

# Ananda Vārtā

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

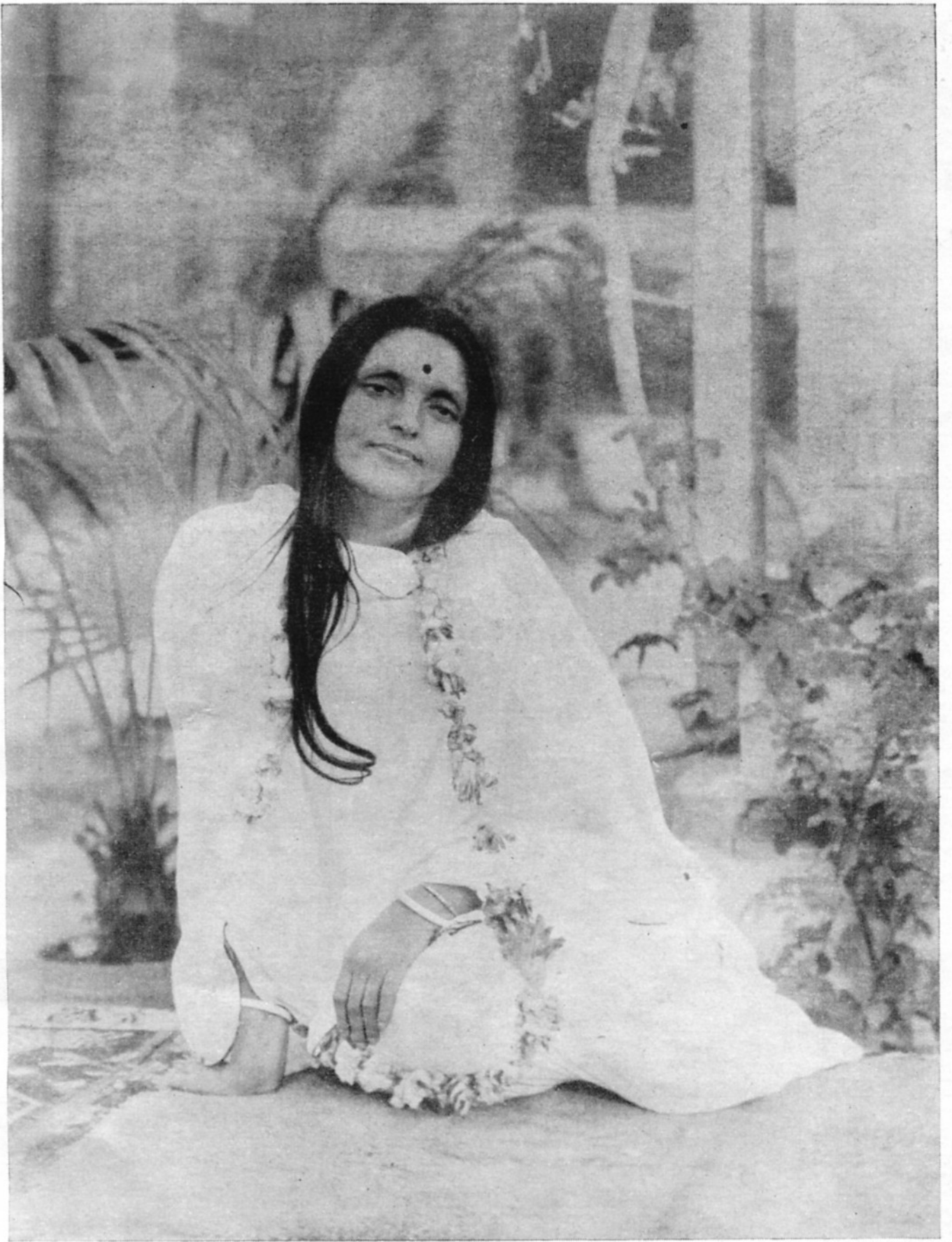


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—An unpublished photo of Mataji.

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*The Self, self contained,  
calling to Itself for its own Revelation—  
this is happiness.*

## MATRI VANI

The awakening of the sense of want is to be welcomed. It opens up the way and makes the unfit fit to tread the path. In the guise of want and emptiness Thou indeed art present. Lord, I take refuge in Thee, I take refuge in Thee!

\* \* \*

The empire of the mind is enclosed by the body. Even though you may desire to turn the mind inward, will it voluntarily renounce its empire? To divide, to wander backwards and forwards again and again constitutes its natural movement. But your sole duty is to realize: Thou alone art within and without, in want and emptiness, in fact in all circumstances whatever. In order to destroy the undesirable ( *anishṭa* ) one must focus one's mind on the invocation of the Beloved, the one desired ( *Iṣṭa* ).

\* \* \*

Your whole life you have spent in acquiring knowledge from mercenary motives, and in similar pursuits. With all

your strength you are serving worldly aims. Learn also to do a little service for the love of God, so that your thought may dwell on His Lotus-feet.

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Spiritual affinity is undoubtedly stronger than blood relationship. The happiness it gives is very special. By the atmosphere created by your meditation, your spiritual endeavour, the place ought to become so wonderful that even people coming from outside will be able to notice it. Ashram life must be made worthy of its object. This surely is as it should be ! And then your eyes, your face, your whole countenance will radiate peace and tranquillity.

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The faithful devotee, the ardent lover of God, the ascetic, the great yogi—all are pilgrims on the path to the Supreme : The revelation of their forgotten SELF, of His touch, their common goal.

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Unless one penetrates to a certain depth, it is but natural for the mind to be fickle and distracted. Those who are absorbed in divine aspiration, must they not constantly abide in His Presence so as to discover pure love ? Let not one precious moment be wasted !

# Conversations with Śri Śri Anandamayī Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULI

( Translated by Atmananda )

( 14 )

*Ranchi Ashram, 23/10/1962.*

*Question* : If someone cannot enter even by breaking the door and is equally unable to throw himself down in front of the door in self-abandonment, will the Mother Herself open the door and come out to him ?

*Mataji* : She does indeed come.

*Question* : If this is so, then have those who cannot succeed either by self-reliance nor by self-surrender no cause for despair ?

*Mataji* : They have not. One must be desperate after Him. The agony of having failed to find Him, the despair over the fact that He has not been realized, will take one there.

*Question* : Have we come to the Mother or has She come to us ?

*Mataji* : ( Pointing towards the image of *Kālī* ) : The Mother comes to you—and yet again also attracts you to Herself. Where coming and going is, there is duality. But a state exists which is beyond coming and going.

*Question* : Nowadays everyone feels deeply concerned; for, although it is true that we have escaped the major disaster due to evil planetary influences that had been foretold

for this year ( 1962 ), how are we to be saved from atom bombs ?

*Mataji* : This time He has come in the guise of the atom bomb. Take refuge in the ONE. Due to the world-wide fear of a major disaster in 1962, prayers and the invocation of God's name were offered in many, many places. This was very beneficent.

*Question* : The following is not a question but an appeal to you: When at every step of one's life one compromises, speaking untruths and committing unlawful actions, how can man's own *dharma* remain intact ? In society and in our country we have fallen prey to such conditions that everyone living in the world is forced, even against his wish and inclination, to compromise all along, although he knows that his character does not remain unimpaired. Every single person is today suffering in this way.

*Mataji* : Such suffering should persist. Where there is suffering, Truth Itself will come to save Truth.

*Question* : I am not speaking for the individual only, but also for the entire community.

*Mataji* : If the suffering is universal, its result will likewise be accordingly.

26/10/1962.

*Question* : If one does not count every penny one cannot live. On the other hand, unless one is completely uncalculating, one's heart is not preserved. Thus, in order to keep alive one has to become heartless, or if one wants to save one's heart one cannot live.

*Mataji* : Will you do one thing, Baba: Leave all calculation alone ! Turn your steps towards the ONE. If it should be necessary to do accounting, someone else will come and see to it. Who keeps all the accounts of Mother Kali ?

*Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Ranchi, 29/10/62.*

*Question* : Seven years ago this Aurobindo Study Circle was born in the presence of Anandamayi Ma. Now in its 8th year, Mataji has come to invest it with the sacred thread. Is it not so ?

*Mataji* : This body is father's little daughter. What is she to say ? Why the 8th year ? Why should there be separation from Him with Whom one has ever been before birth and will be after birth for evermore ? What does 'then' and 'now' mean ?

*Ranchi Ashram, 29/10/1962.*

*Question* : Should one attempt self-extinction, effacement of oneself ? Or destroy the sense of I ? Or give the power of attorney over one's immature self to the Mother ?

*Mataji* : If the sense of giving remains, effacement has not taken place. Effacement occurs of itself. Obliteration is not of oneself, but of one's desires, of one's ego. So long as one dwells in the empire of the mind, extinction has not occurred and cannot occur. The mind has to be employed in order to discriminate. For the awakening of goodwill an effort can be made. But effacement occurs when the mind has been transcended. However, the mind has countless levels. Having reached a certain level, there is a semblance of Self-awakening. On the other hand, the mind is also He.



What is to be renounced, or wiped out? In the sphere of the mind there is 'doing' and beyond the mind there is (effortless) 'being.' Who is to be effaced? Who effaces whom? Effacement signifies realization—the realization of Him. Until He reveals Himself one attempts to obliterate oneself. Obliterating means to eliminate step by step, the method of '*neti, neti*' ( 'not this, not this' ), to eliminate the impermanent, that which is subject to destruction. In the Kingdom beyond the mind art Thou in all shapes and forms. What indeed is eternal and what impermanent? All is in fact He alone. On the plane of the mind there is relative happiness, not unconditional bliss. And where relative happiness is, there will also be sorrow side by side. Unconditional bliss is the Bliss of the Brahman, ( *Brahmānanda* ); and what is *Brahmānanda*? Thou indeed. Seen from one angle, everything is Thou and Thou alone. And from a different point of view: that which Thou art, I also am. Cleanse the mind of everything, and He will stand revealed as the 'Thou,' as the *Ātmā*. To begin with, you have to make use of the mind ( *man* )—so as to go beyond it ( *aman* ), so as to realize the Self ( *Ātman* ), so as to be Enlightened.

## Pages from my Diary

GURUPRIYA DEVI

( Translated from Bengali )

*New Delhi, 16th February, 1961.*

This morning Mataji arrived here from Hardwar. Sri Dalmiaji has arranged for a huge religious function in town to continue for several weeks. Sri Haribabaji Maharaj is also here. In response to the very urgent request of all of them, Mataji has come and is expected to remain here over the Holi festival.

Mataji is in Her room, alone with Didima and myself. Referring to Didima, She says to me very softly: "She keeps herself so carefully concealed that nobody can possibly know or understand what she really is. This is the way such people live." Indeed, the more one watches Didima and gets to know her, the more one marvels at her. Truly, such a character is very, very rare. Many people have taken initiation from her. The demeanour of a perfect *sādhu* comes to her without the least effort, spontaneously. I have known her for the last 35 years. It goes without saying that anger, greed, self-conceit, aversion, malice are simply non-existent in her. She is loving and affectionate towards all. It never even occurs to her to find fault with anyone. Suppose a very wicked person is being discussed in her presence, Didima will always manage to point out some good quality in the culprit. She really is a wonderful character! Nowadays Didima has become completely child-

like. She is nearly 86 years old. Without Mataji she does not want to remain anywhere ; wherever Mataji happens to be, Didima quietly sits near Her and feels contented. If at that time someone comes to call her for a meal, she says — “I am not at all hungry.” When we smile at her reply, she also, just like a child, smiles back at us. On occasions one can see her sitting quite still outside of Mataji’s door. Mataji’s mother ! It never even strikes her to claim the position that is naturally hers. Most of the time she remains in the background—it is impossible to guess who she is.

24th February, 1961.

Today also a few of us had assembled in Mataji’s room. The discussion turned to the fact that in former years, whenever Mataji gave to a sick person anything She had been holding in Her hand, the disease would be cured. Once, for instance, Mataji held the fruit of a tamarind in Her hand for a few days, without feeling inclined to throw it away. Then someone came and prayed to Mataji to heal a patient. Ma gave him the fruit and the patient became well.

Mataji listened to our conversation with a smile and remarked : “O yes, how these things used to happen ! Later I had the *kheyāla* to stop all this.”

25th February, 1961.

This morning, as soon as Mataji got up from bed, She said : “I hear the sound of weeping.” I thereupon informed Her that a little while ago an urgent wire had been received from Bombay with the news that an old devotee had suddenly passed away. Mataji said : “You had not told me anything until now, had you ?”

After midday Mataji returned from Sri Haribabaji's *satsang*. At about 2 O'clock in the afternoon, Raihana Tyabji together with a number of her followers came for Mataji's *darśana*. Madalasa, the daughter of the late Sri Jamnalal Bajaj was also with her. Raihana Tyabji is a renowned person in this part of India. Although Moham- medan by birth, she has since her childhood been extremely fond of Hindu *kīrtana* and religious music. I have been told that she was to have been married. But on hearing that her prospective husband would not allow her to continue to practise Hindu religious songs, she refused to marry him. She now spends her days in *sādhana*, *kīrtana* and devotional music. For several years she was also closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi.

As soon as she came to Mataji, she put her arms round Her and held Her tightly; then grasping Mataji's hands, she kissed them again and again in rapturous love and veneration. Then, with her head bent and her eyes shut, she remained quite still for a few seconds. Thereafter she gradually began to talk. Pointing to one of the women who had come with her, she exclaimed : "How many lives have we not spent together !" And about Jamnalalji's daughter she said : "This is my niece. Her father looked upon me as his sister."

We put marks of sandal-paste on the foreheads of Raihana and everyone of her party. Mataji took a garland made of *tulsis*\* and put it round Raihana's neck with the words : "Like everyone else I am also garlanding my mother !" Mataji then motioned to me to put a rosary round

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\* *Tulsi* sacred basil, a plant sacred to Sri Krishna.

Raihana's neck. With exuberant joy she began to finger this gift of Mataji. Madalasa observed : "If you make such a show of the rosary, everyone's attention will be drawn to it." Mataji laughed : "This is excellent. Everyone will then want to have a rosary of his own." This remark roused laughter among all present. Raihana said : "Ma, I had a keen desire to receive a present from you. Today it has been fulfilled."

At Mataji's bidding Pushpa sang a song. As soon as it was over, Mataji said laughing gleefully : "This was only to pave the way for your singing." Clapping Her hands full of joy, Mataji exclaimed : "Ma, Ma, now I shall listen to a flute !" We had heard that Raihana could with her voice beautifully imitate the sound of a flute. Responding to Mataji's request, she began to sing :

"I shall listen to the flute and never let it go again...."

Along with her song she also produced with her voice the sound of a flute so well that everyone listened transported.

In this manner about an hour elapsed. When Raihana asked permission to leave, Mataji said : "This body asked you to come, but it won't tell you to go !" Raihana laughed. "What shall I do now ?" and sat down again for a little while. Finally she said : "I don't feel like going, all the same I shall have to go. This time I shall not ask your permission. In any case, my heart remains with you !" Pointing to the spot where she had sat, she said laughing heartily : "What is the matter with this place ? It is trying to glue me to it !"

At someone's question, Mataji said like a small child : "The answer will be given by my mother." But Raihana

declined : "In Mataji's presence I will not say anything. Although it is quite true that at other places I speak a lot and also give instructions."

Before departing she again embraced Mataji with the words : "I am still hungry for more !" Mataji accompanied them to the staircase. Looking back at Mataji again and again, Raihana did obeisance. At last the car started and Mataji returned to Her room.

In the evening, Dr. Rajendra Prasad's son came for Mataji's *darśana*. He had a very long private interview with Her.

28th February, 1961.

At night the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Cuttat, and the High Commissioner for Pakistan, Mr. Brohi, arrived together to see Mataji. For about an hour Dr. Cuttat discussed Vaisnavism and the doctrine of duality (*dvaita vāda*) with Her. He seemed to be extremely pleased about the talk he had with Ma. Dr. Cuttat is himself a Doctor of Theology. Mr. Brohi wanted to talk to Mataji in private, but since he did not get the chance, he said he would come another day.

1st March, 1961.

This evening Mr. Brohi sent a large bunch of flowers for Mataji with his driver.

In the morning on the way back from the *satsang*, Mataji together with Sri Haribabaji were taken to the residence of Sri Jaidayal Dalmia. There elaborate arrangements had been made for a reception on the lawn for Mataji and the Mahatmas. When Mataji left, Sri Dalmia presented shawls to all the sadhus and brahmacharis of our Ashram.

Before returning to the Ashram, Mataji was requested to halt for a short while at the house of Dr. Pannalal's son-in-law, Sri Rameshwar Sahai\*. There *ārāṭi* was performed to Mataji with great love and reverence.

2nd March, 1961.

Today is the festival of Holi. Since last night *Akhaṇḍa Nāma Yajñat†* is being observed in the Ashram. After sunset, the Chief Commissioner, Sri Bhagwan Sahai came with his wife for Mataji's *darśana*. They also listened to the *kīrtana* for over an hour. At half past nine at night Mr. and Mrs. Brohi arrived. They were taken straight to Mataji's room as they wished to talk to Her alone. They repeated again and again how happy they were to be able to meet Mataji. Mr. Brohi had been a famous lawyer at Karachi. In response to the urgent request of President Ayub Khan, he had come here as the High Commissioner of Pakistan. An ideal person, extremely noble-minded, he told Mataji that his one aim had been to establish genuine friendliness between the two countries and their people. Unfortunately this fond hope of his had almost been crushed by now. On all sides he encountered nothing but differences, dissension and quarrels. He talked to Mataji about these matters for some time.

It is obvious that Mr. Brohi also feels greatly attracted to the spiritual side of life. His interview was to terminate at 10 p. m. Before taking leave, he begged to be allowed to

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\* Sri Rameshwar Sahai was the Chief Conservator of Forests, U. P. and is at present a Member of the Railway Board.

† *Kīrtana* of one particular *mantra* such as the *Mahamantra*, the participants moving round a circular altar.

meditate in Ma's presence for five minutes. He asked for the lights to be put out. In a meditative posture he sat perfectly still, with his eyes shut. The strange thing was that, instead of five minutes, more than an hour passed in this way. A number of people who wished to see Mataji in private were waiting outside of Her room. But there was no sign of his getting up. At last, after 11 p. m. he slowly opened his eyes and asked for the lights to be switched on. Sri Panu Brahmachari was interpreting for him. Mr. Brohi wanted him to convey to Mataji that such profound peace and bliss as he had just experienced, had been unknown to him hitherto. When he requested Mataji to tell him something, She suggested that he might fix at least 15 minutes at a definite time of each day to be dedicated to regular meditation. Mr. Brohi accepted Her advice with great joy and promised to follow it to the best of his ability. Whenever he could get an opportunity, he would again come for Mataji's *darśana*. Many were impressed by his earnestness and the genuine interest he seems to take in spiritual things.

This evening, Sri Jamnalalji's son Sri Kamalnayan Bajaj, M. P., his sister Madalasa, with her husband Sriman Nārāyan ( General Secretary of the Congress ), Pandit Shivdatt Upadhyaya and others came together for Mataji's *darśana*. They also appeared to be in high spirits after having talked to Mataji. The late Jamnalalji Bajaj used to revere Mataji as His Guru. We therefore feel very close to his wife, son and daughter. They themselves also obviously feel profound reverence for Mataji.



## Mottoes and Sayings of Swami Sivananda

1. Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize.  
Be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate.  
Enquire "Who am I", know the Self and be free.
2. Practise truth, love and purity.  
This is the foundation of Yoga and Vedanta.
3. Adapt, adjust, accommodate,  
Bear insult, bear injury, ( this is ) highest *sādhana*.
4. Detach-attach, detach-attach;  
Detach the mind from the objects,  
Attach it to the Lord.
5. Nothing exists, nothing belongs to me,  
I am neither mind nor body, immortal Self am I.
6. Work is worship;  
Dedicate it to God.
7. Even this will pass away.  
Balance your mind in pain and joy.
8. *Tat tvam asi*; That thou art.  
Realize this and be free.
9. Satsanga is the first pillar in the temple of Self-realization. Therefore seek the company of sages.
10. Remember the great saints and sages. You will be inspired. They are not dead. They are more alive to-day than ever before.

11. Constant repetition of the Lord's Name purifies the heart, removes your doubts and bestows immortality.
12. Sympathy is the sweet cement of human society.
13. Politics is not the be-all and end-all of human life.
14. Avoid lip-service, lip-sympathy and lip-Vedanta.
15. Science is not the enemy of religion, but a preparation for it.
16. Worship God in the image. This is indeed right worship.
17. Forget and forgive. You will have peace. You will become divine.
18. Utilize well all opportunities. You can make your life sublime.
19. It is the vanity in man that goads him to reform society without first reforming himself.
20. Improve the individual; society will reform itself.
21. Love all. Be one with all. See the One in all.
22. Behold the Divinity in all beings.
23. Always do good to others. Be selfless. Mentally remove attachment to everything and be free.
24. Be kind. Be compassionate. Be honest. Be sincere. Be truthful. Be bold. Be pure.
25. Love and respect the saints of every faith.

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26. Live to serve humanity.
  27. Bear enmity to none. Do not vex others and do not be vexed by others.
  28. Faith is the voice of the Divinity within you.
  29. Miracles are no proof of saintliness. The devil performs them too.
  30. If you understand your past, the future will hold no riddles.
  31. Be good, do good.
  32. Serve. Love. Give.
  33. Purify. Meditate. Realize.
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## Talk with Swami Ramdas

RECORDED BY "K"

*Anandashram, 31st December, 1961.*

*Devotee* : Papa, *māyā* seems to be all-prevailing amongst us.

*Ramdas* : *Māyā* has no existence except in the imagination of the ignorant soul or *jīva*.

*Devotee* : As long as the mind exists, *māyā* is there.

*Ramdas* : The mind does not exist.

*Devotee* : Krishna says : "*mama māyā duratyayā*".

*Ramdas* : When you know that *māyā* is non-existent, the conception of *māyā* will disappear.

*Devotee* : Is that state possible before Self-realization dawns ?

*Ramdas* : Realization means knowing that *māyā* is false. After Realization you find out that *māyā* never existed. In the darkness you stumble against a rope and imagine that it is a snake. On bringing light you see that the snake never existed. It was only a hallucination. So *māyā* is in your imagination.

*Devotee* : Then where is the necessity for us, poor mortals, to struggle ?

*Ramdas* : The Immortal alone exists—that is *Brahman*. No poor mortals or rich mortals !

*Devotee* : Why are we then immersed in *māyā* all the twenty-four hours ?

*Ramdas* : Ramdas told you, it is only an illusion, just as the snake in the rope.

In the waking state, dream experience is found to be false. In the dream state, waking experience is found to be false. While asleep, both the other states are not there. How can you give any reality to these things ?

*Devotee* : How does one find out that in deep sleep bliss is experienced ?

*Ramdas* : When you rise from sleep you say : "I enjoyed sound sleep." You cannot say this without having experienced it.

In sleep you enjoy the bliss unconsciously. You must enjoy it consciously. Then you are free, ever-blissful. *Sat-chidānanda*—that is what you are. When you realize this, where is the question of past, future and present ? Know that you are eternal. There is bliss and nothing but bliss in that state.

*Devotee* : Very promising ! But only as long as we hear you. When we go home, it is all gone.

*Ramdas* : Surrender yourself to *Māyā Devi*.

*Devotee* : She is more like an *asura* than a *Devi*.

*Ramdas* : When you surrender yourself to her, she will remove the veil of ignorance and show you that she is *Brahman*. There is no distinction between *māyā* and *Brahman*. While in ignorance you think she is different. Surrender is necessary. She will then make you realize that she and

*Brahman* are one and that you are *Brahman*. There is nothing but *Brahman*.

Mother worship has come because by the grace of the Mother we can realize the Father, *Brahman*. Her grace is always there. When you surrender yourself to Her, you open yourself to that grace. Now you are unconscious of it. The Mother is *Vidyā Māyā* and the other is *avidyā māyā* who does not exist in *Brahman*.

*Devotee* : Teach me how to surrender, Papa.

*Ramdas* : That is what Sri Krishna taught in the first 17 chapters of the Gita, and lastly in the eighteenth chapter he asked Arjuna to surrender. Ramdas has shown in the '*Gita Sandesh*' how step by step Sri Krishna leads Arjuna until he comes to the final state where he is advised to surrender.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

“Abandoning all duties come to me alone for shelter. Sorrow not. I will liberate thee from all sins.”

This is the key of the Gita : *Uttamam Rahasyam*—the secret of secrets.

*Devotee* : Till now I never knew that *māyā* was the Universal Mother.

*Ramdas* : *Purūsha* and *Prakriti* are not different. See them as identical and your whole problem is solved.

— — —

## The Master as I Adore Him.

PROF. K. R. R. SASTRY.

A hundred years ago was born Narendra who later was to shine as the star that lit the American skies at Chicago. The roar in the lion of Vedanta in Swami Vivekananda is audible even now through his marvellous speeches and through the flowers of memory strewn by disciples like Sister Nivedita.

Why was our Prime Minister honoured more at Chicago? That was the place where at the Parliament of Religions the "monk without credentials" was honoured by "the brothers and sisters of America."

### **Vivekananda's Brilliance.**

From where did the agnostic Narendra get the spark of inspiration? There was a "mad man at Dakshineswar" who pulled the unspoilt youth of Bengal for service, sacrifice, and sublimation.

"Can you show me God?" queried the valiant doubter. "Yes, you will see" answered the Godman of Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, pressing his leg to the chest of the honest doubter. All his power was transmitted to his favourite disciple who could later get into trances.

### **Sri Ramakrishna and his Disciples.**

Sri Ramakrishna started as a devotee at many shrines and a seeker through many paths to TRUTH. This great jeweller collected thus so many uncut jewels: Vivekananda

with his thundering voice, Brahmananda the ripe mango, Saradananda with beautiful poise, Yogananda of silent nobility, Niranjanananda the spotless Advaitin with his wonderful love for TRUTH, Ramakrishnananda full of Vedic culture, Trigunatita a great yogi, Premananda excelling in service of devotees, Adbhutananda rare in service to the Guru, Turiyananda an unbending Vedantin, Subodhananda with his mastery of Kundalini, Shivananda stressing the spirit behind all our works, Akhandananda overflowing with sympathy, Vijñanananda a scholar, engineer and spiritualist and Abhedananda, a fine cultural ambassador.

Swami Nikhilananda, my host when at New York, is doing his best by keeping the flag of Vedanta flying in New York along with Prabodhananda, Prabhavananda and others. Unlike our poor land, one such address by Swami Nikhilananda earned for the Mutt 700 dollars.

### **Vivekananda on his Master.**

Let us hear once again of the life and mission of Sri Ramakrishna from his favourite disciple, Swami Vivekananda :—

“I happened to get an old man to teach me, and he was very peculiar. He found all religions so many paths leading to the same goal.

“I went there with some other young men when I was about 16”.

### **Vivekananda's Grand Conception.**

Swami Vivekananda conceived the following plan :

“We must show the spirituality of the Hindus, the mercifulness of the Buddhists, the activity of the Christians,



the brotherhood of the Mohammedans by our practical lives.”

And 14 years out of his span of 39, the Swamiji had never been for three months at a time in any one place. So, he was continually rolling.

### **Hear Him.**

All our Five Year Plans can become a striking success only when the worker in the field, and the administrator in the office imbibe the spirit of service of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Order of monks. At the body, mind, and spirit-‘levels’ the mission is ever on its work of mercy throughout the world.

Our dynamic Nehru wanted a few talented monks for cultural missions abroad; but the mission itself is short of such workers, who after twelve years of service and supervision are admitted into the order of Advaita monks. In a sense, these trained monks belong to the great order of monks instituted at the four points of the compass by Sri Sankaracharya.

So let us this day hear a few sayings of Vivekananda, the spiritual father of our freedom :

“Thy ideal can be expressed in a few words : to preach unto men their divinity and how to make it manifest at every moment of life.”

“If you want to find God, serve man. Every soul is a sun covered with clouds of ignorance, the difference between soul and soul is due to the difference in density of these layers of clouds.”

“First let us be Gods and then help others to be Gods.”

“*Be and then make—let that be our motto !*”

# Sri Vallabhacharya and His Philosophy

T. KRISHNAJI

Sri Vallabhacharya is a renowned and revered name among the *āchāryas* or religious teachers of India. Vallabhacharya was not only a religious teacher but also a philosopher who expounded a new line of thought to sustain the devotional approach. The religious life and philosophic outlook of any period of any country are largely interwoven with its spiritual and social needs. Hindu religion has an innate energy and a power of resilience accommodating within itself the most varied faiths, beliefs and doctrines. Despite separatist tendencies due to diverse sects, foreign creeds, social differences, and political domination by rulers belonging to alien faiths, the dynamic power of Hinduism as a unifying force persists. Sri Vallabhacharya gave a new message, new hope and a new pattern of devotional life to India.

In order to understand a hitherto unknown philosophic thought, it is helpful to have a picture of the preceding philosophic ideas. The Jaina and Buddhist religions arose as a challenge to the ritualism of *Purva Mimansa*. The ritualists gave the utmost importance to the Vedas and ignored God while the protestant creeds of Jainism and Buddhism denied both the Vedic authority as well as God. Sri Sankaracharya restored the surpremacny of God as the sole reality and explained the world of form and name as non-real, a mere appearance due to *māyā*. The common man is always in need of a personal God who can be adored and whose saving grace is a solace. To dismiss the world as a mere.

appearance is beyond his comprehension. The Alvars (the Vaishnava mystics) and the Nayanamars (the Saiva mystics) of South India spread the perfume of devotion by their God-intoxicated lives and passionate songs. Shri Ramanujacharya was inspired to reveal a novel philosophy called *Visistadvaita*, wherein God, life (chit) and nature (achit) are treated as separate but not distinct, allowing scope for devotional expression. Devotion implies duality of God and the devotee. Ramanuja gave us *Saguna Brahman* or Vishnu as the supreme personality of God. Sri Madhvacharya (1197—1276 A.D.) postulated Pluralistic Realism, maintaining that God, man and nature were real and separate, thus affording scope for worship. Madhvacharya obtained, by a miracle, an idol of Gopala Krishna, which he enshrined at Udipi and worshipped as a part of his religious scheme. Vallabhacharya, differed from the views of his predecessors, declaring that God, man and nature were identical, like fire and its sparks but remained separate, the sparks ever seeking the Eternal Flame by love and devotion.

During medieval times, India experienced ravages from Muslim hordes that plundered and desecrated its shrines. The *Bhāgavata Purāna* and Krishna *bhakti* became popular, and several God-inspired devotees spread the gospel of devotion and Krishna *bhakti*. The Maharashtra saints, Narsi Mehta (1504—1550 A.D.) in Gujrat, Mira Bai (1415—1481) in Rajputana, Jayadeva in Puri, Vidyapati and Chandidas in Bihar and Sri Chaitanya Deva in Bengal taught passionate devotion to Lord Krishna. It was necessary to marshall the devotional forces by a sound philosophy. Sri Vallabhacharya furnished the philosophic background for devotion or *bhakti* and also formulated a religious creed of his own.

On *Vaisakh Krishna Ekādasi* 1479 A. D. a babe was born to pious parents in the woods of Champaranya (U. P.). Lakshmana Bhatta and Ellamma Garu had left their village Kambam Patti in Andhra Desa for Benares on a pilgrimage. The babe was a male child, named Vallabha, and he is said to be an incarnation of the Fire God. Madhvacharya was said to be an incarnation of the Air God. Vallabha, and Sri Tyagaraja, the South Indian Rama *bhakta* and musician belong to the Kakarla clan, that claims its descendance from Risi Bharadwaja and it is probable that both of them were of the same family. Vallabha was intelligent and quick in his grasp and by his tenth year had learnt all the scriptures. About 1490, his father died and he travelled south, visiting the sacred shrines at Tirupati, Kanchi, Srirangam, etc. While at Tirupathi he studied South Indian Vaishnavism and its philosophy. He proceeded to Vijayanagar, ruled by Krishna Deva Raja or by his guardian, in whose court Vallabha's maternal uncle was an officer. The King was himself a scholar, poet, and patron of learning and a Vaishnavite. He honoured Vallabha with riches, *Kanakabhisheka* and addressed him as "*Maha Prabhu.*" Since then Vallabha has been known as *Maha Prabhu* in his *sampradaya* (sect).

After his triumphal return from the south in 1493, when he was about 14 years old, Vallabha engaged himself in writing commentaries re-interpreting the scriptures in the light of his new thought. He wrote commentaries on portions of the *Brahma Sutra*, the *Bhagavata* and several miscellaneous works (called *Shoḍasa Grantha*), some stotras and *Purushottama Sahasranāma*. He promulgated his philosophy called *Suddhādvaita Brahma Vāda* and invoked the grace of Lord Visvanatha. In *Patravālabhāna*, he says;

“*Sthāpito Brahma vādo hi  
Sarva vedanta gocharāh  
Kāsipatis trilokeso  
Mahā Devastu Tushyatu*”.

‘Let the Lord of Kasi and of the three worlds, Mahadeva, be pleased with my establishing *Brahma Vāda* seen in all Vedanta.’

Vallābha taught complete dedication and devotion to Lord Krishna as the end and aim of life. In *Samnyāsa Nirnaya*, he says that one need not forsake one’s home and take to asceticism, unless home life becomes an impediment to one’s devotion for God. About 1507 Vallabha married a girl called Mahalakshmi and had two sons, Gopinath ( b. 1511 ) and Vittalnath ( b. 1516 A. D. ). Vallabha lived with his family at Charanadri ( near Gaya ) and at Adel ( near Allahabad ), frequently visiting Mathura and Vrindavan.

Vallabha was a mystic, immersed in love and devotion for Lord Krishna. The Lord granted him a vision and directed him to visit Govardhan where His manifestation, an idol of Deva Damana or Srinathji, was to be found. Vallabha discovered the idol and was thrilled with the manifestation of the Lord. He became ecstatic and found beauty and loveliness in everything pertaining to the Lord.

“*Mathurādhi patē sakalam madhuram.*”

“Everything relating to the Lord of Mathura is sweet.” Vallabha enshrined *Srinathji* and arranged for its worship.

Vallabha was a contemporary of Sri Chaitanya Maha Prabhu ( 1486–1533 A. D. ) and both these God-intoxicated Krishna *bhaktas* met twice, once at Allahabad and once at

Puri. The meeting of two such devotees of Lord Krishna must have been a feast for the eyes of all devotees. About their meeting at Puri the *Chaitanya Charitāmrit* narrates: "Chaitanya embraced Vallabha and made him sit by his side. Bhatta extolled him, Chaitanya praised his disciples. Bhatta was proud of his *bhakti* theology. He entertained the Master and his disciples with *mahāprasāda* and delighted all by his reverence." Some unkind critic of Vallabha reads too much into this partial version intended to give, in contrast, colour to the subject of *Charitāmrit*. Both Vallabha and Chaitanya were great mystics, one lost himself in ecstatic love for Lord Krishna and the other had the mission of an *āchārya* or Teacher to propagate devotion. Vallabha wanted commendation for his *Bhāgavata* commentary from Chaitanya but Chaitanya, who held *Sridhara* in high esteem, avoided this by saying that "the *Bhāgavata* was too high for his comprehension." We should have corroboration from other sources to the version given in Chaitanya Charitamrit. Dr. D. C. Sen rightly remarks that "we must arrange for a scrutinizing enquiry into the literature of the Vallabha school, before accepting in toto the account of *Charitāmrit*." (Chaitanya and his age, P. 242). The above version describes the utmost humility on the part of Vallabha and the ecstatic life of Chaitanya. Both of them had accomplished, and enriched the devotional life of the country, as few have done ever since.

By exemplary conduct, deep devotion to Lord Krishna, and by his philosophic approach, Vallabha guided many to the spiritual path and his religion spread from Mathura to Gujarat. Dr. R. D. Ranade opines that Vallabha's movement followed the track Lord Krishna had taken from

Mathura to Dwaraka. He had 84 disciples who led ideal lives of devotion and dispassion. Their lives written in "*Chorasi Vārtā*" are an inspiration and guide to Vallabha's adherents. Vallabha's second son, Vittalnathji ( called Gosainji ) carried Vallabha's message to princes and peasants. Akbar and Shahjahan honoured him and presented rights in Gokul and Vrindavan. Raja Mansingh, Birbal and many Rajput princes came under his spiritual influence. He had 252 important disciples and the eight poet-mystics ( called *Ashta Chap* ) were his close adherents who enriched the devotional literature in Hindi and *Vraja bhāshā*. Surdas, the blind poet saint of Agra, wrote *Bhāgavata* in *Vraja bhāshā*. The names of the other poets are: Kumbhandas, Krishandas, Nanddas, Govinda Swami, Chaturbhujdas, Swami Haridas. Rajasthani art and music owe much to the Vallabha sect. Vittalnathji had seven sons and four daughters. The sons became *Gurus* and some of their descendants were noted scholars who led saintly lives. In the history of the religious renaissance of North India the Vallabha Sampadaya and thought occupies a prominent place.

Vallabha combined in himself deep devotion to Lord Krishna, profound scholarship, the vision of a sage and a new approach to philosophy. He accepted Sankara's axiomatic statement that *Brahman* is the Non-dual Reality, and rejected his principle of illusion, known as *māyā*. According to Vallabha, God is both the efficient and material cause of all worldly phenomena. *Māyā*, according to him, is the wonder working power of the Lord and man is bound by *avidya* (ignorance) and *karma* (action). Everything emanates from the Lord, like sparks from a flame, and partakes of His Nature. The *Mundaka Upanishad* supports him.

“That is That, the truth of things; as from one highly kindled fire thousands of different sparks are born and all have the same form of fire, so o fair son, from the Immutable manifold becomings are born and even into that they depart.”

( Sri Aurobindo's Translation )

To Vallabha, the Highest Reality, the Absolute is Lord Krishna, *Purushottama*, who is also the God of his religion, endowed with auspicious qualities and being all-pervasive. Vallabha follows the *Bhāgavata*. He who is known as *Brahman*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān* is Lord Sri Krishna. The *jīva* as a spark is also a manifestation of the Divine, but is enveloped by *avidyā* or ignorance, and struggles. While treading the path to God, one should rid oneself of all ego and sense of possession. The sense of mine should be effaced by complete dedication of mind, body, and wealth (*tan, man, dhan*) to Lord Krishna, and even the idea of self should be surrendered to the Lord. This is called '*ātma-samarpaṇa*'. The *jīva* in separation, should be reminded of its eternal relationship to God, and the Guru instructs the disciple in "*Brahma sambandha*". The *mantra* was revealed to Vallabha by God himself.

“The suffering due to separation from Krishna for many years shall cease. I surrender to Bhagavan Krishna my senses, my body, wife, child, wealth and the self. I am bound to Thee, I am Thine, Lord Krishna be my refuge. God's name is both, means and end in itself.”

God is *nirguṇa*, devoid of attributes, in the sense that He transcends the three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, though for worship he is thought of as *saguṇa*. The devotee



serves the Lord for service's sake, without any thought of return, even of *mukti*. Vallabha relies on *nirguṇa bhakti* as set out in the *Bhāgavata*. (iii cha. 29th, sarga 11-12).

“The uninterrupted flow of the mind stream towards Me, dwelling in the heart of all, like that of the waters of the Ganga towards the ocean ... at the mere mention of my virtues, combined with motiveless and unremitting love to Me, the Supreme Person, is spoken of as the distinguishing character of unqualified ( *nirguṇa* ) *bhaktiyoga*.”

Vallabha calls the type of his devotion “*Nirguṇa Pushtimārga Bhakti*.”

In Vallabha's philosophy, God is both immanent and transcendent, there is nothing but God and so he calls his system of thought *Śuddha Advaita*. The path of devotion shown by him yields full *Krishna Prem* or *Pushti* ( Divine Grace or *anugraha*). Therefore it is known as *Pushtimārga*. Devotion must be uninterrupted like a vice or *vyasana*. In *Siddhānta Muktaṅgalī*, Vallabha expounds sincere service ( *seva* ) to Lord Krishna as a means to eradicate all sins due to *karma*. In *Siddhānta Rahasya*, he inculcates self-dedication and in *Bāla Bodha* he teaches full surrender to the Supreme Lord. In *Nirodha Lakshana*, he teaches that the mind should be withdrawn from sense objects and be attached to God. That is renunciation and *saṁnyāsa*. The Gópis of Vraja are its examples.

As a practical missionary, Vallabha had taken into consideration the *adhikāri bheda* or temperament of the spiritual aspirant. So *Pushti Bhakti* has its gradations:

1. *Pravāha Pushti* is intended for people who lead worldly lives but seek the grace of God.

2. *Maryādā Pushti* requires the devotee to withdraw his mind from all worldly things and devote himself to *bhajan* and *śravan* and he obtains *Sāyujya Mukti*. Moral discipline is enjoined.

3. In *Pushti Pushti* the devotee has obtained God's grace and Knowledge and is aware of the nature of God and of His ways.

4. In *Śuddha Pushti*, the devotee develops, through God's grace, ecstatic devotion for God and sings His praises.

In his mysticism he is one with Gopa and Gopi and joins in the eternal service and the *Līlā* of the Lord.

The fountain of *Pushti* is the spiritual welfare in the sublime Love and the grace of God.

Vallabha was a practical reformer who understood the needs of the people of his time. In *Siddhānta Muktvāvali* he extolls mental worship as superior:

“Worship Krishna always;

Mental worship I regard as superior.”

There are no public temples as such in Vallabha's religion. The devotee worships the image of God at home and is permitted to have *darśana* of the Lord worshipped by the Guru at stated times. The *Mandirs* and *Havelis* are private residential houses of the Gurus but the disciples and people belonging to the sect have access for *darśana*. There are neither fasts nor ceremonies in the scheme of this religion. The idol is decorated and *Bhoga* or *Naivedya* offered at stated times. As public temples were the targets of loot and desecration, Vallabha devised a new system of worship in the home. Vallabha's religious message comprises a complete dedicated service to Lord Krishna, and a life of the

utmost detachment. Once he had no means to offer *bhoga* and therefore had to raise money by pledging a golden goblet used in the Lord's service, and with the money purchased things and offered the usual *bhoga*. But he fasted all day. He enjoined that "if my descendants, or anyone who claims relationship with me, misappropriate God's wealth, he comes to grief." His message is :

"Worship the Lord of Vraja  
Always seeing Him in all."

Vallabha follows *Nārada Bhakti Sutra* No. 79

*"Sarvadā sarva bhāvena  
Nischintitaih, Bhagavān eva bhajaniyah."*

Like Spinoza, Vallabha has given a new philosophy maintaining that God, the sole Reality, pervades life and nature. The universe that arose from Him partakes of His nature, and HE IS ALL. Vallabha gave new inspiration and impetus to the devotional life of India.

Some scholars are inclined to believe that Vallabha's philosophic predecessor was one Vishnuswami of the 12th century A. D. alleged to belong to the *Rudra sampradāya* and a guru of *Jñāndeva Maharaj*. In the *Sarvadarśana Sangraha* of Madhavacharya there is a reference to one Vishnuswami who belonged to *Raseswara* or the mercurial system, according to which the self is identified with God. Liberation depends on the body, which should be nourished. There is not even a semblance of similarity between Raseswara and Vallabha's system.

Although the philosophy and religion propounded by Vallabha was a great success, influencing the lives of many Indians, it was not taken notice of by the philosophic wri-

ters. Some reviled the system as a hedonist and epicurean creed, alleging that—“*Push̥ti*” meant “eat, drink and be merry.” This is a fatal misreading of Vallabha’s devotional religion. Such false impressions have been created by some Christian missionaries who wrote with the avowed object of showing how “flickering is the lamp of Hinduism” as compared to their faith, and to divide and wean away the followers of the Indian religions. One writer says: “The effect of a religion that set upon itself as the object of adoration the sensual Krishna of the *Bhāgavata* and *Gita Govinda* could scarcely fail, one would have thought, to prove evil.” (The religious quest of India by J. N. Faruquhar, P. 127 ). The second reason is that the Gurus of the Vallabha cult are householders and some of them live a life unworthy of Gurus. Such Gurus had exposed their religion and philosophy to contempt and criticism. The Maharaj libel case misled people to generalise about the entire religious system. If one is to understand a particular system of philosophy or religion, it should be judged from the standard literature written and expounded by the founder and persons belonging to his school, unaffected by extraneous considerations. Vallabha taught fervent love and dispassionate service to God and to live a life permeated by the Divine.

In his 52nd year, Vallabha completed his mission and took formal *sanyāsa*, assuming the name of Purnananda. On the 3rd of Ashad̥, 1531 he called his two sons and enjoined them finally to devote themselves to the service of God. He said: “If you become divorced from God in any way, time will devour you, that is my belief. Krishna, the Lord of Gopis is worthy of your service with mind, body and speech. He alone will give you everything here and hereafter. If you

have faith in me you will be saved." He went to the holy river Ganga and took the sacred water into his hands. A bright flame arose from his body and left to meet the greater glow of Lord Krishna.

Among the philosophers, religious reformers, and mystics of India, Vallabha succeeded in giving a new philosophy and in tracing a new devotional path, imparting vitality and vigour to the religious life of India. He lit the lamp of devotion about 450 years ago and in spite of the shifting political and social changes, fresh beliefs and new values in religious life, Vallabha's name and message will remain undimmed, influencing the spiritual aspirations of the country. Vallabha shall ever be cherished with respect by the Hindus as a torch bearer of spiritual life and devotion to Purushotama Sri Krishna.

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## New Diary Leaves

ATMANANDA

( 11 )

In summer 1962 Mataji stayed in Kishenpur for several months. After Her birthday celebrations were over and most people had dispersed, Mataji used to reply to questions daily for half an hour or more. On some days, Ashramites got a chance to ask questions and voice their own problems.

19th June, 1962.

*A sādhanakā:* How does *sādhana* become intense (*tīvra*) ? .

*Mataji :* By one-pointedness (*ek lakshya*). 'Tīvra' means to direct the arrow (*tīra*) towards the goal: 'Tīra ka vrati hona' to aim with single-mindedness at the goal, and at the goal alone.

Mataji then enlarged on how to practise *sādhanā*. She pointed out that it was certainly very good to sing *kīrtana*, to chant holy texts and perform *pūjā*. But if, while engaging in those practices one enjoyed the praise and prestige one earned from those who listened, then this would become an obstacle to one's progress. "Sādhanā ki gati khaṇḍit hoti hai" the stream of *sādhanā* will be interrupted. Suppose someone says to you: 'How beautifully you sang! Let me copy your song.' He then notes down your address, a correspondence ensues and he starts sending you presents. This is not *sādhanā*, but worldly enjoyment."

*Another sādḥaka* : Should we then stop singing *Kīrtana* ?

*Mataji* : No; sing as much as you can—but sing for God only. Sing His praises, get absorbed in Him, be oblivious of whether people praise you or take no notice of you.

Your way of doing *sādhana* is like travelling by bullock-cart, and there are hundreds of them on the road. At times the driver falls asleep and then the bullocks take a wrong path and one has to retrace one's steps. Therefore one must constantly remain watchful and alert.

*Someone else* : Suppose I buy a ticket and travel by train. Then, surely, I need not worry ?

*Mataji* : The driver has to be alert. But so must you, for if you fall asleep you may miss your destination and stay in the train too long.

*Kishenpur, June 25th, 1962.*

*Question* : While living in the Guru's Ashram, what is better, serving the Guru ( *Guru seva* ) or engaging in meditation ( *japa-dhyāna* ) ?

*Mataji* : Whatever the Guru advises is best.

*Question* : But the Guru does not say anything about this.

*Mataji* : Then he is not a Guru.—To do the Guru's personal service is not possible for everyone. It requires special capacity. Suppose you do the Guru's personal work for a time and then someone else is asked to continue and does it in a different way, and this upsets or irritates you. This is

not called service. You should, on the contrary, feel happy that some other person also has the chance to serve your Beloved in his or her own way.

Always remember that whomever you serve, you are serving God (*Janjanārdana*) in that particular guise. So many people come to the Ashram and there is no end to the opportunities of serving them in this spirit. Even if some of them be bad or mean, do not forget that they have come to the temple of God. For this reason, serve them to the limit of your capacity, although they may not keep up the same attitude after leaving the Ashram. Serve the pure intention that has moved them for the moment. Whether you provide them with food or water, or sweep the place for them or assist them in any other way, it is service to God in the shape of man. Thus, there is any amount of scope for service in an Ashram.

Obey the Guru implicitly ! Whatever He may ask you to do, try to carry it out. If it be disagreeable or troublesome, accept it as your *tapasya*. Although it is true that, so long as one is bound by the knots (*granthi*) of the I-ness, perfect faith is impossible, nevertheless exert yourself to the utmost to act upon the Guru's orders. If you are able to remain in meditation continuously, nobody will even dream of expecting any service from you. But if you linger about aimlessly for part of the time, you should certainly do service of some sort.

*Question* : What is *mantra caitanya* ?

*Mataji* : A *mantra* that has become alive, that is to say, that which the *mantra* represents becomes revealed.



The seed is sown by the Guru, but unless the soil is properly prepared the tree will not grow. An ordinary seed may die if not tended, while the seed which the Guru sows is immortal. All the same, the earth has to be dug up and made soft and receptive, then the stones have to be removed and the earth is sieved, etc. If the seed is not watered it cannot develop. The regular practice according to the Guru's instructions provides the nourishment that will make the seed grow into a tree.

*Question* : What is *citta suddhi* ?

*Mataji* : When the mind becomes empty and, like a clean mirror, reflects the Self, this is called *citta suddhi*.

30th June, 1962.

*Question* : Is the hour of death fixed beforehand ?

*Mataji* : In the realm in which the laws of nature function it is fixed and cannot be averted. But by the Will or Grace of One who has gone beyond those laws, it may be altered. As a rule, fate will have its way; somehow or other it will work itself out.

To illustrate this fact, Mataji related a story which She often tells:

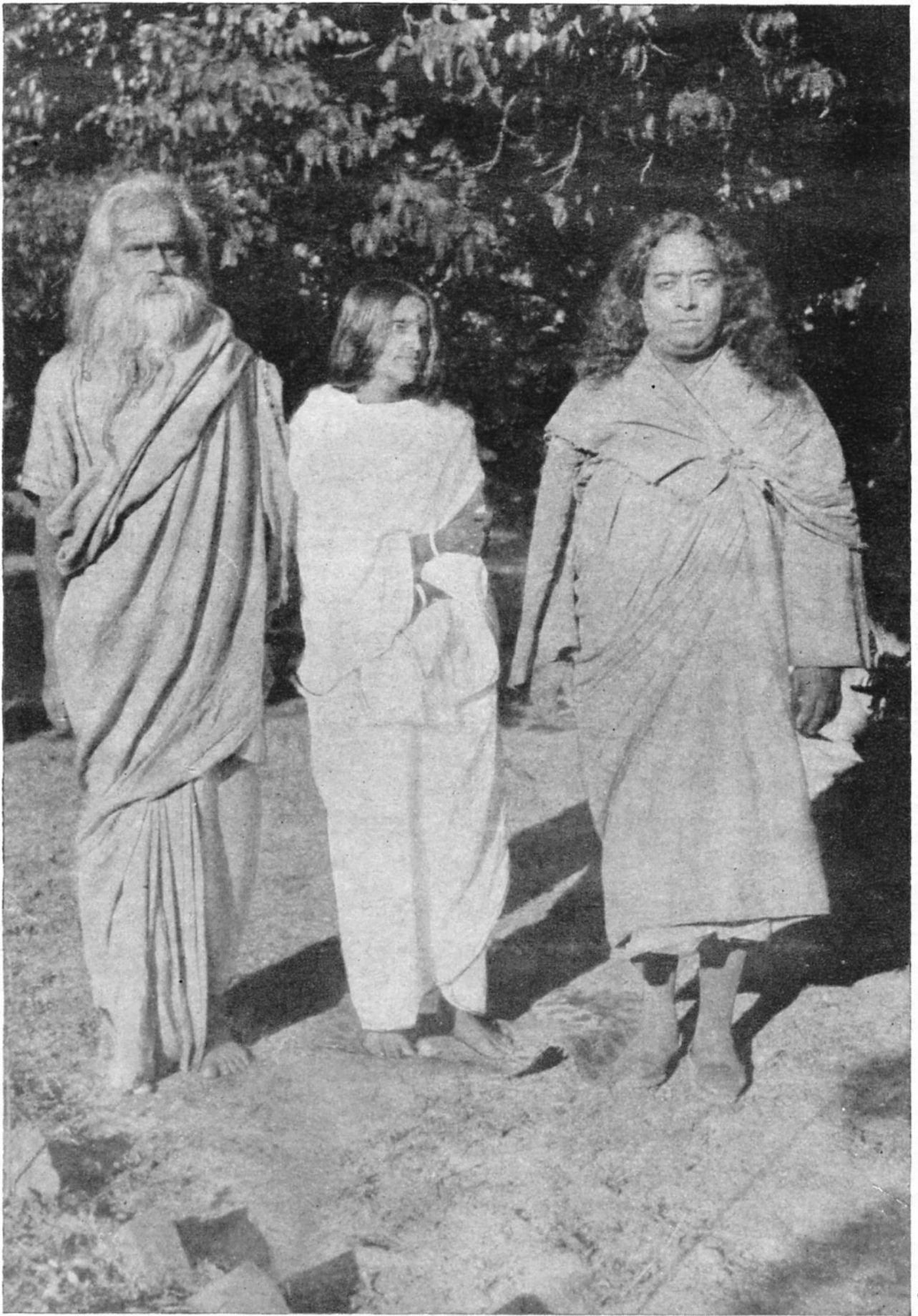
“Once upon a time there was a learned Brahmin. One night, while he and his family were asleep, a poisonous snake entered the house and stung his wife, son and daughter. Within a few moments all of them were dead. The Brahmin naturally felt sorely grieved and dejected. What to do now? He watched the snake crawl away and leave the house. In his despair he ran behind the reptile. After following it for some

distance, he saw the snake change into two fighting bulls. After they had killed each other, a beautiful young girl emerged on the spot. Two men started quarrelling over the lovely lady, a fight ensued and they stabbed each other to death, while the young beauty went on her way. Deeply pained and puzzled the Brahmin kept close to her heels. Finally she turned round and said: "Why do you follow me? Leave me alone!" "Not until you explain to me who you are. First you were a snake and your poisonous fangs blotted out my whole family. Then you turned into two fighting bulls that perished; and now, taking on the shape of a charming girl you have caused the death of two men. Tell me who you are!" The young woman tried to escape, but the Brahmin would not let her go. "First disclose your identity, then you may go where you please." At long last he got the reply: "I am destiny. I do not kill anyone. But man by the results of his own actions causes his own death in some manner or other." "If this is so," said the Brahmin, "tell me how I shall die!" "By drowning." With these words the woman disappeared.

The Brahmin made up his mind to counteract destiny. "Let me see how I shall die by drowning, if I keep far away from water," he thought. After attending to the funeral rites for his wife and children, he disposed of his house and wandered high up into the mountains. There he decided to spend the rest of his life. One evening, when as usual he was looking for shelter for the night, he sighted at some distance a large and well-built house, obviously the mansion of a wealthy person. When the owner saw the Brahmin approach, he invited him with courtesy to be his guest. He started

talking to him and soon found out that he was a learned man. 'How much further do you want to trek?' he said. 'Please make your home in my house. My whole family will benefit by the company of such a learned and cultured pandit.' The Brahman also felt attracted to his host and his sons. He thought: 'The family seems pleasant and well-to-do. There are hills on all sides and no watercourse anywhere near. What better place can I find?' and he remained. He stayed for a number of years, teaching the sons. Grandsons began to grow up. One of the little boys got greatly attached to the old pandit and spent much time near him.

One day, the head of the family said to the pandit: 'We are all going down to Benares to bathe in the Ganges, since a very auspicious day is nearing which occurs only once in a hundred years. Please, do join us.' The Brahmin flatly refused. However, the little grandson began to cry and declared firmly, he would not go without his beloved pandit and rather stay at home with him. When therefore his host tried again and again to persuade him to join in the trip, the pandit finally disclosed his reasons for refusing to go. 'Is that all?' said his host. 'Be without fear, I shall construct a special bathing-place for you, very shallow and surrounded by a strong railing. Not even a small child will be in danger of drowning there.' After much controversy, the Brahmin at last agreed to go. His host kept his word. He made excellent arrangements for the pandit's safety, exactly as promised. The Brahmin entered the water, carrying the little boy on his arm. Suddenly the child changed into a crocodile and with the words: 'I am destiny!' dragged



*Mataji with Paramahansa Yogananda and Sri Bholanathji.*

the old man over the railing into the main current. This is how fate will have its way. According to one's *karma*, the date and manner of one's death is pre-ordained.

*Question* : Suppose a man dies, pronouncing God's name, will he not be born again ?

*Mataji* : It depends on the stage he has reached. If he is in the right state of mind, it may of course happen that all his remaining karma is burnt up instantaneously. This may also occur by the grace of the Guru.

*Question* : Is it possible by the grace of the Guru to obliterate desire (*vāsanā kṣaya*) ?

*Mataji* : It is. The grace of the Guru always pours forth, but you must have mercy upon yourself and allow it to reach you. If your vessel is turned upside down, the grace will merely run down the sides and you will be unable to receive it. (Mataji has on other occasions explained that to keep one's vessel upside down means to be outward turned. When one's attention is focussed on God or Truth or realizing one's Self, one becomes receptive to Divine Grace.)

*Question* : I have taken refuge in the Mother. Why does She not take me into Her arms ?

*Mataji* : The sense of duality has remained, you are feeling apart from Her, this is why. To give a little is not enough, you must give yourself wholly—have mercy upon yourself.

## Matri Lila

( JULY 7th—OCT. 7th 1963. )

As already stated in the last issue of 'Ananda Varta', Mataji reached the Kishenpur Ashram by car from Hardwar on July 7th. Quite a number of visitors who had come to Hardwar for *Guru purnimā* ( July 6th ) accompanied Mataji to Dehradun. However, after two or three days, it became fairly quiet in Kishenpur. Sri Gurupriya Devi was expected from Bombay on July 11th, but the railway line being damaged due to heavy rains, she arrived on the 15th evening. Mataji was downstairs most of that day, seeing in person to the arrangements for Didi's stay, since Didi's health was still indifferent at the time. ( We are glad to say that it has since considerably improved. )

On the 16th Mataji felt rather tired and remained upstairs all day. In the evening when she got up to give *darśana* as usual, her foot got entangled into a towel that had fallen to the floor, and a small bone of one of the toes of her right foot was fractured. Mataji had no *kheyāla* to put the foot into plaster and therefore every movement would have aggravated the trouble. Mataji thus remained confined to bed for eight days. Sometimes one has the feeling that incidents of this kind are the only means of providing a little much needed rest for Mataji between spells of intense activity and strain. During that week people had *darśana* in the evening, standing on the veranda in front of Mataji's room. On the 22nd Mataji agreed to have the fractured toe banded tightly with sticking-plaster and on the 23rd she came downstairs and paid a visit to Didi, who was confined to the

room below Mataji's. To the joy of everyone present, Mataji walked all over the Ashram and to the temples, although the foot must have still been quite painful.

On July 25th a very charming little ceremony took place in Mataji's own room. When reporting about the festivals and functions that are being celebrated year after year, a good deal of repetition seems unavoidable. The following is being described rather in detail, since there has been no occasion so far to write about anything similar. Gopal, the youngest child of Sri A. P. Dikshit, the District Magistrate of Dehradun, had a few days before had his first haircutting ceremony (*mundan*). His mother was eager that *vidyārambh* (the beginning of learning) should now be performed in Mataji's presence. On a mat right in front of Mataji's couch sat little Gopal and Brahmachari Nirvanananda, who was guiding the child's hand to write every single letter of the alphabet, which he simultaneously taught him to pronounce; then his own name, various sacred syllables and words, some with chalk on a slate, some with a pencil on paper and finally a few with red ink into a copy book. The parents, some other close relatives of the little boy and as many as could squeeze in, stood tightly packed at the back of the room and on the verandah, men on one side and women on the other, watching with great interest. Mataji seemed to guide and supervise everything, often suggesting what should be done next. At the end she gave garlands to Gopal to be presented to his elders and asked him to fall at their feet. At midday a feast was given to everyone. There is surely nothing very noteworthy in a child being taught the alphabets. But the original way in which it was done in

Mataji's presence left a deep impression on many who watched the procedure.

Another unusual happening, although of a very different order, was the visit of a Roman Catholic priest, who had travelled to India all the way from France to find out what Indian spirituality actually was. He spent a couple of days in Dehradun in order to meet Mataji and had an interesting interview with her. For a consecrated priest of the Roman Catholic church to visit India, not as a missionary but as an inquirer, is very rare and surely not without significance.

On July 29th Mataji shifted to the Raipur Ashram. Raipur has played a special part in Mataji's *Līlā*. In 1932, when she suddenly left Bengal together with Bholanath and Bhaiji, they remained for many months in the dilapidated room and veranda next to the Siva Temple. The room could not provide adequate shelter from either the sun or the rain, but the place was and is charming, commanding an extensive view over the surrounding hills, and is even now fairly secluded. Much later, the Ashram was built just below and by the side of the Siva Temple. On the plot next to it a devotee of Dehradun, whose son passed away soon after his investiture with the sacred thread, erected in his memory another small Ashram for Brahmacharis. The room that Mataji occupied in 1932 was renovated and improved when the Ashram was first constructed and has just now been enlarged and converted into almost a mansion, compared to what it used to be.

In 1932 Mataji was not known outside of Bengal. While at Raipur, Bholanath would sit in meditation most of the time, while Bhaiji did whatever housework and errands were required for the three of them. They lived on very scanty



and extremely simple food, often just a few boiled vegetables and a couple of rotis each. Bhaiji was clad in a dhoti only and walked about bare footed, since Mataji did not use any footwear either. There was hardly anyone to talk to in that solitary place which was then a real jungle, infested with snakes and scorpions. Some of the villagers wondered, whether Bholanath had perhaps left his home to do *tapasyā* and his wife had followed him against his wish, taking their servant ( Bhaiji ) with them. However, later, when letters began to arrive for Bhaiji, his identity as a high official in Government service was disclosed. In those days, Mataji did not bathe and hardly ever changed her clothes. Her hair became matted. Later she had it cut off. It had formed into an exquisite pattern just like a crown, which was preserved. When Bhaiji had to return to Bengal, Brahmachari Kamalakanta came to attend to Mataji and Pitaji. One or two others arrived from Bengal and tried to join the party, but Mataji sent them back. Only very gradually a few people of Dehradun discovered Mataji and began to go to see her inspite of the very bad road that became in parts a riverbed during the rains.

For the last several years, Mataji has not stayed in the Raipur Ashram for more than a few hours at a time. But on this occasion she remained there for full eight days. *Jhulan* was celebrated from July 31st to August 5th. The two Raipur Ashrams are comparatively small and it was quite a feat to accommodate all who had shifted from Kishenpur. The *satsang* hall had to serve as a dormitory at night. The *jhālā* was placed in the room adjoining the hall. The decorations, done by the Ashram girls with infinite care and great artistic taste, using profusion of flowers

and brightly coloured hangings, were different every evening and always superb. The devotees of Dehradun and the people of Raipur village and Raipur Factory joined into the functions with enthusiasm. The crowd overflowed from the hall to the veranda and into the courtyard. *Jhulan Purnima* night, as always, marked the climax of the festival. After the silence, from 9 p. m. onwards until the midnight meditation started at 11.45 p. m. Mataji indefatigably tied *rākhis* to the hand of everyone who approached her, and there was no end to the children and grown-ups, eager to receive Mataji's blessing in this manner. After the meditation the *kīrtana* was resumed and kept up until the morning. A lady from Venezuela was present throughout the night, while two gentlemen hailing from Holland and Australia attended some of the functions. The celebration of *Raksha bandhan* continued the next morning in Raipur and then in Kishenpur until late at night and even the day after. On the 7th night Mataji, Didi and half of the party entrained for Delhi, while Didima with the rest went straight to Varanasi, where *Janmastami* was to be celebrated. Mataji spent only one day in Delhi and reached Varanasi on August 9th.

The famous black Gopal of the Varanasi Ashram had been presented with a beautifully carved *simhāsana* made of sandalwood and Mataji had been specially requested to be present during the installation on Gopal's birthday on August 12. The next morning *Nandotsava* was observed and Mataji left the same evening for Delhi, where she remained until August 22nd. On the 23rd she motored to Vrindaban. A *Bhāgavat saptaha* was held there from August 26th to September 3rd. On September 4th Mataji returned to Delhi.

On September 11th Mataji was back at Raipur, this time for a sojourn of 15 days, interrupted only by a stay of 24 hours in Kishenpur on the 15th, when Srimati Sushila Nair, Health Minister, came for Her *darśana*. From September 18th to 25th a *Bhāgavata Saptaha* was held for the first time in the Raipur Ashram. It had been arranged by the Asstt. Secretary of the Dehradun Ashrams, Sri Nawal Kishore, for the good of his deceased father's soul, and was enjoyed and appreciated by all who had the good fortune to attend. Electricity had so far not penetrated to the village of Raipur. On the eve of the *saptaha* the installation was completed and electric lights flared up in the whole of the Ashram. A loudspeaker could thus be installed, to enable people to listen from the courtyard and the roof, since the hall could not hold even half of those who flocked regularly every afternoon and listened spell-bound to the lucid exposition in Hindi by Pandit Srinath Shastri, who was also responsible for the Sanskrit reading every morning. A German lady and a French doctor who had come from their respective countries mainly for Mataji's *darśana* were present in Raipur for the whole of the week. The entire function proceeded in great harmony. Mataji sat in the hall daily towards the end of the talk for sometime.

On the first morning, while the *pūjā* that precedes the reading of the *Bhāgavata*, was in process, a snake appeared on the back veranda where some girls were cutting fruit. It soon left the veranda but remained in the open near the hall until the *ārati* was over, and then vanished into the adjoining jungle. It was again sighted the next day in the Ashram compound, where the Raipur children killed it with stones. Some of the people present felt that it may have

been more than a coincidence that the snake came just at that moment and also that it was released from its existence as a reptile while the *Bhāgavata* was being recited.

On September 26th Mataji proceeded to Kishenpur where she spent one night, leaving on the 27th evening for Kanpur to respond to the entreaties of the Jaipurias there to bless another *Bhāgavata saptaha* with her presence. However, Mataji remained there only for a night and then went to Allahabad by car staying at the Satyagopal Gita Ashram for three nights. She motored to Vindhyachal on the 2nd noon, where she is expected to stay till about 15th and then proceed to Varanasi.\*

It is expected that the next Samyam Saptah will be held at Ahmedabad from 23rd to 29th November.

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\* Although the Durga Puja will not be celebrated in our Varanasi Ashram, it is hoped that Mataji will stay in Varanasi during the Puja period.