

# Ananda Vartā

*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

Become drinkers of nectar, all of you—drinkers of the  
wine of immortality. Tread the path of immortality, where  
no death exists and no disease.

Action directed towards God is alone action—all else  
is worthless, non-action, activity of the path of death. To  
become absorbed in *Sva kṛiyā*, the action that ends in Self-  
revelation, is man's duty as a human being.

Man appears to be the embodiment of want. Want is  
what he thinks about and want indeed is what he obtains.  
Contemplate your true being—or else there will be want,  
wrong action, helplessness, distress and death.

Only you exist, you and you alone. Truly, you are  
contained in everything. Again, you are indeed THAT  
Itself. In all infinity is He and no other—I alone am.

*There* also one obtains a pension. The pension you  
earn in this world lasts only as long as you live, while that

pension never ends. By what grace of His such a pension is granted is impossible to tell. If anything is to be desired at all, one should desire this Grace.

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To cry out to Him is never in vain. So long as no response is received the prayer must be continued. It is but the Self that calls to Itself, and none other than the Self that realizes Itself. By ceaseless prayer He who is whole (*akhandā*) is found. One's own Self (*Ātmā*), the Life of one's life, the Beloved of one's heart is the one to be eagerly sought. How many times have you not come into the world, craving and experiencing its fleeting joys and sorrows. The prayer, the invocation of Him, by which the opposites of renunciation and enjoyment are blotted out, this invocation has to become most dear.

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## Teaching without Words

ARNAUD DESJARDINS

( Translated from French )

Why not state it plainly right at the beginning : from the first day that I met Ma Anandamayi I have had the conviction that I was not in the presence of a human being, however extraordinary, but of a Being of an altogether different order. This happened in September 1959. Since then I have stayed with Ma in 1961, 1962, 1963 and also in 1964, & 65 and every time I have again felt equally certain about this fact. How is one to describe this stupendous impression ? The words 'divine' and 'supernatural' come to my mind. But I falter before the mystery which they represent and hardly dare use them.

I am a European with a Christian upbringing engaged in my profession and family life. Apart from a few colloquial words, I do not understand either Hindi or Bengali, and Mataji does not speak English. With the exception of about one hour in all of conversations with her that I was granted with the help of interpreters, I have thus never understood what she said or replied to questions. And yet have I for her sake undertaken four journeys to India and spent eight months close to her, sometimes under rather difficult conditions. This proves the power of her influence even over one to whom the Hindu tradition in which she is rooted is foreign.

For years the photos of Sri Ramana Maharshi have—for me as well as for many others in Paris—been a real teaching. A few minutes of attentive silence in front of his picture—and his sublime look would teach me more than the reading of the best book. (I am speaking of the only real knowledge, the one which transforms those who acquire it.)

I have never missed the opportunity of meeting a Frenchman who has had his *darśana*. It is through these living witnesses that I conceived the overwhelming desire—more powerful than all other desires—to meet a Sage, a liberated Being, one who has realized his Self, a *Jivanmukta*.

I expected infinitely much from this meeting, and the discovery of Mataji has certainly not disappointed me. Since then I travelled to Kanhangad to be with Swami Ramdas and Krishnabai. Those also were luminous days of intense living. The *rajasic* and *tamasic* impressions of Paris have not been able to wipe out the cherished memory of those days. But 'Papa'\* spoke English and his replies, his parables and remarks, so full of humour, would give to the ever insatiable mind the only valuable sustenance. The part that Swami Ramdas played in the lives of so many in the west can be explained even to our modern mentality, enslaved though it be by rational logic.

What, on the other hand, appears to me most amazing is the function of a Master, of a spiritual preceptor that Mataji has taken on towards a French visitor who has been and truly remains her pupil. Above all I should say she has gradually made me understand the meaning of the Gospels and of the message of Christ. Thanks to Mataji, the word of Jesus has now for me become a word of Life. And she also has opened for me the door to that universal treasure-house called '*Bhagavad Gita*' and has made me discover Sri Krishna.

Nothing can be further removed from the life at Paris which I lead, working for the cinema and the television, than the atmosphere of Mataji's Ashrams. Hindu orthodoxy, the observance of caste rules, the importance attached to rites and ceremonies may seem to have nothing whatsoever in common with the problems that confront modern man in

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\* Swami Ramdas.

the worldly and materialistic life of a European metropolis. Nevertheless, I can bear witness to the fact that the teaching of Ma, even though it has been communicated without words, has completely transformed my life in Paris. Intellectually she has given me the conviction that a metaphysical perspective exists that is unique and universal, a 'Philosophia Perennis' that teaches us that all our problems have already been solved although we are not aware of it : "He is all in all, He alone is." But she also teaches us that Realization must be all-embracing. However far away I may feel from her *ashrams*, from the purity of those white robes, from the beauty of the *kirtans*, amidst the violence, the contradictions and disturbances of professional life in Paris, Mataji or at least what she stands for is always with me, within me. And I remember the famous words : "*Kurukshetra dharmakshetra...*" and also : "Act in the play of the world" ( Yoga Vasista ) and I know who is the doer and who is not.

It seems to me that for foreigners the relationship between the master and his disciple is the most interesting feature of Hinduism at the present time. That some people think that the entire significance of their lives has changed because they have had the *daršana* of Ramana Maharshi, Ramdas or Ma Anandamayi is a certainty which can neither be proved nor contradicted. One may verify the recounting of a miracle; one may—in the name of Christian orthodoxy—be surprised to hear Beings other than Christ say : 'The Father and I are one'; one may be flabbergasted at the social phenomenon which the glory of a woman represents who does nothing else but teach us to seek God. But the shock of her gaze and the meaning of the slightest of her gestures is a personal experience. Those who have seen have believed. And those who have understood the words of Life Eternal have taken to the Path.

What ally does Ma's Realization find in us that vibrates in tune with her ? At what depth of our being are we touched ? All those whose experiences I have compared with



mine have had the same impression of certainty. That is how it is and nothing is to be added. All the rest has always been conditioned by 'buts' and 'ifs', by 'moreovers' and 'thens.' Face to face with the Master there is only certainty and clarity and that extraordinary experience of a life beyond time, which liberates from all fear. Nevertheless it is not easy to be with *Mataji*. None of our old tricks work and we are all the time exposed and denuded. Never before have I been so divinely happy as in the presence of Ma Anandamayi, Yet also have I never before been so ill at ease and so utterly shattered. I knew that a painful transformation had to be wrought within me : I had come for that purpose, and I knew that this transformation had to be accomplished with my consent and active co-operation. It is not enough to remain passive in the presence of a sage : one has to lend, to deliver oneself voluntarily to his influence.

"For none is it easier than for the flies to follow this body wherever it may go", *Mataji* has said, referring to herself, "but that does not enlighten them." *Mataji* asks us to work unceasingly and to make tremendous and sustained efforts, so that these very efforts may one day be transcended—and then comes effortless being, the spontaneity of one who has in the very midst of the 'battle field' attained to inner freedom beyond action and reaction.

For years before my first journey to India I asked myself the question : "And if it were true ?" How can one help posing this question with a trembling hope, when one hears about the great Sages in India who "by a single look can change a whole life." When one reads accounts, describing their supernatural presence that is a living witness to a world quite different from the one in which we believe ourselves imprisoned ? The reply, the certainty : "Yes, it is true !" I found in the *darśana* of Ma Anandamayi. At times her eyes gaze into the far distance and her expression is of a supernal beauty which defies all description. What does she see at such moments ? What is the significance of

the presence among us of a Being so totally different ? Her face is so powerful that, week after week, lost in the crowd, I was unable to detach myself from it; so irresistible was the impression of intensity and fulness that I felt with my whole being. In the presence of Ma, at last something actually was happening in my life. And I have gained the certainty that everything is possible for her.

But one has to admit that the almost miraculous aspect of Ma, the attraction she exercises over thousands and thousands of people misleads certain persons who have observed this to see in it more a manifestation of the abnormal than of the supernormal. My gratitude to Ma is even greater for what I feel I receive from her in Paris than for the extraordinary moments experienced in India. I do not seek any explanation: The oneness of the Self, the awakening of the inner Guru are enough. But the fact remains : after returning to Europe from my first trip to India my relationship to my own surroundings of which I had suffered for so long changed radically. I have understood that our being conditions our life. I know that by the grace of Ma Anandamayi and Swami Ramdas something has been transformed in my being. Of course, I have kept on the mantelpiece of the room in which I spend most of my time the photo of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the first picture of a sage I possessed and that I looked at so much for years together. It was this photo that made the desire to visit India grow in me. And at times I have the feeling that it is Ramana Maharshi who has guided me to Ma Anandamayi.

Near her I have found the Life that is beyond all created things, yet is also in all of them, and against which no power in the world, no difficulty, no tribulation or anxiety can prevail. Since my first visit to Ma at Varanasi, I have discovered the Life in myself. I can understand that certain people negate the existence of God or of the Atma. But Life ? Who can object to opening himself to Life and to letting himself be transformed by It ? The Christ said : "I

am the Life. I shall give Life to all who come to me.” I know that Ma is Life and that she gives Life to those who come to her. Why then should it be difficult to call her ‘Mother’, to call her ‘Ma’ ? For not only does a mother protect and guide, scold and comfort, a mother is first and foremost she who gives birth, who brings you to life. And I know—and there has not been a week during these five years that has not brought confirmation of this fact—the fact that my life actually started in September 1959 in Varanasi. A life into which I have no doubt been born with the *samskāras* of my existence before that time and which is wrapt up in impurities, fears and contradictions but, which has revealed itself—once for all—as being in truth beyond those limitations.

How many times in France has one not put me the question : “What have you received from this woman saint ?” One expects a reply, I know, that will conform to what one reads in books about the *chakras*, *kundalini*, or *nirvikalpa samādhi*. But the answer is much simpler, and for myself at least, much more significant. “What I have received from this woman saint is myself. I was dead and I have come back to Life. I was born of the flesh and I am born of the Spirit.” Whatever may be my sin and my impurity, now and for ever, Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi you are my mother and I am your son. Jai Guru, jai Ma.

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## Mothers Infinite Karuna\*

“SIDHU”

The incident related below took place about 22 years ago in the month of March. The exact dates on which it occurred have been forgotten, but the incident itself is ever green in the memory of the person who has had the great good fortune of witnessing it.

Mother was at Benares. She had been entreated to visit a large school and in her usual kind way had consented to go. Mother and her then very small party arrived at the institution in the cool of the evening. Through a lovely garden lit with coloured electric bulbs she was taken to a beautifully decorated rostrum. We all sat down around her and then some people began to sing kirtan.

Abhay and I were sitting right at Mother's feet. Abhay carried a small roll containing Mother's bedding, while I held Mother's slippers in my hand. Suddenly, when the kirtan was in full swing, Mother got up from her dais. I at once put the slippers down and Mother thrust her feet into them. Then she walked swiftly out the pandal, Abhay and myself following her. Mother sped away like the wind and we actually had to run to keep pace with her. The garden was very large and the entrance quite a distance away, but we found ourselves at the gate in a few seconds. A gentleman was just alighting from his car. He had evidently come for Ma's *darśana*. He seemed astonished to see Ma walk away with only two companions. He folded his hands and asked what we were doing at the gate. Mother appeared to be in a great hurry. She at once requested him to take her to the railway station. He hesitatingly opened the door of the car and Ma got in without delay, asking us to

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\* *Karuna* Compassion.

to get in 'quickly, quickly.' The door was shut behind us and the gentleman drove us to Benares Cant. Station. As soon as we arrived there, he asked Mother where she wished to go. "To Sarnath!" was the reply. The gentleman explained that there was no train to Sarnath until the next morning, but Mother insisted. So he went to purchase three first class tickets to Sarnath, while we sat in the waiting-room. He had hardly returned with the tickets when a train steamed into the station. Mother stepped into an empty first class compartment and we followed, while the gentleman kept on murmuring that this was a mail train which would not stop at Sarnath. However, Mother paid no attention to his remonstrances and soon the train left the station.

Within a few minutes it stopped ( as happens at times when there is no "all clear" signal ). Mother opened the door of the compartment and got down. To us she said : "Come down, come down quickly !" Abhay jumped down with Mother's bedding roll in his hand, but I felt afraid to follow suit as it was pitch dark and I could not see anything. Moreover, being rather bulky, athletic feats such as jumping down from a train were beyond me. While I was hesitating, Mother stretched out her hand. The train gave a whistle and in desperation I risked the leap. It was not a moment too soon, for the train puffed away immediately. We now found that we had alighted near Sarnath Station and that we were standing between railway tracks. Mother asked us whether we knew the way to the then newly built Birla Dharmasala. Neither I nor Abhay had ever been there before.

Mother then started walking and we followed her. We were plunged into complete darkness, with not a single light showing anywhere. We had no idea where Ma was leading us. Eventually, after covering quite a distance, we came to a large gate. The doorkeeper told us that this was the entrance to Birla Dharmasala. Mother went in and we after her. It was quite dark inside the Dharmasala also, but Mother advanced unhesitatingly in a certain direction. She seemed

to know exactly where she wanted to go. She passed along a large verandah and pushing open a door, entered a room. A small lantern was burning there. The room was quite empty, except for a couple of wooden couches placed against the walls. Mother walked straight to one of those and with an indescribable tone of voice compounded of laughter, tenderness and all the compassion in the world, she exclaimed: "Here I am, here I am!" We now detected the figure of a woman who sat up sobbing loudly. Mother put her arms about her, repeating: "Here I am, here I have come—don't cry anymore!" We ventured closer and recognized in the weeping woman Maharattan.\* She gradually gained control over her desperate crying and we all proceeded to the roof of the building and sat there for some time. Soon Ma's party arrived from Benares. The gentleman who had brought us to the station had reported to Didi where Ma had gone and then conveyed her and the others to Sarnath.

Mother was in wonderful spirits, laughing, talking and joking with Maharattan. We had a very late dinner and then all went to sleep on the roof near Mataji.

It transpired later that Maharattan had come from some far off place to see Ma. On reaching Benares she had been told that Mataji was at Sarnath. Without enquiring further, she had hired a tonga and proceeded to Sarnath, only to find that Ma was not there, nor was she even expected there. In the meanwhile the tonga had left and there was no train to take her to Benares. So she was stranded for the night all alone in a huge, empty dharmasala. To make matters worse she was running a temperature and feeling quite ill. When she had been crying desperately for Mataji, *Karunamayī Ma* suddenly appeared in her room. This is only one of the innumerable examples of Mother's loving kindness and mercy.

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\* See Ananda Varta, February 1965 issue, p. 206.

## Old Diary Leaves

ATMANANDA

### On Bereavement.

In summer 1948, a lady from South India had come to Kishenpur with a party from Rishikesh. The lady seemed absentminded and was obviously deeply distressed. She asked for an interview with Mataji. She said : "First my husband passed away. I was upset, but I could bear it, because I had my only daughter, a lovely, talented child. When she was 12 she fell ill and died. Since then I cannot find peace of mind. She was all I had, so beautiful and promising. When she had hardly begun her life she was torn away from me. Why did she have to leave me? Why? I cannot understand.

"For some time I worked in an orphanage. I thought, if I have no child, let me at least serve motherless children. I got attached to those orphans and they to me. But my heart is still broken.

"My guru says : 'Go on with your *sadhana* and gradually you will find consolation.' But I cannot concentrate. All the time I am pining for my darling. Nothing appeals to me. I want my child back. What am I to do?"

*Mataji* : First of all : Sorrow comes from the sense of 'I' and 'mine.' You say ; 'My daughter died' and so you grieve. But who are you? Find out who you are! She was the fruit of your body. As long as you are identified with the body, there must be pain, it is inevitable. So many boys and girls die, young and beautiful, yet it does not affect you deeply. You only *think* that this one child was your own and you have lost her.

Then there is another thing to be learnt : all sorrow is due to the fact that one keeps apart from God. When

you are with Him, all pain disappears. Let your thoughts dwell on Him. Remember that your daughter is now with Him. The more you think of God, the nearer will you be to her. If you must shed tears, cry for Him.

Just as some blossoms fall off without bearing fruit, so some human beings die young. For a while God had entrusted the child to your care and then He took her back unto Himself. Now He Himself is looking after her. One day you will go there too. Until then keep your mind on God and you will also be with your child.

How do you know that your daughter is not much better off where she is now? How much trouble and distress life has brought you! Would you have desired a similar fate for her?

Then again, on the level where there is only one Self, there is no question of birth and death. Who is born? Who dies? All is One Self.

The same mind that identifies itself with the body can be turned towards the Eternal, and then the pain the body experiences will be a matter of indifference. Since the body is bound to get hurt at times, there must be suffering as long as one is identified with it. This world oscillates endlessly between happiness and sorrow, there can be no security, no stability here. These are to be found in God alone. How can there be both, the world and the ONE? On the way there seem to be two, God and the world, but when the Goal has been reached there is only One. What the worldly life is you have seen. Who is yours? Only your Guru, your *Iṣṭā*, in Him you will find everything and everyone.—I am your child.

Several months later the same lady came to Varanasi for Mataji's *darśana*. She looked younger and happier. "I have got over my grief," she told us. "I am now reconciled to my fate. When Mataji said: 'I am your child,' her voice was my daughter's voice. My hair stood on end and I had a wonderful feeling which I cannot describe in words. From



that moment the wound in my heart began to heal. I have gained an inner conviction that my child is happy where she is. I am finding ever greater peace and am able to attend to my meditation. Now I am planning to go on a pilgrimage to Badri and Kedarnath. I only wish all bereaved mothers could be comforted as I have been."

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*Question* : Is it good to repeatedly call a dead person by his name, to keep his picture and remember him ?

*Mataji* : If one mourns for the person, regretting the loss of worldly enjoyment one has had together, it is bad, both for the departed and for oneself. If, on the other hand, the remembrance be an act of worship, as for example, since it is a wife's duty to regard her husband as God, she thinks of the deceased and keeps his picture with this attitude of mind, it may well be beneficent both for her dead husband and herself.

A couple once came to this body, who had lost their only daughter just a few days before she was to be married. They were broken-hearted. The girl's mother started wearing widow's dress and her husband also deeply grieved after his child and gave up many things he had been accustomed to enjoy. They had a life-size picture of their daughter made and lived only in their memory of her. Before eating they would place the food before the picture, and so forth.

This body told them : "Just as some flowers blossom and fall off without bearing fruit, so your child passed away young and pure, without having formed any attachment. Look upon her as the servant of the Lord, keep a picture of Him near hers, burn incense in the room and set it apart for worship and meditation."

Neither the husband nor the wife were religiously inclined, but by taking their loss in this manner they gradually developed in that direction. This body then said

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to them. "Your daughter has become your Guru, it is she who has made you turn towards God." This is a case where a whole family was benifited.

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The following true story Mataji sometimes relates to bereaved mothers who refuse to be comforted and keep on crying :

When this body stayed in Bengal, it used to visit Tarapith about once a year. One day a woman came, weeping at the loss of her daughter who had died at the age of seventeen or eighteen on the eve of her marriage. The woman had a younger daughter, aged about ten or eleven. This body enjoined on both of them to turn to God for comfort and the little girl also started practising *japa* regularly every morning and evening with the help of a rosary. She became very fond of this practice, and even when she fell ill would keep her rosary under her pillow and continue her *japa* with great regularity. But as fate would have it, she succumbed to the illness and died. When this body returned to Tarapith the following year, the woman was again in mourning. Having lost both her daughters, she was naturally disconsolate. I told her that her grief would react on her children, keeping them tied to the earth instead of letting them proceed unhampered on their upward path. After much talking she finally promised to try her best to remain cheerful. She made a sincere effort, but often she could not help longing for her children. One evening she was thinking dolefully : "Not even in dreams am I allowed to see my little darling." That night she dreamt of her younger child, who appeared to her dressed in white, with a wreath of flowers in her hair, looking radiant and beautiful. She motioned to her mother to follow her and led her to a place where many girls of her age were singing the praises of God.

All were dressed like herself and decorated with flowers. A venerable old man with a long white beard, who looked like a Rishi, seemed to instruct them. They all appeared full of joy and peace. When the woman awoke from her dream, she had a distinct feeling that her little daughter was happy where she was and she made up her mind not to disturb her. However, after some time the lonely woman started pining again for her lost children. One night her husband had a strange dream. His younger daughter came and put her arms round him, saying : "Mother is so sad and lonely without me. I can't bear her crying anymore, I am coming back to you". In his dream the father took the child into his arms and placed her into her the mother's lap. Ten months later a baby girl was born to them. When I came to Tarapith the next year, the woman brought the tiny infant and placed her before this body. The child grew up and is now a woman. In this way it may happen that the grief of their loved-ones drags souls back to this world, but it is better to leave them free to progress in their own way on their upward path. God alone knows what is best for everyone and provides for it.

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A couple who had recently lost their son came to Mataji and asked her, what was the sense of a child dying before he had lived his life.

*Mataji* : Everything happens according to one's *karma*. It was your *karma* to serve your son for a few years, and his *karma* to accept your service. When it was over, God took him away. It is all God's Play. Some flowers fall off without bearing fruit. Similarly the child was given to you by God for a time. This is the nature of the world. There is bound to be loss and bereavement.

*The bereaved father* : From where is one to take the strength to bear all these troubles and tribulations ?

*Mataji* : Remember that the *Ātmā* of the child and your own *Ātmā* are one. The *Ātmā* was neither born nor will it die, it eternally IS. The body, like a worn garment, falls away. Endeavour not to be attached to the body and not to cry for it. Cry for God alone. Remember Him, repeat His holy Name, contemplate Him, and regularly read scriptures such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Rāmāyana*, and so forth and you will be comforted. Your grief will become much lighter. Let your life be a dedicated life. The householder's ashram is also an ashram. Blows come in order to remind you to turn your mind to that which is Real. Someone who had lost all his six sons found much solace by reading the *Bhāgavata*.

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Two ladies from America came to Mataji. One of them told us that she had enjoyed an extremely happy life, adored by her husband and her children, until about one year ago her husband suddenly passed away. In a moment fate had destroyed her happiness and she now felt at a complete loss, wishing that she could have left this world instead of her husband, who had been a renowned surgeon. Mataji said to her : "We must always remember that we are God's children and that it is therefore right for us to contemplate Him and to try to realize Him. God does not give sorrow. He is the one Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved and Husband. But there certainly is sorrow in this world. A beloved person leaves us and we are grief-stricken. As long as we keep in mind that we are God's children and turn our thought to Him, we shall be happy. But when we forget Him, He sometimes gives us a slap to remind us of Him, just as a fond mother at times slaps her child for his own good. 'World' (*duniya*) means duality, the world consists of the pairs of opposites and so there is happiness and sorrow alternating. Without searching the Supreme none can find lasting peace and bliss. Your husband's body is no more, but his Self

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(*Atmā*) is one with you eternally. He is not separate from you. Just as you discard worn clothes and get new ones, so the body has to die in order that you may realize THAT which is eternal and can never be lost. Your husband has not really left you, his body only is gone, so that you may lose your attachment and find the real Self in which you are one with him.

It is natural for human beings to weep. If you shed tears for worldly things it only increases your attachment to them, and more and more impurity accumulates. But by crying for God all impurity is washed away. You should ever keep in mind that God has removed your husband's body, to show you the path of *Brahmacharya*, so that you may realise your husband's true Being and thereby know that you are one with him eternally. Happiness and misery are of the mind. When the mind merges into the One, then you have reached beyond them. In order to find true and lasting happiness, man has to contemplate the Supreme. Happiness that depends on anything, be it a person, money, comforts, fame, cannot endure. If we are deprived of the comforts we are used to, we feel troubled. But if we accept cheerfully whatever comes, we shall always be at ease.

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# The Great Work

MARK HALPERN

In the abstract and symbolical writings of the illumined alchemists and occultists repeated emphasis is placed on the necessity of completing what they term "The Great Work." Another phrase often encountered in those profound writings is "The Philosopher's Stone."

Like the teachings of the Bible, the real meaning of the words of the great sages and adepts becomes apparent only after we have found the key by which we can apply to ourselves the significance lying between and behind the words. For just as it is true that the Kingdom of Heaven and the Peace That Passeth All Understanding are to be found nowhere else but within each one of us, so is it true that the Great Work must be accomplished and the Philosopher's Stone discovered by each individual within his own being.

What, then, is the Great Work? We of the modern world are inclined to pride ourselves on the great works of our scientific and industrial enterprise. And it is no mere accident that the genius of the Occident, particularly in this century has centered its energies on objective expression producing material works on a grand scale. For Providence in these latter times has been directing man to develop his latent creative faculties into a dynamic genius that can be efficiently used on all planes of expression. But so wholeheartedly have the people of the Occident embraced the opportunity to objectify their inner creative potentialities, that they are in danger of going "overboard" in that direction; just as the people of the Orient have gone to the other

extreme of becoming too subjective and introspective, to the extent of growing apathetic toward the creative opportunities in the world about them.

But, getting back to our main line of thought, it should be evident to us that the great works of our modern materialistic civilization have nothing to do with "The Great Work" of the illumined seers and alchemists. The inspiring and oftentimes amazing grandeur of the great works of man, created outside of himself, are only transitory and evanescent. They will inevitably return to dust—whether they be the Empire State Building and the Taj Mahal, or the Great Pyramid at Gizeh and the mysterious brooding ancient figure of the silent Sphinx. All are of the dust, and to dust they shall return.

Not only these wondrous monuments of man's architectural genius are doomed to vanish from the earth as though they never had existed. Even the immortal artistic masterpieces of Michelangelo, Davinci, Raphael, El Greco, Veronese, Rodin—all are destined eventually to disintegrate into oblivion. For a day will arrive when even this very planet of ours shall have become nothing but cosmic dust again, scattered to the four corners of the infinite Universe. Then we shall inhabit other mansions in the Father's House of Cosmic Space.

But when all that is gone, when all the boasted great works of man shall have returned to the formless substance from which they came, man himself, in his Deathless Eternal Spirit, shall still exist. For throughout ages of arduous labour—the labour of his soul on the Great work within himself—he will finally complete the transmutation process whereby he was able to fashion his radiant vesture of Divine Consciousness out of his noblest thoughts and deeds while in the travail and bondage of earthly experience.

As a reward for the consummation of the Great work, he is given the White Stone—the Philosopher's Stone. It is

a reward unasked and unsought by the selfless illumined soul. It comes as a gift of grace—the rightful inheritance of him who has conquered the lower nature. Needless to say, the White Stone or the Philosopher's Stone is no stone of a tangible kind. It is the symbol for the spiritual powers or faculties gained by the soul who has successfully brought to fruition the Great Work. In the middle ages, these powers and faculties were veiled in the guise of the magic potency to turn baser metals into gold. And so, while the spiritual alchemists of that day were in reality engaged in the Great Work of inner transmutation, the people around them were led to believe they were seeking a way to turn baser metals into gold. Otherwise they would not have been permitted to continue with their high endeavour by the ecclesiastical authorities who at that time countenanced no individual regenerative work outside of their own jurisdiction.

And so, the Great Work is forever going on in each of us. It progresses invisibly and silently, without sign of workman or sound of hammer. While the objective personality is engrossed in what it often considers to be its all-important affairs in the outer world, it oftentimes forgets, or may not know consciously, that the Supreme Work of the ages goes steadily on in the soul's innermost sanctuary, to that glorious Day of days, in which there will be the full unveiling of the Apotheosis of our own being...

Perhaps it is because there is often no definite outer proof of spiritual progress, that people cynically turn their energies into physical and objective expression, where they are able to perceive the evidence of their handiwork and creative abilities with their senses. But therein lies the great paradox of human life. What we perceive with our physical senses, will some day, soon or late, pass away as though they never were. On the other hand, the Great work within, invisible and soundless though it may be to our senses, is the one Supreme Eternal Reality which will endure forever and ever.



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For we are all of the same deathless Essence as our God. We are all engaged in the Great Work of weaving our radiant immortal vesture of Divine Consciousness, in which we shall serve throughout the universe, rising from glory unto glory. That is our Divine Heritage and Lofty Destiny, achieved unto perfect fruition and realization by the soul-magic of the Great Work....

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