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*Mataji at Kankhal, 1961.*

*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 the Immortal is to be found, to remember THAT in everything is always helpful. The search after Truth alone is man's duty so that he may move into the path of Immortality.

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No matter in what way the One may manifest Himself, man must endeavour to draw close to Him. The rare boon of human birth has to be made fruitful. Truly, God's beneficent hand is ever at work.

\* \* \*

All are indeed your own, your very Self. The path to the Supreme is the only real Path, all other tracks lead astray. God and God alone is Truth, He alone is eternal.

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# Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULI

( Translated by Atmananda )

Ranchi Ashram,

26-5-1958.

*Questions* : Where is the heart situated ?

*Mataji* : As regards the contemplation of the various parts of the body, it is said that one should concentrate from foot to head and again in the opposite direction from head to foot. Further, the body as a whole should be contemplated. In this, heart, mind, everything is contained. When viewed separately, the heart will be found in the cave of the heart in the centre of the body. Yet, the heart has to be contemplated in any spot that the Guru may indicate, since different aspirants experience the heart in different places—many in the brain, for instance. In the cave of the heart God resides. According to the disposition (*samskāra*) and the particular path of a seeker, he may become aware of the cave of the heart in any one of the *cakras*,<sup>1</sup> for the simple reason that everything is contained in everything. Just as in the outer world the sight of a dark cloud may arouse *bhakti* in a worshipper of Krishna, so much so as to induce a state of *bhāva samādhi*,<sup>2</sup> similarly in the inner world the

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1. *Cakras* = Psychic Zones in the human system which represent the fields of activities of different psychic forces and which have to be conquered, purified and sublimated by the Yogi in his upward journey to the sphere of Divine Consciousness and Power.

2. *Bhāva samādhi* Spiritual ecstasy, generally emotional in nature.

*yogi* may become conscious of the cave of the heart in either of the two *cakras* or in any of the three *granthis* (*Brahmagranthi*, *Viṣṇugranthi*, *Rudragranthi*),† and God, the One who is all pervading, may be realized. Just as for the sake of convenience in man's work, indivisible time is divided into morning, midday, evening and night, so also, among the infinite variety of objects, the human body being the nearest, or any of its centres may be used as a focus in meditation in order to make the mind one-pointed. Any centre of the body in which the aspirant's mind can find rest as in a cave, becomes for the time being the aspirant's cave of the heart. There is only one Brahman, everything is contained in everything. Depending on the disciple's particularity, the Guru will instruct him on which point to concentrate in meditation.

**Question :** Why has the Guru to be contemplated on the crown of the head ? What harm is there in thinking of Him in the heart or in the centre between the eyebrows ?

**Mataji :** It is right to meditate as indicated in the *Sāstras*. He, at whose feet one is enjoined to surrender one's head, where should His place be if not on top of the head ? Nevertheless, the Guru who is Knowledge Itself is everywhere, and therefore may be visualized in any place of the world or in any part of the human body. When transmission of the Guru's power has taken effect, everything becomes permeated by the Guru. All the same, at the level of spiritual practice, the place for the contemplation of the Guru has, as an aid in meditation, been fixed at the centre on top of the head, or on Mount Kailash for the Guru who is Śiva and for Śiva who is the Guru.

**Question :** When one's chosen Deity becomes displeased, the Guru delivers one. Why cannot one's chosen Deity save one when the Guru becomes displeased ?

**Mataji :** Because it is the Guru who reveals your *Ista* ( chosen Deity ) to you.

Ranchi, Ramakrishna Mission,  
27/5/1958.

**Question :** How can the ordinary person acquire faith in the existence of God ?

**Mataji :** By seeking the company of saints and seekers after Truth, by listening to religious teaching, reading Scriptures and carrying out the injunctions of the Lord. Are you not the offspring of the Immortal ? The Immortal is Self-effulgent and lets Himself be contacted through the company of saints. Any kind of work that anyone does is based on faith. By associating with pilgrims on the path to God, the fire of faith will be kindled into a bright flame. Children study with the faith that, like everyone else, they will pass their examinations. Likewise, by watching other seekers, devotees or *yogis*, one gains the faith that enables one to tread the path. In reality you are Supreme Knowledge, Supreme Bliss. In order to discover your true nature, it is necessary to remove the veil of ignorance; and for the purpose of removing the veil one has to resort to the Path, to spiritual exercises, and so forth. By following with perseverance the method pointed out by the Guru, one finally discovers God; one comes to understand that all are His images, that actually there is no 'you' or 'I'.

You manifest as peace and also as error. You are eternal, pure, enlightened, free. In order that this truth may be

revealed, the veil has to be rent asunder. One has to obey the Guru, practise *sādhana* and so forth, so that one may know that only He alone exists. Indeed, God is not far away, *Bābā*. He seems far because of your idea of distance, which is wrong knowledge. He is within, without, everywhere, of infinite shapes. Again, in very truth, He is your Self. To find Him means to find your own Self, to know your Self. Inquiry arises in you because He who is Knowledge Itself is within you and has to be revealed. Just as by studying, the knowledge that is latent in you comes to light, so by spiritual practice God or your Self—which is one and the same—is found. For the sake of God-realization or Self-realization, the instructions of the *Sadguru* have to be carried out with single-minded devotion. This path is extremely easy and yet may be extremely difficult. In the measure that desirelessness grows, it becomes easy. If you want to tread the Path, He will hold your hand and guide you. In fact, He is holding your hand; with this conviction forge ahead—that's all ! At present you know yourself in ignorance; on reaching the end of the journey you will know yourself as endowed with Knowledge Supreme. For you are indeed both, ignorance and Knowledge. Remove the veil, and Knowledge will stand revealed.

This body speaks in such an incoherent way. Now it is for you, *Bābā* to grasp what has been said.

*Question* : What are the signs by which a competent Guru can be recognised ? How shall I know Him ?

*Matiji* : When the time is ripe, He Himself will make



characterize a competent Guru are laid down. According to those signs you may also try to find Him.

At the end of the meeting, the head of the Ramakrishna Math of Ranchi ( Moravadi ) said : "Ma, I profoundly enjoyed this !"

Mataji replied: "You yourself are *ānandamaya* (permeated with joy ), this is why, Bābā !"

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*"Feel convinced that, no matter what the State or condition you may be in, out of that very State Enlightenment may come."*

—Sri Anandamayee Ma

## Mother as Seen by a Westerner

ARNAUD DESJARDINS ( PARIS )\*

Flow on, Ganga, holy river, from the mountains to the gigantic plains, from Rishikesh to Benares, called Kashi or Varanasi by its children. I now intend to return to the sacred city.

At last I shall see face to face the sage whose two pictures, at an interval of several years, stirred me so profoundly that I could never forget them. When I had only just completed my studies, lost among the various problems that confront a young man hardly prepared for life, I one day, at a library, glanced casually through the pages of "*Autobiography of a Yogi* by *Paramahansa Yogananda*, the founder of the well known *Self-Realization Fellowship*. Among all the photos of austere sages and venerable old men that illustrate the work, the

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\* The following is not an article written for *Ananda Vārtā*. Short extracts from *Arnaud Desjardins'* book in French "*Ashrams, Les Yogis et les Sages*" published by *La Palatine*, Paris-Geneva, have been translated into English and in this way made available to our readers. The book describes the writer's journey in India and his impressions and experiences in four well-known Ashrams. We have obtained permission to publish in the pages of this magazine some portions of the two chapters devoted to Mataji. The book also deals with Yoga, Vedanta and Hinduism at large. It is interesting to note how powerfully Mataji has influenced the life of a Westerner, who is a Christian, does not understand either Hindi or Bengali, and has been with Mataji only three times, for several weeks on each occasion. Our readers will be interested to learn that Mr. and Mrs. Desjardins and their little daughter have come to India for the fourth time and are with Mataji at the moment.

— The Managing Editor

picture of a very young woman with closed eyes struck me like a shock. She seemed extraordinarily beautiful and I thought: this is the Woman, the Mother, the Virgin.

Eight years later someone presented to me the beautiful book "*India*" by the English photographer and writer *Richard Lannoy*. As I turn its pages, the face of an elderly woman with a look unlike any other, touches me to the quick. I am reminded of the meaning of the name *Krishna*: "he who steals the hearts." I do not even skim through the rest of the book: it has remained open on that page and never been closed again.

And a few months ago, when in my own car I started on my first trip to India, I made my first halt in a small Swiss village, at a distance of several thousand miles from my destination. Two courageous women spend every summer in that village. They both have lived a number of eventful years in the country that I am about to explore. To my question: "If I were to meet only one person in India, who should it be?" one of them replied very softly: "Ma Anandamayi."

When I mentioned her to Swami Sivananda, he said: "She is the most perfect flower the Indian soil has produced."

Today I only think: "It can hardly be that I am not deceived." And I am not even sure that I wish to meet her.

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Benares is the touchstone for the love or the horror of India for Europeans. I have perhaps never been so perfectly happy as during the weeks that I spent in that city, and thanks to my friends *Bhattacharya* who made me discover

the heart of their city, I lived like in the Kingdom of Heaven. But I know a number of travellers for whom it remains the memory of a veritable night-mare. I am sure that one could spend one's whole life in Benares, without exhausting its riches. But one of the spiritual seekers whom I esteem highly, was actually obliged to flee after a few hours.

At the very end of one of the narrow lanes that all resemble one another, and where it is easy to lose one's way, right at the bank of the Ganges, in the mohulla of Bhadaini is situated the main Ashram of the great Bengali saint and sage Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi. I arrived there for the first time one evening during the Durga Puja festival. I shall always remember it.

Having started at sunrise and succeeded in reaching Varanasi by nightfall, I am fairly exhausted. To locate Bhadaini is yet an event. At last I park my car in a road broad enough for carriages and, led by a few children, proceed on foot through the lane that seems even more mysterious and unreal in the dark of night.

What I see at the end of the lane is fantastic.

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A swarming multitude enters, emerges and watches those who enter and emerge. One might think the bustle on the footpath due to a special performance at the Opera-house or to a ball in some large hotel, of which the guests have been miraculously undressed and deprived of their shoes.

The narrow entrance, giving way under the streamers, is blocked by flower and garland-sellers and by a heap of shoes and sandals scattered all over the pavement.

Inside, the crush is indescribable : tanned backs, *dhotis* shining white in the night, a rainbow of *saris*. A guide whose dark features I am unable to distinguish catches hold of me, and not without difficulty tracing out a passage for us, walks ahead of me up a narrow staircase.

The noise, the chanting, the music are deafening. But as we enter a terrace where the crowd becomes, if possible, even more dense, the threefold rhythm beaten on gongs, bells and cymbals bursts forth abruptly. Those who know it, will guess at once. Those who have never heard it, cannot imagine it. Thundering, sublime, piercing, overwhelming, shaking the whole body with its ever repeated three beats, capturing emotion, imposing silence on the mind, it raises in that wonderful autumn night the cry of the planet towards the sparkling sky. Across the white of a portico, amidst the black infinity of the plain far below, I distinguish the broad band of the eternal Ganga. In that frame, which opens out from a small outer staircase rising from the river, I see the most beautiful face of a man I have ever seen. Some wandering *sādhu* for whom this evening is but a halt on the road without end. The serene and silent peace that emanates from him, his ineffable smile and the light in his eyes give their meaning to the clangour of the brass under the blows of the clappers. Then he vanishes.

Instantaneously, abruptly there is silence, total, absolute, nourished by thousand individual silences.

I do not know for how long.

And suddenly I am pushed through the once again moving and noisy crowd, towards Her whom I had almost forgotten. "Mother, Mother," says a voice close to my ear. A woman who seems at the most forty years old, with long black hair falling loosely over her shoulders, dressed in a spotlessly white sari, more beautiful than I ever dreamt, smiles at me.

There is no question of my prostrating and putting my forehead on the ground : I cannot tear away my gaze from hers. I place one knee on the floor. I do not know how long this lasts. Then she turns round and walks away. I have had my first *darśana* of Mataji.



With the exception of two disciples of long standing, namely a French doctor of medicine and an Austrian musician who have settled in India, but like many other disciples of Mataji pursue their individual *sādhana*s in two of her Ashrams, rather than travelling much with Mataji, and two others who after long years of spiritual practice have returned to their countries, Ma Anandamayi receives even to this day few European visitors who remain with her for longer periods. Many stay for a few weeks, days or hours only.

This is no doubt due to the fact that her fame has in the west not yet spread like that of Sri Ramana Maharshi. However, I must also say that her incessant and unpredictable changes of residence do not make her easy of access. One must really be determined to have her *darśana* in order to succeed in meeting her. Moreover she does not speak English, and the difficulty of rare conversations with the

help of interpreters who are more or less acquainted with our way of thinking and putting questions, will never satisfy those who cannot search after Truth without resorting to questions and answers.

In short, after the enchantment of the first days is over, in which one is aware only of her extraordinary countenance and the beauty of her songs, to stay in close proximity to her (and Ma Anandamayi herself admits this quite frequently) is extremely difficult from every point of view. She also wields the sword more often than she bestows contentment.

Among those difficulties, a particular one may no doubt seem less easily acceptable to Europeans than to sleep on the floor or to be devoured by mosquitoes. For it is also true, as a matter of comfort, that Mataji's children know how to receive you as brothers and sisters who have come to the same Mother from a great distance, and they open to you their homes and their hearts. The difficulty I have in mind is the observance of caste rules in all the Ashrams, in which Ma Anandamayi herself considers herself but a guest.

The division into castes of Indian society has always seemed revolting to the west and to Christians. The recognition of that division in the surroundings of a Master who is regarded as the Mother of all and who teaches the absolute unity of the universe seems even more incomprehensible and unacceptable. For among the casteless are the foreigners. Those rules apply particularly to food. If I had entered the kitchen where the rice for the Ashramites was being prepared, that enormous quantity of food would have been lost for the orthodox Hindus, as if my impurity had positively defiled it.

Foreign visitors are served separately, apart from the children of Bharat, and they are not allowed to enter certain places at the Ashram. Of course, in Christian monasteries also, outsiders are forbidden to enter the dining-room of the monks.

I have at times suffered deeply because of these restrictions, just as all those who feel Ma's call and who may perhaps sacrifice a great deal in order to respond to that call, will suffer, and this is why I speak about it at the beginning of my narrative.

However, I wish to make certain comments. First of all, it is like this. We are free to refuse the pearls and precious stones offered, merely because the casket that encloses them appears defective to us.

Furthermore, the caste system is greatly misunderstood by the west that has seen only its misuses, which are unfortunately only too real. Far from being purely unjust, it represents serious advantages since it avoids the unbridling of ambitions, the anguish of the social ladder, the ruthless competition of the struggle for life. Everyone has his place, and everyone has at all times had the possibility to transcend that organization by raising himself on the spiritual ladder, for the *sannyāsi*, even though a beggar and in tatters, is greater than the purest Brahmin. Moreover, caste imposes many more duties than it confers privileges.

For the orthodox Brahmin, to maintain what Europeans call 'caste prejudices' is not a matter of pride, but rather due to the fear of being subjected to undesirable influences.



But, whatever may be the discomfort that these caste rules cause to foreign visitors, I feel convinced that the circumstances, although at times difficult, irksome and provoking revolt and even rejection, can be much more congenial to an awakening and to the development of understanding than an atmosphere of superficial sweetness and kindness that leaves one exactly as foolish as one was before. One must not forget for what purpose one has come and what one is actually doing at the Ashram.

Finally, and above all, the position of Ma Anandamayi herself leaves no doubt. She does not prevent those who surround her to follow the rules of their orthodoxy, but they are not her own rules. A non-Brahmin disciple, who although still young has spent eighteen years near her, related to me examples of how she on many occasions violated in a very drastic manner those rules of orthodoxy.

Thus, it is not easy for a foreigner to stay in an Ashram, even while Ma Anandamayi is present. He has no place in the traditional Hindu society that surrounds him, and obstacles arise that often make it difficult for him to have access to her room. Then also, since he probably does not know either Hindi or Bengali except for a few words such as rice, water, milk, etc., he is condemned to never understanding anything of the questions put to Ma Anandamayi, neither her replies, neither what is sung or read, nor the commentaries to what has been read. What on earth are we then doing in that dreary place and why have I returned to her three times at intervals of eighteen months and for a sojourn of several weeks each time ?

The reply I have known ever since that first evening at Benares, and have never denied it in spite of a personality that does not want to die willingly and always finds an excuse for judging and criticizing in the hope of saving its life and maintaining its tyranny.

It is the answer to the question I put to myself before setting out on my journey : "And if it were true ?"

A reply that lives among us at this very hour, is 65\* years old, and may be approached by anyone who will take a little trouble over it.



Mother is here.

Devotees and visitors are sitting around her in a cluster in order to have her *darśana*, her blessed sight, and she enlivens by her supernatural presence and her silent radiance the singing of the hymns.

Close by her, dressed all in white, the young girls who have dedicated their lives to her.

By her side a woman of hoary age, very thin, very frail, a *sannyāsini* with shaven head, clad in the orange robe. It is Didima, Mother's mother, the mother of Ma Anandamayī.

And I marvel at the extraordinary destiny of that humble woman of the village, who lost several children at a tender age, and whose baffling little girl, more serious, more

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\* This book was written over a year ago. Matajī is now nearly 67 years old.

gentle and more joyous than all the others, the little girl who did not cry after she was born and who never wept except once during her childhood, has become the epitome of the Mother for millions of men and women. While Didima's life was confined to her modest home, how could she have thought that she would one day travel all over India and that the crowd of the small and the splendour of the great would come and bow at her feet, and that very untouchable foreigners would beg of her to touch their heads in token of benediction ?

Three young women share the honour of fanning Mataji, and their movements seem in rhythm with the music.

To the accompaniment of his little harmonium, a *brahmachari* sings. Six or seven years ago he was a well-known radio star. He has renounced everything for the search after God. Nowadays his singing has attained to such an abandon, to such an impersonality that he really seems to transmit something divine. Then two of the young girls, dressed all in white, sing some songs and this is perhaps even more perfect, even purer.

Among the crowd are many children. Some play quietly in their corner. Others, curled up, sleep without the slightest movement. A few gaze at Mataji, unwearied.

Without a pause, newcomers worm their way to Ma, prostrate and offer a few fruits, flowers or a garland.

Indifferent to all this veneration, Ma Anandamayi is basking in peace and bliss.

Off and on her eyes gaze into the far distance and her expression takes on a beauty that is truly divine and beyond all description. What does she see at such moments? With which world is she in touch? What is the significance of a being in our midst so totally different? She has eyes like ourselves and yet so entirely unlike. She sees us and sees much more than us. Why have we no access to her vision? Why are we thus banished from the world of which she is a living proof? The more I look at her, the more fascinated, the more amazed am I.

Sometimes she smiles at a newcomer. Sometimes suddenly, her gaze fastens on one or the other with such intensity that it is almost unbearable even for those who only witness it. This lasts for a few seconds that seem an eternity.

The hymns follow one another, but now it is Ma who sings, and the crowd repeats in chorus: "*Hari bol, Hari bol, Hari bol, Hari bol.*" Her singing has such force, such vigour that we are shaken in our entire being. This surpasses by far everything of that order that I have had the chance to experience. Something immense that very nearly causes giddiness makes its presence felt among us. We want even more of it. But we feel that we should be unable to bear it.

Her face is so powerful that I cannot disengage myself from it. Lost in a crowd I have never before known a similar impression of intensity and fulness. At last something has actually happened in my life. And this certainty remains with me day after day for weeks, together with the one, not less forceful, that everything is possible for Mataji.

A sentence comes to my mind: "I am not worthy that you enter my house, but say only one word and my child will be saved."

Perhaps I have been capable of really knowing this, for at this very moment Ma Anandamayi slowly turns her face in my direction and looks at me. Of that instant I will not speak. Now she talks. She speaks with animation and gaiety. She laughs a great deal. 'Anandamayi'—does it not signify 'permeated by joy'? Everyone seems highly amused. Questions are asked in quick succession.

The atmosphere is completely free, intimate, spontaneous, relaxed. I do not understand anything, for sure. But what does it matter? The French disciple to whom someone remarked: "You don't understand anything of what Ma says?" only replied: "But who does?"

This reply is correct. The teaching of Ma Anandamayi is absolutely beyond words, just like that of Ramana Maharshi. And when she speaks, she still remains beyond her words and beyond the comprehension of her listeners. Nevertheless, a teaching of Ma Anandamayi, formulated in words, certainly does exist. One has often been surprised and dumbfounded by the way this unlettered woman replies, without ever a moment's reflection, to the most difficult and perilous questions that are put to her by very learned men. Her words have for years been recorded by her disciples, especially by a quite astonishing and indefatigable woman, Sri Gurupriya Devi, and by Brahmachari Kamalda, and some have been translated into English. They are extraordinarily interesting and striking and represent one of the monuments

of metaphysical thought and a prodigious commentary on all *sādhana*s known to us.

I myself have, assisted by the Swami who served me as an interpreter, prepared in minute detail several conversations with her. Certain sayings, certain utterances have impressed me profoundly.

But this was never the most essential point.

( To be continued. )

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“Lightning comes in a flash, but the light of day continues steadily.”

—Sri Anandamayi Ma.

# Power of Thought

SWAMI SIVANANDA SARASWATI

Thought is the greatest force on earth, it is the most powerful weapon in the armour of a Yogi. Constructive thought transforms, renews and builds up. Destructive thought disintegrates, harms and reacts harmfully upon the thinker. Positive thinking rejuvenates and imparts strength and power. Negative thought stunts personality and stifles all effort. It kills initiative. Pure thoughts lead man to the status of Divinity. Impure and base thoughts vitiate the entire atmosphere. The far-reaching possibilities of this force were most accurately developed to perfection by the ancients and put to the highest possible use.

For, thought is the primal force at the origin and back of all creation; the genesis of the entire phenomenal creation is given as a single thought that arose in the cosmic world. The world is the Primal idea made manifest. This first thought became manifest as vibration issuing from the eternal Stillness of the Divine Essence. This is the reference in classic terminology to the *iccha*, desire of the *Hiranyagarbha* Cosmic soul, that originates as vibration. This vibration is not like the rapid oscillation to and fro of physical particles, but is something infinitely subtle, so subtle as to be quite inconceivable to the normal mind. But this has made it clear that all forces are ultimately resolvable into a state of pure vibration. Modern science also has newly arrived at this conclusion after its prolonged researches in external physical nature.

Thought is subtle matter. Every thought has got weight, shape, size, form, colour, quality and power. A spiritual thought looks yellow. A thought charged with anger and hatred is of a dark red colour, a selfish thought brown, and so on. A Yogi can see all these thoughts directly with his yogic vision.

Thoughts are like things. Just as you hand over an orange to your friend and take it back, so you can give a useful, powerful thought to your friend and also take it back. Thought is a great force; it moves; it creates. You can work wonders with the power of thought, you must know the right technique to handle and manipulate it. This science is very interesting and subtle. The thought-world is relatively more real than this physical universe.

Thought is a vital, living dynamic power, the most vital, subtle and irresistible force that exists in the Universe. Thoughts are living things. One may cease to be, but one's thoughts can never die. Through the instrumentality of thought, you acquire creative power. Thought passes from one man to another. It influences people; a man of powerful thought can easily influence people of weak thoughts. There are now-a-days numerous books on thought-power, thought-dynamics and thought-culture. A study of them will give you a comprehensive understanding of thought, its power, its working and usefulness.

Mental actions are real actions. Thought is real action; it is a dynamic force. Thought is very contagious—nay, more contagious than the Spanish flu. A sympathetic thought in you raises a sympathetic thought in others with



whom you come in contact. A thought of anger produces a similar vibration in those who surround an angry man. It leaves the brain of one man and enters the brains of others who live at a long distance, and excites them. You are filled with joy and intense delight when you see a batch of hilarious children playing full of mirth and dancing with happiness. A thought of joy in us creates sympathetically a thought of joy in others. So, think sublime and elevating thoughts, and evil thoughts will die by themselves. A noble thought is a potent antidote to counteract an evil thought.

While electricity travels at the rate of 1,86,000 miles per second, thoughts virtually travel in no time. *Manas* is finer than ether, the medium of electricity. In broadcasting, a singer sings beautiful songs at Calcutta. You can hear them nicely through the radio-set in your own house at Delhi. All messages are received through the wireless. Similarly, your mind is like a wireless machine. A saint who is full of peace, poise and harmony sends out into the world thoughts of harmony and peace. Whereas a worldly man whose mind is filled with jealousy, revenge and hatred sends out discordant thoughts that enter the minds of thousands and stir in them similar thoughts of hatred and discord.

Thought actually leaves the brain and hovers about. When a thought, whether good or evil, leaves the mind of a person, it gives rise to vibrations in the *manas* or mental atmosphere, which travel far and wide in all directions. It enters the brains of others also. A sage living in a Himalayan cave can transmit a powerful thought to the farthest corner of America. He who tries to purify himself in a cave, really purifies the world and helps the world at large. Nobody can

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prevent his pure thoughts from emerging and passing on to those who really want them.

Just as the Sun goes on continuously converting into vapour every drop of water that is on the surface of the earth, and just as all the vapour thus rising up gathers together in the form of clouds, so all the thoughts that you project from your own lonely corner will mount up and be wafted across space, join similar thoughts projected by those who are like you and, in the end, all those holy thoughts will come down with tremendous force to subjugate undesirable forces.

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“Real vision is that vision where there is no such thing as the seer and the seen.”

—Sri Anandamayi Ma.

## New Diary Leaves

ATMANANDA

( 10 )

*Kishenpur, June 4th, 1962.*

After the birthday celebrations were over and most of the crowd had dispersed, Mataji used to come out of her room daily at about 11 a. m., and sitting on the veranda of the *Siva* Temple, reply to questions for about an hour. These were quite informal and very delightful meetings. Mataji was often in a joking mood and the whole audience was roused to hearty laughter. In the beginning most questions were asked by Dr. Pannalal and Pandit Sundarlal, but later many others joined in the discussions.

*Question* : People think they must crowd as near as possible to you. Do those who sit at the back get less than the ones in front ?

*Mataji* : Suppose someone sits very close to this body, but his thoughts wander away to his family or home or business, while another person right at the back keeps his mind on God and feels His presence. He surely is nearer to God than the one who sits close to this body.

*Question* : What about doing *pranāma* ( obeisance ) ? People think they must do it right in front of you.

*Mataji* : *Pranāma* is done to God alone, never to a person, and therefore can be done anywhere at all, for He is all-pervading.

**Question :** When people pray for something while doing *pranāma*, do you know it ?

**Mataji :** If God did not know what people asked for, would they pray ? Of course He knows. But He will not grant you everything you ask for. Do you give your child whatever he wants ? The child does not know what is good for him. God does not give you everything you pray for. He gives you what is best for you.

**Question :** Why do people come to you ?

**Mataji :** They come here for *Śiva darśana*. pointing towards the *Shiva-mandir*. In actual truth they themselves are *Śiva*. *Śiva* is everywhere; but those who believe that He specially dwells in this temple, come and do *pūjā* and *ārāṭi*, and in this case they have of course to come near.

All men are manifestatious of Him, they are '*Jan Janardhana*.' They come here also to teach this little girl, and she learns much from everyone of them—how to behave, how to talk. If she does not talk sweetly they get angry and do not want to come again.

This little child does not know how to serve anyone, but they love her and therefore put up with any amount of inconvenience for her sake. They renounce so much. Some wear white and others ochre—having left their homes and everything.

**Question :** Does it help one's *sādhana* to wear the ochre robe ? Once I asked Swami Sharananandaji this very question and he replied : "It provides food." Is that all ?

**Mataji :** If he has said this, it is all right. This body will not refute it. But to wear the ochre robe does help

some people to constantly remember their true calling, and they wear it for this purpose.

*Question* : But is it not the Guru who tells them to wear *sannyāsi* colour ?

*Mataji* : Well, if the Guru tells them, He does so because it is helpful. For those who believe in it, it is an aid, for others all colours are alike, be they white, red, or black. The robe of the *sannyāsi* is flame coloured to remind him that he has burnt *rajas*—greed, passion, anger and so forth—, to remind him that he is enveloped by that fire, that he is always at the burning-*ghāt*. For this reason he also has to shave his head, for when entering fire, the hair will be burnt first of all. However, there is of course a state where one has risen beyond colour, for colour is part of this world. In that state it is quite immaterial in what colour one is dressed. But while one is still influenced by one's surroundings, it is helpful to adopt the garb of a *sannyāsi*.

*Question* : The *sannyāsi* is dead to the world. Is it therefore right for him to live in society ?

*Mataji* : Certainly. What is this world, but a constant dying ! Does not the child die to the adolescent and the adolescent to the man, and so forth—indefinitely : To remind people of this fact, the *sannyāsi* who has understood the true nature of the world and therefore renounced it, should live in society.

*Kishenpur, June 17th, 1962.*

*Question* : What exactly does मगवत चिन्ता ( the thought of God ) mean ? Since I have not seen God and do not know Him, how can I think of him ?

*Mataji* : At times you want to buy something that you have never seen. You nevertheless think of it, go to the market and finally get it.

At present you are on the level of belief and acceptance of what you have been told. You know the *mantra* and you know the *Guru* : the *mantra* is God and the *Guru* is God. In actual fact there is nothing but God. Anyhow, you accept the *Guru*; therefore meditate on Him.

*Question* : But I do not know the *Guru*, I only see His body.

*Mataji* : Never mind. Concentrate on the little that you know of Him and on the *mantra*, and carry out the *Guru's* instructions. The *mantra* is the seed. Having obtained the seed, the whole tree is potentially there. All you have to do is to bury the seed in good earth and tend it carefully. The tree will grow of itself. When you have found the *Guru* and received His instructions, you have in very truth found everything, just as the tree is contained in the seed.

*Kishenpur, July 1st, 1962.*

*Question* : The other day I read in the newspaper that someone was found dead. He had left a letter to say that since the woman he loved had passed away, he had gone to join her, for he could not bear to live without her. Can one by committing suicide really be united with a person who is dead ?

*Mataji* : Never. One who commits suicide enters a very deep darkness from which it is most difficult to be released, unless some one who wields great power takes pity and liberates him from it. In that condition of dense darkness

one cannot meet anyone. Suicide is a most heinous sin. Man is born in order to reap the consequences of his actions of former births. To try and escape from this by suicide is extremely foolish, it only prolongs the agony indefinitely. No one who is in his senses can possibly take his life; at the moment of doing so a person is invariably disturbed in his reason. Suicide does not solve anything, on the contrary it creates endless complications and prevents one from paying off one's karmic debts.

*Question* : What about murder ?

*Mataji* : Well, the murderer will no doubt have to suffer for his crime.

*Question* : And the murdered ?

*Mataji* : It is bad luck to be murdered. But it has to be remembered that this is due to some evil *karma*. It is an inauspicious death.

*Question* : What about *sati* ?

*Mataji* : That is a different matter altogether. A real *sati* has to be completely steady in mind and body. If, entering the fire, she suffers, she cannot be called a *sati*.

A few days ago Mataji related to us the story of one of Her ancestors. After circumambulating seven times around her husband's funeral pyre, she put one of her fingers into the flame of a candle to make sure whether she would be able to bear being burnt alive. The finger did not move. She then told her relatives that since one of her little toes had once inadvertently touched the pillow of her husband ( which is considered a sin ), that toe would, in order to expiate this sin, feel the flame and therefore riggle, but nobody

should feel alarmed at this. She then entered her husband's pyre and at once her body became completely still, just like a corpse. She obviously did not feel any pain whatsoever. She was perfectly steady.

Mataji then referred to a story of a *sati*, which She had heard from Bholanath. That particular woman did not even have the chance to leap into the fire. While doing *praṇāma* before entering her husband's pyre, life ebbed away from her, and her dead body was burnt together with her husband's.

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“Supreme Knowledge does not come “through” anything—Supreme Knowledge reveals itself.”

—Sri Anandamayi Ma.



## Highlights of Pilani

BY KRISHNANATH

Naimisharanya and Shuktal where the *Samyam Vrata* was celebrated during the last two years, were secluded spots, away from common human habitations and hallowed by traditions of penance, where the very atmosphere was surcharged with spirituality and where the *Vratīs* lived close together in tented camps like soldiers recruited for the service of God, receiving their training. Pilani, the venue of this year's *Saptah*, was quite a different kind of place. Originally a small, little-known village in Rajasthan, it has in recent years, by the magic touch of the munificence of the house of Birlas, whose birthplace it is, blossomed forth into a sizeable township with modern amenities, magnificent buildings, parks and play grounds. It is essentially an educational centre, with large well-appointed Colleges and High Schools, having a student population of about ten thousand for whom ample hostel accommodation is provided in single-seated rooms, a facility which, though essential for concentrated study, is not available even in bigger and older-established reputed Universities of India. Another commendable feature of this seat of learning is that students are not allowed to smoke and are thus saved from a pernicious habit which most young people acquire automatically when they reach freedom from parental control during college life. And the students, both girls and boys, one sees in the campus, look bright, alert, healthy and happy. They move about in a brisk and business-like manner and after night-fall are mostly closetted.

in their rooms, applying themselves to their studies. The Birla Vidya Vihara campus is a spacious area, imaginatively planned and artistically laid out. It is dominated at one end by the imposing and elegant edifice of the Saraswati Temple, which is an almost exact replica in white marble of the famous Mahadeo Temple of Khajuraho, with the same wealth of carving and sculpture. The statuary includes, in addition to the mythical gryphon and deities of the Hindu pantheon, figures of distinguished scholars, scientists and savants of all ages and countries, like Panini, Chanakya, Newton, Archimedes, C. V. Raman, Malaviyaji, Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhiji and others. At the other end, separated by long stretches of rolling lawns in the middle, and lined on both sides by hostels and other college buildings, stands the beautiful structure of the Science and Engineering Colleges, having at the centre a very large-sized auditorium which is like a fashionable modern cinema-hall. From its long and deep dais or stage one can look straight into the Saraswati Temple opposite, though fairly far away. About a mile from the Vidya Vihara is the main township, at the entrance of which is a tank built with old Indian style turrets, which is the paradise of the large Dhobi population engaged in dashing loudly against stones and washing the thousands of uniforms and other clothes of the student inhabitants. The town itself is full of schools, hostels and palatial buildings. These provided ready-made accomodation for Mataji, Her entourage and those who had come to participate in the *Vrata*. While such a spot undoubtedly offered convenient meeting, housing and messing facilities and catered to the creature comforts of the devotees in the numerous residential and educational buildings, could it provide the

spiritual environment and the calm and quiet conducive to contemplation which is most essential for the *Vrata* ?

I had my doubts about this when I was trying to find out the most convenient and cheapest way of reaching Pilani from Bombay. As in the case of my visits to Hardwar and Dehra Dun, help came unexpectedly and unasked for and I found my passage to Delhi booked by the Airline's new Boeing service which takes only one and a half hours, and a car provided for the journey from Delhi to Pilani. My fears about the suitability of Pilani for *Samyam* were however confirmed when I was installed along with Dr. Pannalal, not among the rest of the *Vratīs*, but over a mile away in Birlas' posh guest house called *Shiva Ganga* or *New Canal House*, which is surrounded by a beautiful circular swimming pool with a separate screened bathing ghat for ladies, descending water-falls and fountains, terraced lawns and flowering shrubs in the style of the Moghul gardens. The main fountain has a gigantic image of Shiva sitting in serene contemplation with a spray gushing out of his head like the Ganga inverted. On our arrival we were served with a sumptuous lunch and given to understand that all meals would be provided for in an equally grand style. Unfortunately, the next day which was the beginning of the *Saptah*, a complete fast had to be observed and on the remaining days also I could have only one midday meal which came from Mataji's kitchen. To forego the pleasure of being provided with morning tea in bed and the delicious dishes served in the Dining Hall for breakfast, lunch and dinner was perhaps a form of *samyam*, but in view of the comfortable living conditions and the fact that I could fortify myself with plenty of milk at the house before starting for the evening sessions of discourses instead of having to

wait for it till late at night, I could hardly claim that I was performing any real penance. The fault was my own, because arrangements for my stay at Pilani were made by me through Birlas direct and as Mataji said, 'I had tried to find a friend elsewhere.'

Though I had thus created special difficulties for myself from the point of view of observing the penance in all its rigour, I think the other *Vraja*s also had, on account of the very nature of the place and the excellent arrangements made for everyone by the Birlas' organization, a far more comfortable time than on previous occasions, and to that extent less opportunity of putting up with the hardships associated with *Samyam*. (I wonder what our last year's host, Swami Kalyan Devji, who castigated us for clinging to our comforts by bringing too much bedding, preferring costly vegetables to the cheap homely *maṭi*s and drinking milk at night, would have said if he had seen how the *Vraja*s lived at Pilani!) It is perhaps paradoxical and ungrateful to talk about the amenities provided by the Birlas as handicaps, hindrances or hurdles on the path of penance, and in any case it is not so much the physical conditions in which we lived that could have made or marred the *Samyam Saptah*, as our own mental attitude. What I was worried about was, whether in spite of the city comforts we were continuing to enjoy, we could put ourselves in the calm and serene frame of mind required for engaging earnestly in the *sādhana* for which we had come. Was there the necessary religious atmosphere to attune us to God-contemplation?

This doubt about Pilani's suitability for the *Samyam Vrata* was voiced in one of his first discourses by Swami

Krishnananda Avadhutji. There was a difficulty for the first day or so, because the other distinguished *Mahatmas* who usually attend had not appeared. The arrival of Swami Vishnu Ashram livened things up, but he stayed only for two days. The situation, however, soon improved. First, Swami Ganeshananda of Bombay, started an illuminating course of lectures on the teaching of the Upanishads, सर्वं ब्रह्म एव, 'All this is Brahman'. He developed the theme in a clear and convincing manner. Secondly, Mohananandaleshwar Swami Maheshwaranandji came and delivered his slow, measured Sanskritised, very learned talks. The spiritual climate these two created was further intensified by Swami Chetan Giri who had captivated our hearts at Naimisharanya by his lucid exposition of the Upanishadic philosophy. His way of simplifying by homely illustrations the great truths of Vedanta became so popular that, apart from the *Saptak* programme, a special discourse was arranged for the students at the spacious auditorium of the Engineering College. Some of the students had started attending the night sessions of the *Saptak*, and on one of these occasions when several of them were asking questions, the Swamiji had suggested that they should hand these over in writing so that the *Mahatmas* could deal with them in their talks. This suggestion resulted in a crop of written questions which Chetan Giriji handled with great mastery during two or three of his discourses. The queries naturally did not indicate any great spiritual aspirations but more or less moral problems. For instance one question was : "If some one tells a lie to save a cow from being captured by butchers, would he be committing a sin and have to suffer for it ?" The reply was : "The lie would undoubtedly be a sin ( पाप ) for which he would have to pay, but he would at the

same time be acquiring merit ( पुण्य ) which far outweighed the sin. Another person asked : "When an enemy is coming to kill you in war, how can you look upon him as God ?" Reply : "If you accept that everything happens by God's Will, you will feel that God has come in this form." A friend sitting near me did not like this reply and passed on to me a note saying that Lokamanya Tilak had interpreted the *Gita* as teaching that an attacking enemy should be killed. I thought that the Swami's answer was not intended as a reply to the problem of how to deal with an enemy but to solve the difficulty of being able to see God everywhere. After all, that teaching could have no meaning if you looked upon your friends alone as manifestations of Divinity and excluded all those who were unpleasant or inimical. The Swami did not say that one should not defend oneself.

All these *Mahatmas* undoubtedly imported spiritual atmosphere into Pilani but it would have continued to remain in our mind as a great educational centre rather than a religious one. The person who endowed it with a definite spiritual aura was Prof. Tripurari Chakravarti of Calcutta who was introduced as 'the walking *Mahabharata*', a description which he justified by the mastery he showed of the great Epic by fluent quotation of verse after verse from memory. Even the *Mahatmas* had not been able to refrain from alluding to the Chinese aggression. But Prof. Chakravarti frankly took that subject as the theme for illustrating how the present war could be compared to the one fought between the Kauravas and Pandavas. He certainly brought cheer to our hearts by pointing out how the Kauravas, like the Chinese, had a much larger army and more armaments, and yet the Pandavas, having Krishna and *Dharma* on their side,

ultimately won. But the striking point he made was that Ajmer, Alwar and the region in which Pilani was situated formed part of the ancient Matsya country, the kingdom of King Virat, where the Pandavas spent their last year of banishment incognito. Before the war actually broke out, Krishna had undertaken his famous peace mission for which he started from a place called *Upaplavya* on the day before our *Saptah* was ending, and returned the next day viz. *Ras Purnima* in *Kartik*. The Professor advanced the theory that 'Pilani' might be a corruption of the word '*Upaplavya*', which meant that we were practising our penance at that very spot. This was an uplifting and stirring thought; it not only changed our outlook about Pilani's appropriateness for the *Saptah*, but it made me feel that we might even be helping the war effort by our *sādhana*! In fact somebody did ask Mataji whether he could do *japa* for victory to India in the war. She said such a *sakāma japa* (chanting God's name with a worldly object) could be performed and that he might consult our Vedic rites expert, Batuda, about it.

The main contribution to Pilani's spirituality was of course the presence of Mata Anandamayi Herself. With Her sitting in front of us on the dais in serene contemplation during our hours of meditation, what other source of inspiration was necessary? Her physical proximity was sufficient to surcharge the whole place with holiness and attune our minds to God. The most important part of our *sādhana* were the two daily meditation periods of one hour each in the morning and afternoon. Mataji was always there even before Vibhuda started his soul-captivating chant of सत्यं, ज्ञान-मनन्तं ब्रह्म to tranquilize our minds in preparation for the *dhyāna*. The spacious hall on the first floor of the High

School, where the congregation sat was more amenable to the maintenance of quiet and the *Vratīs*, most of whom had previously participated in the *Saptah*, were more disciplined than on former occasions. There had been the usual scramble for front places as near Mataji as possible, and Dr. P. and I had been able to place our *āsanas* only in the third and fourth rows. At the start, however, Mother got Dr. P. moved into the front enclosure reserved for the Ashramites and I could promote myself to his place from where I could get a good view of Her most of the time except when the devotee in front of me shifted to the right. Though he showed less restlessness than last year, indicating that he had benefited by regularly attending the *Samyam Saptah*, one whole hour was too long for him to sit still and he had not only to alter his position but also to peep at his wrist-watch several times. One day when he was reverting to his old habit of going about sprinkling Ganga-jal on the heads of everybody and disturbing those who were trying to compose themselves, I saw Mataji motioning to him to put the water on his own head and sit down. Next to him was a person who was obviously a newcomer and who not only could not keep still but did not know how to occupy himself during the hour and had recourse to reading! What was more disturbing was that a portion of his starched shirt or occasionally even the hand he stretched out to rest on, touched me. Even these little disturbances, somehow, did not annoy one as they would have in the past and one was able to concentrate better and more intensely. The few outsiders and casual visitors who attended the meditation periods maintained perfect quiet. The situation, however, used to be very different at the night session, beginning from 7.30 p. m., when large



crowds invaded the back of the hall to hear the *Mahatmas* and particularly to have Mataji's *daršana* and to listen to Her answers to questions. A large proportion of these multitudes were the women of Rajasthan who, though they lent colour to the function by their Marwari costume, created quite a din by their constant chatter, which was further accentuated by squealing babies-in-arms. The quarter of an hour's silence from 8.45 to 9 p. m. was never a success and quite a trial for the *Vratīs*. On the first day Mataji Herself remarked that it would have been doing a good turn ( *परोपकार* ) if the women and children could have been silenced, but as She followed this with an interesting story of the experiences of a king who saved the lives of a lion, a snake, a monkey and a man, the point of Her remark seemed to have been lost on the audience, and as Mataji herself never denies access to anybody, no effort was made to keep out the throng, and the disturbance persisted throughout the week. In spite of it the half hour of *Matrisatsang* (when Mataji answered questions) always went off well. Even though the time for this kept on being shifted to later hours, the crowd would remain till the end. On the last night the *Vratīs* had to assemble for a midnight meditation ( *महानिशाध्यान* ) from 11. 45 p. m. to 12. 15 a. m. and those of us who stayed at a distance were wondering how we would be able to come back at that time. But we had an experience of how Mataji manages these things for us. There was a last minute addition to the night programme in the form of a talk by our host, Shri Jugal Kishore Birla, which lasted for half an hour, and it was nearly 10.30 before Mataji's talk could begin. Dr. P., who is over eighty and was suffering from high blood pressure tried to make a move, but Mataji persuaded even him to stay on.

With him as the spokesman of the various questions, She continued answering till it was time for the meditation. And so we ended our week's penance appropriately with a final half hour's meditation at midnight sitting round Mataji.

We had been told that Mataji was not keeping too well, and warned not to trouble Her at Her residence. But She was present with us in the hall most of the time and was ever radiant and full of laughter. She must have had a strenuous time though as She was also taken round to the Saraswati Temple and visited some of the educational institutions. On the day of Swami Chetan Giri's discourse at the Engineering College, She was also invited to give the students a few words of counsel. As usual She said She was like a musical instrument which responded as played upon, but nobody got up to ask questions. An attempt was then made to get her to sing a *bhajan*, but when Chhabi Banerjee started the chant of हे भगवान्, nobody in the hall took it up and so Mother did not join in. Luckily the Professor who conducted the proceedings had the presence of mind to say that the students wanted to know how to become devoted to God and then Mataji spoke for quite a long while.

The customary *Yajña* to complete the *Saptah* was held on the morning of November 12th in the courtyard of the house where Mataji was staying. After this was over there was the usual rush to have Mataji's blessings. It was bad enough when everybody was crowding round Her but the position was made worse when after some time copies of the *Gītā* were placed in Her hands, for which there was another scramble. The last straw came when a basketful of framed pictures of deities was brought to Her to be bestowed



*Mataji in Pilani during the Samyam Saptaha*



*A view of the Satsang during Samyam Saptaha in Pilani.*



*Mataji outside the gate of the Saraswati Temple,  
Pilani.*

on the devotees; the jostling that ensued to get these coveted presents made it impossible for Mataji to stay and She had to retreat into Her room. I was given a garland and a copy of the *Gītā* which I did not need, having received it from Her on previous occasions. At first I felt sorrowful for not being favoured with a picture of my *Iṣṭā* from Ma's hands, which I could have treasured as a token of Her grace, and worshipped. I am however now able to find consolation in the idea that perhaps Mother did not want me to be distracted by possessing an outer symbol, but rather to carry constantly engraven in my heart the Reality we had been meditating upon during the *Samyam Saptah*.

JAI MA

“Divine Happiness—that which you call *Par*  
*Sukhadam*—is pure, unalloyed bliss, happiness in its  
right.”

—Sri Anandama

## Matri Lila

( October 1st—December 31st, 1962. )

As already mentioned in the November issue of 'Ananda Varta,' Mataji reached Calcutta from Allahabad on September 29th early morning. To avoid the rush of devotees at Howrah station, Mataji detrained at Bandel, several miles before Calcutta, and was taken by car to Her destination. Until October 2nd She stayed in a newly built room at the house of Sri M. L. Ghosh at New Alipore. Then She moved to the residence of Sri K.N. Banerji where She remained until the 5th. From the 6th to 8th October She was accommodated in the house of Srimati Sarbani Basu. Durga Puja was celebrated there in Mataji's presence. Many devotees of Calcutta who find it very difficult to come all the distance to our Agarpara Ashram, had thus the opportunity of Mataji's *darśana* in various localities of Calcutta proper. Only on October 9th She proceeded to Agarpara, where the newly built *Satsang* hall was inaugurated in Her presence and Lakshmi Puja celebrated. Mataji remained in the Ashram until October 15th.

At the repeated invitations of Sri Jagannath Roy, a devotee of many years' standing, Mataji travelled from Calcutta to Hazaribagh and stayed in Sri J. Roy's newly built house for 5 days. There, She and the small party that had come with Her could enjoy a delightful time of quiet and relaxation after the hectic days of Calcutta. Most of Mataji's party had gone directly to Ranchi where Mataji reached on October 21st morning.

In Her presence the consecration of a new Kali Temple took place in the Ashram. Kali Puja was celebrated in great style on Divali night, 27th October. A few devotees who had come from Calcutta for the festival, were travelling back to their homes by the Ranchi Express which derailed. We are happy to say that only two of them who were 1st class passengers escaped with slight injuries what might have proved a serious accident, while the others who travelled in 3rd class were not hurt at all.

Mataji left Ranchi on October 30th and alighted in New Delhi on the night of the 31st, bringing with Her a large party. Sri Gurupriya Devi, whose health was indifferent, had already reached Delhi earlier and remained there while Mataji, Didima and others proceeded to Pilani on the 3rd November, partly by bus and partly by train. Mataji chose to go by train, reaching Pilani late at night. She was received by Sri J. K. Birla's Secretary and Manager at Loharu station, from where She motored the remaining 14 miles to Pilani. Mataji, Her mother and a number of Ashramites were put up in "*Vishram Batika*," Sri Birlaji's guest house, which is beautiful, quiet and spacious, surrounded by well laid out gardens, and very near the school hall where the *satsang* of the *Samyam Saptah* was held. That very night, soon after Her arrival, Mataji saw in their subtle bodies a number of persons connected with Pilani.

Over a hundred people who wished to take part in the forthcoming *Samyam Mahavrata* had already arrived on the 3rd November. On the 4th, Mataji and all the *Vratīs* who had come, were taken by cars and buses to see the main sights of Pilani, namely, the college Campus, the very interesting

Technical Museum of the Engineering College, the exquisitely beautiful Saraswati Temple, built entirely of white marble and *Siva Ganga*, the New Canal House.

At the special request of Sri J. K. Birla, the 13th *Samyam Mahavrata*\* was observed in Pilani from 5th to 11th November. Thanks to the efficient management of Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Dass, Pandit Devdar Sharma, Sri Madan Lal and Captain Harish Chandra, all arrangements were first class, and the entire function could proceed perfectly smoothly and harmoniously, without a hitch.

Although the programme of the *Samyam Saptah* always sounds more or less alike (judging from the printed invitation-card) each one of the 13 *Mahavratas* had its own distinct unique note and seemed not only entirely different from the preceding ones, but also the best of all. This last function was certainly no exception to this rule, although due to the Chinese war the attendance was somewhat weaker than usual, as officials could not get leave. Those who live in Delhi did however come at least for the last week-end, which marked the climax of the function. Most of the participants were accommodated in the school hostels. Everyone was comfortable and therefore kept good health. Consequently there was hardly any coughing or restlessness during the long hours of *satsang*, which was a very welcome change from former years. After all, physical well-being does help concentration.

Until the day before our *Samyam Vrata* ended and Professor Tripurari Chakravarti from Calcutta delivered several talks, many of us were not aware of the fact that the

\* See also 'Highlights of Pilani' on page 161 of this issue.



country in which Pilani is situated, namely, *Matsyadesha* was already famous in ancient times. The Pandavas are supposed to have practised *tapasya* there for one year. Moreover, Prof. Chakravarti told us that the very day on which he was talking to us, happened to be the anniversary of the day on which Sri Krishna left *Upaplavyanagar* (which Prof. C. believes to have been more or less where Pilani is now) for *Hastinapur* on his peace mission, making a last attempt of persuading the Kauravas to refrain from war. The next day, the fullmoon and the 7th day of our function, was the anniversary of Sri Krishna's return to *Upaplavyanagar*. Having failed in this mission, He now advised the Pandavas to get ready for a fight. Professor Chakravarti thrilled the whole audience by his talk, not withstanding the fact that he does not master Hindi. He used four languages, namely Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and English, all mixed up. However, he succeeded surprisingly well in conveying with great force what he intended to let us know. The thought that we had practised *samyam* in Mataji's presence in such a memorable place inspired everyone, and fervent prayers rose from our hearts that this time the world might be preserved from the nightmare of a modern war with its inhuman cruelty and wholesale destruction.

A large number of the students of Pilani had the good fortune of Mataji's *daršana*, since She was shown round the beautiful Girls' School and other places, and even more so when Mataji was invited to the Auditorium of the Engineering College, where She gave quite a lengthy reply to a question. The students of the colleges were present. More and more boys got interested in our gathering and came

to our evening meetings. At the end some people of Pilani voiced the wish that a Satsang hall should be created in that city.

On November 12th everyone dispersed. Mataji and a very large party returned to the New Delhi Ashram, which was packed to capacity for the next few days and nights. Many arrived by various buses on the 12th evening and night, while Mataji reached on the early morning of the 13th by train.

She had the *kheyāl* to pay a visit to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru immediately after the *Samyam Saptah*. She drove to the Prime Minister's house on the 14th November very early morning. By coincidence it happened to be also his birthday. Nobody at the Ashram knew where Mataji had gone. To our utter surprise we read in the evening papers that Mata Anandamayi had been the first to greet Sri Nehru on his birthday. Mataji arrived at his residence without any previous notice. She stayed there only for a few minutes and then took Her leave.

Mataji remained in the Chandraloka Ashram for five days. On the 17th night She left for Dehradun, reaching the Kishenpur Ashram on the 18th morning. Among the very few who were allowed to accompany Her, were a few visitors from France and the U. S. A. They also followed Her to Hardwar where She arrived on November 21st. Mataji stayed at Baghat House for one week. She gave *darśana* twice daily, but most of the time was able to enjoy a good rest. Our foreign guests were delighted to be with Mataji in such quiet and intimate surroundings. This has become a rare privilege in recent years. One of our guests from the West wrote to a friend from Hardwar: ".....Although Mataji

seldom comes downstairs and we are not allowed to go up, yet the *darshan* times are something rare. There are so few here..... Mataji sometimes even cooked for the three Brahmacharis herself. We have such rare and beautiful glimpses of Her here. The first morning after we came we spent a long time with Her up on the terrace where She delighted everyone by feeding the monkeys....."

On November 28th Mataji left Hardwar for Vrindaban. She passed through Delhi, but did not halt there and arrived at Mathura Station at 1 a.m. on the 29th. At the Vrindaban Ashram a *Bhagavata Saptaha* was observed, which had been arranged by the Maharani Satya Prem Kumari of Mysore for the good of her mother's soul, who was also a devotee of Mataji. Another *Bhagavata Saptaha* was held simultaneously, followed by a *Gita Jayanti*. Many guests came from various places to attend the various functions and Mataji had a very busy time once again. Nobody knew where Mataji would go from Vrindaban.

Suddenly She turned up quite unexpectedly with only two companions at the Kishenpur Ashram on the 27th December evening. That day it had rained in Dehradun, and Mussoorie had had its first snowfall this winter. Fortunately the sun came out the next morning. A surprisingly large number of people could be informed of Mataji's sudden arrival and the hall was full at the *daršana* on the 28th evening. On the 29th midday Mataji motored to Hardwar. Swami Shankarananda, one of the Sannyasis belonging to our Ashram, had at an advanced age, passed away on the 18th December at Hardwar. His sons begged Mataji to be present at a feast

that they wished to give in his honour to 101 *Sannyasis* at Hardwar on December 30th. This is how Dehradun, Kan-khal and Hardwar were so fortunate as to receive Mataji's unexpected visits.

On December 31st Mataji left Hardwar to return to Vrindaban. She is expected to go to Bombay by Jaunary 12th for a few days. Rai Bahadur G. M. Modi is arranging for a big function in Modinagar from January 26th to February 3rd, on the occasion of the consecration of a new temple. He has very earnestly requested Mataji to grace the function with Her presence. Many well-known *Mahatmas* have been invited as well.

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