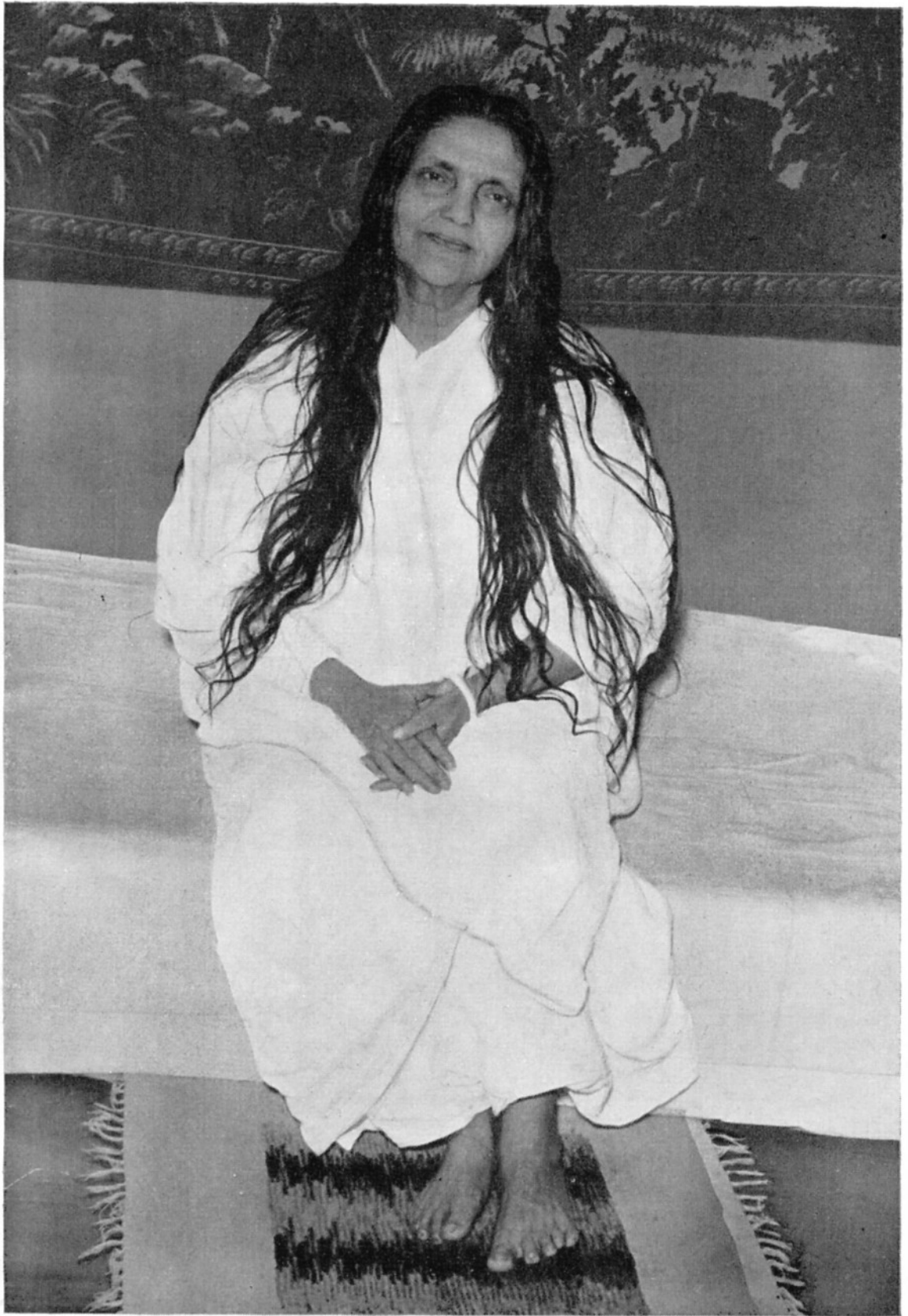


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—Poona, June, 1960.

*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 Vani

If you are able to love God really—this is the consummation of all love.



By whatever means anyone may desire to realize God, all are seeking Him, and Him alone. Differences are merely of the path. HE is the One to be found, He the One to be known. To know or find Him means to know one's Self, to know or find one's Self means to know Him. He May be invoked from anywhere, by anyone, under whatever circumstances; for He is everywhere, pervading all. One should constantly pray for the knowledge of Him, for the realization of Him.



In search of the inner Guru one seeks and accepts a spiritual guide. With single-minded devotion one must advance on the path. Whatever takes one nearer to God, no matter from what source it may come, should be adopted. A person who desires God as his one and only goal is bound to find a path. He Himself will reveal Himself.



Man as man must cultivate that which aids the Supreme Quest. It is the Lord who inspires the prayer and it is He who hears it. Ever strive to keep your mind centred in Him.



In worldly life man is subjected to calamities and may go astray. The only expedient for deliverance from such calamities is the Revelation of the Self within oneself.



To associate with pilgrims on the path to Self-realization means to open oneself to good sense, to right discrimination. But taking a wrong path leads to distraction and restlessness.



Philosophy of Education

SRI U. C. DUTT, M. A.

Science is a systematic enquiry into laws and principles governing some facts or phenomena of nature. It deals with a part of nature. Philosophy is an attempt to know the universe as a whole. It deals with Reality itself and nothing less. Indian Philosophy or Darshan means direct vision of Truth—result of intuition. While interpreted intellectually, it takes the form of a reasoned account and looks like philosophy. Philosophy determines the aims and purpose of life, and education is the practical method by which it is realized. According to Sir John Adams education is the dynamic side of philosophy. It is the practical means of realizing the ideals of life. James Ross says that philosophy and education are like the two sides of a coin, the former is the contemplative side, while the latter is the active side. Nunn observes, "Educational aims are correlated to ideals of life." The relation between the two is so close that Dewey does away with the line of demarcation and writes: "Philosophy is the theory of education in its most general phases." It is a fact that men live according to their notions of life and the world. 'It is impossible to live without a metaphysic.' The choice is between a good metaphysic and a bad metaphysic as Aldous Huxley puts it. Education is, after all, a preparation for life on which all such theories are based. So life is moulded on one side by philosophy and on the other by education.

The philosophical basis of theories of education are Idealism, Realism, Naturalism and Pragmatism. All systems of education in the East and the West are prompted by them.

IDEALISM IN EDUCATION

Idealism offers a spiritual conception of the world. If materialism reduces mind to matter, idealism resolves matter into mind or spirit. It regards mind as prior to and more important than matter. The world is grounded in Mind which is conscious and self-conscious.

Of the two worlds with which we are concerned, the world of ideas or experience is more in tune with ultimate Reality than the physical world. 'Mind, reason, intelligence, personality, values, moral and religious ideals are the real entities. Physical forces are secondary.' Man is superior to Nature. So for educational purposes the humanities or the studies concerning man himself are more important than the study of positive science.

All seers and prophets are idealists. The Rishis of the *Upanishads*, Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Tulsidas, etc. are all idealists with individual variations. Idealism has different shades. So in the West, Plato, Barkeley, Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer represent different types of idealism standing on the common ground that idea or spirit is the real stuff of existence. This doctrine held the field of education everywhere till the sixteenth century. The Brahmanical, Buddhist and Islamic education in India, and Plato, Quintilian, Loyola, etc. in Europe gave prominence to idealism. The highest ideal to be attained in life is the True, the Good

and the Beautiful. This idea of the *Upanishads* is echoed by Plato when he talks of the 'Form of the Good' and 'the Supreme Beauty' as identical and 'as the goal of our spiritual pilgrimage.' Idealism in education leads finally to Self-realization through a process of gradual self-expression.

REALISM IN EDUCATION

Realism asserts an extra-mental reality which is outside and independent of the mind, and knowledge is an exact copy of this reality. In line with this thought there is a realistic movement in education. It appears as a reaction against the courses of studies that have become bookish, subjective, abstract and abstruse. All real knowledge is considered to come through the senses and experience. So the Realist 'stressed the value of direct studies of men and things' and 'sought to displace literary and linguistic by scientific studies, that is to say, studies of real things by the inductive method.' (Ross). Realism gained importance in an age of scientific achievement since the seventeenth century. It took the specific form of a scientific technical or practical training. It turned from the subjective study of Man to the objective study of Nature.

Long ago India was proud of Realists who built systems of Philosophy like Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Mimamsa, Jainism and Buddhism of the Vaibhashika and the Sautantrika schools. All of them propounded and preached Realism, but unlike Materialism showed the way to liberation from the bondage of life. The same doctrine has taken a materialistic turn in the West perhaps as protest^d to dry schola-

sticism and religious persecution. In fact Realism is not the same as Materialism. The former recognizes matter as different from mind or spirit, while the latter reduces everything to matter.

In Europe, the Medieval period was the dark age which was intellectually barren. The old ideals could no longer satisfy the demand of life. There was a wide gap between education and life. So the land had to accept and reject many ideals and doctrines one after another from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. They are Monasticism—living in monasteries in seclusion under religious vows, Scholasticism—schoolmen dealing in logical subtleties and grammar-grinding. Renaissance—revival of art and letters under the influence of classical models, Humanism—devotion to human interests and welfare in the light of Greek and Roman Culture. Reformation—movement for reform of abuses in the Roman Church establishing Protestant Churches. Then came the scientists like Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Bacon, etc. who ushered in a new era of Science and Realism. Scientific investigation and emphasis on intellect and reasoning helped to remove superstitions and widen the narrow outlook of life, particularly in the 19th. century. A thorough examination of human intelligence and reasoning and a vast experience of life has led to the discovery of their limitations of intellect. So in the present century a synthetic view of life has been developed, which has combined intellect and intuition, rationalism and mysticism, spirit and matter, knowledge and devotion, the spiritual and the mundane. The search is after a complete view of life in which Idealism has been wedded to Realism. Long ago this view was taught

in India by the *Upanishads*, the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata* and in the present age this supreme truth of life has been revived by Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi, Tilak and Sri Aurobindo.

NATURALISM IN EDUCATION

Metaphysically, Naturalism is another name for materialism. It believes that life evolves out of non-living matter and that mind also evolves from complex living organisms. Life is an aggregate of physical and chemical forces. Mind is a by-product of the brain. There is no supernatural power like God or supermental reality like the Soul. In education Naturalism means something else. It is a broad mode of thinking rather than a clear-cut doctrine. It is an education according to nature. It is an attempt to go back to Nature by rejecting the well-established, stereotyped and artificial systems of training. Change becomes inevitable where the spirit of a movement disappears leaving the dead forms behind. A new movement comes as a protest and sweeps away the old paraphernalia. Rose observes : "Historically, naturalism was a reaction against the pedantry into which the humanism of the Renaissance had degenerated. That fine movement was itself a reaction against the arid, hair-splitting logic of medieval scholasticism, beginning as the study of man himself through the medium of the literature that embodied the spacious lives of ancient Greece and Rome; it became in its decay a mere study of books and of linguistic forms."

The most prominent naturalist is Rousseau whose methods were naturalistic but his aims idealistic. His

naturalistic education was preparatory to aesthetic, moral and religious training. He considered human institutions to have been one mass of folly and contradiction. So he prescribed : "Reverse the usual practice and you will almost always do the right."

"God makes all things good, man meddles with them and they become evil; so you must make your choice between man and the citizen. You cannot train both". (Rousseau). Naturalism believes in man's evolution from lower to higher forms of life. Barnard Shaw goes further and 'takes education as a man's deliberate effort to accelerate the pace of evolution itself, to achieve racial improvement more quickly than would otherwise be the case.'

Naturalistic education is based on the nature of the child which is believed to be good. Children should be treated as Wordsworth's "trailing clouds of glory" coming from heaven. It is the child rather than the teacher, the book or the school that occupies the central position. Child-psychology will guide child's education and childhood is playhood. Here nature refers to the nature of man and not to external nature. Pestalozzi, Herbart and Froebel tried to work out the implications of Rousseau and make his vision concrete. The play-way in its various forms is the general method of creative education. It has been developed in infant schools by Montessori. The psychological movement gained much impetus from the work of eminent psychologists like McDougall and Freud. Naturalism is a modern educational movement. Idealism and Realism have no quarrel with the psychological methods employed by Naturalism.

Even in ancient India the spirit was caught. Students had to live in a hermitage in the lap of Nature far away from cities. They were in close touch with nature and received individual attention and guidance from the teacher in every sphere of life. The Gurukul system was perhaps the beginning of the Naturalistic movement.

PRAGMATISM IN EDUCATION

Pragmatism is a doctrine that estimates any assertion solely by its practical bearing upon human interests. James, Schiller and Dewey are the chief exponents of Pragmatism. Knowledge is derived from pure experience which gives not only impressions, but also relations among them. Mind and matter are not different in essence. Stuff of pure experience becomes subject and object in different contexts. It is a form of Radical Empiricism.

The world is real, but it is not perfect or complete. The world is plastic and is to be moulded to human needs and purposes. Evil is real and positive. It has to be conquered by human spirits in co-operation with God.

The world is always changing and growing. Time, evolution, progress, freedom, chance, etc. are real. Human minds have real freedom, the power of creating new values and realizing new purposes. They are not mere channels through which Divine Energy flows.

God is finite and not the Absolute. "He is the ideal tendency in the world." He is free, but limited by the world and the finite spirits. In co-operation with finite beings, He conquers evils. God exists and the soul is immortal, other-

wise life would be full of discord. These beliefs have pragmatic value. They promote and elevate our life. Religion works, so it is true. Whatever is workable and useful is true.

Pragmatism does not admit any eternal truth or ideal. Truth changes with the changing conditions of life-time, place and environment. Progress depends on this dynamic aspect of truth. Life is a laboratory in which new ideals and values coming automatically are experimented upon. Every individual accepts what is good or useful to him. A thing or action is judged by the good or bad result that follows. Knowledge results from action which is primary. Pragmatism glorifies man who by his power alters the environment according to his needs and thereby solves his problems. It is the latest movement in education started by John Dewey.

According to Pragmatism man is a social being. So education must increase social efficiency and social welfare. Anything opposing it should be eliminated. Biologically, a man has to adjust himself to the ever-changing environment and the ever-increasing complexities of life. Education should aim at realizing this end. A child will create values through various modes of activity, physical, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and religious. "Such activities, however, are pursued not for their own sakes but only with reference to human needs." (Ross). Education on this line makes the child a seeker after truth and becomes real when it enables him to create values for himself. An ideal should grow from inside, it should not be imposed from outside. The teacher's duty is to guide the inner tendencies and impulses of the taught so that his personality may grow freely along his own line.

The Project Method of Kilpatrick is based on the Pragmatic view of life. In education a project is a purposeful activity carried to completion in a social environment. It involves purpose, planning, activity and utility. The Dalton Plan is based on this method.

Based on radical empiricism or sense-experience, Pragmatism is quite consistent with the modern spirit of Scepticism, Agnosticism, Positivism, Activism and the like. Some of its good features are the dynamic character of the world, freedom of human minds and their creativity, positive existence of evils and their conquest by human effort. Many other theories are untenable. Life, individual and racial, commands and covers a vast experience. Besides sense experience it has highly intellectual, intuitive and mystical experiences. The experiences of the race or humanity are there to guide the child who can save much time and energy without having recourse to experiments at every step. If the child has to find out every ideal for himself, he or she will remain a child all his or her life. Again a teacher of the Idealistic school does not impose an ideal on the student. He sets up some typical ideals evolved by humanity before him so that he may feel drawn towards anyone of them due to an inner urge and affinity or inborn tendencies and peculiarities. In fact every child is born with an ideal in its germinal form. It takes a definite shape and an active form coming in contact with an external pattern. This method does not retard, but accelerates progress.

Experience can guide only particular truths. It cannot give universal truths. The idea of a finite God co-operating with men in fighting out evil is belittling to God. Intelligence

is not a mere instrument of adapting the organism to the environment. It is contemplative, appreciative and creative. Ideas are not mere plans of action. They are also representations of reality. Intelligence can grasp reality through ideas. Workability is the tentative test of truth. It shows the way to truth but cannot constitute it. Pragmatism gives a partial view of reality. (Sinha).

Pragmatism reflects the American way of life. Active, practical, earthly, facing new problems and adapting to changing conditions people of the New World without any past tradition to tie them down, found this doctrine quite suitable. Certainly there is one good point. No preconceived notion should find place in education or life. This is what the Vedanta teaches. The mind must be purged of all notions and impressions and made a void for the reception of Truth. Creation of new notions or concepts may lead to novelties, but not to Truth that is universal and necessary.

New Diary Leaves.

ATMANANDA

(9)

Vrindaban, 28th January 1962.

In reply to a question, Mataji pointed out the importance of what one thinks at the moment of death. For, just as a leech does not leave its place without hooking on to something else, so the soul at the time of leaving the body hooks on to some kind of new existence according to the state of mind of the dying person. But at that moment one has no control over one's thought. It will automatically dwell where it usually dwells. This is why one has to practise the Presence of God while one is well and fit, so that the thought of God may come spontaneously when one is ill and weak. To illustrate this fact, Mataji told two stories :

“An old woman who had spent many years of her life selling oil, was about to die. Her relatives had assembled round her and were urging her to repeat “Rama” or “Krishna.” But the dying woman was only half conscious and her power of hearing was impaired. To the shouting of her children and grand-children : “Repeat the name of God,” she kept on replying what she had been used to say to beggars who came to her shop begging for oil : “Not a drop will I give, not a drop.” Saying this, she passed away.

“The following actually occurred in your Ashram at Varanasi. The aged mother of one of the Ashramites had come to spend her last days in the Ashram. She used to at-

tend to her *pūjā* and *japa* with great regularity from early morning until nearly midday, without eating or even drinking a drop of water. She would then cook her food, eat and scrub her vessels. Towards evening she got busy again with her *sādhana*. After some time she fell ill and was confined to bed, but continued with her *japa* all the time. Whenever some food or drink was brought to her, she would indicate by signs that she had not finished her *japa* and could therefore not take anything. Finally she breathed her last, with her fingers in the correct position for doing *japa* according to the prescribed rules. The people who took her body to the burning-ghat related that, when it had burnt to ashes and only the bones were left over, even then the skeleton remained in the same position, until at last the arms crossed over the breast. The people present declared that they had never before witnessed anything of the sort."

Later Mataji spoke about the close connexion between the kind of food a person eats and the quality of his mind. This is why it is so important for a *sādhaka* to avoid *tamasic* food, such as meat, fish, eggs, onions, garlic, etc. Unless one partakes of *sattvic* food it will be difficult to develop a *sattvic* mind.

For *pūjā* people often wear silken clothes. Human magnetism is always oozing out and a constant exchange takes place. During prayer and meditation the activity of the magnetism is more powerful. Silk prevents it from being dissipated. For a similar reason one has to sit on an *āsana* for meditation. *Kushāsa* preserves the magnetism well and so does deerskin. Deerskin is not as a rule used by householders, but only by *brahmacharis*.

Hardwar, 6th March 1962.

A couple who recently lost their son, have come from Calcutta. They wanted to know what was the sense of a child dying before he had lived his life. Mataji replied : "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 way 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 *Srīmad Bhāgavata*, the *Rāmāyana*, and so forth, and you will feel 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 in reading the *Bhāgavata*.

Hardwar, March 1962.

Now-a-days many interesting letters arrive from abroad. An American couple wrote to Mataji. They had heard about Her from a devotee who had recently stayed with Mataji and on returning to U.S.A. showed them Her photos and tape recordings of Her voice. Their letter contained snaps of their three little daughters, seated in meditation in the lotus pose. One of these little girls felt so attracted to Mataji that she declared, her one and only wish for her forthcoming seventh birthday was to go and meet Mataji. Since it was impossible for the parents to take their daughter to India, they requested Mataji in their letter to send a birthday message to the child. They also mentioned that she seemed to be specially fitted for the spiritual life and had already declared that she would get married to none save God. Mataji gave the following reply : "How beautiful the pictures of my friends are ! Immersed in meditation—moving indeed to look at.

"At the very moment my friend had the desire to come, she did come and she met her friend. My friend should keep this in mind. In order to realize this fact, man engages in hundreds of *kriyās*, practices, meditation and so forth. 'This friend is with her friends at all times.' Man's duty as a human being is to be a pilgrim on the path to the Supreme. One who can be wedded to God has indeed fulfilled the purpose of human existence."

After some time another letter arrived from the couple to thank Mataji....."The whole family is benefiting by Mother's message.....Our daughter told us that she had indeed met Mother during her birthday meditation. She told us this in a matter of fact fashion."



The following is quoted from a letter by a European gentleman, who has been in correspondance with Mataji for some time.

“.....You say : ‘He who seeks will no doubt realize Him and one who realizes Him goes beyond death.’ Mother Divine, can you guess the awful pain of a man who has sought for 37 years and has found nothing but despair. I write this letter with the tears of agony. My heart is crushed, my soul is burning like a fire. I spread myself on the ground and await death. I would become a great saint and you see what I have become. I cannot understand why I am always thinking of Anandamayi. She can give me only words on a sheet of paper. Words cannot help a man who has sought for 37 years and has no strength to go forth.....”

Mataji’s reply : “This time also Mataji says : If someone really and truly seeks God, he will certainly find Him. You say you have sought for 37 years—does He always reveal Himself within a specified number of days, months or years ? He is eternal, ever present, everywhere, in everything—He alone IS. The first step on the path to this realization—be it induced by something read in a book or by direct word of mouth and accepted—the first step is the manifestation of unbroken endurance and never ending patience. My father, who is also a small child, it is only natural that fatigue and despair should overwhelm you, for this road is extremely difficult. So long as one’s feet have not been set on a smooth and simple path, the condition in which you find yourself at present is natural, this is also a state that may occur on the

path. This small baby says, do not long for death, while you are travelling on the path to conquer death. You are out to find immortality and yet awaiting death. Of course, to look forward to the death of death is very good. One who goes out in search of Truth, for the realization of Truth, must walk with firmness, wide awake and full of vigour. Yes, it is true, this little baby* can send you only a few words. But through these words can be found the way to the realization of *Sabda Brahman*,† *Akṣara Brahman*,‡ provided someone is actually a traveller on the path. Pilgrims on the path of the Supreme must endeavour to be receptive. Only that which is all the time falling away has to be relinquished. To the limit of your power try not to give way to despair and to remain at every moment an aspirant towards Self-realization. The duty of a pilgrim is to aspire constantly at Him who is beyond everything, who is at the same time in all forms, qualities, moods, and modes of being, and yet eternally beyond, who is all in all, the SELF of the Self. When the desire that lies at the root of all yogic practice becomes self-revealed, then He is found.”

* Mataji often refers to Her own person in this way.

† *Sabda Brahman*—The eternal sound that is the first manifestation of the Supreme Reality and lies at the root of all subsequent creation.

‡ *Akṣara* means indestructible as well as letters of the alphabet.

With Mataji at the Hardwar Kumbh and in Dehra Dun.

BY KRISHNANATH.

(2)

I had heard Swami Paramanada say one day that in connection with the Kumbh and in honour of Mataji one of the biggest organizations of *Sannyāsis* at Haradwar, the *Niranjani Akhaḍa* had proposed to arrange for a public procession with Mataji on the back of an elephant. I had also observed Brahmachari Nirmalananda going into a huddle with a local *Sādhu* over the details of the arrangements. Then one day a neighbour in the *dharamśālā* brought a leaflet with Mataji's photograph, making the announcement about the procession.

According to it Mataji was to be taken in a welcome procession on April 12th, starting at 9 A. M. from *Sati Kunda Kanya Gurukul* via Kankhal, reaching the *Niranjani Akhaḍa** at twelve noon. Thus on that day we followed Mataji's car along the improvised hill-side road and arrived at the *Kanya Gurukul* at about 9 o'clock. After a short visit there Mataji came out. A caparisoned elephant knelt down and a ladder was fixed. Swami Paramananda and Nirmalananda climbed to the silver howdah and took their places at the back. The Swami held a long-poled parasol (*chhātra*) and the Brahmachari a chowrie (*chāmar*). Mataji had some difficulty in taking the last step

* An Akhaḍa ordinarily denotes a Gymnasium where wrestling is taught, but in Hardwar different religious institutions style themselves as Akhaḍas and among them the *Niranjani Panchayat* occupies a high place under the protocol.

which was rather steep but managed somehow to clamber into the throne-like seat in the front of the howdah. The mahout goaded the elephant to heave up and we saw Mataji enthroned high up like a Queen or a Goddess. Some of us were wondering whether we should get into our cars to follow the procession, but when the procession got formed we all automatically filed into it on foot. It was headed by a horseman with a drawn sword, followed by two silver palanquins, then a bag-pipe band, then the Ashram girls and ladies, then a very long orchestral band (I think three bands had joined forces), then we men led by two Rajas who were both conspicuous by their straw hats, then the elephant led by an ash-besmeared *Vairāgi* holding a *Trisul* (trident), the cavalcade of cars and buses bringing up the rear. From the front to the rear, the procession must have been over two furlongs long and it wound its way majestically along the thoroughfares and some of the crowded localities of Kankhal. Large crowds everywhere, on the way-side, on verandahs, ridges and house-tops were greeting Mataji who was swaying in the howdah with a beatific countenance looking very dignified and graceful. We who were walking just in front of Her elephant could not avoid the temptation of turning back again and again to look at Her and in order to face Her and to have longer Darshan we very often walked backwards. I saw that the elephant was every now and then raising its trunk towards the mahout who would lean forward to touch the curled tip. Someone explained to me that the elephant was picking up and passing to the mahout money in notes which people on the road were throwing in front of him or giving to the *Vairāgi* leading him who would then place it in the elephant's trunk. It was quite an amusing sight and

must have been also very profitable. When we were nearing our destination, the *kīrtana* party of the Ashram, led by Vibhuda and Hiruda got down from the bus with their musical instruments and started singing *bhajans* and dancing in front of Mataji's elephant. In this manner we arrived at the crowded entrance to the Niranjani Akhāḍa. Mataji got down and was welcomed. For a while we sat in the pandal where Mataji was being entertained with *bhajans*. Then Mataji's car came to the front and She drove away. The other cars had all got scattered about. Some of the Ashram ladies could not find theirs and had to pay exorbitant rates for rickshaws to take them back. In spite of eating a lot of dust on our way back we were quite hungry when we reached the Ashram rather late for the midday meal. However "we were all feeling very happy that we had been able to join that grand procession of Mataji, which will always remain with us as a cherished and treasured memory. I thought that my coming to Hardwar was worth-while for this alone.

The next day, the 13th of April, was the great day for *Kumbh Snān* (bathing in the Ganga). We were staying at a distance of about one mile from the Brahma Kunda where it is considered most holy to bathe on the occasion, though the Ganga flows through the whole of Hardwar. Since all vehicular traffic had been banned and the crowds were terrific, there did not seem to be any possibility of going there. My neighbour in the *dharmasālā* asked me to join him in the early morning as he was venturing forth on foot with a big stick in his hand, but I had demurred and contented myself with a swim on the deeper side of the river beyond the bridge. Hardly anyone was bathing there and I enjoyed my swift dive in the cold water and came out

feeling all aglow. The auspicious time for bathing was said to be after noon, so after twelve I again accompanied some of the ladies who went a little beyond the steps of that Ghāt where we generally bathed; I thought it was very brave of them because the current here was strong and almost swept me off. By about five o'clock, hoping that the crowd would have thinned, we walked towards the bridge in order to go to the Kunda but just as we started we saw some volunteers running that way. A telephone message had been received from the Brahma Kunda that the crowd there was getting unmanageable and the situation dangerous. So we decided to turn back.

We were spending the evening somewhat disconsolately, when we heard that Mataji had gone to the *ghāt* (our usual bathing place). We found that She was sitting there on the steps with the Ashramites all round. Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj had also joined. After a while we realized why Mataji had come. Adjoining was a *Smashān* (cremation) *Ghāt* and some volunteers brought a body for cremation. While there had been no casualties as a result of the rush at the Brahma Kunda, the head of the volunteers who was an old man had collapsed while standing on duty and died of heart failure. It was, I believe, for attending his cremation that Mataji had brought us all to the *ghāt*. As we watched the flames rise, some of us started chanting the *Mahamantra*, in quite a different way than the usual—a doleful tune like a dirge for the departed soul, a tune that has haunted me ever since.

The day had thus ended and there did not now seem to be any hope of Kumbha Snān at Brahma Kunda. Mataji

had said that those who felt capable of doing so could go there, but otherwise bathing in the Ganga anywhere else was all right and in view of our experience all day we had given up the idea of venturing there. After dinner, we went to join the usual evening Kirtan in the hall of the temple. I found that Mataji had come to sit in the Śiva temple. She asked some of the Ashram girls whether they would like to go for *Snān* and on their responding eagerly told Sri Sahai and me, who were nearby, to lead the party. Mataji arranged for a small force of volunteers to escort us, and all those who wanted to go were marshalled into a long line of two abreast. There were not only the Ashram girls, but elderly ladies like the Rani of Sherkot and several visitors including the Raja of Amb, about fifty in all. Thus we were marched over various bridges and brought to the holy Kundas. We were halted at the Kunda just before the Brahma Kunda and asked to bathe there because it was less crowded. But the Ashram girls who were in the front protested and said that having come all that way they would like to bathe in the Brahma Kunda. Some people at the back called Sri Sahai to give instructions, but I was by now in a sufficiently adventurous mood to support the girls and we marched on. It was however worse than we had imagined and once we got into the crowd there was no way of keeping together. There was such a crush that all one could do was to have a quick dip, make a short prayer and offering and come out. In all that confusion, the Sahais managed to send their servant to get our tins filled with *Ganga-jal* (water) to carry home. He took a long while and by the time we came out we could not see the rest of the party anywhere. Luckily old Yogeshji came look-

ing for us and said they were all waiting outside on the footpath. Somehow we were again all safely marshalled together and marched home with the volunteers. On reaching the Ashram, we saw Mataji sitting on the dais in the hall, sprinkling people with *Ganga-jal*. We then learnt that after we had left the Ashram, Mataji Herself had been taken to the Kunda in a car by the Police Inspector and She had actually been there when we were having our dip, though we did not know it. I have related the whole incident in some detail to show how, with Mataji's favour, one can get or do what seems impossible. We were able to bathe in the Brahma Kunda at the most auspicious time of about 9.45 p. m. in Mataji's presence (though unknown to us) in spite of what seemed most insuperable obstacles. Thus we were able to achieve the main goal of the pilgrimage to Har-dwar for Kumbh.

As I have stated earlier, Sadhus and Mahatmas from all over India had congregated and pitched their camps in different places. It was a great chance for meeting saints and I now wish I had been more enterprising and gone round to see some of them. Only one night some of us had walked to nearby tents and ventured into the camp of Tanpurewala Baba of Pandharpur. Here the typical Maharashtrian Kirtan was going on, but the Baba was inside the tent. He came out and talked to us and on being told that we were with Mata Anandamayi, he said he was coming to see Her one day. I have already referred to his visit on the 14th night.

On the 14th evening Mataji went to the camp of Swami Naradananda of Naimisharanya. As it was not far off, I had started walking with some of the Sadhus from our

