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Courtesy : Sri Sadanand, Bombay

*Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,
so there is also a door to Knowledge.*

Matri Vani

The man who is a seeker after Truth shall find his own true Self within himself through his Guru's instructions. In the mantra bestowed by the Guru, the Guru Himself is indeed present. You may see His body die, but the Guru never leaves you. When you are crying your heart out for the loss of His physical frame, why then do you put obstacles in the path that He has chalked out for you? Verily, the Guru is one.

* * *

If a person decides to shape his life according to someone's directions and then again acts according to his own sweet will, this, from one point of view, creates a hindrance.

* * *

It is a matter of rejoicing that he wishes to join the Ashram. The moment his desire to do so is genuine, he has already as good as entered the Ashram.

* * *

About health and ill-health this body does not say anything. The real supreme and universal remedy for all ills is to abide in the constant remembrance of God. Put your whole trust in Him.

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Man's life must be turned towards the realization of Truth. The Lord is Love. So as to find this Supreme Refuge;

suitable practices and activities have to be adopted at all times.

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The moment that has passed, returns not. Time must be used well. Only when spent in the effort to know "who am I?" has it been used well.

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If one is to attain to the Immortal, it is helpful to look for THAT in everyone and everything. The search after Truth is man's duty, so that he may advance towards Immortality.

Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

RECORDED BY PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

Ranchi Ashram, 7th May, 1965.

Question : Some live in the Ashram and some outside; are they all of the Great Mother's kith and kin or are some closely related and others more distantly ?

Mataji : Mother Kali is here* in front of you. Does she belittle anyone ? Why do all come to the Great Mother ? Because all are alike to Her, all are Her kith and kin. But Her children ought to be aware of this !

Question : I always feel that everything in this world is fruitless and senseless—like in the workshop of a ghost. How can one escape from the grip of that ghost ?

Mataji : Who is the ghost ? What is the work of man in the world ? The ghost exists only because you think it does. Otherwise every man (*jīva*) is Siva, every woman Gouri. When you are yearning to do *sādhana*, you cannot remain without it. Even within the workshop of that 'ghost' you will very well be able to enter the current of *sādhana*. Depending on your interest, you will give preference to some work or other. On the spiritual path one has to fulfil one's duty. The Lord of Men comes in the guise of every human being to accept service from you. The housewife should regard her husband as an embodiment of the Lord and serve him with this attitude of mind. The small daughters of the family ought to be cared for as incarnations of the Virgin Mother and the sons as so many little Gopals who are in need of your love and affection. Why do you call this "the workshop of a ghost ?" Carry out all work as God's service and there will

* There is a Kali temple in the Ranchi Ashram.

be no such thing as a "workshop of a ghost." The Ashram of the householder is a field of service and every service should be performed as the worship of God. Let the husband adore his wife as Lakshmi, the Goddess who presides over the home. Then you will see how full of happiness and joy life becomes.

To be able to keep up this attitude of serving God in all your actions, you must at fixed times of the day retire to your shrine-room for meditation, prayer, japa, the reading of scriptures and so forth, just as a clock has to be wound regularly. In this manner you will gradually come to do all your work as a divine service.

Question : I am aware of the fact that I am unable to attend to my duty. Is this a sign of spiritual progress ?

Mataji : Do you feel that you are unable to attend to it or have you not the power to overcome the obstacles that are in the way ? The sense of want or insufficiency is salutary, for it awakens the remembrance of God and therefore helps one to advance.

Question : If I commit anything wrong, this is, according to the *Sāstras*, due to some evil mental dispositions (*samskāras*). Now the question arises : from where did the first evil disposition come ?

Mataji : All *sādhanas* are practised in order to discover this. Start meditating and invoking God's holy name and you will find that one day the reply to your question will come to you of itself.

Ranchi, 8th May, 1965.

Question : For the last thirty years I have kept *satsang*, yet my mind is not at peace. Like an ox that turns the wheel of an oil-mill I revolve and revolve. How can I find peace ?

Mataji : You have indeed kept *satsang*, but you have not reflected upon what you have been told. You have

listened to words of wisdom, yet have not acted according to the injunctions of the wise; you have not thought deeply, not contemplated as advised. How will you win the Guru's grace ?

Question : Why should the wise not let me have a share of what they have earned ?

Mataji : So you wish to enjoy the fruit of another's labour ? So long as you do not meditate and act upon what you have been told, how can the path open out for you ? If you practise whatever *sādhana* that suits your temperament and is within your capacity, your inner power will develop and increase. God is the Life of life, the Self. There is only one Life, one Self. In order to realize, to know it, you must resort to the spiritual exercise that appeals to you from deep within you. What have you done to find Him ? How much work you do for worldly ends, how much trouble you take. But you sit down idly over the fact that you have forgotten your true nature—that you are the Atma, that you yourself are Peace. Have you made a sustained effort to realize this ? Start right now some spiritual exercise for the purpose of this revelation. God has given you so much capacity to work. Dedicate at least a little more time to Him ! And all the work you do in the world, lay as an offering at His feet. Regard yourself as His manager, don't feel that you are the boss. As the Lord's manager, serve Him in every human being. In your home there are the Goddess Lakshmi, Kumari Devi and Balgopal. Do service to them, do not neglect them, and you will be at peace. And whatever time you can spare, morning and evening, sit in solitude in your shrine-room and contemplate God's divine form, meditate on Him, worship Him. Start today, do not waste any more precious time !

Question : Mataji, will I have the vision of God by virtue of the *sādhana* I am practising ?

Mataji : He does not reject or refuse anything. Whatever you offer to Him He will accept. In whatever way you

approach Him, He will respond. All *sādhana*s are different paths that prepare you for the realization of Him.

Question : Man's life is conditioned by his *prārabdha karma*. Where does free will (*puruṣkāra*), come in ?

Mataji : You must use your free will to find the Supreme. The practice (*kriyā*) by which you advance towards Him (*Puruṣottama*) that exactly is called *puruṣkāra* (free will or the power to decide for oneself.) By God's grace even your destiny may be modified. If a devotee has firm faith that his *prārabdha karma* can be changed by God's grace, then this may become possible. There certainly are laws in God's creation, yet nothing is impossible for Him. If you think that God's grace is also within destiny, this is so for you. If on the other hand you are convinced that God is more powerful than destiny, then He may do anything at all for you. He provides for the worldly as well as the spiritual needs of His devotees.

From the Diary of a European

MELITA MASCHMANN

(*Translated from German*)

(3)

Varanasi, October 1963.

Yesterday most of us left by bus for Varanasi. The rest of the party will follow today with Mataji. Only very reluctantly I left Vindhyachal. There, the foreign country with all its strangeness became familiar to me. This may sound paradox, yet is a fact.

Early morning I ascended to the roof of the Ashram where I had spent many mornings all by myself. I wanted to bid farewell to everything that had been within my horizon here. After a little while I heard the sound of quiet, regular breathing from the tiny room on the roof. Through the open door I saw Mataji lying fast asleep. Perhaps she had fled up here to escape the commotion of packing down below. I have often heard it said that she does not sleep as we do, but nobody has yet given me a satisfactory explanation of this. May be I was deceived by appearances, but what I saw was the deep, relaxed sleep of a person whose perfect inner peace was expressed in the delightful harmony of her features.

I stole away on tiptoe and sat down in my place on the roof. If God were a mighty magician and granted me the fulfilment of a wish—if he had asked me at that moment, “Where would you like to be?” (How many times had I not imagined this as a child !)—I could only have replied : “Exactly where you have put me.”

After the quiet of Vindhyachal, Varanasi seems pandemonium. What a jumble of people, cars, rikshaws, cows, camels, and again people, people, people.

We have to get down in a main street. A narrow lane leads to the Ashram. But here what a relief: the Ganga. Oceanic expanse, serene streaming, promise of calm.

The Ashram is situated right on the bank of the Ganga. This is the far end of the town. The building is rectangular, opening towards the Ganga. The main tract which runs parallel to the river is three-storied, with verandas in every storey. The left wing, at right angles to it, accommodates the *Kanyapith*, a residential Girls' School for religious education. In the right wing there is a small hall downstairs and on the first floor the two temples with a large veranda that protrudes far into the courtyard in the manner of a balcony. Besides these there are a few small rooms in which Swamis live. All the three buildings have extensive roof-gardens. Above the temples there is a tall, pointed tower, surrounded by four smaller towers at the corners. The courtyard is enclosed by the buildings on three sides and by a low wall on the riverside. Here there are shady bushes. In the centre, under a roof, is the well arranged place for the fire sacrifices.

Behind the back-wall of the main building there are several other lower houses, also belonging to the Ashram. There is also a second courtyard. In a low annexe food is prepared; another one contains the office and the library of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. Leaving the Ashram and crossing the narrow lane, one finds a large rectangular platform on which a *satsang* hall is to be built (the original hall that was right on the bank of the Ganga had to be demolished after a high flood). On one side of the hall-to-be a large temple is under construction. Beyond the platform there is a small house, which Mataji's brother has built for himself and his family.

Having passed through the teeming, tumultuous lanes one is surprised to find here such an imposing and extensive project. This Ashram with all its annexe build-

dings is regarded as a spiritual centre by Mataji's devotees who live scattered all over North and Central India.

Our Ashram family of Vindhyachal has in a trice multiplied by ten. I hardly see a familiar face among the crowd that constantly waits for Mataji. My companions of Vindhyachal have become almost invisible, as the large Ashram provides shelter for all of them, while at Vindhyachal they had to remain in the open most of the day. Mataji has disappeared into her room. Even the door to the veranda in front of her room is either locked or strictly guarded. If this were not so, people would at all times try to force their way to Mataji.

* * *

One of the things that I appreciate immensely is that in Mataji's circle no false gesture exists and no artificial pathos. Of course, there does not seem to be any genuine pathos either, or at any rate not noticeable for me. It may well be that the religious poetry which is often recited contains pathos. But this I am unable to judge since I do not understand the language. The manner in which it is rendered does not sound in the least effusive. The same holds good for the style in which the *pūjās* are performed here: the movements of the priests are unaffected, sober and to the point. It is of course true that the numerous symbolic actions keep the *pūjāries* so fully occupied that there are, as it were, no gaps that would have to be filled in with empty gestures.

* * *

Yesterday I paid a visit to Sri Gopinath Kaviraj. He had permitted me to do so. His house lies in a small garden. No sooner has one crossed the gate than one enters into an area of silence which encloses this unusual man in ever more silent concentric circles. A vigorous dishevelled palmtree, underwood grown wild and covered with white blossoms. On the terrace a small fire, tended by a servant who, without a

word, points across his shoulder to the entrance of the house. A lofty, dark corridor, a steep staircase, everything quite undecorative and austere. The study of the wise man, more a cell than a room: books, magazines, manuscripts are towering on all four sides of the couch on which he is seated. He points to a low stool: "Sit down!" But I prefer to settle myself on the floor. Quite effortlessly: several minutes of silence. At long last he begins to talk about the essay in which I have described my first encounter with Mataji. Great hushed appreciation. Then again silence, which this time is interrupted by myself. I ask whether I may explain to him where, at the time, I believe to stand spiritually. He nods and listens to me with half closed eye-lids. Occasionally a smile of consent flits over his face.

When I tell him that I have really no special desire to converse with Mataji, he opens his eyes in astonishment. "This is excellent," he remarks softly, "do not talk to her. Gaze at her and seek the contact which is beyond words." I then ask him whether I should meditate although I seem to have no gift whatever for it. "It would be of great help to you." We remain silent for a while, then he asks me to come again after a few days. He would then give me some practical hints. Without a word he folds his hands, a remote smile, a hardly perceptible bowing of his head, I am dismissed. After getting up, I remain standing for a moment. This room with its bare walls and its mountains of books seems more familiar to me than any of my own rooms have ever been. The sage on his couch, with his scanty silver hair and the heavy eye-lids was at one time my father or will some time be my brother. I know nothing about his life and yet seem to know all.

While riding on a rikshaw through the crowded streets, I have the physical sensation as if everything I see around me were not outside but within myself. The skin that confines my body seems infinitely widened and encloses all this as well.

I suddenly recall the peculiar sensation I had a year ago after my first *daršana* of Mataji. I felt as if my heart—the physical heart—were growing to double its size. For days I could feel it expanding slowly. It was a sensation that caused pain and bliss at the same time.

* * *

This morning I got up very early to go to Sarnath, one of the holiest places of Buddhism. Here the Lord Buddha "set in motion the wheel of *dharma*". He preached for the first time after gaining illumination. I hire a rikshaw. It takes about an hour to get to Sarnath. We at first traverse the city. It is early dawn but the streets are already full of life. Then, gradually houses become fewer. Fields and fallow land, behind walls neglected gardens of old manor houses. A flock of goats by the roadside, donkeys loaded with bundles of dirty linen, peasants carrying milk to town; off and on we meet a monk walking with vigorous strides. Then the road becomes empty.

When I enter the holy district I am completely alone. The sun rises from behind a small grove, wild pigeons are cooing in the tree tops, and a strange perfume overpowers me with impetuous sweetness. I take off my sandals and leave them on the way.

Scattered over an extensive tract of grassy land are the ruins of several temples, stupas, monasteries from early Buddhist times. Before the first monasteries were built during the reign of King Ashoka (three hundred years before Christ), this was a large jungle inhabited only by ascetics and wild beasts. The first five disciples of the Lord Buddha were practising rigorous austerities here. Gautama had been one of them and had left. When after several years he met them again, Buddhagaya lay behind him; as a living man he had reached Nirvana. The ascetics recognized him as the Enlightened one, the Buddha, and became his first disciples.

The awakening landscape is full of a secret expectation. I can hear its voice with the naked soles of my feet, while I slowly wander round the excavations. With the entire surface of my body I hear the soundless jubilation that tells of the undying presence of the Enlightened-one. He is here, in the shade of the old trees, in the moss that grows over two thousand years old walls, in the slumber of the temple ruins, in the air that vibrates with the prayers of countless pilgrims.

Buddha, the Enlightened-one who concealed God. Was this silence his greatest sacrifice, his holy super-human renunciation ?

But are not silence and speech the same—at the height to which He had ascended ?

I lie down under a tree. Like a purple silk scarf a broad flag of flowering bougainvillia winds round the branch above me.

Thick white cobwebs are lying in the grass, spread all over, like pages of a book—the teaching of the Enlightened-one that has here been put into words for the first time, is later carried into the whole world as scripture. The sun sparkles in the cobwebs that are studded with dew-drops : the unspeakable is reflected in the revealed word.

In this hour it is also reflected in me : as a speechless exultation of gratitude for all the friends of God whose feet have ever touched the earth—for those whose name I know and for the untold nameless ones. Remain with us, take your abode among us—without you there would be everlasting night.

It is nearly midday when I return to the Ashram. Mataji is sitting in the narrow court-yard of her brother's house in front of the shrine in which her brother is performing a *pūjā*. The courtyard is packed. I remain standing at the entrance. A quarter of an hour later, Mataji beckons to me to join her.

Under the tree under which I was lying at Sarnath,

I have picked up a flaming red-yellow pod from which the seeds had fallen. I take it with me because it is so beautiful. Now I offer it to Mataji. I request someone to tell her that I found it in Sarnath. "Regard it as a symbol of something that I want to strive for with your help. Mataji, I wish to become emptied of all karmic seeds, just as this shell has been emptied of seeds." With great care I let the pod drop into Mataji's hands. Reverence makes me too timid to touch her.

Smilingly Mataji looks at my gift while she loudly repeats my words in Bengali. Suddenly she puts the pod into her left hand and stretches out her right one towards me. Among Hindus it is not customary to shake hands. I have never seen Mataji do so. She gives me her small, delicate hand as one would give a flower to someone. I am so surprised that I hesitate to grasp it. Finally I dare to cautiously touch only the upper parts of her fingers and to hold her hand for a few seconds as if it were some venerable and precious jewelry. It occurs to me that I should like to touch it with my forehead, but immediately I feel ashamed of such a crude impulse, and very carefully I return what has been lent to me for a few moments.

Later several people come and ask me to shake hands with them. What they seek is surely the indirect touch of Mataji's hand.

(To be continued.)

A Little Anthology

I

ON PRAYER

In the beginning there existed God, the source of Light. He was the one Lord of all created beings. He upholds this earth and the heavens. He it is to whom we shall offer our prayers.

He, Who is the giver of spiritual knowledge and giver of strength, Whom the world worships, Whose command all learned men obey, Whose shelter is immortality. Whose shadow is death—He it is to Whom we shall offer our prayers.

—*Rig Veda*

Prayer is an essential part of the practice of religion. Its power is irresistible ; prayer reveals the life of human beings. All the thoughts that arise in your heart should be offered to God. Pray for his aid with all earnestness and in a spirit of self-surrender.

—*Mataji*

You are all He. To realize this is the common aim of you all—the one real end of this human existence. When God puts you in situations in which you are forced to remember Him and to pray to Him earnestly, to take you to His holy feet, is He not kind ? Is He kind when he gives you some transient bubbles of this world which bring pain and misery ? He does grant these things also when you pray for them. But He warns you at the same time : “You have asked for the perishables, but you cannot have permanent happiness from them. Pain, anxiety and sorrow are always associated with them. Seek for the Eternal ; seek for me alone. I am *Satchi-dānanda*, infinite existence, consciousness and bliss.” So, pray for his grace and vision. You are already free and

immortal. Pray to him to give you this knowledge, to give you this realization.

Swami Ramdas

The whole business of spiritual growth is a development of your conscious realization that thought is the beginning and end of your life, whether it be spiritual or material. In the negative experience where man has refused to look deeper than his five senses and has indulged his appetites, he is bound to meet the full realization of his failures, whether it be in defeat or violence, sickness or despair. And you who have endeavoured to seek your life within, will find that your realization cometh in the awakening to the beautiful and freeing knowledge that the thoughts of your inward selection, that is, what you choose to entertain will be "made flesh." Believe this; choose your thoughts with wisdom and make your own declaration, for this is a high form of that misunderstood word, 'prayer'. Prayer has always been a cup held up to be filled.

—*Anonymous*

One may attribute the various forms and aspects of God that are current in society to imagination and may have no faith in them. Yet God will shower his grace on a person if he believes in a divine power that creates and directs the world, and prays with a distressed heart : "O God, I do not know Thy real nature. Deign to reveal Thyself to me as Thou really art."

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his work good.

—*Emerson*

The deepest and the most earnest prayer that has ever risen from the human heart has been uttered in our ancient tongue : *O Thou self-revealing One, reveal Thyself in me.*

The real misery of man is in the fact that he has not fully come out, that he is self-obscured, lost in the midst of his own desires. He cannot feel himself beyond his personal surroundings ; his greater Self is blotted out, his truth is unrealized. The prayer that rises up from his whole being is therefore, "Thou, who art the spirit of manifestation, manifest Thyself in me". This longing for the perfect expression of his self is more deeply inherent in man than his hunger and thirst for bodily sustenance, his lust for wealth and distinction. This prayer is not merely one born individually of him; it is in the depth of all things, it is the ceaseless urging in him of *avibh*, of the spirit of eternal manifestation. The revealment of the infinite in the finite, which is the motive of all creation, is not seen in its perfection in the starry heavens, in the beauty of flowers. It is in the soul of man. For there Will seeks its manifestation in will, and freedom turns to win its final prize in the freedom of surrender.

—*Tagore*

Tinge of Hindu Philosophy in Chinese Religion

PROF. A.N. GHOSE

The general religious faith of China is an admixture of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Confucianism is an orthodox state religion and Taoism is higher idealism for the attainment of ultimate Reality. As we know, the founders of the current Trio Faith are Confucius, Lao-tsze and Gautama Buddha, who represent the three combined tastes of Chinese Religion : sweet (Confucius), saline (Lao-tsze) and sour (Buddha). In other words, Chinese religion is a mixture of three Ss, sweet, sour and saline.

Taoism (i.e. the religion of Tao) is the most ancient religion of China. The "Tao" of China corresponds to the "Brahman" of Hindu Philosophy (Upanishads, Vedanta etc.). This Tao conception (i.e. the monotheistic conception of God or ultimate Reality or Consciousness) influenced the common religious faith of Confucianism which was adopted by all shades of people, the sovereigns and the commonality. The preacher of this popular state religion, Confucius, was definitely influenced by Lao-tsze, the founder of Taoism and writer of the Chinese Vedanta 'The Tao Teh King.'

Confucius was an idol to royal personages. I cannot resist from describing here some passages as regards the position of Confucius in the official circle of China :—

"At the present day, he is worshipped twice a year on certain days in the middle months of Spring and Autumn. Then the emperor goes in state to the Imperial College in Peking, and performs his homage, and presents the appointed offerings before the spirit tablets of Confucius and four of his most famous disciples. These are the words of the principle prayer on the occasion :—

"In this month of this year, I, the emperor, offer sacrifice to the philosopher Kung (Confucius), the ancient

Teacher, the perfect Sage, and say : O Teacher, in virtue equal to heaven and earth, whose doctrines embrace the past and the present, Thou didst digest and transmit the six classics and didst hand down lessons for all generations. Now in the second month of Spring (or Autumn) in reverent observance of the old statutes, with victims, silks, spirits and fruit, I offer sacrifice to Thee. With these are associated the philosopher Yen, Continuator of Thee ; the philosopher Tsang, exhibitor of Thy fundamental principles ; the philosopher Tsze-sze transmitter of Thee and the philosopher Mang, second to Thee. Mayest Thou enjoy the offerings." So is the sage Kung who was unreasonably neglected when alive, now unreasonably worshipped when dead."*

The ethics of Confucius prevailed all over North China, whereas the idealism of Lao-tsze was the sun of South China. Confucius and La-tsze were the heavenly sages of China and though Confucius was very junior to Lao-tsze, they never differed and both had co-operative views for the good of the country. People say : " Work means Confucius, meditation and the rest mean Lao-tsze. Confucius worked for man, society and state whereas Lao-tsze dreamt for 'something unthought of' beyond the horizon of human thinking. Confucius wanted to give shape to an organized society where men must respect their elders and parents and worship their 'settled' spirits in heaven, whereas Lao-tsze was dreaming of the interrelationship between *Ātmā* and *Paramātmā*, individuality and the entirety, part and the whole, the limited and the unlimited."

We may say that the religion which had its universal hold in all ages was Taoism, called by some scholar, the outcome of Indian Vedanta. He goes to the extent of remarking that Lao-tsze came to India and was influenced by the thoughts of Indian philosophy. It is a well-known fact that many kinds of crude beliefs, superstitions, enchantments,

* 'The Religions of China' by James Legge, Page 148.

sorceries etc. enter into the minds of crude people in all ages and thus Taoism also was overshadowed by such spirit conceptions. There is a class of believers who say that Chinese religion is nothing but superstition and display of magic and enchantment. It is found in literature that the founder of the Chin dynasty, Shih Hwang Ti, who waged a fierce war against the memory and the followers of Confucius, had sent an expedition in quest of Fang-Lai, the isle of the Immortal and to bring for him the Herb of Immortality. This superstitious faith was the inversion of Buddhism, which entered China from India in 65. A. D. In matters of Trinity conception (Three precious Ones) both Buddhism and Taoism were alike. The Buddhist Trinity consisted of Intelligence (*Buddha*), Law (*dharma*) and Church (*sanga*) whereas the Taoist Trinity is San Ching (the perfect Holy-one, the highest Holy-one and the greatest Holy-one). Taoists began to lay stress on the selection of burial grounds for the dead, as badly buried bodies would inflict harm on the descendants. They had their hell and purgatory (chamber of horrors). The Taoist *pusa*, the Ruler of Infernal Regions, is an abbreviation of the Sanskrit *Bodhisattva* who grants Intelligence to the sinner, by means of which, he attains Buddhahip after only one human existence. The purgatory is under the control of the Infernal Majesty Ping Tang and is a huge construction, subdivided into 16 wards. In the sixteenth section, the sinners "are tortured by venomous snakes" The Taoists believed more in their magical powers than in the evil spirits* and demons.

But this is not the Taoism as expounded by Lao-tsze. I remember his slogan when he says, "I do good to others who do harm to me." He says: "The three items most valuable in life are (1) Piety (2) Broadmindedness and (3) Humi-

* Ref. to evil spirits (*pret*, *bhut* etc.) of Hindu faith, Jin or nymphs of Muslim and Christian religions etc. Even now, we hear of evil spirit influence amongst the simple villagers.

lity." He used further to say to Confucius : "I get disturbed when you speak of helping others and of preaching religious slogans. Why are you particular about the miseries of others ? Is it not crying in the wilderness ? Can you revive a dead man or remove misery ? Why do you then wail ? Man does not grow out of his fame or position. A duck need not take a bath to become white." So, it is God's blessing which counts.

The Tao conception of God sounds almost like our Upanishad or Vedanta conception. It is found in Yuen Tao Huin (Quintessence of Tao-religion) that "Tao is world-pervading but worldly man does not know anything about It. It is not perceptible, being very subtle. It is to be realized by pure mind. Tao does not grow high if heaped together ; it does not lower down if spread out ; no addition makes It bigger, neither does It decrease if something is abstracted from It. No rubbing reduces It. It has form but It is formless (Nirākara). It has no name but it the source of all names. Heaven and earth are working by Its power. The outside world is *māyā* and is Its outer manifestation. It is not guided by matters or time. It does not work but It is the Father of storm and rain and the cause of thunder, lightning and cloud. Nature is changeable and moving in Him like a wheel. Tao is higher than the sky, touching mountains, and deeper than the earth touching the bottom of the ocean. Belief in Him is cessation of miseries. Forgetting Tao means unhappiness even if a man possesses learning and wealth. He says : "God is present in all beings, but He Himself is void of *gunas* or forms. Tao has not grown out of anything but I am confident He is the Father of God. He was existing before God. The Christians or the Mussalmans do not believe in anything higher than God. But Taoism and Vedanta go beyond the conception of God."

The Tao sages are almost like the yogis of India, wearing yellow caps (yellow cloth of Indian *yogi*, or *sannyasi*), keeping long hair and nails, residing in lonely hills and caves

and living upto very old age (upto 300 years). To attain Tao is Union with Him which brings salvation. Like Vedanta, it says that one who knows Brahman, becomes Brahman. He is all happy; pleasure or pain, fire or water cannot harm him who is a Taoist (Ref. Gita). Life and death is the same to him. He is all serene, carefree in the midst of care. He can play on his fiddle when Rome burns. To him, any creature is God (*Jīva* is *Shiva*). He believes in the Immortality of the soul and in re-birth. Tao is *Sat-Chit-Ānanda*. Father Wiser, a French missionary, has written: "Taoism is an overflow of Upanishad-truth."

The book Tao-Teh-King has been translated into various languages of the world, e. g. Latin (by Roman Catholic Missionaries), French (by Stanislaus Julien) English (by Chalmers, James Legge etc.), German (by Prof. Max Muller, Viktor von Strauss, Reinbold von Plankner) etc. and Tolstoy wanted it to be translated into Russian.

Lo-tze was a single, prideless, lonely Tai Sung (superman), inspired by Tao, which is an ultimate conception of Truth or Reality that the Orient is still struggling to attain.

The Quintessence of the Yoga Vāsistha

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

Padma-Bhusan

IV

The World as an Unreal Appearance.

The test of reality is eternal persistence. All forms, however, persist temporarily. They, as such, come into existence and pass out of it. How therefore, can, they be regarded as real in the true sense of the term. But we cannot either say that they are unreal, because they partake of reality, however little it may be, as they persist for some time at least. They may not be absolutely or fully real, but they are not totally unreal as long as they persist for some time. A new category is required to comprehend this fact of the forms being neither absolutely real nor absolutely unreal, but persisting for some time. Vasistha calls such things *mīthya* (not true) *avidyā* (that which exists not eternally), *māyā* (that which is not) and *bhrama* (delusion), etc. Appearance is the best philosophical term to express the idea behind these terms. There is another sense in which Vasistha regards the objective forms not as realities but as appearances. As he is an idealist, to him nothing of the objective world is real, apart from its appearance in the mind. The reality and existence of every world and every object is only relative to its experiencer. It is nothing to another percipient, like the vision of a ghost; like things in the experience of a hypnotised person—V.5,9; IV.45,46; III.6,64; III.65.5; III.44.27.41; VIa.114,20; III,5.4.21; IV.1,2,12.III.67.76; IV.41.15).

Acosmism

In itself, the Absolute Reality is, according to the Yogavasistha, above all changes, above all distinctions and differentiations, and above all relations. All differences and distinctions are within it, yet in itself as a whole, it is the distinctionless and homogeneous Substance. All the opposites self and not-self ; subject and object ; being and non-being ; one and many ; consciousness and unconsciousness ; rise and fall of individuals and world-processes, etc-negate each other, balance each other, fuse with each other, neutralize each other into a zero, void, (*shuniya*) a total blankness, which is at the heart of both the opposites, neither of which as such forms the content of this timeless and spaceless Reality. Thus the *samsāra*, creation, world, individuals, objects, bondage and freedom, etc.; all, as such, are absent in the Absolute considered from its own point of view, because their existence as forms is relative to some particular kind of consciousness apart from and outside of which they are nothing. They are all like dream-objects which have no existence apart from their being perceived or imagined by some mind. Production or origination of anything is meaningless for the Absolute and from the Absolute point of view ; for the Absolute everything is ever negated. The Absolute is everything as well as its opposite, and so nothing as such. There is no individuality, no world, no creation, no movement, no bondage or freedom from the absolute point of view. Acosmism is the Ultimate and Highest Truth, which can be realized by everyone, when one ceases to be interested in the relative, particular and finite appearances. (Vasistha-darsanam, pp. 168 178).

The Ultimate Source of Happiness.

All creatures, says the author of the Yogavasistha, strive for Happiness (VIa. 108, 20). But they seek for it in wrong places. They are under the delusion that they can be happy through worldly prosperity and possessions. All kinds

of worldly enjoyments and sense-pleasures have the seeds of pain and sorrow hidden within them. No increase in our wealth, possessions and objects of enjoyment ever causes our thirst for happiness to be satisfied. Even a flood in a mirage river will not quench the thirst of a thirsty man. No amount of dream-wealth will ever allay the suffering of a poor man. (V. 49. 6-7 ; V. 9. 41 ; VIB. 93. 39. 73. 75. 78 ; V. 9. 52 ; VIa. 78. 8 ; IV. 46. 3-4). The real source of happiness is elsewhere. It can be easily found by carefully observing the conditions under which we feel happy or miserable. Things as such, are neither pleasant nor painful, agreeable nor disagreeable. It is our own attitude towards and our relation with them that make them appear so. The same object may be pleasant, painful or indifferent to different persons, and to the same person at different times. If we hanker after some object, contact with it is pleasant and the pleasure decreases in proportion as our hankering for it diminishes in intensity. The contact with an object which is not desired by us is felt indifferently. Whereas it will be felt as positively painful in case we have an aversion for the object. From these facts Vasistha concludes that pleasure, pain, agreeableness or disagreeableness of objects depend on our own desire or aversion and not on the objects themselves (VIa.44.2; VIa. 120.18-20; VIa. 44.4). Really speaking the rise of a desire in us for something and its persistence for some time are themselves a painful experience, our obtaining the desired object is pleasant only because it relieves us from the pain of an unfulfilled desire. So attainment of the objects of desire is only negatively pleasant. In reality therefore, the presence or absence of desire are our worldly pain and pleasure. (Vib. 36. 24; VIB. 68. 31). But if desire is absolutely and permanently eradicated from the mind by right methods, there will not only be freedom from pain, but there will also be an experience of a peculiar and abiding joy or Bliss, which only those who have experienced know and which cannot be experienced as long as hankering for objects continues. (V.74

24,50) "The joy of desirelessness is much greater than and superior to that of ruling over an empire, of the company of one's beloved of Heaven, and that experience by Vishnu" (V. 74,44). This joy is really the bliss inherent in the Absolute Reality, which is our very Self. The Absolute Self is the real home of abiding and unconditional happiness. It is the bliss itself which all of us are consciously or unconsciously seeking (V. 51,70,72,69). A glimpse of this joy can be had when the mind is at peace, when it is not functioning in its usual way of thinking of this or that object, but is calm and quiet. (VIa. 44,26,27).

Bondage and Liberation

Inspite of thus ever living in the ocean of Absolute Bliss, we are at the mercy of external objects for happiness. Inspite of our own Self being the fountainhead of joy, we are seeking for it in the objective world. This is our trouble. This is what is called bondage (*bandha*) by Vasistha. (II.2.5; V.13.20; III.1.22). This, however, is only one aspect of our bondage, which assumes different forms in our cognitive, affective and conative nature. When we are bound, we are bound in all our being. In fact, we are ever one with the infinite and absolute Reality, yet at the present stage of our evolution we do not know that (IV.12.2) we are in reality omnipresent and unlimited, thus we feel finite, limited and weak (IV.27.22,23,25). Bliss is our very being yet we desire this or that object (IV.27.18); VIa,10.8), thinking wrongly that it will bring happiness to us (IV.12.12); our abiding essence is the Reality behind everything, yet we take it to be the ego (VIa.99.11); everything is within myself and myself is within everything, yet I limit my interest (IV.27.25) to this or that object, prefer this or that, attach myself to particular things and actions, possess something and reject another. No form is real, yet we take everything to be real. All these are so many aspects of our bondage, release from which is called Liberation (*Moksha*), which

consists in the conscious realization of our being identical with the Absolute and in freedom from limitations of all kinds. It is the same as the dissolution of the mind or the individuality (VIb.38 32.) ; as indifference to objects of enjoyment, and desirelessness (VIb.38.32.) ; as dropping down from the world of consciousness (III.21.11) ; as freedom from ignorance about the Self (VIb.20.17). This experience (Moksha-liberation) can be realized even while one is alive, for we are one with the Absolute, here and now.

The Way of attaining Liberation

According to Vasistha, there is no other way to attain Liberation than Self-knowledge, as our bondage consists in the ignorance of the fact that we are here and now the Absolute. Liberation cannot be attained by living in a forest, undergoing penances (VIb. 199.30), performance or renunciation of any kind of actions, undergoing any disciplinary practices (VIb.199.31), pilgrimage, distribution of alms, bath in sacred rivers, learning, performance of duties, riches, friends (V.3.8.), fasting (III.6.4), Scripture, words of a teacher, worship of any personal God (VIb.176.26) etc. etc. Knowledge alone is the means of Liberation (III.7.17.11.11.36 ; V.83.18 ; V.13.89). The saving knowledge consists in the realization that Brahman is the only reality ; that everything is Brahman ; that nothing other than the Brahman is real ; that the Brahman is the very Self of us (V.79.2.3.;VIa.190.5). This knowledge can be acquired only through one's own thinking and effort. Nothing else will bring right knowledge home to anybody III.69 ; VIa 1184 ; V.12.8;V.5.6). To think correctly, the mind is to be purified ; purification of mind is effected through the study of philosophical works, association with the wise and cultivation of virtue (V.5.5; V.21.11). No Shastra or Scripture can make us realize the Self, if we do not make our own attempts along the right interpretation of our experience, and thereby have the direct intuition of the Self

(VIb. 197.18; VIb.41.15). The Scripture and the words of great teachers have value only so far as they suggest to us the existence of the Self, the Absolute, of which we, at the present stage of our knowledge, are not fully aware. (VIb. 197.19.21.25.29).

Need of Self-reliance and Self-effort

Wisdom or Self-knowledge cannot be acquired by one who does not make earnest effort to acquire it, but merely depends on fate or God to bring it about. Vasistha is a great opponent of the belief in Fate or Destiny and the first thing that he taught Rama was that he should be self-reliant and earnest in determining his own destiny by his own efforts. "He thinks that every individual is wholly responsible for what he is. He believes in complete self-determination and the strength of every individual to overcome his miserable plight or to achieve anything he wants in the realm of the world or in the Kingdom of Heaven. Fate, for him, is not a reality other than the results of our own previous actions, which every person is bound to have, but is at the same time quite free and strong enough to modify by his present efforts". (Attreya ; The Philosophy of the Yogavasistha, p. 128 ; Vide also Atreya : Vasisthadarsanam. p. 20-24).

Worship of a God not necessary for Self-realization

Devotion (*bhakti*) for or worship of any personal God is not of much use in attaining Liberation. Nobody can confer Liberation as a boon on anybody, unless the latter deserves it by his own right. No other agency than our own, than that of our own purified mind, can show us the Absolute, which is our very Self." One is one's own friend or enemy. If one does not save oneself there is no other remedy. (VIb.162.18) Gods like Vishnu or Shiva, however propitiated and pleased, cannot bestow Self-knowledge on one who does not think for himself. (IV.43.10). God,

according to Vasistha should not be sought elsewhere; He resides within every one (III.7.2). The God residing within the temple of one's own body is the same as is immanent in Shiva, Vishnu, the sun and Brahma (III).7.4)." Those who, leaving the God residing within their own heart, worship other gods, are like those fools who, having thrown away the precious gem that was in their hand, run after ordinary glass-pieces." (V.8.14) The best way to worship the real God residing within the temple of our own body is Self-knowledge and Self-realization." The artificial and showy ways of worshipping God are only for the ignorant and for those whose minds are restless and not matured" (VIa.30.5). And "devotion for Gods like Vishnu is invented only to put on the right track those fools (*murkha*) who run away from study, effort and thinking." (V.43.20).

Renunciation of Active Life not necessary

Performing or giving up any kind of action, whether it be religious, moral or worldly, is immaterial for attaining liberation. It is foolish to believe that action can be given up. Life is action, thought is action. As long as one continues to be an individual and is thinking and living, one is doing some action. Renunciation of activities is therefore impossible and so is not required for attaining liberation (VIa.28.8.6; VIb.2.34.31.35.42.43). The root of action is desire or will. That is to be cut off. Personal desire and will are to be given up and not actions. (VIa.2.44; VI.38.4). For Self-realization, one has not even to go to a lonely place in some forest, renouncing worldly duties and activities. The busy home-life is an obstruction to Self-realization. It is the culture and refinement of mind which is needed more than renunciation of worldly life. (VIb.3.26.38).

Nathamuni and Alavandar, Sri Vaishnava Acharyas

T. KRISHNAJI

Sānatana Dharma or Hinduism comprehends many systems of philosophy, varieties of religious beliefs and divers forms of faith and ways of worship. It is a web of many threads of several colours. The main schools of theism are Saivism and Vaishnavism and the shrines of God Shiva and God Vishnu, often existing side by side, afford opportunity for worship by the faithful. The Nayanmars of South India adored God Shiva and the Alvars glorified God Vishnu. Each extolled the supramacy of his chosen Deity, Shiva or Vishnu. The adherents of Sri Sankaracharya offer their prayers and worship to both the Gods, Shiva and Vishnu, as forms of the *Brahman*. Often they prefer one or the other as their chosen Deity or "*Ishta Devata*". The word '*Shaiva*' denotes the devotees who exclusively worship Shiva like the *Lingayats*. But the term *Vaishnava* has a special connotation. Though all worshippers of God Vishnu are Vaishnavas, there are differences between them. The followers of Madvacharya are called *Sad Vāishnavas*, the followers of Sri Ramanujacharya call themselves Sri Vaishnavas. Nathamuni and Alavandar, predecessors of Sri Ramanuja, as Acharyas led the foundation of *Sri Vaishnavism* and inspired Sri Ramanujacharya. The invocatory verse of *Sri Vaishnavas* to the Guru is ;

"*Narayana samarambham, Natha, Yamuna madhya-
mam
Asmad Acharya paryantham, vande guru param-
param*"

"I offer my obeisance to the order of preceptors commencing from Narayana, Natha and Yamuna in the centre and to my Guru ultimately."

Nathamuni was the first of the *Sri Vaishnava* Acharyas who discovered the wisdom of the twelve Alvars, the Vaishnava devotees, who lived between the 1st and 8th centuries A. D. The Alvars sang their praises in the shrines of God Vishnu and their devotional outpourings in Tamil language, in the context of their spiritual experience, had wider appeal among the masses of the Tamil country. Further "the vision and testimony of the Alvars is the ground work for philosophic thought" and the Acharyas who came after them gave special religious value to the utterances of the Alvars. Nathamuni discovered the devotional literature of the Alvars, gave it form and notation and preserved it for posterity as the sacred collection " *Divya Prabandham*". It is considered on a par with the Vedas and recited in the shrines of Vishnu as a part of the temple ritual.

The sole and supreme unifying factor in India is its religion, with its sacred shrines and sacred rivers. From the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari, faith moves its people to brave hazards and bear hardships, to go and have a bath in the holy rivers and to have darsan of the Lord in various shrines. Nathamuni was born in a Brahmin family who hailed from the banks of the river Jamuna and settled in South India. He was born in about 820 A. D. at Katumannar Koil called Viranarayana puram.

The religious spirit of India lies in self-abnegation, and so we have less reliable data and details relating to the lives, of saints and the acharyas of India. The traditional accounts are meagre, embellished with supernatural powers. Even from the scanty traditional accounts, Nathamuni emerges as a great scholar and devotee, a seer and *Mahayogi*.

Once he heard some pilgrims chant a few verses of Nammalvar and he was so thrilled that he longed to know more. Like a research scholar he went from shrine to shrine in pursuit of his quest to collect the songs of the Alvars. He met a disciple of Madhura Kavi Alvar and meditated for a long time at the shrine of Nammalvar. At last his labours

fructified. He collected 3900 verses of the Alvars. He divided them into groups of one thousand each, like the four Vedas. He gave them form and notation. It is called "Nalayar Divya Prabandham," sacred collect of 4000 and its recital was enjoined in every Vishnu shrine. Its is acknowledged to be on a par with the Vedas. Nathamuni lived for some time at Srirangam and was called Ranganathacharya.

Nathamuni visualised the bright future of Sri Vaishnavism and he instructed his disciple Pundaikaksha to reveal to his grandson, Alavandar, the treasure of devotion, God Sri Ranganatha. He was a great yogi and remained in yogic trance for long periods. He lived for one hundred years. Once his deep *samādhi* was disturbed by the sounds of a passing bugle leading a royal retinue. He thought God Sri Rama was proceeding that way and, in divine ecstasy, he ran and ran until he fell down exhausted near Gangaikonda Solapuram in about 920 A. D. and attained to *Paramapadam*. His extra-ordinary life was epitomized by his grandson Alavandar in an invocatory verse ;

*'Namo, achintya, adbhuta, aklista,
Jnana Vairagya rasaye
Nathaya Munaye agadha
Bhagavat bhakti sindhave.'*

"Respects to Sri Natha Muni, who is a mine of wisdom and dispassion, an ocean of devotion to the Lord, whose extraordinary greatness is unimaginable." By his exemplary life as a *Mahayogi* and devotee, by his dispassionate service in collecting and preserving the wisdom of the holy Alvars, a vision of the future greatness of Sri Vaishnavism, Nathamuni laid the foundation for a new way of religious life and philosophic thought of Sri Vaishnavism.

Nathamuni had a son named Iswara Muni. Iswara Muni and his wife went on a pilgrimage to Mathura and

Brindavan and on their return to Vira Narayanapuram, they were blessed with a son in 920 A. D. The child was named Yamuna. Yamuna became famous as Alavandar.

Alavandar was not only precocious as a student but had daring. He was a student of Maha Bhasya Bhatta, who owed allegiance to Akki Alvan, the Chola court pandit. Once the messengers of Akki Alvan came to collect the monthly tribute from Bhatta. In Bhatta's absence, Alavandar challenged the right to demand tribute. The affront from a young boy created commotion and the matter reached the ears of the pandit and his royal patron. The king convened a parishad to which Alavandar was duly invited to challenge the pandit. The queen had the insight to foresee the success of Alavandar but the king had his misgivings. He promised to the queen that he would part with half his wealth if Alavandar succeeded. People admired the audacity of the young boy to beard the lion, Akki Alvan, the court pandit, in his own den. After due preliminaries, Akki Alvan called upon Alavandar to put three questions.

Alavandar cleverly framed three questions to be answered in the negative. The questions were ; "The queen is chaste", "The king is righteous", and "Alvan's mother is not barren". Akki Alvan was at his wits end to answer them and he kept silent lest he may offend the queen and the king by his answers. When the turn of Alavandar came to answer his own questions, he replied, "The queen was married to the Devas before she was married to the King. The King shares the sins of his subjects. Akki Alvan being the only son of his mother, she is as good as barren." As the boy Yamuna triumphed, the queen hailed him as "Alavandar" 'come to rule' and the King duly fulfilled his promise.

Alavandar was fully engrossed in his princely life and the pleasures of the palace. He married and had four sons. Pundarikaksha, the disciple of Nathamuni commissioned his disciple Rama Misra or Mankal Nambi to wean away Alavandar from his princely life and unravel to him the spiritual trea-

suress and fulfil the desire of Natha Muni. Rama Misra devised a plan to get audience from Alavandar. He befriended the palace cook by supplying a leafy vegetable which was relished by King Alavandar. After a few days he stopped the supply and the King enquired why that vegetable dish was not prepared. The cook informed him about the stranger who supplied it and that he had not come that day. The King desired to see the person who served him like that. The next day Rama Misra got the opportunity to see the King and told him that his grandfather Natha Muni had entrusted to him some secret treasures and that they would be revealed to him if he chose to accompany him alone. Alavandar agreed and en route Rama Misra roused the spiritual longing of Alavandar by reciting the Bhagavad Gita. They reached Sri Rangam and took a bath in the sacred river Kaveri. Then they entered the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine of Sri Ranganatha. Rama Misra pointed Sri Ranganatha to Alavandar and told him, "Your grand father Natha Muni had bequeathed this treasure to you." A change came over Alavandar and he renounced his all and became a Sannyasin.

Alavandar's achievements were versatile. He had many disciples and taught them the importance of devotion in accordance with the Āgamas. He wrote a work called '*Āgama Prāmānya*' emphasizing the authoritative-ness of *Pancharātra Āgama*. The *Pancharātra Āgama* was revealed by God Narayana in five nights inculcating 1. *Abhigamana* or approach to God, 2. *Upadana* or right conduct and living, 3. *Tyāga* or sacrifice, 4. *Swādhyāya* or scriptural study 5. *Yoga*. In *Siddhi Traya*, he expounds that *Jiva* is separate from *Brahman* and refutes the doctrine of the identity of *Ātmā* and *Paramātmā*. He wrote Sri Rama Ashtaka and Sri Stuti, four verses on the Goddess Lakshmi. He also put the substance of the Gita in a verse and elaborated it in 29 verses. It is called *Gītārtha Sangraha*. He epitomizes the teaching of the Gita in one verse, set out here;

“Swadharma Jnana Vairagya, sadhya bhaktaika
gocharah
Narayana Param Brahma Gita sastre samiratah”

“The Gita Sastra lays down the supremacy of Narayana as *Para Brahman* and he is to be realized through the prescribed paths of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*”. His view was that *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* had no separate existence but all were integrated in spiritual life. *Stotra Ratna* in 65 verses is one of the brightest gems in Sanskrit literature. It reveals his deep devotion and high poetic skill.

He had the vision to foresee that Ramanuja was fit to succeed him as an Acharya and Ramanuja fulfilled the last desires of Alavandar by writing *Sri Bhashya*, a commentary on the Brahma Sutras, a commentary on the Gita. Bhattar wrote a commentary on *Vishnu sahasranāma*. Alavandar nominated Ramanuja as his successor and his eminent disciples became the preceptors of Ramanuja.

Alvandar foresaw his end in 1040 A.D. and called all his disciples and imparted to them his last message. “Look upon Sri Ranganatha as your saviour. The Lord is beyond speech and mind. Dedicate yourself entirely to Him and to His service. Even the service you do to His devotees is also to Him alone. Does He not dwell in the heart of His devotees? Where else shall we find Him, if not in such saints like Thiruppan, Kuranga Purna and Kanchi Purna? These great souls though born in very low castes, what sublime faith and devotion they had. Thiruppan has actually bewitched Sri Ranga by his music. Take him as your ideal for contemplation of the Divine. Consider him as your very soul”.* His last message embodied true religious precepts and heartened his sorrowing disciples.

*Article on Thiruppan Alwar. Ananda Varta. Vol X. No. 1.
Page 8.

Alavandar left an organization of Vaishnavas and a doctrine to be elaborated and expounded by Sri Ramanujacharya. Alavandar continued and improved the Vaishnava doctrine left by Natha Muni. His powerful personality and profound teaching inspired Ramanujacharya to formulate a new philosophy called Visistadwaita and to consolidate the devotional energy of the people into a separate religious sect and a school of Vaishnavism.

Great as a poet and a philosopher, Alavandar shines brightly as a great mystic devotee of God Ranganatha and his illustrious life and teachings have profound influence on the religious life of Vaishnavism.

— — —

*"If He manifests as longing,
He will also manifest as fulfilment."*

—Mataji.

Evolution of Matter

3

Matter in the Making

D. S. MAHALANOBIS

Rupa : Luminosity

Tactile Energy (*Vayu*) + 'Luminosity Principle' (*Rupa*) (*Tejas*) or 'Luminiferous Energy'.

The evolution of nascent matter has gone through two of its stages, viz., Atomic Ether and Tactile Energy. In the third stage the binary Tactile Energy is converted into a ternary one by the integration of a third constituent, Luminosity Principle, which evolved in the wake of the binary combination *Vayu*. This triple energy is called *tejas* or Luminiferous Energy. It is the energy of heat-and-light, as distinguished from kinetic energy, *vayu*, described earlier. It should not be confused with the classical luminiferous ether, which modern science does not recognize.

But, what is 'Luminosity Principle' (*rupa*) ?

It is the principle which steps up the hidden 'luminous' quality in ether to present it as light. This lighting up of ether is due to its vibration, Vibration is a periodic motion. But it is not called kinetic energy by the ancients, since, according to them, it is a different energy just as light is different from electricity though both are today regarded as electro-magnetic phenomena. Vibration of ether produces light ; Tactile Energy moving in ether does not.

We should note that 'Luminosity' is a constituent of 'Luminiferous Energy'. The first is an elementary principle, while the second, a composite product. The former is a property of the latter. *Rupa* is a property of *tejas*.

Tejas evolved as a mid-way gradation between the first and the final stuff in the making of matter ; it occupies the

third place in the series : *ākāsa*, *vayu*, *tejas*, *ap* and *kshiti*. Like *vayu*, *tejas* is a distinct energy.

But what is light and how does the ancient view differ from the modern conception of it ?

In modern science light is a baffling phenomenon. Is it light waves or is it particles ? The scientists say it does not matter what it is, we can think of it either way, if we choose, "the equations of Heisenberg and Born fit in any picture".¹¹

The ancient physicists did not perhaps go into these precise details ; various aspects of light were well-known to them, however. We know on their authority that light is a composite phenomenon of three principles, viz., 'Ether', 'Contact' and 'Luminosity'. The result of their integration is a ternary product, which is light. Ether represents the basic form-stuff as always ; 'Contact' principle represents Tangential Energy ; and 'Luminosity' is associated with vibration. Hence, light is made up of ether particles as base, with two other energies, one of which (*sparsa*) imparts to it Tangential (rectilinear) motion, and the other (*rupa*) is a vibratory motion. The net effect is the phenomenon of light. Light particles (or waves) must therefore, travel at high Tangential velocity ; vibrating as it moves on at different frequencies, according to the quality of light. If the 'Luminosity' component increases, we may assume, the vibration frequencies too increase. Since light has 'Contact' principle as one of its constituents, it is a quantum phenomenon too.

Rasa : Affinity principle. Luminiferous Energy (tejas) + 'Affinity Principle'(rasa) = *Ap* or 'Differential Energy'.

In the next stage of evolution, the fourth notable development is the integration of 'Affinity Principle' with

11. L, Barnett.

the ternary product 'Luminiferous Energy', which is thus converted into a quaternary one, and bears the ancient epithet *Ap*.

What is *Ap*, 'Differential Energy' ?

It is a more involved form of energy than *tejas*, which is now stepped up in complexity by the integration of *rasa*. *Rasa* literally means sap or essence "which affects our desires and fears, cravings and shrinkings,"¹² that is, attraction and repulsion. In nature, it decides fusion and fission, attractions and repulsions, likes and dislikes, variations and invariance. They are the two terms of a binomial, so to say, the two aspects of 'affinity'. The opposite sets are not negations of each other. They are processes in differentiation towards multiplicity and diversity. *Ap* represents, in energy form, this multiplicative urge, covering all changes, transformations, composition and decomposition, either chemical or physical, or even biological, if we may presume it by inference. All these complex phenomena are due to *ap*. It is the 'differential' formative energy, a composite form of energy that initiates the process by which structures are built up in nature. Under different conditions it can also act as a disintegrating force.

Since we are in the penultimate stage of 'matter', with the last principle yet to evolve, which alone can give stability to structure, and though *ap* acts as a structure-building force, these structures are unstable. They disintegrate the moment they are formed. We can make a fair guess *ap* what really is and what the stabilizing principle could be in the making of matter. It, *ap*, is the electrical energy, and the stabilizer in question is gravitation, which evolves in the last stage.

Ap at bottom is the urge of new creation. This urge comes from *rasa*, 'affinity', which is the dominant constituent in *ap*. Things unite by affinity, males and females are

attracted to each other by it, and gametes conjugate to form zygotes under its compelling force. The physical union of men and women is really the attempt to satisfy this gametic urge to conjugate. Men and women are conscious gametes, if we may extend the denotation so far, and the germ cells are live gametes. In inanimate nature, this creative urge is represented by the positively and negatively charged electric particles, positrons (protons) and electrons—they are material (matter-forming) gametes. They are the structure-building factors in atoms. But these structures are, at this stage, unstable, as are the electric particles themselves. In the final stage of evolution, gravitational forces come into operation and give them the needed fixity of structures.

What, after all, is electricity ?

We know that electricity is 'Differential Energy' in ancient conception. It is due to electric particles that different atoms are what they are. Addition and subtraction of these particles in an atom changes it to a different kind of atom. Different chemical elements are nothing but different types of atoms cohering by identity in different groups. Electricity, in its evolutionary stage, is a quaternary product. It is made up of four constituents, viz., 'contact', 'luminosity' and 'affinity'; and it has also the rudimentary stuff, ether, as base. It, therefore, has them dynamic properties, viz., Tangential motion, vibration, and 'differential' affinity, i.e., attraction-repulsion.

How exactly do the two aspects of electricity arise, the positive and negative characteristics ? By differentiation, we may guess. It is noteworthy in this connection, that, in biological sphere, differentiation of sex characteristics into male and female is a later development from the bisexual units. There is some truth, it is evident, in the Biblical allegory describing how Eve was created from a rib taken out of Adam's flesh as a "help meet for him." Fission and fusion essentially are basic processes of new

creation in nature, both in the sphere of life and non-life. Differential Energy, *ap*, has the epicene characteristics of *rasa*, which seems to bifurcate as discrete units, *plus* and *minus*. They are then reorientated as electrons and positrons (protons), which have the urge to reunite, for example, in chemical combinations.

What is chemical affinity, one may ask. A distinguished scientist answers the question thus: "We can try to answer the question about the forces which bind together the atoms of different elements into the complex molecules of innumerable chemical compounds. Why, for example, do not atoms of sodium and chlorine stick together to form a molecule of table salt? In the 'shell' structures of the two atoms, chlorine lacks one electron in order to complete its third shell, whereas an atom of sodium has an extra electron left after the completion of its second shell. Thus there must be the tendency for the extra electron from sodium to go over into chlorine to complete the unfinished shell. As the result of this transition of one electron, [the sodium atom becomes positively charged (by losing a negative electron)], whereas the atom of chlorine acquires a negative charge. Under the forces of electric attraction between them, the two charged atoms (or ions as they are called) will cling together forming a molecule of sodium chloride."¹³

It is evident that chemical affinity is an electrical phenomenon. And we may infer from it, in a general way, how Differential Energy acts.

Rasa also represents the taste sensation of our tongue, which has differential affinity for different food items. How does this food affinity work? The tongue has innumerable taste-buds, each with its nerve connection to the brain. These taste-bud receptors are stimulated by food particles,

13. Dr. George Gamow.

“the substances acting in some way or other by virtue of their chemical constitution on the endings of gustatory fibres”¹⁴. The gustatory effect seems to be chemical, hence electrical, in nature. It is communicated to the brain to be interpreted as taste.

GANDHA : *Inertia or Gravitation*. Differential Energy (*ap*) + Gravitation (*gandha*) = *Kshiti*, i.e., Matter.

We must make it clear at this stage that Inertia and Gravitation are one and the same thing in Relativity. “Einstein’s Postulate of Equivalence consists essentially in an identification of forces of gravitation and forces of inertia.”¹⁵

Gandha, the fifth and last principle, evolves at the final stage. Nascent matter has gone through grosser and grosser involutions to arrive at its quaternary form, which *gandha*, in combination with it, now transforms into a quinary one. This is the grossest formation, *kshiti* of the ancient physicists, and matter in modern terminology. We began by defining matter as a quinary product; we now know that it is so, finished off with the estabilizing factor *gandha*, that is, gravitation. But what justification have we to label off *gandha* as gravitation ?

Gandha is derived from the Sanskrit verb *gandh*, to kill, to be hostile. In this original sense, *gandha* is a killing force, a controlling or hostile principle. It kills or subdues the violences and over-activities of other forces. Matter, predominantly a product of *gandha*, represents a state of these ‘killed’ forces. In the words of Sir James Jeans, “Matter being nothing but congealed radiation travelling at less than its normal speed.....Bottled up waves, which we call matter, and unbottled waves, which we call radiation.”

14. Foster’s Physiology, quoted by H. Aranya.

15. “Evolution of Scientific Thought from Newton to Einstein”, A. d’Abro.

What are the violent forces that gravitation kills? Forces that evolved earlier, viz., Tactile Energy (kinetic energy), Luminiferous Energy (vibration), Differential Energy (electrical forces) etc. These can be very destructive. It is gravitation that tames their fury and helps to build and stabilize the structure that 'differential' units (positive and negative particles) make possible. *Gandha* resists disintegration of matter. The universe holds together its contents, the different *bhutas*, because it has the attribute of *gandha*.¹⁶ How does matter retain its mass, if not by gravitation or inertia? Ponderability, density, resistance, in short, mass, are all due to gravitation, which is an inertial force identical with *gandha*. *Gandha* can, therefore, signify one thing : gravitation. It is a moderating, retarding or slowing down force, *tamas*, according to the ancient authorities. Einstein says almost the same thing about gravitation : "Einstein's law of gravitation necessitates a slowing down of time in the proximity of large masses of matter. If we accept the general significance of this fact as affecting all physical phenomena, it will entail the slowing down in the rate of vibration of an atom located in a gravitational field. This is the celebrated *Einstein shift-effect*, which has since been verified."¹⁷ *Gandha* is an integrating or binding force, an inertia-producing principle.

It is noteworthy that, in Indian mythology, gravitational forces have been allegorically described as Sesanaga or Ananta, a serpent king with countless heads. He is supposed to hold, by the Creator's assignment, the stars and planets in their places in *ākāsa*, bound in *nāga-pāsa*, that is, serpentine grip. *Sesa* means final ; the universe is in the noose of this final authority. Sesanaga is also designated as Sankarsana, which means strong attraction. All these characteristics, we have seen, appertain to *gandha*, gravitation.

16. वारिणो सर्वभूतानां पृथिवी गन्धलक्षणा । -Mahabharata.

17. A. d'Abro.

Gandha in relation to our olfactory organ means smell. It has to be perceived by inhalation. The free endings of rod cells in the olfactories attract and immobilize the odoriferous particles as if by gravitation, and transmit sensory impulses to the brain. Prof. C. V. Raman defined odour as characteristic molecule. His view was that "the molecule attached itself to the olfactory mechanism in the human nose and received the energy necessary to excite the low-frequency vibrations of its electrical structures; had these in turn excite the nervous impulses which passed through the olfactory nerves."¹⁸ The chief thing to note is that the olfactory mechanism catches the molecules by gravitation, when drawn in by inhalation. And that is the characteristic of *gandha tanmātra*.

It is interesting to note that gravitation on the physical plane, and smell on the psychic plane, have a curious relationship. Each represents the lowest form of degradation or grossness in its respective sphere. Grossness goes with gravitation or 'smell', as it were. Inertia or gravitation relates to mass, and 'smell' is the 'mass-sense'. The olfactory organ alone is capable of perceiving the cloying sensuous mass-feeling that smell can excite. Gravitation is the 'smell' of matter.

The smell sense is regarded as the lowest in gradation of our sense organs. "Elliot Smith has shown that the parts of the human brain correlated with the higher intellectual functions have developed at the expense of the olfactory centre."¹⁹ And it is significant that in lower animals, with little or no intellectual faculty, the sense of smell is generally very highly developed. It is a fact that smell is a more *tāmasic* sense, a mass-sense, usable for the enjoyment of the grossest mass. Animals with highly developed olfactory centre, especially, are the rankly earth-bound creatures given

18. Azad Memorial Lecture by Prof. C. V. Raman, New Delhi, 1962.

19. Aldous Huxley.

to unrestricted instinctive indulgence. Mother earth has a great pull on them, psychically, and they are strongly attached to her. The lowest type of lives are protozoans; they probably have "chemical-sense-activity related to smell" like germ cells. They, the earth-bound types, have no higher lives and enjoy low living. Men who have mental lives gravitate to higher existence, since mind is subtler than matter, which is "smelly", inertia-ridden. The lowest lives are a step above dead matter; they live in sloughy conditions, slothful and prolific. They are a link, as it were, between matter and life. Scientists have looked for this link in disease viruses, which, according to Dr. Gamow, "must be considered as ordinary chemical molecules, and as living organism at the same time." Nevertheless, "To regard them as the first step in the evolution of life from inanimate nature would almost certainly be a mistake, because as they exist today they depend on the existence of comparatively highly organized form of life."²⁰ The higher lives are mystic lives, mentally attracted to higher and higher relationship with the Spirit, which is at the farthest end from matter.

Let us look back to the stages through which the simplest nascent matter has evolved into its grossest involved form, *kshiti*, which is the cosmic matter of our experience. And the five evolutionary stages we have discussed are :

<i>Akasa</i>	<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Tejas</i>	<i>Ap</i>	<i>Kshiti</i>
Mono-	Binary	Ternary	Quaternary	Quinary
ether	Tactile	Luminiferous	Differential	Matter
	Energy	Energy	Energy	

The real genesis of our world begins at the last stage under the tremendous integrating influence of the gravitational forces. Until the emergence of gravitation, things were unstable. In its wake, we now have, in the offing, vague glimmerings of the shape of things to come, i.e., evolu-

20. "The Chemistry of Life", J. S. D. Bacon, M.A., Ph. D.

tion of the ordered universe from undifferentiated matter. This last phase of evolution is described in the next chapter.

Summary.

The origin of matter is a cyclic event in space. This space is an infinite uncognizable subtle substance known as *Avyakta*, the unmanifested ground. It is the extra-cosmic source of all existence. In this acosmic space, the birth of our universe took place as an inchoate stuff known as subliminal *ākāśa*, which is non-atomic, all-pervasive and motionless, the infra-sensible principle of kinesis in it being yet in a subdued form. An area in it is later charged with *parispandic* motion, and this charged area evolves as atomic space or mono-ether, which is known as derivative *ākāśa* or *ākāśa-11*. *ākāśa-11* has the property of *śabda*, called the first *tanmātrā*. The second *tanmātrā*, *sparsa*, or Contact-principle evolves next and combining with *ākāśa-11* becomes *vāyu*, Tactile Energy. This binary product intergrates with it the third *tanmātrā*, *rupa* or Luminosity-principle, and becomes ternary *tejas* or Luminiferous Energy. The fourth *tanmātrā*, *rasa*, Affinity-principle, evolves now and converts the ternary stuff into a quaternary one, which is designated as *ap* or Differential Energy. Differential Energy is the same thing as electricity in its pure state, which is unstable like other foregoing pure products. The fifth *tanmātrā*, gravitational principle (*gandha*), evolves last, and intergrating with the quaternary stuff, becomes quinary *Kshiti*. *Kshiti* is the cosmic matter of our experience. The five stages of evolution are : *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *tejas*, *ap*, and *kshiti*. They are mono-ether, binary Tactile Energy, ternary Luminiferous Energy, quaternary Differential Energy and quinary Matter respectively. Our world has evolved out of this quinary stuff by differentiation.

Matter, therefore, consists of, in a rough way : ether, kinetic energy (kinetic 'contact') light-energy, electricity and gravitation.

Mātri Līlā

(OCTOBER 1965—JANUARY 1966.)

Already long ago the Calcutta devotees had beseeched Mataji to reach there on *Mahālayā*, the new-moon day before *Navarātri*.* Until the last moment it was uncertain whether Mataji would go to Calcutta at all. But the "cease fire" between Hindusthan and Pakistan came just in time. Mataji left Varanasi on September 23rd and reached Calcutta on *Mahālayā*.

We have on several previous occasions reported in detail about *Durgā Pūjā*, which is always a very grand and joyous function, especially in Bengal. In former years, literally thousands would come and partake of a full meal of *prasāda* daily. This year for the first time *prasāda* was packed in neat little cardboard boxes and distributed in this manner.

Mataji shifted from our Ashram at Agarpara to Calcutta on October 6th, staying at the residence of Sri M. L. Ghosh where *Lakshmi Pūjā* was celebrated on October 10th (the full-moon night after *Durgā Pūjā*). On October 11th she left for Rajgir, accompanied by many Calcutta devotees, including Professor Tripurari Chakravarti who gave a daily talk at Rajgir. Dr. A. Lipski, a professor at California University came to Rajgir for Mataji's *darśana* and remained for three days.

On October 21st Mataji arrived at Varanasi where *Kālī Pūjā* was celebrated at *Diwali*. There is a history to this particular *pūjā*. About 35 years ago, when Mataji lived in Dacca, the grandson of one of her oldest devotees, Nishi-

* *Navarātri* are 9 nights holy to Devi Durga. The main *Durgā Pūjā* begins on the 6th night.

kanta Mitra (who later joined the Ashram) was suffering from an abscess in his ear. The sick child was then about eight months old and the doctors took a very serious view of his condition. Mataji, at her own place, picked up a needle and scratched the back of her hand with it. It was later ascertained that the abscess had burst at about the same time. The child was saved. Mataji had enjoined on the family to perform *Kālī Pūjā* every year at Diwali in grateful commemoration of the child's recovery. The child, now a grown-up man, had for a long time desired to have this *pūjā* performed in Mataji's presence. This year at last, he got the chance to arrange for it in our Varanasi Ashram. The scratch on Mataji's hand is still detectable.

After an interval of three years, Mataji was present during the *Annakut* festival on October 25th. On the same day also the foundation - stone of the main building of the Ashram Charitable Hospital was laid in Mataji's presence, and an upper storey above the Medical Out-door block ceremonially opened. These rooms will later be used as staff-quarters but have for the time being been occupied by Ashram patients. The allopathic and homoeopathic sections are working from 8-12 a. m. with four doctors in attendance. An average of 120 patients daily receive free treatment and free medicines. It is interesting to note that Mohammedan patients are in the majority. No distinction of caste or creed is made.

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On October 26th a strange little incident occurred during a *Nārāyana pūjā* performed by one of Mataji's nephews at the residence of the architect of the Annapurna Temple of our Ashram, Shri Manmohan Ghosh, a devotee of many years' standing. Mataji was sitting in the open courtyard, watching the ceremony. One of the attending girls saw a small insect on Mataji's *āsana* and wanted to remove it, when Mataji firmly caught hold of her wrist and told her

to leave the insect where it was. After a little while another girl approached Mataji and, seeing the insect, tried to brush it away. Mataji again prevented this. When a similar thing happened for the third time, Mataji took the towel with which her head was covered, carefully placed the insect on it, and put it on the shelf that was near her head. The insect had become completely still by this time and Mataji drew someone's attention to it, remarking that it was as if in *samādhi* (deeply absorbed in meditation). After the *pūjā*, which continued for two or three hours, Mataji took the towel from the shelf and, looking at the insect intently, said that it had left the body. She showed it to several of the people present. After cautiously wrapping it into the towel, she summoned Narayana Swami, who was asked to take the tiny creature to the Ganga and give it *jal samādhi*,* wrapt in the cloth that Mataji had worn on her head. Who can tell who comes to Mataji in what guise? This is one of thousands of mysterious incidents that constantly take place round Mataji.

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On October 27th, Mataji with a large party entrained for village Suriya near Hazaribagh Road Railway station, reaching there the next morning. On the journey Narayana Swami caught a severe cold and on arrival at Hazaribagh Road he had very high fever and breathing trouble. The attending physician diagnosed broncho-pneumonia. The Swami is an old man of 68. He was bed-ridden for the next few days and Mataji would go and see him daily, giving directions as to treatment and diet. But lo and behold, on the first evening of the *Samyam Vrata*, Narayana Swami, at Mataji's suggestion, gave an interesting lecture with a clear voice and with

* Usually dead bodies are cremated. But the bodies of *Sannyāsis* and of children below 6 months of age are tied to stones and immersed in the Ganga. This is called *jal samādhi*.



Hospital opening ceremony—Mataji with the Civil Surgeon and hospital staff.



Sri Dau Dayal Khanna, Health Minister U.P., visiting the hospital



Sri Bishwanath Das, Governor, U.P. visiting the Hospital.



Sri Bishwanath Das taking leave of Mataji.

hardly a cough to disturb it. This surely was an unusually speedy recovery, to say the least of it.

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When Mataji arrived at Suriya, our host Sri Jagannath Roy and Swami Paramananda, assisted by a band of helpers, were busy preparing for the function. Suriya has no municipal water supply. Water has to be drawn from wells. An electric pump was installed in one of the tube-wells and water pipes laid on for the convenience of the *vratis*. Many people were put up in houses in the neighbourhood. Since tents were not available, a kind of second pandal with partitions made of dhotis was improvised near the *Satsang* pandal. A large number of women were accommodated in this peculiar tent. One day, when Mataji went round inspecting the preparations, she saw a long row of hired tape-cots lined up in the open, ready to be put into the tent. She advised that they should be put into the sun and sugar sprinkled on them to make sure that they were free from troublesome insects. She then related a story from her early life. When she stayed at Ashta gram with Bholanath, she once visited her home at Vidya Kut.* There were bed bugs in the cots. Mataji watched the women trying various remedies with very little success. So she finally devised her own cure. When the whole family went away on a visit, she put all the cots into the sun and sprinkled plenty of sugar on them. This attracted large black ants which ate up the eggs and perhaps also the smaller fugs, while the bigger ones fled away. In any case, after three days there was not a single bug left.

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The 16th *Samyam Mahavrata* was held at Suriya, Hazaribagh Road, from November 1st to 7th. Every *Samyam*

* Mataji was then about 18 or 20 years old.

Vrata has had its own special note and has seemed different from all the preceding-ones, although the rules as well as the programme are more or less similar every year ; every one of these meetings has always seemed even more elevating and inspiring than the previous ones. This was so also on this occasion. Usually these gatherings are held in a place of pilgrimage to ensure a congenial atmosphere. Suriya, although not a place of pilgrimage, seemed singularly favourable for a function of this kind. It is said that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu walked through the jungles there singing the name of the Lord and thereby sanctifying the whole countryside. However this may be, the beauty and the deep peace of the large open spaces, with picturesque hills rising in the distance, the complete freedom from the hustle and bustle of modern life, the absence even of shops and traffic were invaluable assets. Mataji was in an excellent mood throughout and obviously felt at home and at ease in the new house that had, in the midst of Mr. Roy's spacious gardens, been built for her, Didima and the attending girls. The number of participants in our week of *sādhana* was much smaller than usual, only about 150 compared to 350 last year at Vrindaban. This also was a distinct advantage. It gave the function an intimacy and a concentration that had probably never been achieved before. The climate was just perfect, neither too hot nor too cold, and every one consequently kept good health. Hardly even a cough could be heard during the hours of collective meditation. One of the rules of the Samyam Vrata is to refrain from going up to the dais to offer flowers or other things to Mataji. For the first time this restriction was observed by one and all. A number of eminent *Mahātmās*, such as Mahamandaleswar Swami Maheshwarananda of Bombay, and several other heads of well-known Āshrams had come from considerable distances and gave excellent discourses on *Samyam* (self-mastery), on the *Gītā*, *Bhāgavata*, *Upanishads*. It is really surprising that, although we have listened to talks on *Samyam* for fifteen years, this time again

so many new, very striking and significant things were said on this subject. Mataji herself spoke very little. A few words, however, she repeated two or three times: "You practise *samyam* (self-control) so that *samyam swarupa* may come about. *Samyam swarupa* means that *a-samyam* (uncontrolled behaviour, speech and thought) becomes impossible. Action, speech and thought are then naturally disciplined: right thought, right speech and right conduct have become your second nature, no effort is required any more. All unnecessary movement of mind and body ceases. When one attains to *samyam swarupa*, then THAT for the sake of which *samyam* is practised will stand revealed."

Swami Sharananandaji said among other things: "By the *Samyam Saptah* Mataji gives the *vratīs* initiation into *Samyam*. There is a great difference between teaching and initiation: teaching appeals to man's intelligence, while initiation transforms the I-ness. *Samyam* signifies the relinquishment of all unnecessary action, talk and thinking. To do, say and think exclusively what is really necessary is called *samyam*."

Swami Chidanandaji, the head of the Divine Life Society at Rishikesh, pointed out that control of the tongue and the palate was the key to self-mastery. "To conquer the tongue is like killing the commander-in-chief in battle: the whole army is thereby put to flight."

Swami Sadananda of Paramarth Niketan, Rishikesh, one day spoke about *Guru* and *śiṣya* (disciple): "The *Guru* knows that the disciple is *Brahman*, while the disciple believes that the *Guru* is *Brahman*. When the disciple comes to know that the *Guru* is *Brahman*, he himself has attained to the status of a *Guru*".

Swami Chetan Giriḥi talked mostly about the fleeting nature of all happiness that is not of the *Ātman*: in fact, no other happiness exists at all. When a desire has been fulfilled, the mind becomes still for a moment and in that

stillness the *ātman* is reflected, which causes happiness. Man, however, thinks that he is happy because his desire has been fulfilled. But actually the gratification of desire causes only new desires to arise. There is only one desire that, when fulfilled, results in the cessation of desires, namely, the desire for God, Truth or self-realization.

So long as we are identified with the body, it is impossible to conquer greed, passion, anger, pride, jealousy and the rest. Sri Chetan Giriji related a story to illustrate this. A man was lying on a cot that was riddled with bugs. He killed twenty, fifty and more, but there were still a sufficient number to prevent him from sleeping. At last someone advised him to come down from the cot and sleep on the floor. At once he was able to rest in peace : The moment we cease to identify ourselves with body and mind, and become aware of our true nature, trouble ceases for us.

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There is no town near Suriya, Hazaribagh city being 32 miles away. It had therefore been taken for granted that there would be very few chance visitors. However, the rural population seemed to take ever greater interest in the proceedings. They came on foot and on cycles, men, women and children. There was often not enough space in the comparatively small pandal. Many sat and stood outside, listening to the talks of the Mahatmas and to the *kirtana*.

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At the collective midnight meditation that always marks the end and climax of the *Satsang*, a *Nārāyaṇa Silā* was enthroned on the dais near Mataji's seat. This was an innovation. After the meditation, Mataji said : "In future, whenever this particular *Nārāyaṇa* is available, you may perform your *Samyam Mahāvratā* in front of him,"

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A *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* is a special kind of blackish stone, regarded as a form of the Lord, which only a Brahmin is allowed to worship. It is found in Nepal only. The legend has it that Lord *Viṣṇu* was once upon a time threatened by the planet Saturn. To escape him, he hid inside a mountain called 'Gandak' in Nepal. Saturn then took on the form of an insect and began to cut holes into the mountain. Thereby gradually, bit by bit of the rock crumbled down and fell into lake 'Damodar Kund' that was below the mountain. A *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* is thus to be regarded as the very body of Lord *Viṣṇu*. There are a number of signs by which a *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* distinguishes itself from every other stone and can be recognised as much.

This particular *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* has a story of its own. When on August 14th, 1965, Mataji on her way from Dehradun to Jodhpur, halted in Vrindaban for a day, a man connected with our Ashram told her that he had recently found a *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* on the road while going round the temples of Vrindaban. Although not a Brahmin, he had picked it up and taken it with him. It then occurred to him that the raised place near Mataji's house in the Vrindaban Ashram, where twelve *Sannyāsis* had planted twelve *tulsi* shrubs, would be a suitable abode for the *Śilā*.* He had therefore buried it in the earth below those plants. Mataji asked him to bring the *Śilā* to her. Some of the people present were of the opinion that it was an ordinary stone, but Mataji had the *kheyāla* that it was a *Nārāyaṇa Śilā*. She washed and cleaned it with her own hands and three *chakras* (circular holes) were found in the stone. Mataji then gave the *Śilā* to Brahmacharini Udas and asked her to do *pūjā* to it regularly and to offer *bhoga* (food) to it. Usually, however, women are not permitted to worship a *Nārāyaṇa Śilā*.

* The *tulsi* plant is supposed to be very dear to *Nārāyaṇa*. Below and above a *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* *tulsi* leaves are always kept.

During the time when Mataji played the role of a *sādhaka*, she had once performed a sacred thread ceremony on herself and for the next few days lived exactly as is enjoined on a Brahmachari after his investiture with the sacred thread. When Bhaiji came to know of this, he was greatly surprised because he had never heard that according to Shāstric rules, women could be given the sacred thread. Yet, the *sādhanā* which Mataji had gone through, had without exception been in keeping with the *Śhāstra*. On inquiry, it was later confirmed that there actually was provision for this in the Hindu Scriptures. Mataji then had the *kheyāla* that three of the women connected with her should be initiated as Brahmins and thus wear the sacred thread and practise the *Gāyatri mantra*. These three were : Marani (Bholanath's niece who had been brought up by Mataji), Gurupriya Devi and Udas. This happened about 26 years ago. The rule is that after that initiation a woman has either to get married immediately or else live in the Ashram of her Guru. It so happened that Marani's wedding took place two days after the investiture. Gurupriya Devi and Udas had both left their families and were already staying with Mataji.

Last August, in Vrindaban, on giving the *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* to Udas, Mataji said : "Look, after a quarter of a century, your initiation as a Brahmin has at last borne fruit. The Lord in His grace has let Himself be found on the road so that you should be able to worship Him in this form."

That same day, Sri Prabhudatta Brahmachari came along with a basket full of vegetables, inviting himself for a midday meal. However, when he heard that Mataji was due to leave the same afternoon at 3'0 clock, he felt that the time was too short. He thus said : "Since I am living in Vrindaban and you are here only for a day, you are my guest and so please come and take your midday meal in my Ashram ?" Mataji agreed. Since Udas had to feed Mataji, her *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* had also to be taken to Sri Prabhu-

dattaji's Ashram for *bhoga*. When Mataji showed the *Śilā* to the Brahmchariji, he told her that a *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* with three *chakras* was supposed to be most unlucky and would bring nothing but trouble and distress to its worshipper. Very likely someone therefore had thrown this particular *Śilā* away. Thereupon Mataji at once started cleaning the stone again and two more *chakras* came to light. The *Śilā* was later shown to Pandit Agnishwatta Shastri (Batuda) who declared that it was a *Narasingha Lakshmi Śilā* and extremely lucky. It would bring success in all his undertakings to one who worshipped it. A *Narasingha Lakshmi Śilā* was in fact the *Iṣṭa Devata* of Sri Padmapāda, a direct disciple of *Ādiguru Sankaracharya*.

Whenever Udas travels, the *Nārāyaṇa Śilā* is tied round her neck with a silken cloth. Every day before feeding Mataji, *bhoga* is offered to *Nārāyaṇa*. At Suriya Mataji showed the *Śilā* to all the Mahatmas present and related to them its strange history.

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After the *Samyam Saptaha* was over, Mataji remained in Suriya for another eight days. Most of the *Vratīs* left on completion of the function and only a comparatively small group of people stayed back. The pandals were dismantled and *satsang* was now held either on Mataji's veranda or in the largest room of her house. Mataji was in a delightful mood. The self-effacing spirit of service of our host and his entire family who had taken end-less trouble to make the gathering a success and to see that every body was comfortable and at ease, was now amply rewarded. Mataji highly praised the place and its people, calling Sri Roy's property an Ashram and enjoining on the family to live as Ashramites, expressed the hope that she herself would come there again before long. Mataji used to go for walks in the open fields twice daily. She would walk into the compounds of neighbouring villagers, talk to them and give them "*Rāma Nāma*'

in her own unique way. "Which of God's names do you like best?" she asked. "We like all of them." "But which of them do you repeat?" The villagers felt at a loss and remained mum. Mataji stretched out three fingers of her right hand and pointing to each of them, said: "This is Rāma, this Krishna, this Siva. Now catch hold of one!" The next day she again went to see the villagers and asked them whether they had started repeating the names. She one day stood in the field surrounded by the villagers and sang *Rāma Nāma* to them and made them repeat every line after her. Some of the people became friendly and brought vegetables, guavas and sugarcane from their fields for Mataji, which she distributed. On the last day she went to say good-bye to them, calling them loudly by their names until they one by one came out of their houses.

Of Mahatmas only Sri Chakrapaniji had remained after the *Samyam* week. He used to come and talk to us at *satsang* time. Mataji also was in a communicative mood, joking and relating incidents from her life, sometimes till quite late. It is not often now-a-days that one finds Mataji so relaxed and approachable.

On November 11th, Mataji and her whole party, including Sri Roy and his family, visited Katrasgarh colliery at the invitation of one of its owners, Sri Morarji bhai, who supplies the Ashrams with coal. Morning and evening *satsang* was held in his house and every one present was entertained to a sumptuous Gujerati meal.

One day Sri Chakrapaniji took Mataji by car to a Mahadeva Temple, called *smashaneshwara* near a river. They found a *sadhu* there who had lived in this very solitary place for twelve years, subsisting on whatever food and clothes God would provide for him. Mataji talked to him and the next morning sent some of our *sannyasis* to him with gift of grains, fruits, vegetables and a blanket.



Sm. Sucheta Kripalani, Chief Minister U.P., visiting the hospital site along with Dr. Sushila Nayar, Union Health Minister.



Dr. Sushila Nayar Sri P.N. Naskar, Deputy Health Minister, and, Sm. Sucheta Kripalani at the Varanasi Ashram.



Sri Biswanath Das, Governor, U.P. at the Varanasi Ashram,



*General Secretary, Anandamayee Sangha explaining hospital scheme to
Dr. Sushila Nayar and the Chief Minister, U.P.*

On November 15th, Mataji boarded the train to Varanasi, taking our hostess and one of her daughters with her for a long stay. At Varanasi, during Mataji's *darsāna* time at 5p.m., some of the talks from the *Samyam saptaha* were reproduced by the tape recorder daily for half an hour for the benefit of the Varanasi devotees. The recording is perfectly clear and it was joy even for those who had been at Suriya to hear once more the words of wisdom of the *Mahatmas*.

Early morning on November 23rd a solar eclipse was spent in very beautiful kirtan sung mostly by the pupils of the *Kanyapith* for two hours, with half an hour's silent meditation in the middle. Mataji herself sprinked Ganges-water on everyone's heads at the start and again blessed all when they returned to do *parṇāma* after a bath in the Ganges at the end of the eclipse.

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One day, at Varanasi Mataji and Didi were talking to a small group of people about the time when Mataji was keeping *Mouna* (silence). Her facial expression was then stonelike. Not even her eyes would indicate whether she recognized any one who approached her. Nobody knew how long Mataji would remain in that state or whether she would ever revert to a different one. Didi sometimes cried bitterly, saying: "Mataji does not know me anymore." During those times Mataji once said to her: "Wait and see, a time will come when I shall seem so ordinary that you will be amazed." Mataji laughed and remarked: "This time has now come."

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On November 24th the Governor of U.P., Sri Viswanath Das paid a visit to Mataji. He was received on the veranda in front of the temples and sat near Mataji for half an hour.

On November 26th morning the Chief Minister of U.P.,

Srimati Sucheta Kripalani and the Union Health Minister, Dr. Sushila Nayar were shown round the new hospital. They also came to Ashram and had Mataji's *darsana*. Dr. Sushila Nayar returned again in the evening to see Mataji.

On November 27th Mataji left for Dehradun. Since it was the first anniversary of Buni's death-day kirtan was performed by the girls for six hours and a feast was given to *Kumāris* and *Brahmins* before Mataji's departure.

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Mataji arrived in the Kishenpur Ashram on November 28th morning. On the 29th *Rudrābhisheka* was started at Kalyanvan in front of the Rama and Siva shrines and continued every morning until December 4th. Mataji used to attend daily for some time. On the 29th foundation stones for four buildings were laid in her presence, first, for two houses in the grounds adjoining Kalyanvan, belonging to Sm. Rajadevi Khaitan and then for two cottages in Kalyanvan itself. On November 30th, *Akkhanda Rāmāyana* began in Buni's memory in the Ashram hall ending in the afternoon on December 1st. The reading was done in relays mostly by women.

Mataji remained extremely busy throughout her short sojourn in Dehradun, attending functions and talking to people both at the Kishenpur Ashram and at Kalyanvan. On December 4th, while the final ceremony of *Rudrābhisheka* was taking place at Kalyanvan, a *Gita Jayanti* was celebrated in the hall of the Kishenpur Ashram. In the morning the girls recited the entire *Bhagavad Gita* and three lectures on the *Gita* were delivered in the evening in Mataji's presence.

On December 6th Swami Chidanandaji and a number of other *Sannyāsīs* and Ashramites of the Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh had lunch in our Ashram at Mataji's invitation. In the evening some of the Swamis tape recorded our Ashram

kīrtanas. Mataji sat in the hall for three and a half hours and at the end sang two wonderful *kīrtanas*. One of the Swamis of Sivananda Ashram has taken those tapes to South Africa.

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On December 7th Mataji left for Delhi, visiting three places in Dehradun on her way to the Railway Station. In Delhi, Mataji did not stay in our Ashram, but in the newly-built house of Sri J.N. Dutta. Sri Dutta had arranged for the recitation of the whole of the *Gīta* and *Durga Saptasati* and for *Kirtana* continuing for 12 hours. Mataji was to leave on the 11th morning for Vrindaban, but at the urgent request of the whole family reinforced by the entreaties of other devotees of Delhi who wished to celebrate *Nama yajna* for 24 hours in Mataji's presence, she agreed to postpone her departure by one day. The *kirtana* was, as usual, performed by the men all day and by the women all night. Mataji took active part and was present for a long time even at night, returning again early morning for the termination of the very successful function.

Before motoring to Vrindaban on the 12th, she paid a flying visit to our Ashram, leaving Gurupriya Didi there. Mataji went to Vrindaban mainly to see the progress of the Radha Govinda Temple that is being built in our Ashram there. She remained in Vrindaban for three days only. *Satsang* was held every evening. One day Pandit Sundar Lal said : "Ma, we are all beggars, begging for your grace." Ma replied : "And I am the greatest beggar, ever begging for your greed, anger, jealousy, pride, egoism to be laid at the feet of the various deities of your temples."

One night Mataji slept in *Rāma Bhavan*, although the house is not yet quite ready. Maharani Satya Prem Kumari of Mysore who is building it, stayed with her companions at the Modi Bhavan, next door to our Ashram. It had been her desire that Mataji should sanctify the house by spending one night there first of all.

On December 15th Mataji reached Allahabad, where she put up at the Satya Gopal Ashram. She usually goes there for three days before Durga Puja, but this year it could not be fitted into her programme earlier.

At Allahabad, a research student of the University one day came and posed many searching questions. She was full of spirit of enquiry and had a lively argument with Mataji. Finally Mataji said to her: "Listen first to all I have to say and do not contradict just yet. Think it over quietly, and if you have any questions left, we shall discuss again to-morrow." The next day, the girl returned, saying that all her doubts had been solved. She had not a single question to ask. Mataji presented three flowers to her.

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On December 18th, Mataji motored to Vindhyachal. There she at last had a really restful time, at least for the first few days. She had been expected to go to Varanasi for a short visit, but this was cancelled and she remained in Vindhyachal without a break until she moved to the Kumbh Mela at the Triveni on January 11th. Vindhyachal is still a place where no crowd ever collects round Mataji. Ashtabhuj Hill has not yet been invaded by modern civilisation and has preserved its charm and solitude. To spend even a couple of days there with Mataji is a privilege which is treasured by Indian and foreign visitors alike.

Mataji remained in the *Kumbh Mela* from 11th to 25th and thereafter stayed for three nights in the Ashram of Sri Prabhudutt Brahmachariji at Jhusi. On January 25th Sm. Indira Gandhi, the new Prime Minister of India, Sri G. L. Nanda, Home Minister, Dr. Sushila Nayar, Health Minister, Sri G. S. Pathak, Law Minister and a number of other high Government officials came to our camp in the *mela* ground for Mataji's *darsana* and sought her blessings. We hope to write further details about the *Kumbh Mela* in next our issue.