

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

## **MATRI VANI**

Is it not wonderful to be a pilgrim on the Supreme Path? This is indeed the path to be taken. The ultimate Goal is reached when the Supreme Path has become revealed.

Everything is His doing. HE alone IS; your sole duty is to remember this at all times. So long as the sense of "I" and "mine" remains, there is bound to be sorrow and want in the life of the individual.

HE alone knows to whom He will reveal Himself under which form. By what path and in what manner He attracts any particular man to Himself with great force is incomprehensible to the human intelligence. The Path differs indeed for different pilgrims. Very often He destroys misfortune by misfortune and annihilates sorrow by sorrow. To advance

in this spirit means for everyone to tread his own path. One's own path is the path that leads to Self-realization, to the Supreme, ultimate Goal Itself.

Man must aim at the superhuman, at real greatness. The traveller on the Supreme Path may hope to attain to ultimate Bliss. This is man's main duty.

The spiritual practice that will cleanse one from the dross accumulated life after life and that has for purpose the uncovering of one's innate, radiant, illumined Self that lies latent deep within—this has to be fostered and served. What does service signify? Action that purifies the mind.

Always bear in mind that food, sleep, walking, standing, sitting—in fact your entire conduct has to be strictly controlled for the sake of liberation. Further, whatever spiritual exercise, ritual, and so forth is engaged in, should be carried out with faith and love. No ritual should be performed irreverently. He Himself has come in the guise of spiritual practice. The suffering which patience, endurance, forbearance entail is a manifestation of Him, the destroyer of suffering, for the purpose of its destruction.

## Pages from my Diary

GURUPRIYA DEVI

(Translated from Bengali)

*Poona, 9th June 1961.*

Mataji arrived here today from Bombay. She had already been here on May 13th to inaugurate the Ashram. It is a beautiful place situated in the I. C. S. Colony, on Ganeshkhind Road, quite close to the Poona University and also fairly near the Government House. Sri Bhagwan Das Nangpal, a local devotee and his wife have donated this newly built house to the Ashram. By the joint effort of Poona and Bombay *bhaktas* a large piece of land in front of the house has been acquired for the Ashram.

Sri Haribabaji Maharaj also reached here soon after Mataji. A spacious pandal has been erected in the Ashram grounds for the purpose of daily *satsang*.

*Poona, 14th June 1961.*

Two or three days ago Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj was discharged from hospital. He arrived here this morning and is staying in a house opposite to Sri Dilip Kumar Roy's Ashram.

*Poona, 23rd June 1961.*

The President of the Indian Republic, Dr. Rajendra Prasad has been in Poona for the last few days, residing in the Government House. This morning one of his secretaries came and announced that Dr. Rajendra Prasad as well as the Governor of Maharashtra, Sri Sri Prakash desired to come

and see Mataji this evening at a boat quarter to six. Since they wanted to meet Mataji informally, it was arranged that they should be received by her, not in the pandal, but in her own small room.

They arrived in the Ashram a little after half past five. Sri Sri Prakash had brought his daughter-in-law and a few of his grand-children with him. Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj was also present. The Governor has great regard for him.

No sooner had they taken their seats near Mataji, than Dr. Rajendra Prasad said to her : "Please give us some instructions that will help us on the spiritual path !"

*Mataji* : Pitaji, this body does not give instructions. Nevertheless, quite often in the course of conversation something is said in a very informal and unconventional manner. (Pointing to Dr. G. Kaviraj) These learned men will be able to explain everything to you in beautiful and appropriate language.

Kaviraj Mahashaya said : "Please, put some questions."

Thereupon Sri Sri Prakashji asked : "Mataji, I have a problem which I put to every wise or learned person whenever I get the chance. We encounter so much fraud, deceit and dishonesty. How can the spiritual life develop in the midst of all this ?"

Mataji gradually warmed up to the reply. "Pitaji, this reminds me of something that occurred years ago. This body was then in Mussoorie. One day, while going for a walk, it saw lots and lots of children playing in a games field. Suddenly, at the sound of a bell, they all stood as still as stones wherever they happened to be. This was an example of self-control. So long as the Brahmacharya Ashram is

not lived fully as it should be, day after day, man's life cannot be moulded according to proper laws and regulations. If the first of the four Ashrams is not lived in the right manner, then, just as when the foundation of a house is not well built, the house is in danger of collapsing, so also when the foundation of human life is not properly laid, lots of difficulties keep on arising."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad asked: "How is one to acquire love and devotion for the spiritual life?"

*Mataji*: By the yoga of practice. By sustained practice love and devotion for the spiritual path are developed.

About 45 minutes were spent in this kind of interesting and useful conversation. Then our guests were entertained to some light refreshments. Dr. Rajendra Prasad is suffering from asthma and therefore would not partake of anything. But he tied some fruit and sweets into his handkerchief to take along with him as *Mataji's* present.

Sri Haribabaji, who had gone out for his daily evening walk, returned at that moment. He was invited to join the party in *Mataji's* room. *Mataji* asked him two or three times to talk about some spiritual topic, but he could not be persuaded. Dr. Rajendra Prasad said: "Babaji is not gracious today."

At about 6-30 p. m. all did *pranama* to *Mataji* and took their leave. When they had gone, *Mataji* with a number of the people present paid a visit to Sri Dilip Kumar Roy's Ashram and remained there for some time. Then, after dropping Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj at his place, *Mataji* returned to our Ashram.



Poona, 24th June 1961.

In the beginning of May a French couple, Mr. Arnaud Desjardins and his wife Denise, came to Mataji at Allahabad. Since then they have mostly travelled with Mataji. However, for two weeks in between they visited Swami Ramdas at Kanhangad in South India and the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Now they have again returned to Mataji at Poona. Mr. Desjardins is a well-known camera-man at the Television in France. Both he and his wife are very spiritually minded and, have great faith in Mataji. They had their first *daršana* of Ma in Benares during Durga Puja in 1959. Staying with Mataji for some time they produced a film of her which was shown in several places in France and North Africa. Innumerable people were immensely impressed by Ma's film and eager to see more. Mr. Desjardins is therefore trying to produce another film. However, Mataji does not take the slightest interest in such matters. Therefore he has to be always alert and on the lookout for moments when he can get exposures, out of which he will piece together his new film.

This evening Mr. Desjardins showed some fragments of his would-be film to Mataji, Sri Haribabaji and to all present at the Ashram. Sri Dilip Kumar also came with Indira Devi and a few of his devotees to witness the performance. Although no adequate projector was available with which to project a technicolour film, the entire audience enjoyed and appreciated immensely what they were shown.

Mrs. Desjardins has to return to Paris already tomorrow to be with her small daughter, while her husband is

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staying on for another week or so, hoping to get a few more shots for his new film.

*Poona, 30th June 1961.*

H. H. Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior is here at present. In spite of his indifferent health he comes almost every evening for Mataji's *daršana*. Daily pure cow's milk is sent for Ma by car from his private dairy farm. At first only Maharani Vijayaraje used to come to Mataji, but after some time the Maharaja also began to feel drawn to Mataji. This was a surprise to many, since the Maharaja was reputed for his indifference to religion and spirituality. There is no knowing who may change in what manner and at what time by Mataji's grace.

*Poona, 2nd July 1961.*

Since this morning it has been raining heavily. In the midst of this downpour Sri B. K. Shah came from Bombay together with his wife Lilaben, their daughter Sunayana and her baby boy. In Bombay, when Mataji had seen the baby for the first time, she remarked that he had very extraordinary ears. Today, as soon as he was taken to Ma, he tried to leap into her lap. Every time an attempt was made to straighten him, he would incline his head again towards Mataji's feet. He is just five months old. Everybody present was quite amazed to watch how powerfully he felt attracted to Mataji. There were a number of people in the room, but the child took no notice of them; his attention was exclusively occupied with Mataji. Suddenly Mataji stood

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\* Sri B. K. Shah is the Managing Director of the New India Assurance Co. and a well-known personality in Bombay. He and his family are greatly devoted to Mataji.

up, lifted the baby into her arms, and touching both his cheeks with her head, she fondled him. Again and again she stroked his forehead, and the baby seemed tremendously delighted. It was a unique sight, for one does not ever see Mataji take a baby into her arms. Everyone present felt that the child was extremely fortunate. Who he may have been in his former birth, Mataji alone can tell.

Poona, 30th July 1961,

Sri Kaniabhai has arrived here from Bombay together with his wife, a woman of a very sweet and gentle disposition and a fine singer. In the course of the conversation she said to Ma : "Surely, I am bound to fulfil my duties as a wife and mother. These are also a gift of God."

*Mataji* : Most certainly. All is His, all is He. Whatever work you do in your home, always carry it out as a service to Him. In every shape and form is He alone and therefore everything can be done as His service. The important thing is to be ever aware of Him, to think of Him in everything one does.

Last night Mataji related many interesting things to Kaniabhai. The following happened several years ago, once at Bundh, Sri Haribabaji took Ma out in a special procession on an elephant. A howda had been placed on the back of a huge elephant. It was difficult to climb up to it. Sri Haribabaji told one of his devotees to bend down low, so that Mataji could use his back as a step to get up to the litter. But Mataji was not willing to agree to this. Not

\* Sri D. I. Kania is a well-known businessman from Bombay.

knowing what to do. Haribabaji suggested that Ma should step on his two outstretched hands. Needless to say Mataji refused to do this either. Suddenly she had the *kheyāla* to climb up on the elephant without any help as nimbly as a mouse. All who watched were speechless with amazement. When Ma has the *kheyāla* nothing is impossible.

Another incident was also mentioned. After the death of Sri Uriababaji, Mataji once went to Vrindaban at the invitation of Sri Haribabaji. Mataji had the *kheyāla* that Sri Uriababaji was all the while present near her. A carpet had been spread below the wooden couch on which Mataji was seated during the *satsang*. Mataji had the carpet removed. A few stains of blood were then discovered on the carpet. Everyone was dumbfounded. It became clear that Sri Uriababaji must have sat on that very carpet when he had been murdered in public during the *satsang*. Up till then nobody had noticed the stains and Mataji drew people's attention to it in this manner.

This evening Sri Dilip Kumar Roy and Vidira Devi came to see Ma. Sri Dilip Kumar asked: "Mataji, why have excellent people and even supermen to suffer so much physical pain? Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa died of cancer. Why did Sri Gopinath Kaviraj also have to suffer from this terrible disease?" Mataji replied with a smile: "What does Gopibaba himself say about this?"

*Dilip Kumar*: "We want to hear what you say! Your words sound very sweet to us." Mataji smiled: "Whatever Gopibaba says is what this body would say." Mataji then explained that men of Sri Gopinath Kaviraj's learning and spiritual experience were extremely rare in this world. To find

another person who united a teacher as well as a student of such profundity in himself was difficult indeed.

The famous singer Srimati Hirabai Barodkar came for Ma's *daršana*. With deep feeling she sang two songs to Mataji. Mataji said: "Through melody, tune and rhythm the One who is all can be contacted. Just as Ram Prasad found the Great Mother through the intensity of his songs, so you also should dedicate your power to sing to Him. Try to realize Him through music."

Poona, 11th July 1961.

Today Mataji was taken to the famous National Defence Academy. The Principal himself had invited Ma and drove her in his own car. A reception was given to Mataji and her party on the veranda of the guest-house. First Pushpa sang two or three songs, then, at the urgent request of everyone, Mataji herself also sang for a short while. The place is of extraordinary beauty, facing a large lake surrounded by hills. In the distance Emperor Shivaji's fort can be seen. On the way back, stopping the car in various places, Mataji was shown round the Academy by the Principal who explained everything to her and to us. Amongst other sights Mataji visited the dining-hall in which about 2000 students take their meals together. The whole trip was most interesting.

Poona, 12th July 1961.

For the last fifteen days there has been continuous rain in Poona, such as has rarely been experienced before. The news has been received that the dam at Kharakvaala has burst and that a large part of the town is under water. Since the Ashram area is very high, nothing can be noticed of the

flood here. But a little further down the road everything is submerged by water. Thousands of people have had to vacate their homes, many bridges are broken, schools and colleges, the court, offices and shops are all closed. No one knows how many men and animals have lost their lives. We are happy to hear that all of Mataji's devotees are in safety.

Mataji told us : "When we got the news that the flood was rising with terrifying speed, this body had the *kheyāla* to say to the water : 'Now start receding gradually.' And really, from that moment the flood began to subside bit by bit." Who can tell how much disaster was prevented by Mataji's grace ?



*[The following text is extremely faint and illegible due to heavy noise and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a continuation of the diary entry.]*

## **A Life in Zen\***

**TAKASHI HIRATA †**

( Translated from German )

### II

I shall now give a translation of the famous Chinese text named '*Zazen-gi*' (the Zen posture), which may prove helpful to the practice of Zen by Westerners. It was written in the 10th century by a Chinese Zen Master Chang-I-I. The work is to this day the instruction for beginners in *Zazen*.

#### *Zazen-gi*

( in Chinese "Tso-Shan-I." )

( in English "The Zen Posture" )

"O disciples of the Supreme Knowledge !

"If you want to master the Supreme Knowledge (*Mahā Prajñā*), you must first of all awaken in your heart the 'Great Compassion.' First of all concentrate earnestly on the 'four pledges' and then attend carefully to the practice of meditation. You should take a solemn vow to seek liberation not for yourself only, but for all sentient beings.

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\* The following is the second instalment of an essay that appeared in the German book "HOHLEN, KLOSTER, ASHRAMS" Published by U. W. Barth Verlag, Weilheim Oberbayern.

† Professor Takashi Hirata was born in Kyoto, Japan, in 1924. After 10 years of strict training and meditation in a Zen monastery he received the title of "Zen Master."



“Remain aloof from your surroundings, also from inner attachment, drop all feeling and willing, thinking and striving. In this way, whether active or in repose, you should always remain poised in the unity of body and mind. Be moderate in eating and drinking, take neither too much nor too little. Likewise also never sleep too much nor abstain from sleep forcibly. If you wish to get absorbed in *Zazen*, choose a quiet place, sit on a thick cushion, tie your clothes loosely, and keep your body erect.

“There are two kinds of Zen postures. The first is called ‘perfect pose’. To form this posture, place your left foot on the right thigh and the right foot on the left thigh, or else the other way round, that is to say, begin with the right foot. The second posture is called ‘half posture.’ Leave the right foot under the left thigh and place the left foot on the right thigh ( or vice versa here also ). Then put your right ( left ) hand on the left ( right ) leg in such a manner that the hand rests on the point where the legs cross, the palm turned upwards. Then put your other hand over it, also with the palm turned upwards and let the tips of your thumbs touch each other.

“Your back has to remain completely straight. First bend forward and then let your spine, as it were, grow vertical. Then swing your body a few times to the right and left, so as to keep it finally in perfect balance. In this way you can make your whole body assume the right posture. You should neither stoop to either side, nor bend forward, nor lean backward. Let your hips, your spine, neck and head rest one above the other like a stupa that is formed of stones heaped up perfectly straight. Do not stretch your-



self too high up, as your breath would thereby become short and uneasy. Shoulders and ears, navel and nose should lie vertically above one another. Let your tongue lightly touch the hard gums behind your upper front teeth. Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open. By keeping your eyes open you can avoid falling asleep. If you compose yourself in this manner in the Zen seat, you may acquire the best accumulated strength of Zen. Since ancient times all prominent monks practised thus, with their eyes open. The famous Zen Master Yuan-Tung used to rebuke his pupils for closing their eyes: "This is the cave of the ghost under the black mountain." In this saying wise men find a deep significance. Keep your body in the right attitude and breathe naturally; then relax your abdomen and do not harbour any thoughts at all, neither good nor bad ones.

"If any thoughts or ideas are in your mind, do not try to destroy them forcibly; leave them alone. In this way you can cause them to become extinct quite naturally. By practising in this way for some time, all your senses will become still. In this manner you can effect a harmony of body and mind as easily as one folds a leaf. This is the main purpose of the Zen posture.

"An ancient Zen Master once said that the Zen pose was the shortest path to the most delightful place in the world. All the same, due to carelessness, some pupils fall ill as a result of the Zen posture. However, if one takes proper precautions, the body will gain strength through the Zen pose and the mind be refreshed. By this strength and refreshment the consciousness becomes perfectly clear. If one attains to *prajña* (knowledge) through this practice, then one's inner power becomes overwhelming, like that of

a dragon swimming up a waterfall or like that of a tiger standing at the edge of a yawning precipice. Even though the aspirant cannot yet attain to *prajña*, it comes into being after a time, just as fire is inflamed by the wind.

"You should adhere to the practice and beware of delusions. Remain ever watchful. After you have got used to the Zen pose, all kinds of obstacles may arise within you, such as for example phantoms or mental illusions. Whether you give in to such a current or resist it, you should always persist in right meditation. *Samādhi* cannot be influenced by any current.

"The nature of such fantasies is explained in detail in various books, for instance in the *Lankavatara Sutra*. You should definitely study such books, so as to be on your guard right from the beginning.

"When rising after meditation, you should slowly and gradually come back to normal consciousness and not get up hastily.

"Zen meditation is most important for us. If we do not succeed in it, we shall be without concentration and composure when it is most needed. If one endeavours to dive for the precious gem in a river, one must first let the waters become still. While there are waves, one cannot extract precious stones. But when the water is perfectly clear and calm the gems become visible of themselves.

"In the *Yuan-Chiao (En-Gaku) Sutra* it says: "The pure, unobstructed knowledge arises only out of the Zen posture."

"The *Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra* enjoins: 'Concentrate your heart in a quiet place and for many hours remain there motionless like the Himalayas!'

'Pass by mundane truths and enter sanctity. Invoke it in meditation in a quiet place.' By such power of concentration you may be able to enter death in a sitting posture, although it is generally believed that one has to lie on a bed or on the floor when dying. However, one may practise Zen for a life-time and yet remain untransformed. Thus the never ending *karma* hits him who practises Zen half-heartedly and not with firm faith. Man is tortured by the chains of birth and rebirth and is forced to go hither and thither in bondage unless he succeeds in developing this inner strength.

"Dear disciples, read this paper again and again. Redeem your Self and that of others! Attain as speedily as may be to *Samyak Sambodhi*, the excellent right Knowledge."

#### IV. *An Experience in a Zen Monastery.*

In 1946, at the end of the second World-War, the whole world was terribly tired. At that time I joined the University of Kyoto, in order to study ancient Indian philosophy. In the beautiful Kyoto with its many old temples, I began to study with great zeal. But already after one year I had lost interest in the lectures, as the Professor taught nothing but critique of the texts.

I am the son of a Zen priest and was born in a temple. In my childhood I had occasionally heard my father use the word '*satori*', which signifies Enlightenment in Zen. When I was still a child, unable to grasp the meaning of the word,

my father explained *satori* to me by a metaphor suitable for a child. "*Satori* is an immortal, very supple, violet coloured bird that ever brings fruits of power, wisdom and strength to men."

'*Tori*' means 'bird' in Japanese, but the word *satori* does not signify any bird.

"If you diligently practise *Zazen*, the *Satori* bird will come to you and bring you lovely, sweet fruit."

While yet a child I practised *Zazen* with enthusiasm, in the hope of attracting that bird. Since then I could never forget the word '*satori*.' Only the meaning of the word changed from bird to attainable Truth. While at the University, I now and then attended a lecture by Professor Himatzu on "The Formless Ego." Professor Himatzu was then Lecturer for Buddhist Religious Science at the Kyoto University. I was greatly interested in his expositions. He explained: "Usually one assumes that the ego of one man is in contradiction to that of another man. But the ego about which I want to speak is not separate from other egos. I call this ego the "Formless Ego," which is called the 'Original Man' in Zen Buddhism. He is unborn and immortal: To awaken to this Formless Ego is called *Satori*."

I loved this lecture and enjoyed it much more than the studies in the Department for Indian Philosophy. Professor Himatzu said: "This Ego is immortal, unborn, pure, immaculate, neither growing nor waning. It is beyond all pairs of opposites, beyond all objective forms. Therefore it is able to approach freely all objective forms. It is ever void of all forms and in its perfect freedom it assumes every form. It is called 'Absolute Freedom.' This is true Freedom that trans-

cends freedom and bondage, appearing sometimes as freedom and at other times as bondage. It is genuine freedom, beyond all opposites.

“By dwelling where subject and object are not separate, one can realize the Formless Ego within oneself. The essential thing in Zen is not to realize the Absolute, God or the Buddha, but to become the Formless Ego. There is a difference between being and knowing. By thinking one can never attain to the Formless Ego.”

It goes without saying that I had to give up the study of Philosophy in order to realize this Formless Ego, since I had actually since my childhood searched for *Satori*.

After completing my studies at the University, I at once entered a Zen Monastery. Life there differs greatly from the life of a University student. I found it extremely strenuous. The Zen Master gave me a *Koan* to solve of which I have already spoken. In her wonderful book ‘Zen, Japan and the West’, Miss Ingeborg J. Wendt writes about my own *Koan* question. She translates: “How can one hear the clapping, not of two hands but of one single hand?”

Throughout a whole summer term I tried in vain to hear this clapping. Twice daily, and during the *Sesshin* three times, I had to enter the room of the Zen Master to reply to the *Koan*. “Tell me, tell me at once!” the Master pressed me, I had no reply. Once he abused me and another time he hit me with his stick. Yet I was unable to perceive the clapping of a single hand. With tearful eyes I sat alone on the hill behind the monastery in the dead of night. I had lost my appetite and could not sleep at night. While begging, cleaning or cooking I constantly meditated on the *Koan*.

The summer term had passed without success. Even during the vacation the monk may enter the room of the Master to give the reply to his *Koan*, if in a sudden experience it seems to him true and unique. For more than a month I sought peace of mind in the monastery. Soon the winter term would start. Again life would become strenuous. As before I practised *Sanzen* twice or thrice daily but never with success.

From December 15th to 22nd is the most difficult *Zazen* week in the Zen Monastery. Since ancient times it has been called "the monk-killing *Zazen* week." For all the seven days the monk is forbidden to lie down. Except when going for his meals and to answer nature's calls the monk is not allowed to leave his seat. As before, the Zen Master inexorably pressed me for an answer to my *Koan*. Mercilessly he beat me with his stick: "You lazy monk! Get out!" Full of despair I sat day after day. My lips got cracked and bled, my whole body was numb from the cold wind, my consciousness became ever clearer. In one of the nights of the *Sesshin* I sat alone under the veranda to the large hall to protect myself from the icy cold. The sharp wind howled against the ceiling of the hall. Suddenly I was one with the howling of the wind, I let go of my body and mind. This was the clapping of one hand, I could hear it perfectly. I sat until daybreak unconscious, yet my consciousness was extremely clear. Someone shook me. On regaining normal consciousness, sky and earth looked very fresh to me. All sounds, the twittering of the birds were in reality nothing but the clapping of a single hand. Filled with great joy I entered the room of my Zen Master to enquire about my experience. For the first time he smiled gently and said: "When you become one with the



*Koan* you hear for the first time the clapping of one hand. The clapping that you experienced is called "Buddha Nature" which traverses the universe in ten directions, is formless, without clapping, acting here and now. It manifests as the seeing of the eye, the hearing of the ear, the speaking of the mouth, the walking of the foot, the grasping of the hand. It is without subject or object, lifeless and deathless."

I entirely understood the words of the Master and their significance. Then he continued. "Nevertheless, your experience belongs to the first stage in Zen. If one wished to remain on that level, one would pass into the dried-up, dead Zen. One must persist in one's quest so as to be liberated from that world as well."

Once again he gave me a *Koan*: "See through the clapping of one hand!" In this manner my Zen practice continued uninterruptedly for ten years.

To conclude I should like to mention the most important words of the Master Rinzai (Linci). Try yourself to shed light on these words! Once Rinzai said in an address: "In your red body the 'genuine man' who is detached from everything is already present. Look, look, you who cannot yet awaken to that 'genuine man.'" A monk asked: "What actually is this genuine man?" Rinzai descended from his seat, caught hold of the monk and said: "Speak, speak!" The monk hesitated and could not utter a word. Rinzai chased him away and replied himself: "What a dirty old scrubbing brush this 'genuine man' is!"

Then he traversed the big hall and returned to his room.

# Birthday Celebrations at Almora

KALI PRASAD

After an interval of ten years, Mataji's birthday is to be celebrated in Almora once again this time. The following is the last portion of an article describing in detail the celebrations in 1954, reprinted from the August 1954 issue ( Vol II/2 ) of *Ananda Varta*. We feel that even those of our readers who have been subscribers for more than ten years will enjoy reading again this very poetic and beautiful description by a European visitor of the night of the *Tithi puja* which marks the end and climax of the function.

The Managing Editor.

## The Night of May 21st.

What magnetic force beyond our ken attracted over two thousand people to the Ashram to keep an all-night vigil? An all-night vigil holds no prospect of feasting, of *prasāda*, as perhaps might attract many to what is conventionally considered an ordeal. Yet, this huge crowd of people from widely scattered parts of India came and sat silently for hours, awake, patient, completely absorbed, suffused with happiness, people from all walks of life, *sannyāsis*, *pandits*, children, rajas, business men, families, artists, beggars—pilgrims all on the route to the inner Kailash. *Kirtana* and *bhajanas* were sung throughout the night and a grotto was created out of pines and banana leaves on a stepped terrace. At three in the morning Mataji came out of Her room; She was radiant in white, a kind of minuscule fineness and perfection, wreathed in garlands. She mounted the steps and after briefly sitting surrounded by devotees, She lay down on a couch and was covered with a beautiful golden and



floral coverlet. Only Her forehead gleamed out of this robe of spring flowers and freshness, and Her black hair fell like a plume on the pillow.

Puja commenced and salvers of sweets laid out in rows on the steps were uncovered. Three *sannyāsis*, led by Sri Haribabaji Maharaj sat near Her like the Three Wise Men in the Adoration. For two hours the ceremony continued in a mood of intense exaltation. Yet there could hardly be anything more simple and undramatic. Almost no outward sign was manifested beyond Her recumbent figure. But here, within the black arena of invisible Himalayas Mataji lay in Her birth dream, the mystery of mysteries, Her brow alone marking Her presence like a face, like a mountain peak, inscrutable. This *murti* seemed like *Viṣṇu* asleep upon the Ocean of Bliss, dreaming of the universe, or *Queen Maya* dreaming of the birth of Lord Buddha, or *Devi*, immersed in the imponderable mystery of *sunya*, beyond creation and dissolution, birth and rebirth. Yet it was none of these things, for it was the essence of *Anandamayī*. And the assembled crowd, filled with *bhakti*, kept vigil for that. Whether the *pandits* may have called this *samādhi* or *susupti*, complete absorption in the causal *prakṛiti*, whatever the guess, nothing can either approach the full truth, or dissolve the reality of that surge of devotion which filled those assembled, and made them *as one*. For if, as is supposed, only the perfected *Yogi* can perceive one *Jiva* where before there was a whole world of many *jīvas*, here was an unvoiced awareness of that reality, lived for those few wondrous moments.

As the *pūjā* ended, everyone, still entirely absorbed by the moment, by the mystery of the Birth Day, processed

quietly, unhurriedly to the foot of the couch, there to *prānāma* and re-dedicate themselves.

As the last filed past, a new mystery was born, reborn, and Mataji awoke; laying aside the coverlet of flowers She walked forth into the morning in Her simple white robes. But now it seemed that one had never really seen Her before, so different She appeared to us, almost delicate, pale and beautiful as a full-moon in a blue day sky, with eyes utterly remote and serene, remote in that they seemed to embrace all, rather than any single person, to look beyond and to embrace that which abides deep within; but never in so close a communion with Her bhaktas as at that unforgettable moment.

That day there was feasting and singing of hymns, and discourse of the learned. In the night as I returned home I saw a single glow-worm ahead of me on the path, as if I had found myself being called to the attention of something within. My eyes then wandered and saw by contrast the distant flashes of a great Himalayan storm, and suddenly, from the direction of the hidden Nanda Devi, came a piercing bright light, and as straight as an arrow, serenely, with awesome, incalculable silent power a comet traversed the sky. It sped in a huge arc across the star-broken blackness piercing the brain, proceeding to some nameless distance, leaving behind it a long sparkling plume of fire — and vanished. And then a wind came rushing through the night, stirring and weaving through the pine groves, voice of the night, poised between the void of the unknown and the Light of a promise.

# The Mother's Call

PROF. BATUK NATH SHASTRI, M. A.

## Love for All - the One Lesson

The lesson of history is one with the teaching of the Scriptures—love for mankind and goodwill towards all. It is the core of Sri Chaitanya's tenet : the highest object of man's pursuit is love. The Yajurveda has the prayer : May all creatures look on me with a friend's eye, May I look on all creatures with a friend's eye. The Buddhist *Metta Sutta* holds up *Brahma-Vihara* as man's highest good in the words : "As a mother protects her son, and only son, by the sacrifice of her own life if need be, even so cherish amity and love towards all beings." Laotse said, "I choose to practise compassion in return for ill-doing, goodwill even towards the evil-minded." The gospel of Christ enounces not the rule of law but a dispensation of grace and charity. The sages of our times hold that a united world, mankind as one family, universal brotherhood and one sovereign world-state sum up the destiny of the race and will ensure its well-being.

## The Dual Pull

Human society today stands perilously poised between two contrary pulls - centripetal and centrifugal. On one side is the mentality typical of the atomic age—the outburst, ghastly and staggering—of narrow self-interest culminating in ruthless aggression, through global holocaust. On the other is the immense and unprecedented attempt of welding all mankind into one whole, under the idea : All men are

brothers and the whole world is my own country. The first ever tends to confine man within the cramping cell of the egoistic prison, the other leads forward along the line of the widening ego towards self-forgetting fulfilment by renouncement and merger in all-embracing unity.

### **Serenity and Harmony—the Need of All**

The problem before religion is how to bring peace and joy to the millions of mankind tugged by these two opposite trends, to give them the sense of belonging and worthwhile-ness, singleness of purpose and joy of fruitful endeavour. Tagore, our great poet, pointed out the goal ever before Indian manhood as fullness. Fullness he defined as the sense of oneness with the universe. This communion dissolves the ego-sense and makes one feel humble. Humility, he says, is a spiritual power. It is like the steady current of air. By its very gentleness it exceeds the force of a storm. A hurricane agitates and convulses a little space for a short while, but the gentle stream of air envelops the whole earth at all times. This sense of fullness is an elixir of the heart, a feeling of harmonious serenity. No doubt it shows itself at times in choicest spirits, even amidst the glitter of wealth, the satiety of a life of comforts, pleasures and luxuries. But the enormous masses of humanity—those who inhabit the outskirts of opulent habitations, who by hard work produce wealth and turn it over to society, who build mansions and themselves lodge in shacks and hovels, they view from afar the pomp and pageant of the men of success and power and so bear within themselves the gnawing sense of failure and frustration. They are the nameless uncounted ciphers of men and women. They have been through the ages the concern of the great souls

whom the world loves to honour. It is for their sake that these exalted spirits gave up hearth and home and wandered forth and became one with them by voluntarily embracing their miseries and lowly condition. And so they raised the worth and dignity of the common man and stirred the conscience of classes lapped up in a smug life and grown insensitive to the lot of their fellowmen.

### **Unity in the Atomic Age**

Hence the crying need of our age is an atmosphere of love and shared well-being, of peace and self-control which would unite mankind instead of letting it be torn by the rampant forces of passion and violence. Through population explosion space is fast shrinking and sustenance dwindling. Like grains of sand individuals are being forced apart and society atomised, making the age atomic in an unkind sense. This is poles apart from the Vedic prayer for oneness which runs—

May our motto be one, our meeting-place the same.  
May we be of one mind and our spirits work in  
unison !

What philosophers' stone, what balmy bliss can wipe off the dividing lines and charm away the seeds of dissension and help realize the longing for the universal man ? What rain of heavenly dew like a shower of heaven's grace may again turn the parched earth into a stretch of living green and stir man's spirit to fresh joy and ardour of life ?

### **The Onward Phase of Evolution**

Perhaps mankind longs today, naked and shivering, to be wrapped in the hem of love's garment, to feel the touch

of a healing hand, to hear the reassuring accents, to find meek tolerance as of the earth under our feet and a spirit of self-disregarding helpfulness and melting compassion, the exquisite sweetness of genuine sympathy. Anthropologists of our day speculate on the coming phase of evolution of the species in future and picture the traits in body and mind which the race will develop. They forecast how men would shape themselves in form and in manners, lay aside all that is stern and harsh, uncouth, aggressive, predatory and, these features fading away from their limbs and lineaments—they will exhibit the qualities and dispositions, soft and tender, comely and graceful, suave and delicate—all that bespeaks womanliness, the motherly heart, the attitude goddess-like. All that is red in tooth and claw, cruel, unsightly, disproportionate, hairy, fleshy, enormous in growth, unfeeling, rough and repulsively self-centred—which keeps apart and outside the pale of civilisation the aboriginal tribes in hills and jungles—will disappear like a nightmare of the past. And a new chapter in life's transformation will open, exhibiting refined thought, delicate artistry, mental aptitudes, meek and mild, subtleness of taste, all-round awareness and highest sensitiveness.

### **Needed - a Philosophy of Help and Cooperation**

The day seems to be done for the philosophy which has so long taught that human good and progress is best achieved through scramble and competition, tussle and combat. The time has come for the passing away of the modes of life—crazy for business, greedy for gain and accumulation, eager for mastery, self-sufficient, indifferent to right and justice. To light the path for mankind out of this dark past to his future destiny, are there not signs manifest of a new motherliness

emerging and awakening in life's arena? Do we not behold the auspicious jar and never-quenching lamp as at the installation of a deity? Some auguries of that coming glory seem to be appearing even amidst the oppressive glare and hubbub of a civilisation which revels in material goods, gigantic plants, vast industries. The majority of men with the unsatisfied hunger and thirst in their soul, under a sense of emptiness amidst affluence and creature comforts are wistfully turning towards the serenity and meditative raptness of bygone ages. In place of the dominance of power and opulence and high place, a life of luxury and general subservience to all that, man is growing impatient for a new spiritual climate, a new sense of values and new cult of equality and brotherhood. And the chime of accordant voices is heard from the ends of the earth. Recently the Primate of England remarked to the same effect: It is on the plane of spirituality that we can with great profit search for unity, less in the thoughts and formulations of the mind than in the depths of the soul and in actions which are controlled from thence.

### **Ananda Varta -- the Gospel of Motherly Inspiration**

By the tremendous success which man has achieved in probing the mysteries of external nature, he has astounded the world and shot up to the proportions of a Nuclear Giant. But in his moral nature enchained to primitive impulses he is still an ethical infant undeveloped in mental powers and puerile in the levity of his code of conduct. To cleanse the insight of this infant and to nourish it with spiritual sustenance, the one thing needful is the creation of a suitable atmosphere. Hence the age seems to yearn for the awakening of the power maternal. Does the new gospel of joy—



the *Ananda Vārtā* sound the sacred notes as on the conch-shell, does it shine with the effulgence of the lamp which is waved before the Icon? In the Veda the Acharya prays: "Even as the hungry offspring eagerly approach the mother, may Brahmacharins come unto me: Oh Almighty Dispenser! from all sides." Under the attraction of Motherly majesty, this prayer now seems to be realized in visible form. From all sides men and women—young and aged—hankering after the infinite and thirsting for beatific joy are gathering in the serene air, under the mild shade of the hermit-grove and are learning to be rapt in meditation, seated in the steady pose and absorbed in the stillness of *dhyāna*. They are coming together for the week-long vow, the practice of silence and self-control. The desire for a steady mind and a heart stilled in peace is growing even amongst the privileged classes reared amidst all the good things of the earth. The recital, continuous and complete, of sacred books throbbing with emotion and charged with noble thought, the collective chanting of sublime hymns are reviving the atmosphere of ascetic groves with their routine of scriptural reading even in great cities and the thriving countryside.

### **The new Climate of Self-Control & Meditative Devotion.**

The strict, austere devotion which marks the ritual of worship and sacrificial fire-offerings at holy seats and shrines is once again releasing the pent-up hidden springs of pious fervour and making them flow in ample stream. Above all, the lines of sectarian separation are fading away under the magic touch of a Mother's large heart and abounding affection for her children. For the Mother bestows her grace and



moves all so effectively to finest issues because of her sure insight into the special need of each. As is said in the Gita stanza :

“Even as people approach me with devoted heart but with diverse desires, so do I serve them. For it is my path, O son of Kunti, that men go along. Even as each resigns himself to my will, I fulfill his heart's wish.”

Those that have felt the delicious touch of the Mother's heart amidst the divergence of doctrines and worries and perturbations of the present are tasting the truth of these lines. For them life's savour is being purified from what is of the earth earthy and refreshed with the juice of immortal joy. The sweetness of adoration, the ecstasy of choral chanting and concerted hymn singing, the sublime inspiration of sermons and discourses are spreading through the country a new atmosphere, which moves from place to place like a flame of hallowed fire. Those who are coming in contact are elevated by the ennobling experience and those who are witnessing these scenes are in raptures over this manifestation of the perennial power of purity, austerity and renunciation. May this visible demonstration of Motherly power win glory evermore and convert the world into one unit.

# Modern Science And Indian Philosophy

DR. B. L. ATREYA. M. A., D. LITT.

It is surprising indeed that in spite of science being so much studied in Indian Universities, and in spite of popular scientific literature being so cheap and common, there has not been any serious, systematic and comprehensive attempt on the part of any Indian thinker to synthesize and correlate the discoveries of Modern Science with the doctrines of Indian Religion and Philosophy. Only a few references here and there are made by some of our writers to the doctrines of scientific philosophy such as we find in the works of Dr. Bhagavan Das and Dr. Radha Krishnan and others. We should not be satisfied with such meagre and occasional references. We need a more thorough and detailed attempt at correlation and synthesis of modern Science and Indian Philosophy, in which not only similarities but also differences will find due place. Our purpose should be not only to have the satisfaction that the conclusions of Indian Philosophy are corroborated by Western Science but also to correct and revise those of our conclusions which may not be found true to experience and in line with facts discovered by exact sciences, and to enrich our philosophy by incorporating within it more and more of the newly acquired knowledge.

We do not hold that Indian Philosophy is perfect and omniscient. There is much that it has to learn from modern science; much that it has to throw away as unscientific and therefore unacceptable; much that has to be altered and improved upon in the light of modern science, and much that

needs detailed study on a scientific basis. On the other hand, there is much that science needs to learn from Indian Philosophy in order to completely understand human life and experience. There are indeed, many points of contact between various systems of Indian philosophy and various branches of modern science. It is better wisdom to compare notes and revise opinions. The followers of the Charvaka philosophy can very well sit at the table of a modern believer in scientific materialism and get inspiration from him and acquire greater confidence. The Vaisheshika atomism may compare notes with that of modern Chemistry. The modern physicist and an Indian believer in the Samkhya Prakriti may delight in having come nearer each other. The modern logician and the Indian Naiyayika can very well learn from each other. The Yoga of India and Psychical Research of the West can help each other very much. The monism of the *Upanishads* finds great support in the scientific philosophy of the present day. To draw the attention of Indian philosophers in this direction, we would briefly refer to the most important conclusions of some of the well-known branches of science, namely, Physics, Biology, Psychology and Psychical Research. These are the basic sciences dealing with matter, life, mind and spirit, respectively.

### Physics

Apart from being an enquiry into the nature and relations of physical objects and events, physics investigates the ultimate nature and structure of the physical world, and, as such, it comes in close contact with the domain of philosophy.

According to modern physics, in contradistinction to Indian opinion accepted in almost all systems of its philo-

sophy, all the qualitative differences of things can be well reduced to quantitative ones. The real world, apart from our perception of it, possesses only quantitative distinctions, which can be measured in mathematical terms. Hence physics confines itself to the quantitative relations only. Heat, light and sound are all now regarded as different forms of motion. Heat is a kind of agitative motion of the molecules of a body. Sound is a motion in the form of waves in air, water, or some other medium. Light is a wave motion in a much finer and denser medium of space (called ether by some). The intensity of heat depends on the degree of agitation of the molecules; the intensity of sound on the amplitude of the waves, and its pitch on their length. In the same way the intensity of light depends on the amplitude and its colour on the frequency of the waves.

Chemical analysis of things stops at 92 different sorts of elements which exist in the form of atoms or minutest particles which can neither be further divided nor qualitatively reduced to those of other elements or to those of some common underlying substance. This view resembles that of the Vaisheshika school of Indian Philosophy with this difference that according to the latter there are only 4 elements existing in atomic form. Physics has gone much deeper into the problem of ultimate constituents of the physical world than Chemistry and has discovered that atoms themselves are structures built up of still much smaller particles which do not qualitatively differ from the atom of one element to that of another. It is due to the number of these particles, called electrons, when charged with negative electricity, and protons when charged with positive, and their arrangement in the

atoms that there are differences in the weight and characteristics of the atoms of different elements. It is now only the number of electrons that differentiates the atom of one element from that of another. For example the atom of hydrogen has only one electron within it and that of uranium, the heaviest of all elements, has 92. The nature of electrons and protons and their mutual relation have been subjected to tough investigation and physics has come to certain definite conclusions about them. Electrons are nothing but negative charges of electricity. Sometimes they appear as particles, at other times as waves. In fact they share the characteristics of both waves and particles. To neutralise the negative charges in the form of electrons there are equal numbers of positive charges (positrons) concentrated on a minute nucleus at the centre of the atom. The relation of electrons to the protons at the centre within an atom is conceived as similar to that of the planets to the sun within a solar system. The atom is a miniature solar system in which electrons (negative charges of electricity) revolve with great speed round the proton (positive charges of electricity concentrated at the centre) like planets revolving round the sun. Thus the ultimate bricks of the physical structure of the world are, according to modern physics, electric charges, and not atoms of "dead" or "inert" matter which the materialism of the last century used to believe. The ultimate reality as known to physics is electrical energy. What this electrical energy which manifests itself both as a particle and as a wave ultimately is, the physicist at present cannot answer. He deals with its mathematical specifications, the laws of its behaviour, in what he calls a 'configuration space', which is not the space known to us. The behaviour of this energy is no longer in-

telligible in mechanical terms. The quantum theory of Max Planck, applied by Niels Bohr to the behaviour of electrons, has introduced a sort of "indeterminacy" in the world of physics. The radiation of energy from an electron is not continuous but is in the form of *quanta* or jerks. The electron does not radiate energy (light) when it is rotating round the proton in a particular orbit. It does so only when it jumps from one orbit to another. The amount of energy radiated by the electron jumping from one orbit to another is a quantum. But no reason could be given in terms of the laws of nature known to physics why and when the electron jumps from one orbit to another. Perhaps it has a "will" of its own which it exercises "freely". The "matter" of physics, it appears, comes very close to the "*Prakriti*" of the Samkhya and "*Shakti*" of the Vedanta schools of Indian philosophy.

This idea is further strengthened by another discovery of physics, namely, identity of mass and energy. Formerly "matter" (mass) and "energy" were regarded as different. Now, thanks to the electric theory of atoms and to the Relativity theory of Einstein, matter and energy are convertible and ultimately identical. By heating a body will increase its energy and also its mass. A body which radiates energy in the form of heat or light loses thereby its mass. The sun is losing its mass at the rate 360,000 million tons every day by radiating heat and light. The mass of a body is increased by increasing its velocity. The process of conversion of mass into energy and vice versa are going on in the universe everywhere, the total amount of mass-energy probably remaining the same (the law of conservation of energy).

Another conclusion of modern physics which may interest Indian philosophers, because it has been held in India

since long, is that the material universe is finite. The actual volume of space known to the physicist is finite, although unbounded. The finite space, again, is not at a standstill. It is continually expanding, i. e. the circumference of the physical world is lengthening, and lengthening by leaps and bounds. Consequently the distances between various nebulae are fast increasing. And the greater the distance between any two nebulae the faster is the speed at which they are receding from each other. This idea corresponds to the idea of *Brahmanda* ( the universe as a growing and expanding egg ) of Indian philosophy.

The idea of *Pralaya* also finds a parallel in the Entropy theory of modern physics. It has been discovered that the organised form of energy which constitutes the world has a tendency towards a more and more disorganised and less and less available form. The degree of this disorganisation is called entropy. The entropy of the world is continually increasing and there may come a time when it reaches its greatest point. Then there will be no physical universe.

These are some of the very important discoveries of modern physics which have a great bearing on philosophy. There has recently been much speculation in Western philosophy as to their implications. They are very well discussed in the famous works of Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir James Jeans and of their critics. The former think that modern physics leads to an idealistic and spiritual view of the universe and the latter repudiate these inferences. We may only point out, that physics at present leads us far away from the usual type of materialism and leaves much scope for interpreting the universe in other terms, for it is now ad-

mitted that the physicist deals with the behaviour rather than with the ultimate nature of that aspect of reality which is revealed to us in the physical world. The world presents many more aspects too, such as biological, psychological, and and spiritual. The philosopher is interested in understanding the entire experience which reveals not only an objective world with all these aspects but also another factor, namely, the subject which is beyond the scope of all sciences based on objective observation. It is therefore often remarked that physics deals with abstractions and not with the concrete reality. First we abstract an objective world from the total experience, and study it apart from the subjective aspect; then we abstract quantitative aspects from the objective world and deal exclusively with them in physics.

### *Biology*

Biology studies in details another important and well known aspect of the objective world, namely, life, and has made some very interesting and important discoveries which have a great bearing on philosophy in general and on Indian Philosophy in particular. No philosophical thinker of the present age can afford to keep his eyes shut to them. He has to correlate them with and find a place for them in his philosophical outlook.

Biology has discovered that there are some very essential differences in living beings and non-living ones. The most outstanding characteristics of the former may be pointed out here. Living beings are organisms of very intricate structure maintaining a unity and identity of their own; they tend to persist in spite of incessant changes happening within their structure; the colloidal protoplasm of which they and their



various tissues are made, undergoes a continuous process of down-breaking and up-building; each form of life has a specific nature of its own, which it does not share with others; each organism originates from another; grows and develops to a mature form and then multiplies by giving birth to others of the same kind; the behaviour of all living organisms somehow retain the effect of their past behaviour on themselves; and they evolve into other types in course of time; life originates from life only. "Spontaneous generation" of life has not been yet observed or demonstrated. How life must have originated first is still a matter of unsatisfactory speculation.

It is quite evident that most of these characteristics of living beings cannot be successfully explained in terms of mechanical physics and chemistry, although some scientists are still striving after that ideal. This difficulty has given rise to a number of schools of explanation in biology. A brief reference may be made to some of them here. "Descriptive Naturalism" does not want to go beyond what is actually observed and experimentally verified. It therefore keeps to the level of mere description of biological facts and does not dare transcend them in its explanation. It tries to avoid the question "why"? Some biologists, who may be classed as "Methodological Vitalists" are, however, certain that Biology cannot do without using some such concepts as 'life', 'mind', 'struggle', 'appetite', 'interest', 'purpose', and 'will', in their explanation of living behaviour; in spite of their being not observable; for vital phenomena elude description and explanation in mechanical and chemical terms. Different and distinguished from these are biologists like Hans Driess, who are called "Vitalists" (or purposive vitalists) in the full sense of the term. They do not hesitate to postulate an "organi-

sing and directive agency", a "vital force", an "entelechy", "elan vital", "psychoid" or any other "x" behind the vital phenomena responsible for all characteristics of organic life. Then there are those who are called "Emergent Evolutionists" or "Levelists" according to whom living creatures certainly possess some important and essential characteristics which are not present in the matter of which they are formed. At every stage of the evolutionary process of the world, some wholly new properties have emerged. With the appearance of life, the process of evolution attained a higher level than that at which it was before. The world process looks like a ladder of various levels of creative synthesis of graded complexity found in atoms, compounds, organic cells, organisms and minds. In the case of each greater complexity, some new qualities have emerged, which were not present in the previous and less complex group of factors. This theory is pregnant with many philosophical implications. Indian philosophy, especially the Sankhya and Vedanta schools, which believe in a kind of evolutionary process of principles in the manifested world, has to take note of this as well as of other biological theories and bring about a correlation with them.

One of the greatest discoveries of biology, which has had a far reaching effect on almost all departments of human knowledge, is that all of our present species of living creatures, which were formerly regarded as having been created as such by God, have slowly and gradually evolved from some simpler, rudimentary and few species of much earlier times than we usually know in history. This fact is established on the following grounds: In all the varieties of living beings, both animals and plants, we find only a few fundamental plans of

structure; many creatures have useless vestigial organs which bear traces of the path over which the species to which they belong must have travelled; the embryo of the human baby passes through many specific stages which correspond to those through which the species must have passed according to the theory of evolution; in going back to the very ancient past which is recorded only in the rocks of the crust of the earth which has borne on its bosom the now dead and gone creatures, we have discovered a more or less complete series of fossil remains which indicate a gradual process of development in the structure of plants and animals. The credit of this theory of Evolution of the Species goes to Charles Darwin. The evolution of species, according to Darwin, occurs in the same way as varieties occur in the same species. The present species are a result of a long process of accidental variations and their selection, transmission and retention. Nobody knows why certain variations occur in some members of the existing species. Having once occurred, they place the individuals either in advantage or disadvantage over others in the struggle for existence which prevails in the living world. These variations which help the individuals in the great struggle for life are not only retained and improved upon by use and exercise, but are also transmitted to the next generation through heredity enabling it to survive better.

This leads to the question of heredity, which has now-a-days become a very complicated question in biology. Indian philosophy which believes in the rebirth of an individual has to make a thorough study of the facts and theory of heredity and to correlate the two. Here are some of the facts known to biology with regard to heredity. Individually acquired traits or changes that come through the use or disuse of

various parts of the body, or through the effect of climatic changes, are not inherited by the next generation. Only such changes which effect the germ-plasm are likely to be inherited. What effects the germ plasm and how, has not yet been well-determined. The theory of Orthogenesis holds that the mutations or inheritable changes take place in accordance with some inner urge or drive and not through any external influence. Some experiments in recent years have, however, demonstrated that mutations can be produced artificially by chemical effects and by X-ray, apart from the question as to what sort of changes are transmitted by heredity, the means and process of heredity have also become very interesting questions of biology since the recent revival of what is known as the Mendelian theory of heredity. As early as in 1865 Abbot Johann Mendel discovered that the characters of parents are transmitted to the offspring in distinct units. But all the character units of both the parents are not manifested in the next generation. Some of them become perceptible in the first generation, and others in later generations and some remain dormant. A definite ratio of manifested and unmanifested traits is maintained in each successive generation. Recently biologists have also found a physiological basis for heredity in the form of extremely minute "genes" or "factors" which are present within the chromosomes of the gametes or germ cells of each individual. These factors pass from one generation to another in the form of different permutations and combinations. Some of them find expression and are called dominant and others which remain dormant are called recessive. Which genes or combinations of genes are recessive and which dominant is very difficult to answer. ( to be continued )

# Old Diary Leaves

ATMANANDA

In the last issue of 'Ananda Varta' all I had noted on what Mataji had said about doing *pranāma* was copied from back numbers of 'Ananda Varta' and put together. This was found useful and interesting by our readers and it has been suggested that other subjects should be dealt with in a similar manner. It seems appropriate to call this 'Old Diary Leaves.'

## I

### Mataji and Children

Mataji calls all children Her friends. Children no less than grown-ups adore Her. I know some youngsters who can never sit still for five minutes, yet they love to go to see Mataji and as if fascinated, sit quietly before Her for an hour or two without showing any restlessness. It is of course true that Mataji gives them a lot of attention. She presents them with garlands and flowers that have been offered to Her and whenever possible with sweets and fruits. She laughs and jokes with them, while at the same time She takes them very seriously. She asks even small children of five or six to think of God. "You are my friend, aren't you? Then will you listen to me? Are you willing to do something for this friend of yours? All right, be careful to remember what I am going to ask you !

"First of all, as soon as you wake up in the morning do *pranāma*, bow down to the ground before God, pray to Him to make you a good boy or girl and say : 'Lord, I do not know where you are, grant that I may find you !' At night

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before going to sleep do *pranāma* again, and if you have done anything wrong during the day, ask God to let you do better the next day,

“The second thing is : try to obey your parents and teachers.

“Thirdly : study well ! Give your mind to your lessons and endeavour to master them.

“Fourthly : always do your utmost to speak the truth;

“and Fifthly : laugh and play, run and jump to your heart’s content; and if you carry out the first four things I have asked of you, there is no harm in being a little naughty as well.”

To bigger children Mataji frequently says : “How much time can you spare for me ? Don’t reply in a hurry; think it over and see how much time you can give me. Five minutes daily or ten ? Not only once in a way but every day for the rest of your life. All right, for those five minutes think of God. Choose the time of day which is most convenient. If you can sit still and be by yourself, so much the better. But if this is not possible, whether lying, standing or walking, think of Him—lying in bed or whilst having your bath—but never give it up. These few minutes of every day belong to God, although you may be travelling by train or bus, under all circumstances.”

An American couple wrote to Mataji. They had heard about Her from a devotee who had recently stayed with Mataji and had shown them Her photos, and tape recordings of Her voice. Their letter contained snaps of their three

small daughters, seated in meditation in the lotus pose. One of these little girls felt so attracted to Mataji that she declared, her one and only wish for her forthcoming seventh birthday was to go and meet Mataji. Since it was impossible for the parents to take their child to India, they requested Mataji to send a birthday message to their daughter. They also mentioned that she seemed to be specially fitted for the spiritual life and had already declared that she would get married to none save God. Mataji replied : "How beautiful the pictures of my friends are ! Immersed in meditation, moving indeed to look at."

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

After some time, the child's parents wrote again : ".....Our daughter told us that she had indeed met Mother during her birthday meditation. She told us this in a matter of fact fashion."

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### On the Importance of Right Education

Again and again one can hear Mataji point out that most of the difficulties people experience throughout their lives and much of the chaos in the world today are due to lack of right education. If the first of the four Ashramas, namely the *Brahmacharya Ashrama* is observed as it should



be, man can face life without the fear of being crushed by adversity, for the sublime purpose of human existence will have firmly been fixed in his mind. If the growing child, the adolescent, thoroughly understands that man's true vocation is to find himself, if he realizes that all knowledge is only a preparation for *Brahmavidyā*, the knowledge of Reality; if at the same time he is taught how to control body and mind by living the simple, frugal and disciplined life of a *Brahmchārī*, so that all his energies may be available for the quest that alone is worthy of man, he will have learnt the art of living. Whether he chooses the shortcut and, renouncing all worldly attachment, straight away takes *sannyāsa* or whether he first passes through the stages of the householder (*grihastha*) and of the anchorite (*vānaprastha*), the path to Self-realization and Immortality is open to him.

Just as we are bound to inhale the air about us, we constantly absorb the subtle influences from our surroundings. No man can remain entirely unaffected by the contacts he makes. A child is far more sensitive than an adult. It is therefore important that the young should be in the company of men and women who have dedicated their lives to the Supreme quest, that their pliable minds should be moulded by books of wisdom rather than by cinemas and light novels. A boy or girl who has once deeply felt the necessity of aspiring after Truth and Enlightenment, who has been made to feel how treacherous and comparatively unimportant are wealth, name, fame, brilliant career, etc. will come back to the ideals that in youth have been engrained, even though he or she should deviate from them for a time.

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## Matri Lila

15th JANUARY—3rd APRIL, 1964.

In the last issue of *Ananda Varta* we already reported about the Bhagavata Saptah that was held in our ashram at Agarpara, on the banks of the Ganges, from 15th to 22nd January. On the 23rd Mataji left for Rajgir where she remained for two weeks. Mataji kept good health and was in an excellent mood in that quiet and holy place, where Lord Buddha had spent much time. According to the *Srimad Bhagavata*, Sri Krishna also is said to have been to Rajgir. Mataji visited all the famous spots in the vicinity and used to go for walks almost daily in the *Venuvan* bamboo grove, where Lord Buddha is supposed to have dwelt. Only a small party was with Mataji, among them some *bhaktas* from Calcutta, also a young American *sādhaka* and a German novelist.

On February 7th Mataji alighted in Varanasi where she spent a day and a night. On February 9th she reached Vrindaban. There she attended a function in Uriababa's Ashram, held in his honour on February 11th and on the 12th morning was present when a marble statue of the Babaji was revealed. Mataji used to go every evening to Uriababa's Ashram during Sri Haribabaji's satsang and also graced with her presence the Bhagavata Saptah that was celebrated there in memory of Sri Uriababaji, with Sri Akhandanandaji expounding in Hindi. Another Bhagavata Saptah was held in our own Ashram from 18th to 28th February. On the

18th *Vāsant Panchami* was celebrated by *Saraswati Pūjā*. This year, being a leap year, there are two opinions about festivals. While in Haribaba's Ashram *Sivaratri* and *Holi* were celebrated in February, these festivals were observed in our Ashram only in March. On February 26th evening Sri Haribabaji's birthday was celebrated in our Ashram, on the 27th *Holi* and on the 28th *Mahārāsālilā* was performed in great style in the open space near Mataji's house. Many *mahātmās* attended. Almost daily devotees from Delhi came by car or train for Mataji's *darśana*.

On February 29th Mataji and her whole party proceeded to Hardwar. Mataji motored to Delhi, resting in our Ashram for a couple of hours and then drove to the station where she gave *darśana* to an enormous crowd of people. On the way to the station she paid a short visit to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the request of his daughter.

On March 1st Mataji arrived in Hardwar where she stayed mostly in Baghat House, Kharkhari, but off and on also visited our Ashram "*Santiniketan*" at Kankhal. On the 4th morning she went by car to Kishenpur, returning again on the 5th evening. For a week after that she stayed every night at Sri J. K. Birla's house "*Santi Nivas*," a solitary place 2 or 3 miles on the road to Rishi Kesh. However, she daily motored to Baghat House and gave *darsana* there. On the 9th she paid another flying visit to the Kishenpur Ashrams.

On the 12th March *Sivaratri* was celebrated by the usual feast for 36 hours and four *Pūjās* with *Kīrtana* in between throughout the night. The attendance was not as

large as in former years, since many had observed *Sivaratri* already in February, but the function was none the less beautiful and solemn.

A party of *sannyāsis* and *brahmachārīs* of Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, arrived soon after the first *pūjā* had started and performed *kirtana* between the first and second *pūjā*. There was hardly a day during Mataji's stay at Hardwar when visitors from Sivananda Ashram did not come for Mataji's *darśana*. Mataji remained present in the hall throughout the *Sivaratri* night, except for two hours when she retired to her room. In the small hours she herself led the *kīrtana*, playing the cymbals at the same time.

On March 16th two functions began simultaneously, each performed for the benefit of a deceased devotee by their respective families. One, a *Bhagavata Saptah*, that took place in the hall was completed on March 24th. Pandit Srinath Śāstri of Vrindaban officiated, reciting in Sanskrit every morning and expounding in Hindi every afternoon for about four hours in his lucid and delightful manner.

The other function was a *yajña* held for five days, ending on the 21st. For the *yajña* a special structure had been erected on a platform near the Siva Temple in the courtyard of Baghat House. A *yajña* is a rite of oblations offered into a sacrificial fire which represents the mouth of the deity. A *yajña* has for its purpose either the propitiation of any particular deity or of the *Paramātmā* Himself. Fire is the symbol of the *Brahman*. Some regard it also as the symbol of the knowledge of Reality since it burns up illusion. In this particular *yajña* one lakh of oblations were offered with the *Gāyatrī Mantra*, a number of pandits officiating.

In ancient times Rishis, Munis and Kings used to perform quite frequently *yajñas* that continued for years together. The fire sacrifice was regarded as a powerful means to achieve any worldly or transcendental purpose. In recent times however, the science on which the *yajña* is based, although preserved in the Śāstras, is known only to the few. Moreover, the purity necessary in order to carry out such a rite effectively is hardly to be found any where.

It may not be out of place to relate here something of the history of the sacrificial fire that has been preserved in our Ashram with great care for the last 38 years.

In 1926, while Mataji lived in Dacca, Kalīpuja was performed at Divali in her presence. It was a most extraordinary *pūjā*, during which many supernatural events took place.\* Very often, a fire sacrifice marks the end and completion of a religious function, such as for instance our yearly *Samyam Mahavrata*, a *Bhagavata Saptah* etc. All the proceedings of the function are thereby finally dedicated to God. After the above mentioned *Kali Puja* too, a *yajña* was performed. Like the Puja, the *yajña* was also very special. At Mataji's own suggestion there was no '*Pārnāhuti*' (last oblation that completes the sacrifice) and the fire was not allowed to be extinguished. When, after the *yajña* everyone had left with the exception of Didi (Gurupriya Devi), her father and her two brothers, Mataji asked Didi to put the live coals into a vessel and bring them to her. Mataji took the vessel and shaking the fire, remarked "Wait and see. The fire of this *yajña* will be converted into the fire of a *mahāyajña*." Nobody then

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\* See 'Ananda Varta,' Vol VII/3, pp. 144-150 and Vol. VIII/1, pp. 45-51.

understood the meaning of this statement. But when 21 years later, namely in January 1947 a *mahāyajña* was started in our Varanasi Ashram, which lasted for full three years, the significance of Mataji's words became clear. The first person who volunteered to guard the fire after Mataji had made the memorable remark was Didi's father, the then Civil Surgeon of Dacca, Dr. S. Mukherji, who later became Swami Akhandanand. He kept the fire intact for nearly five months. It was arranged that oblations should be offered into the fire every morning. After the inauguration of the Dacca Ashram, the Brahmacharis there were entrusted with the care of the fire. Once, on leaving Dacca, Mataji showed them some special rite by which to relight the fire in case it should by accident go out. While Mataji was at Adinath, *Agnideva*, the fire god, all of a sudden appeared to her in the shape of a fiery wave. Then again, when Ma stayed at Calcutta, *Agnideva* appeared before her as a flame. In both cases it was later verified that this had occurred at the exact time when the fire at Dacca had by mistake been allowed to go out. In this manner, although the sacred fire went out physically, its subtle counterpart at once reverted to Mataji, and thus in one way, it was preserved without interruption. The fire was then divided into two or three portions so as to make sure that it would not be extinguished. One portion was installed in the Vindhyaachal Ashram, in a specially erected small building. Later, when Dacca became Pakistan, the fire, together with the images of Annapurna and Kali, were transferred to the Varanasi Ashram. The food that is offered in the Annapurna Temple is always cooked on that same sacred fire.

The *Savitri Mahayajña* that was performed at our Varanasi Ashram from 1947-1950 was of a magnitude, quite extraordinary in modern times, carried out with meticulous care by specially chosen Brahmacharis under Mataji's personal supervision. For the end and climax of the function a great number of prominent Mahatmas from all over India were invited and many came. It was indeed a unique occasion never to be forgotten by anyone who had the privilege to attend. Not a few are of the opinion that a *yajña* of this quality has not been achieved since Vedic times. The chief priest of the *yajña*, who faithfully attended to his duty throughout the three years, Sri Nepal Brahmachari, then performed his *viraja homa* (the fire by which a man is supposed to renounce everything before taking *Sannyāsa*) and thence became Swami Narayananda Tirth.

Once, when Mataji was asked about the actual purpose of the great *yajña* at Varanasi, she replied, "This *yajña*--so I hear--is performed for the love of Him who is the one Beloved of men, beasts, trees, plants, flowers--in fact of every living beings belonging to the universe, performed for the love of Him who can never cause harm to anyone or anything. Therefore, who will reap the benefit of this celebration? Can you tell? There is no particular motive or set purpose behind it, surely not! When there are clouds in the sky, what happens? It rains. Who profits by it? Everyone indiscriminately....."†

\* It is described in detail in Bengali and Hindi in the book "*Akhand Mahayajña*" by Sri Gurupriya Devi.

† See Ananda Varta, Vol. IV 4, p. 312.



In 1961 a portion of the sacred fire was brought to Hardwar when on *Sivaratri* day three Brahmacharis of our Ashram were initiated into *Naisthik Brahmācharya*. For two full years they had to remain in Hardwar, their daily routine including the performance of *Havan* (sacrifice) into this fire on which they would prepare their meal. The fire has since remained at Hardwar as well as at Varanasi and last year a portion was installed in our Ashram at Agarpara as well.

As a rule, when performing a *yajña*, the fire is lit by rubbing two pieces of wood against each other, as prescribed in the *Sāstra*. This 16th March, when the *yajña* at Baghat House was to be started, the priest intended to ask Mataji whether the fire should be lit in the traditional manner or taken from the sacred fire preserved since 1926. Mataji's room happened to be closed and he could not contact her. He, therefore, decided on his own to use the sacred fire. So far, this fire had never been worshipped for any particular purpose (*sakāma*) but only for the love of God (*niṣkāma*). Mataji would have therefore advised the priest to light a new fire. But evidently it was God's will that the sacred fire should serve in this case also for the uplift of the world.

In these days of Western education and modern science people are apt to think lightly of rites like *yajñas*, *havanas* etc. However, we are convinced that none of Mataji's movements and actions are without profound significance and that they invariably are designed to promote the highest good of all. True, it may not always be easy for us to understand the importance of the various rites and functions performed in our Ashrams, but there can be no doubt that

whatever happens within the orb of Mataji's influence is bound to bring us nearer to the ultimate Goal of human existence.

The atmosphere during those two functions of Hardwar was quite incomparable, apt to lift everyone out of wordly cares and petty considerations and worries. It must have left a lasting impression on everyone present.

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Mataji suddenly left Hardwar on the 24th evening for Calcutta. Didima, Sri Gurupriya Devi and most of Mataji's party remained at Hardwar. After a stay of six days in Calcutta, Mataji resumed her return journey to Dehradun on the 31st evening. She halted for one night in the Varanasi Ashram and reached Rae Bareilly on the 2nd afternoon. On the 3rd evening Mataji was taken to Lucknow by car where she gave *darshan* to many devotees in the house of Sri H. C. Banerjee, a Railway official, and then boarded the train to Dehradun, alighting there on the 4th morning.

Didima's ( Sri Swami Muktananda Giri's ) *Sannyāsa Utsava* is to be celebrated on the 13th April in the Kishenpur Ashram. From April 15th to 23rd a *Bhagavata Saptah* will be held in our *Sadhan Ashram*, Jakhan, Dehradun. Mataji's birthday is going to be celebrated this year in Almora from May 2nd to May 30th.