataji prolonged Her stay and finally took the patient with Her by car on the 28th morning. After settling her at Kankhal, Mataji proceeded to Baghat House, Kharkhari, the *dharmasala* of Raja Durga Singhji of Solan, where Mataji usually puts up at Hardwar.

On March 4th Sivaratri was celebrated as customary by a complete fast without water for 36 hours and 4 *pūjas* during the night. The function proceeded with great solemnity and harmony, as it always does. The worshippers were seated in circles round *Siva linga* in the hall and in some other places. As in former years at least half a dozen Europeans of various countries watched from the gallery with great interest. However, this time comparatively few people had come and Mataji remarked that it was the quietest Sivaratri we had known for years.

A couple of days later one of the European visitors wanted to know the meaning of the four periods (*prahāras*) of the night and why four *pūjas* had to be performed. At Mataji's request one of the Swamis explained that each *pūjā* was different. For instance, in the first *pūjā* the *linga* is bathed in milk, in the second in curds, in the third in *ghī* and in the fourth in honey. Special varieties of fruit have to be offered that are different for each *pūjā*, and so forth. Mataji then commented that milk was the basic substance; out of milk curds are made, out of curds *ghī*, while honey is symbolic for the sweetness of the milk. The different actions in the different *pūjas* are symbolic for subtle changes that occur in the psyche of those who perform the *pūjā*. Mataji also remarked that during the four periods (*prahāras*) of the day we take in the world through the senses, while during sleep we withdraw within and unconsciously contact our real Self in deep dreamless sleep. By fasting the following night in worship on *Sivaratri*, an effort is made to reach with full consciousness where we go unconsciously at least

once every night. If we can succeed in this, the purpose of the festival will have been achieved. Actually, all the 24 hours are meant for the search of God or Truth. If at least on this special occasion we can remain absorbed in it continually, how great will be the gain !



It had been taken for granted that Mataji would remain in Hardwar over Holi and up to the end of the Kumbh Mela. However Sri Haribabaji more than once invited Mataji to spend Holi at Bundh, but Mataji's health being indifferent, one of the Sannyasis of our Ashram went in person to explain to Sri Haribabaji why Mataji could not come. Suddenly, on the afternoon of the 18th March, She declared that She would leave the same evening. Only 3 people accompanied Her. Bundh is difficult to approach. The last several miles of the road are in a bad condition. The morning after Mataji's departure, a letter arrived from one of Sri Haribabaji's disciples to say that it was just as well that Mataji had declined to go there as the road was not at all as Haribabaji wanted it to be. The birthday of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and also that of Sri Haribabaji Maharaj fall on Holi day and Haribabaji's devotees therefore like to celebrate in great style. But Haribaba was not in a mood for any celebration. Needless to say, no sooner had Mataji arrived quite unexpectedly, than the gloom gave place to hilarious joy and the four days of Her stay turned into one continuous festival. Lo and behold, at Bundh Mataji's health suddenly seemed excellent and when Mataji returned to Hardwar on the 23rd March



*Mataji in Shuktal*



*Bhagavat Saptaha in Shuktal, November, 1961.*



night, She related with much laughter about Holi at Bundh. A number of people had come from various places to spend Holi with Mataji and were sorely disappointed to find Her absent. However, at the request of some Ashramites, Mataji played Holi with all present one morning soon after Her return.

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On March 27th Mataji motored to Dehradun. Not less than five guests from Europe and America accompanied Her. An aged sannyasi at Kishenpur Ashram Swami Chidananda had been ill for sometime and recently his condition had worsened. Mataji was expected to return to Hardwar on the 30th. She had the *kheyal* to take the patient with Her, but the doctor advised against his being moved. Mataji therefore postponed Her departure until the next morning. At 4-30 a. m. the fortunate Swami passed away peacefully in Mataji's presence, pronouncing the *Pranava*. By 7 a. m. Mataji started for Hardwar and a truck carrying the body of the deceased followed Her car. The body of the Sannyasi was immersed in the Ganges soon after arrival there.

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Mataji's sojourn at Hardwar was fairly quiet and restful during March, but since the beginning of April the crowd has increased geometrically. Many pilgrims of the Kumbh Mela also come for Mataji's *darsana*. One day Swami Naradanandaji, our host at Naimisharanya, graced Baghat House with his presence, bringing with him his school for

Brahmacharies and his whole Ashram. The hall and the gallery were packed on this occasion, and many had to watch from the courtyard. The students of the school chanted with great enthusiasm and Swami Naradanandaji gave a short address.

From April 7th to 13th Didima's *Sannyasa Utsava* will be observed in great style. So far Didima's *Sannyasa* had been commemorated by one day's celebration on April 13th, for the last few years, while this year for the first time a full programme of meditation, *Kirtan*, *Gurupuja* and discourses by distinguished *Sannyasi* will extend over a whole week. On April 5th Swami Krishnananda Avadhutji gave an introductory talk, elucidating the significance of *Sannyasa*. He stressed the point that without renouncing the fleeting joys and experiences of the 3 worlds it is impossible to find the SELF, which by its very nature is Bliss everlasting.

On April 15th Mataji is expected to proceed from Hardwar to Dehradun, where Her birthday is to be celebrated at the Kishenpur Ashram from 2nd to 23rd May.

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