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MĀTRI VĀNI

Do you know why worry arises? Solely because God is thought to be far away. Unrighteousness also has the same cause. To remove God into the far distance is called unrighteousness; that is to say, the idea that God is far away is itself unrighteousness.

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While working with your hands, His name should be repeated mentally. The work you do with your hands is the *mudra*. With this very *mudra* sustain the flow of His name. Nursing the sick—anything at all is His service, His work. Let this be your attitude of mind.

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If one wants to go beyond belief and disbelief one has to believe in Him. Instead of doing so, you believe in all kinds of other things.

Just as there is a veil of ignorance, there is also a door to Knowledge.

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HE IS. If He were not, where would I be? He is in close touch with me. If you keep up this attitude of mind, you will see Him and Him alone. If 'I' remain, let me be His servant, His handmaid. Thus I shall not be separate from Him anymore. In order that this spirit may prevail, sustain uninterrupted *japa*. The more you think of your Beloved (*Iṣṭa*) the more your faith will increase. Do not allow your

mind to wander in many directions, but become one-pointed. Why should there be fear and anxiety? Solely because I imagine He is not near me. He is holding you. Why fear? If you cling to the One in whom fear is not, how can there be even a question of fear?

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Blame may be likened unto cowdung. When it lies about just anywhere it is of no use. But when mixed with earth and turned into manure it is put under plants, what lovely flowers, fruits and grains will not grow! Similarly, if an aspirant can bear to be blamed and criticized, that is to say, if he uses it to improve his character, it will be very beneficial—just as the soil is made fertile by manure. Do you see how much good even blame can do? Blame also is none but He, the One.

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While living in the world you can with a calm spirit attend to spiritual practices. Then only will that which is to be given up, fall away. And that which can never be relinquished, which does not go, that indeed will remain.

Mātri Satsang

SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDA

(Translated from Hindi)

9th of December, 1947.

Question :—Sri Uddhavaji was Lord Krishna's constant companion, his childhood friend. In spite of this, why did Lord Krishna when He left the world and went to His own abode say to Uddhava : "Go to Bhadrinath and practise *sādhana* there !" Why should He have separated His eternal companion from Himself ? Why did He not take him to His supreme dwelling-place ?

Mataji : What has one to do to please God ?

Question : God alone knows everything.

Mataji : If God knows everything, then He does according to His knowledge. Are not all His companions equal in His *Līlā* ? When the Lord sent Uddhavaji to Badrinath, who is Badrinath ? God is there also of course. God Himself is indeed everywhere. By sending Uddhava to Badrinath, He sent Him but to Himself. Whatever you may behold, it is all God's own form. Bow down to everyone. To go to Badri Narayan and do *tapasyā* there, all this happens according to God's will. The entire world is His form. Get into the habit of seeing Him in everything. *Tapasyā* is also nothing but God. Do whatever He prompts you to do. You see yourself as separate from God, but God tells you to see Him in all forms. All shapes, all movement and all rest are contained within Him. In the field of His play, He and none but He is present in every form.

The Guru's words are mantras. According to the Guru's instructions practise *sādhana* with deep religious feeling and God will have to respond. Just as the parents know what will make their children thrive, so also God

knows exactly what is wholesome for you and what harmful. To ask : "why has God done such and such a thing" is out of place. From your point of view it is of course right. God and His gifts are one. Don't think of yourself as far away from Him. Everywhere God and God alone is present. The father's wealth belongs to his son. Try to see God in every shape and in every mode of being. Man receives according to his desire. Separation is one of God's ways of manifesting. In the separation of Radha from Krishna there also lies a certain charm. Does it not ?

Question : Some people go into a state of *samādhi* when listening to kirtan or other religious music. What actually is this *samādhi* ?

Mataji : Who goes into *samādhi* ? He who goes into *samādhi* becomes one with God. To remain absorbed in meditation for an hour or two is not called *samādhi*.

Question : Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa also went into *bhāva samādhi*.

Mataji : Ordinarily when *bhāva* occurs to someone during kirtan, yet afterwards he again becomes engrossed in worldly affairs, one has to understand that this was just a momentary glimpse of Light, nothing more than that. What is achieved by repeating God's name is all right. As to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's state, this is quite a different matter. This body is not going to say anything about his *bhāva samādhi*. Just as an M. A. can teach small children the alphabets, but thereby he does not lose the status of an M. A., precisely in a similar manner, once real *samādhi* has occurred one does not divert from this state anymore. For you small and great exist, but *There*, there is no question at all of small and great. Even while moving about, *samādhi* may supervene. For one who has reached the ultimate state, for him all conditions are equal. Some people have the capacity to recognise such a superman.

Question : How can by time-bound knowledge the essence of things be attained ?

Mataji : When you attain to real knowledge, you will have found the essence of things.

Question : Truth is one. When we adhere to one particular doctrine, why do all the others seem false to us ?

Mataji : There are many paths to Truth. But Truth itself is one, it knows no distinctions. Depending on his predilections and temperament man adopts the path most congenial to him. It is said : "There are as many doctrines as there are Munis."

Question : Momentary glimpses of Light are experienced but they vanish. Why should this happen again and again ?

Mataji : Even though they vanish time after time, they will appear again.

Question : What is the simplest method to make them permanent ?

Mataji : If you cannot do anything else, at least seek *satsang* ; or if you are unable to secure the company of real saints and sages, read scriptures, meditate, worship, contemplate God. In the measure as you exert yourself you will make progress on the spiritual path.

Question : God is all-pervading. How can this be proved ?

Mataji : A teacher or professor tests his pupils. Why ? The tests are meant for the benefit of the students, not for the examiner ; the teacher knows how much his pupils have learnt. The purpose of examinations is to make the students aware of their shortcomings. Before putting God to the test, you must first scrutinize yourself ; you have to adhere to your practices and it is God who is the examiner. The examiner is beyond examination. The test is taken for your sake, so that you may know yourself. Many people

do in fact practise *sādhana* with a view to God-realization, but they do not pay attention to their short-comings, such as anger, greed and so forth. This is why they become diverted from their aim. Thus tests and trials are not for the professor but for the students.

Question : Again and again doubt assails the mind. Is this a good sign or a bad one ?

Mataji : It is natural that doubts should arise to those who are on the path to find God. Until you reach the state in which doubts are impossible, doubts are bound to come. When problems arise, they also call for a solution. In the course of one's practice, doubt will awaken. Those who have not started learning and those who have completed their course successfully, for them there are no questions. When queries spring up in your heart, put them before your Guru again and again. Whatever your Guru says, accept and follow without criticizing. At the same time proceed also with your spiritual practices. Just as you eat, drink, sleep, and do your professional work regularly, exactly with the same regularity pray to God to make you free from doubts. By sustained effort fire will be generated and its heat felt as well. Once the fire of real knowledge is kindled, everything will be burnt to ashes. By giving a little one receives a little; obtaining a fragment is worth nothing. When you pray for any particular thing, it will be granted to you, but you will not get the whole. Burn up everything by the fire of Knowledge or else melt everything by intense devotion.

Question : Mataji, every day I listen to your words—I also pay attention to what you say. How much I have heard you speak about God ! And yet, when I get engrossed in my work, why do I not remember Him ?

Mataji : Fickleness is one of the characteristics of the mind. For lives and lives you have formed the habit of letting the mind turn outward. The mind is so used to it that now you

will have to reverse its movement and make it turn inwards. So long as the mind's movement does not tend within, it is impossible to find God, therefore try your utmost to make your mind face inwards. By becoming inward turned, God, who is enthroned on the lotus of your heart will be revealed. If the mind roams about outside, it is turned away from God. By practising *sādhana* consistently, a condition ensues when worldly conversation seems distasteful. One is unable to enjoy it. Therefore, so long as you do not enter the current that drives you inwards, you must continue your efforts to make the mind face within. The mind cannot simultaneously move in two directions. Aiming at the two is detrimental ; try to realize the ONE. Worship God, but not for the sake of showing off. Become steady in your practice. What will be the result of this ? There will be no more interruption of your practice. Later you will transcend both practice and non-practice and realize oneness.

Question : Some people are of the opinion that the visions, etc. that come through spiritual practice are due to an unbalanced mind. Is this true ?

Mataji : An unbalanced mind is the cause of vision ? How lovely ! God is manifested everywhere and you have to attain to the vision of Him. How can this vision be due to an unsound mind ? To go beyond the pairs of opposites is the characteristic of Enlightenment. How can this be achieved by a deranged mind ? By the vision of God even insanity is cured.

Question : Is it possible to behold God-with-form (*sākāra*) ?

Mataji : Most certainly.

Question : If you meet a man in the street who is in pain, won't you take pity on him, even though he be unworthy ? Won't you assist him ? Will not God help him ?

Mataji : When appealed to with a sincere heart, God will definitely help.

Question : God is all-pervading.

Mataji : Vasudeva is enthroned upon the lotus in everybody's heart.

Question : When little ants fall into water, we pick them out. Won't God have compassion on us and lift us up ?

Mataji : There are two ways in which God bestows His grace: by favour and also by disfavour. In the world there is both good and bad. Whatever path is right and proper for anyone, that God will choose. In the shape of disease, of *kriyā*, of work, in every shape God's grace can be perceived. At the end of sorrow it comes to light. There is yet another way of looking at it: by sending adversity God destroys adversity. By making you ill He purifies you. God alone is the true doctor who purifies you within and without. Now look at it from yet another angle of vision. Who hits whom ? Who is ill ? That you see sickness is an error. Only God alone is present everywhere. He and He and none but He !

From the Diary of a European

MELITA MASCHMANN

(*Translated from German*)

Varanasi, November 1963.

For the last six weeks I have been watching Mataji very carefully. I do not know how many thousands of people I have seen her greet one by one. For nearly four decades, day after day, men and women have crowded round her, in need of consolation, in search of knowledge, in adoration and out of curiosity. Invariably she receives them with a smile of irresistible charm. This smile has many nuances, only its loving-kindness is unchangeable.

The other day I realized that now and again I am observing Mataji with the unconscious motive to discover at last a smile which is but a mask, not the expression of heartfelt loving-kindness. To this day I have not succeeded and I am happy about it, although it would give me a questionable satisfaction to see her, at least once, smile like a prime minister, or a filmstar, or a nuclear scientist, or a bishop. It might perhaps give me some kind of satisfaction because what I see here in Mataji is—according to human understanding—hardly possible. And because it 'disturbs' to experience something that according to reason cannot be: the expression of a kind-heartedness that by the 'wear and tear' of 35 long years has lost nothing of its freshness, spontaneity, genuineness and strength.

To-day, after Mataji had vanished into her room, she asked one of the girls whether many people were waiting for her. When this was confirmed she at once got up and went to meet them. She walked as I had never seen her walk

before : with difficulty. Probably she is quite ill. When she sat in silence (in her place - 10 minutes later she left again—her smile was indescribably touching and expressive. "Look at me, my dear ones", it seemed to say. "At times the flesh feels rather miserable. But God is full of infinite glory and strength. Gaze at Him through this sick body."

One of the women who has travelled with Mataji for some time told me yesterday that Mataji's illnesses are quite different from our own. One day she may appear to be seriously ill and the next day again perfectly well. It all depends on herself. When she is ill, we pray to her to make herself well again for our sake.

To-day she really is well again. At any rate she appears as fresh as ever, although deep shadows can be detected under her eyes. The crowd pressing for private interviews increases daily. This morning the old, nearly blind *sannyā-sini* came again for Mataji's *darśana*. She seemed in a specially deplorable condition. While fumbling about at Mataji's feet she cried and wailed. Obviously she is losing the last remainder of her eyesight.

Mataji spoke to her with unclouded serenity, laughing several times in between. She said : "It is time for your inner eyes to open. God assists you in this by making your outer eyes blind. You know it yourself : that which is really worth while, you have never seen with your outer eyes. What you could still perceive with them would only distract you. That which you are going to behold with the eyes of wisdom is infinitely more beautiful than what the ordinary eyes can see. But as long as you are not willing to close them, the eyes of wisdom will not open."

For a moment the *sannyāsini* remains still, then she starts lamenting once more. For a second, surprise passes over Mataji's face. How can you rebel against God's will so persistently ? it seems to say. Mataji silently looks at the *sannyāsini*. A short flicker of sympathy in her eyes quick-

ly again gives place to crystal clear cheerfulness. "You will not be the first of my friends to acquire real sight by becoming blind."

Often I have noticed that Mataji responds to lamenting and wailing by laughter. Of course, not in all cases when people weep at her feet. Sometimes she caresses the desperate person in silence, sometimes she very gently says something, but most of all she replies to tears by laughter. Many times she has said, "You should cry only for God; for the realization of Him alone should your tears flow."

What was the significance of the short flicker of sympathy in Mataji's face to-day? As far as I know I have never before noticed this expression with her. At first I felt non-plussed at her laughing at the sight of tears. Was the sympathy to-day an ascent to Christian compassion or rather a touch of human weakness, similar to the emotional pity with which most of us react to this kind of situation?

She sees what we cannot perceive: the imperishable behind the earthly processes of decay, and the Light in which our human darkneses are only like the shadows of a fly on a white wall. In order to wail with us, she would have to deny her wisdom and descend to our ignorance. But does not comforting assurance lie just in her laughter? I have seen how quickly people dry their tears. Perhaps those who still weep when they go away, afterwards come to understand why Mataji laughed.

I notice that it has already become a matter of course to me that Mataji can read in our heads and hearts as we read in books. How does such a conviction develop? I have heard it stated a few times, but that by itself would not persuade me at all. Again and again I have the impression that Mataji "catches me red-handed" at some thought. To-day I was just reflecting about the Lemurian landscape she may sometimes have before her inner eye, when the souls of a hundred people are spread out in front of her like open

books. I was sitting in a corner. Suddenly she turned her head in my direction and, looking, at me, called my name and laughed loudly.

A young doctor told me, "When Mataji is sick, this has two causes. Either she takes the illnesses of others on herself, or our wickedness makes her suffer, which manifests in her body."

A few days ago, someone brought some sweets to the Ashram and all who partook of them fell ill. Fortunately only twenty or thirty people were affected, but they were in a rather pitiable condition. A child, an old woman and a delicate *sannyāsi* got seriously ill. This morning at *darśana* time, Mataji discussed this incident. Already for quite a while I had been observing a strange lightning in Mataji's face. For a long time she did not say anything, suddenly she laughed loudly. After calming down a little, she asked: "Do you know why I am laughing?. I have just been reminded of how I saw you lie that morning when you had caught food poisoning. On entering the room, you can't imagine how difficult it was not to laugh. But I did not want to hurt you, so I suppressed it. But now - now it is coming again, now it may be allowed its free course." And it comes over her in a veritable storm. It is shaking her for several minutes. She is unable to utter a single word. Tears are running down her cheeks. Her whole body is one mighty laughter.

By and by the laughing fit decreases and at last subsides. Mataji dries her tears with the lappet of her dhoti and then tries to speak, but it is still vibrating in her throat and the abating earthquake is still visible in her shoulders. "How miserable you were, my friends. How you prayed: 'He Bhagavan, he Bhagavan !' "Still laughing, she imitates the whining of the sick. "Then you remembered God, because you were afraid you would die: 'He Bhagavan, he Bhagavan !' Do you see how beneficial it was for you ? It will help you to get over your lukewarmness." Mataji once more laughs a

little, while looking with affection from face to face. Gradually the people also join in her laughter. Most of them had so far looked rather puzzled. I often notice that they find it difficult to understand why Mataji is laughing. In one or the other face some faint resentment can be detected on occasions. That I am always irresistibly forced to laugh with her and able to give in to this compulsion, may be due to the fact that I only rarely understand what it is all about (to-day I have by way of exception a good interpreter.) Usually it does not puzzle me : Why on earth is she laughing ?

In the meanwhile Mataji continues: "When the doctor came that morning I at once said to him : 'Don't feel anxious, all will be well.' After examining you, he again came to me. I asked him three times : 'How does it look ?' At first he said with hesitation : 'Hopeful'. The second time his voice became somewhat more reassuring : 'Yes, hopeful'. Only to my third question he replied with conviction : 'It is hopeful, Mataji.' In the evening, after the worst was over, he told me that three of you had been dangerously sick. But I was sure that nothing would happen."

Mataji looks round with friendly derision. All at once she starts laughing again. Or rather : she does not laugh herself, it laughs in her. It passes through her body like a tempest and she gives in without resistance. Again the gradual subsiding of the outbursts. "I am now laughing about something that happened thirty years ago", she says, "I have just been reminded of it. I got a terrible fit of laughter, although it was out of place. We spent the night in a temple at Dehradun. Early morning in the dark, Bhaiji sat and meditated. Suddenly we heard the priest approach. Bhaiji did not speak at that time and this body* was also keeping *mouna*. He got up and wanted to go near the priest so that he should not enter the pitch dark temple and perhaps stumble over us and take us for thieves. But Bhaiji

*Mataji.

was not quick enough. The *pūjārī* really thought burglars had broken into the temple and wanted to arrest Bhaiji. The two men struggled with each other in the dark and I stood there, laughing and laughing.....”

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Yesterday morning a gentleman from Calcutta came to the Ashram with his ten years old nephew. The boy had a large, malignant looking abscess on his forehead. His uncle felt so worried about the child that he cried. At mid-day I saw them again. Radiant. The gentleman told me : ‘When I came to Mataji with the boy, she said : ‘Ah, here he is. I thought he would come.’ She then put her hand into the air over his head, saying : ‘Don’t feel anxious, he will soon be all right.’ The same afternoon the boy was playing with the other children. The pain had subsided. This morning the inflammation had decreased considerably. The gentleman (a Government official) is convinced that Mataji has saved the child.

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Last night an old, one-eyed *sādhu* in ochre robes with a *brahmachāri* dressed in white who was also quite an old man, came for Mataji’s *darśana*. Mataji offered her own *āsana* to the *sādhu* and pressed him to sit on it. She first stood up to greet him. Mataji spoke to the bearded *sādhu* as if he were her father.

This morning the two old men returned, the *brahmachāri* walking behind his master at a respectful distance. Mataji stood up and offered to the *sādhu* a place by her side on the couch. When he refused to accept it, as he obviously thought it too great an honour for him, Mataji was about to sit down on the floor next to him. Thereupon he gave in. Strange to see the two sitting side by side. The one-eyed old man, erect and motionless, with fixed expression; a perfect

yogi. Mataji relaxed, leaning against the wall, chattering, sometimes laughing, graceful and expressive in the gestures of her hands. Suddenly one can again see and feel distinctly the girlishness in her. One forgets her age completely on such occasions. She addresses the *sādhu* as 'Pitāji' and about herself she speaks as his little daughter.

But she does not *play* the role of a young girl, she *becomes* that. To the very sound and pitch of her voice. A little later she is again the mother who comforts, or the sage who interprets a difficult passage of a scripture, or the judge of peace who settles a dispute, or the physician who gives advice as to the treatment of a patient, or the seer whose eyes reflect super worldly light: *Mātri Līlā!*

Tat Karma

“GAURIDASI”

*There is a state in the spiritual life where unconditioned self-sprung action is possible, because there are no ties. And where no ties exist, there is no danger and no wrong path—one cannot take a false step.**

—MATAJI

Some time ago, feeling that writing about spiritual life when one is only a beginner on that treacherous path must be detrimental to one's progress, I asked Mataji if I should continue to do so or not. Her reply to that was merely : “Whatever God causes anyone to do.”

It has been experienced again and again, by others as well as myself, that Mataji seldom, if ever, gives a direct, decisive answer regarding what one should or should not do. Yet, if one thinks about it or rather just allows the mind to rest as it were, in the apparently evasive words of such a simple remark as that given above, letting it connect itself, as it will naturally do, with the one great aim which is the true content of whatever Mataji has to say, it becomes ever more pregnant with meaning. It leads one deeper and deeper into the realm of silent surrender and beyond that to where it makes no difference one way or the other, whether he speaks or does not speak. “The question of solution or non-solution will then cease to arise : whether one says ‘yes’ or ‘no’—everything is THAT.”*

However, where questions do still arise, I might now ask, how are we to discover, in the course of any action whatsoever, if that action has been ordained by Him? Trying to move in the light of Mataji's response to my doubts, how can I discern whether or not God is causing me to write these lines ? Is it not rather ego seeking to express itself, when it would be better for all concerned if it kept still ?

* Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma,

Perhaps mother's reply to a problem I put to her the other day will shed some light on this also. The question was regarding the attainment of what Mataji refers to as self-sprung or spontaneous action as opposed to self-willed or ego-produced action. I asked her how it is possible to attain to spontaneous action, to the idealized "planless life" when one is obliged to live a life regulated by one's work in the world, which must be done according to a definite schedule and under conditions that are not in the least conducive to spiritual aspiration. The question was in a sense, of course, wrong. For in relation to the ideal of spontaneous action it can as well be asked of the life of one who is exclusively on the path of the spirit : How can self-sprung action arise from living by a strict routine, of any sort? And Mataji's answer came in response, not to my implied complaints about my life as it is, but to the essential question. She said, "When all work is done in the awareness of God, (*Bhagavad buddhi*), that is to say with the attitude that God alone is the actor, the work and the act of working, and if this attitude then comes of itself (spontaneously) there is hope that the ego may lose its hold."

The thing to be discerned then is not whether He is the cause of this or that particular action but rather *that He is the cause of all action*. What is to be found out is He Himself. It is the ego that thinks itself to be doer, whereas, in fact, not only is God the cause of our action, He is verily the action itself. Further, to *know* this fact—that there is nothing but He, is the sole aim of all action.

However, merely to act with no thought of Him will not do. It is the attitude that constitutes *sādhanā*, even though so long as the attitude is consciously, deliberately practised it is an act of the ego. As long as I am aware that I am the doer, or making an effort to think "I am not the doer" there can be no question of freedom from action or self-sprung action. Only when that *bhāva* comes, as Ma says, *of itself*, does ego begin to lose its hold; and only by sustain-

ed practice of the awareness of God can it eventually arise spontaneously. And, as Ma has also told us, it is not possible to maintain successfully *Bhagavat buddhi* during the active round of our daily life without practising *japa* and *dhyāna* regularly as well. The two forms of practice nourish each other as it were ; and what holds good for the one holds good also for the other. Only what in time, as the result of continued effort, becomes effortless, spontaneous, has the power to cut the knots of the ego, to destroy the veil of ignorance. *Japa* must become *ajapā* ; and how many times has she not said that the only real meditation is that which comes of itself ?

Therefore, in order to be free, it seems we must willingly be bound; in order to experience the world as His spontaneous *līlā*, we must not only carefully regulate our every action but, also, equally carefully, control our conscious attitude towards it,

In essence, Mataji said exactly the same thing to the *vratis* during *samyam saptāh* last year when she declared. "You practise *samyam* (self-control) so that *samyam swarūpa* may come about. *Samyam swarūpa* means that *asamyam* (lack of control) 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 anymore. All unnecessary movement of mind and body ceases. When one attains to *samyam swarūpa*, then THAT for the sake of which *samyam* is practised will stand revealed."

It may well be, as indeed it must be, that He is *all* action, uncontrolled as well as controlled, but without *samyam* this cannot be known. Someone once asked Mataji, since one's evil tendencies are due to evil *samskāras* from previous lives, from where did the first disposition to evil action arise ? Her somewhat surprising answer to this query was that to find out this very thing was the purpose of our *sādhanā*.

Again she has said, many times in many different ways, but I quote her from *Words of Shri Anandamayi Ma*:

"...He is infinite ! Out of your union with this infinity spring your actions, feelings and thoughts, at the present time or in the future, in whatever form that He may be pleased to assume,"

How full of paradox is the spiritual life ! Little wonder then that we sometimes find that He has assumed in us the form of doubt, and we come to Mother full of questions. All action, *all* thought, of whatever nature, spring from that One. Nevertheless, without practice, without control, without sustained effort, that origin of all, which is our Self, cannot be known. Furthermore, neither can That be known by the means of any action or attempt at inaction whatsoever. No effort on our part can reveal Him who is ever and only Self-revealed,

"Even when the state of *samādhi* has been reached, during which one seems to be wholly absorbed within, this also," says Ma, "is still a state. Yet, when by this spontaneous inner process (*antarkriyā*) the veil is lifted, then the Vision of Reality may come about. It can never come through outer activity, such as the attempt to efface desire."

And again: "Supreme knowledge does not come *through* anything. Supreme knowledge reveals Itself. For destroying the veil there are suitable spiritual disciplines and practices."

Therefore, must we put forth conscientious, sustained effort: in order to attain spontaneous "effortless being." We must practise *samyam* so that *samyam svarūpa* may come about. Then only is there hope that this veil which is the sense of "I" will be destroyed and THAT may stand revealed, THAT which is the origin and cause of all that is seen and unseen; THAT which alone IS.

*Yā devī sarva bhūteshu vritti rūpena samsthita
Namastasyei namastasyei namastasyei namo namaha*

Psychosynthesis and the Ishopanishad

PROF. BIRESHWAR GANGULY

Introduction.

The present essay is a humble attempt to interpret the Ishopanishad in the light of the latest researches on dynamic psychology and psychosynthesis, specially based on the works of Dr. Roberto Assagioli, Chairman of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, New York.

Dr. Assagioli's original essay on 'Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis', published in Hibberts Journal (London) was subsequently revised, enlarged and printed as a separate text in 1959 by the Research Foundation and his essay on 'Self-Realization and Psychological Disturbances' was published by the Foundation in 1961. The Foundation came forward in 1965 with the publication of Dr. Assagioli's magnum opus : 'Psychosynthesis' ; A Manual of Principles and Techniques.

The word 'psychosynthesis' or 'mental synthesis' has been used by several psychologists, and psychiatrists, e.g. Janet, Bezzola, Neutra, Bjerre, de Jonge, Trub, Freud, Jung, Maeder, Caruso, Stocker and Kretschmer.

The concept of psychosynthesis as gradually developed by Dr. Assagioli, while including the usage of his precursors, is much more comprehensive, definite and near Indian Yogic psychology. In this age of extreme materialism and extroversion, it is a happy augury to find that after the publication of Shri Aurobindo's 'Life Divine' and 'Synthesis of Yoga', some Western psychologists have tried in a scientific way to explain the total personality of man and rehabilitate him on the glorious peak of Vedanta.

Assagioli mentions the following schools of thought, which have also tried to make valuable contributions to the knowledge of human nature :

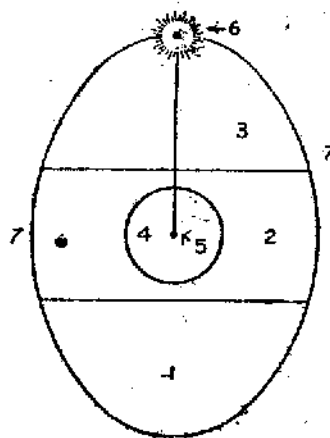
1. Psychosomatic Medicine, 2. The Psychology of Religion, 3. The Investigation of the Superconscious, 4. Psychological Research or Para-Psychology, 5. Eastern Psychology (especially Indian), 6. Creative Understanding, 7. The Holistic Approach and the Psychology of the Personality, 8. Inter-individual and Social Psychology, 9. Psychiatry and, 10. The Anthropological Study of man.

The Total Personality of Man :

Assagioli gives a pluridimensional conception of the human personality, which includes not only the three Freudian levels, viz., conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious, but rather the following seven levels¹ :

Diagram I

(The Total Personality of Man)



1. The lower unconscious.
2. The middle unconscious.
3. The higher unconscious or superconscious.
4. The field of consciousness.
5. The conscious self or 'I'.
6. The Higher Self,
7. The Collective Unconscious.

1. The lower unconscious contains the following elements:

- (a) The elementary psychological activities which direct the life of the body.
- (b) The fundamental drives and primitive urges.
- (c) Many complexes, charged with intense emotion.
- (d) Dreams and imaginations of an inferior kind.

1. Assagioli, R : *Psychosynthesis*, p. 17.

- (e) Lower, uncontrolled parapsychological processes.
- (f) Various pathological manifestations, such as phobias, obsessions, compulsive urges and paranoid delusions.

2. The middle unconscious is formed of psychological elements similar to those of our waking consciousness and in this region our ordinary mental and imaginative activities are developed just before their birth into the light of consciousness.

3. The higher unconscious or superconscious is the source of higher intuitions, artistic, philosophic or scientific inspirations, ethical imperatives, higher feelings of altruistic love etc.

4. The field of consciousness designates that part of our personality of which we are directly aware. It is in this field that there is an incessant flow of sensations, images, thoughts, feelings, desires and impulses, which can be observed, analysed and judged.

5. The conscious self or 'I' is not identical with the wider field of consciousness, but is rather a small nucleus or luminous centre of consciousness. The layman, however, confuses between the two, as he lacks self-introspection.

6. The Higher Self is not the empirical ego or the conscious self. It is the real Self, which remains above and unaffected by the flow of the mind-stream or bodily conditions. It is the '*Atman*' or '*Brahman*' of the Upanishads and the norm of spiritual quest. The conscious self below is merely a blurred reflection of the higher self. This Higher Self is the real nucleus of personality and the synthesizing centre according to the Upanishads, though very little is definitely known regarding this is modern psychology.

7. The collective unconscious, surrounding the human personality corresponds roughly to Jung's collective uncon-

cious,² which includes elements of different natures, namely, primitive archaic structures. Assagioli's concept is more comprehensive and matter-of-fact, in as much as it includes other human beings and the general psychic environment. It is in fact the natural, social and psychic environments, in which the individual lives and with which he reciprocates. It is the '*Yat Kincha Jagatyāng Jagat*', i.e. the universe of movement in the cosmic world, of the *Ishopanisad* and it includes the *Varnashrama-dharma*, i.e. the four castes and the four ways of life of *Srimadbhagavat Gita*.

Diagram No. 1 helps us to reconcile the seeming duality and the real unity and uniqueness of the Self in a rough and ready fashion. Man does not live by bread alone. He is trying today, standing on the crater of a nuclear volcano, to achieve an inner homony.

The Process of Psychosynthesis :

A synthesis or integration of the total personality of man may be said to be the goal or norm of Self-realization according to Assagioli. The following are the stages for the attainment of this goal :

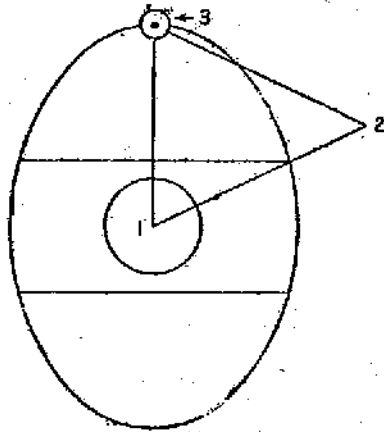
1. Thorough knowledge of one's personality.
2. Control of its various elements.
3. Realization of one's true Self—the discovery or creation of a unifying centre.
4. Psychosynthesis : The formation or reconstruction of the personality around the new centre.

The first two stages need no elaboration. Assagioli's point of departure from Freud, Adler, Jung and Frankle is the emphasis on the third and fourth stages, in order that the healing of the inherent infirmity of man may begin and a happier integrated self be born.

2. Jung, C.G. : *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, London, 1928, pp. 118-9.

Diagram II³ below illustrates the significance of the external unifying centre for the ultimate realization of the Self.

Diagram II (Psychosynthesis)



1. *Conscious self or "I".*
2. *External Unifying Centre.*
3. *Higher Self.*

We have to break the cell of the lower empirical ego and realize our true Higher Self. Some may find the methods of inner discrimination and concentration, as in Vedanta and Raja-Yoga respectively, sufficient for the purpose of Self-realization, but others may find the above methods difficult and may adopt the dualistic method of finding an external unifying centre, which inspires and integrates the personality.

In the words of Assagioli, "the men and women who cannot reach their true Self in its pure essence can create a picture and an ideal of perfected personality adequate to their calibre, their stage of development and their psychological type, and therefore can make this ideal practicable in actual life."⁴

For some, such an ideal model may be the ideal of an artist, or a philosopher or a scientist or a prophet. The ardent patriot makes a typical projection of his Higher Self in the motherland and in the process not only makes great sacrifices for the country, but also achieves a synthesis of personality.

3. Assagioli, R : *Psychosynthesis*, p. 26

4. *Ibid*, p. 25.

The ancient Hindu ideal married woman identified herself with the husband, who was her master, lover and Guru, and thus found it easy to build up a happy integrated life. The Hindu dualistic devotee finds the external unifying centre either in the Guru or in the idol of the deity. Shri Rama-Krishna Paramhansa realized his Highest Self through the worship of the image of Mother Kali, whereas Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Aurobindo found their external unifying centre in the motherland.

“When the unifying centre has been found or created, we are in a position to build around it a new personality—coherent, organized, and unified,”⁵ asserts Assagioli and this is, according to him “the actual psychosynthesis.” He emphasizes the dynamic creative power of a genuine ideal model, which can utilize the great suggestive and creative power of images. In the Ishopanishad, this ideal model, this external unifying centre is the Sun-god (*Pushan, Surya*).⁶

(To be continued),

5. Ibid. p. 26;

6. *Ishopanishad*. 15 & 16.

Parsis—Do They Believe In God ?

PROFESSOR A. N. GHOSE

The religion followed by the Parsis is generally known as Zoroastrianism. It was a line of cult or faith prescribed by an Indian prophet (about the 7th century B.C.). This religion was so powerful that it could rule over the then Greek culture which was regarded as the highest school of western philosophy. Its influence was so great at the time that it illuminated the entire Trans-Himalayan world.

History does not reveal much about the Parsi religion (Mazdaism or Zoroastrianism). Many are under the impression that it is nothing more than a few dogmas and lifeless prayers recited by priests in the form of a daily routine. Even now the Parsi devotees have to depend on legendary writings of western authors (Roman, Greek, German, French, English, etc) for exploiting the depths of this noble faith, but they cannot readily appreciate the information given by those writers.

We find very strange statements by foreign authors, which cannot be reconciled to facts. Rt. Reverend Dr. Prideaux, treating of the *saddar* (vide 'Ancient Universal History' IV 206) remarks in one place : "Zoroaster preached incest ! That nothing of this nature is unlawful, a man may not only marry his sister or daughter, but even his mother." The Bishop, of course referred to only Christian and Jewish authorities and not to any Parsi or Zend author.

Like the ancient vedic Agnihotris, the Parsis worship Nature and Fire. Fire to them is not 'Physical Fire.' It is an emblem of God. We know well why the Aryans worshipped Fire and in what esteem they held this powerful Nature God. The Aryans recited beautiful hymns in praise of Agni (vide Rig Veda Hymns). We find in Parsi literature that he who would penetrate the secrets of Sacred Fire and

unite with it, as the Hinju Yogi unites with Brahman, must first unite himself, soul and body, to the Earth, his mother ; to Humanity, his sister and to Science, his daughter. "Parsis worship Fire as power (see Hindu Tantra worship) and consider it the Mother-power of Science.

Colonel Olcott, in the course of his lecture on 'The Spirit of Zoroastrianism' says that the religion of the Parsis is in agreement with the most recent discoveries of modern science. He writes that fire pervades all nature in its life and soul, is the cause of the motion of the molecules which produces the phenomenon of physical heat. The fires from all sources are collected as so many fragments of the Universal Life—into a sacrificial blaze which should be as perfectly as possible the complete and the collective type of the Light of Ormazd (Divinity).

This type of worship of Divinity (God) through *yajña* (sacrifice) recalls that of the Bhagavad Gita of the Hindus :

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

"Know thou that from Brahman action groweth and Brahman from the Imperishable cometh. Therefore the all-pervading Brahman is ever present in sacrifice."

Zoroastrianism, like the Vedas, worships Fire as divine inspiration. Fire is not only visible fire to the Parsis. They look at fire as they look at Nature's *vibhūti*, the (greatness) in the sun, sea etc, which are supposed to be the hidden grandour of the Absolute Ormazd (Ultimate Reality or Absolute Consciousness). The Parsi is a mystic, a devotee at the altar of sacrificial fire. There is absolutely no place in an impure heart for the worship of Fire revered as Divine Power. The mystery of their drawing fire from heaven for the blessings of mankind reminds of *ābāhan** of the vedic Hindus, 'Elmes

* Calling of fire.

Feuer' of the Germans, Lightning of Cybele, Torch of Apollo, Fire of Parsi Altar, Fireflame of Pluto's belt, Temple of Athens, etc of the Ancients. The Parsian 'Haoma' is vedic *soma* (sacrifice of veda), the juice of which is used at sacrificial gatherings. This 'haoma' plant is regarded by the Parsis as God and its exhilarating effect may be compared to that of the Aryan soma plant which was brought from heaven by a bird called Aparna. Soma plants as referred to in the Vedas are carried down to the sacrificial *vedi* in a chariot drawn by two oxen.

The juice of the Soma plant (*somarasha*) is a popular drink of the Gods.* Those who drink this somarasha (wine) attain divine vision. The Parsi belief of 'Hermes' Rod' is a mystic magic rod or stick reminding of the stick of the Hindu *Dandi sannyāsins* and Gossains; and the priest's holding of the rod at the time of conferring blessings on the devotees, exactly corresponds to the Hindu priest blessing the devotees by holding his sacred thread or *japa mālā*.

The Parsi temples are dedicated to Fire. They worship it in the same spirit as the Aryans were doing. We find in the Vedas about Agni: Agni is God-Agni (Latin '*Agnis*'). According to the Rig Veda he is next to Indra. He is *upāsya* (adorable) in sacrificial ceremonies and rituals. He is known all over as the source of light and food. The necessity of light and fire led the Aryans to the conception of a Divinity. This is thus God-fire. He is the only God present in all. He invites *Rithurk* (priest) Usha. He is also addressed as Father of Sacrifice or as Master of the household. Men acquire fortune and children through him."

The Parsis worship Fire as Light of Ormazd. They believe in magic and sorcery to wield supernormal power for shaping their fortune. I therefore call this religion a "Philo-

* Indra is a deity specially addicted to the love of soma. (ref. The Rig veda and Vedic Religion by C. A. Clayton. P. 85.

sophic—superstitious cult based on scientific doctrines. And it is more a vedic religion than any other of the present world. Dr. Darmester (ref. The Sacred Books of the East, edited by Max Muller, Vol IV, p. 28) shows that the Zoroastrian Avesta (Book of knowledge) has its source in the Hindu Vedas. "The Avesta and the Veda are the two echoes of one and the same voice, the reflexes of one and the same thought : the Vedas are the best lexicon and the best commentary to the Avesta ... Avesta is like the Hindu Gita, Moses' Law of the Bible and Koran Sharif of the Moslems. These Scriptures express the voice of God and are to be used by the pious devotees."

Their belief in *Avatāras* (Dastur), their prayers and mantras in fire temples, their belief in occult power, (*mantra śakti*), their worship of Nature, etc remind of the *tantrik* and vedantic teachings of the Hindus ; and from a critical study of the lives of the pious Parsi devotees we find that their line of worship or meditation and religious faith tends finally to Ormazd (which corresponds to *Brahman*). Dabistan says : "Having heart and body full of Thy (God's) remembrance, he who owns nothing but God in himself, gets the final knowledge and attains everything by prayer." In the Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna, 'He is the Fire' "वसुनां पवकश्चास्मि". The utterance of the last word of the mantra of the Hindus is called as '*Swāhā*' (the wife of *Agni*). The Parsis speak of the advent of an *Avatāra* mounted on a white horse (C/o Kalki Avatāra of the Hindus on a white horse) and they believe in cycles of creation like the Hindus.

From the Persian Dabistan we further know how noble is this fire religion : "The world is a book full of knowledge and justice. The binder of the book is Destiny, the binding—the beginning and the end. The future of it is the law and the leaves the religious convictions."

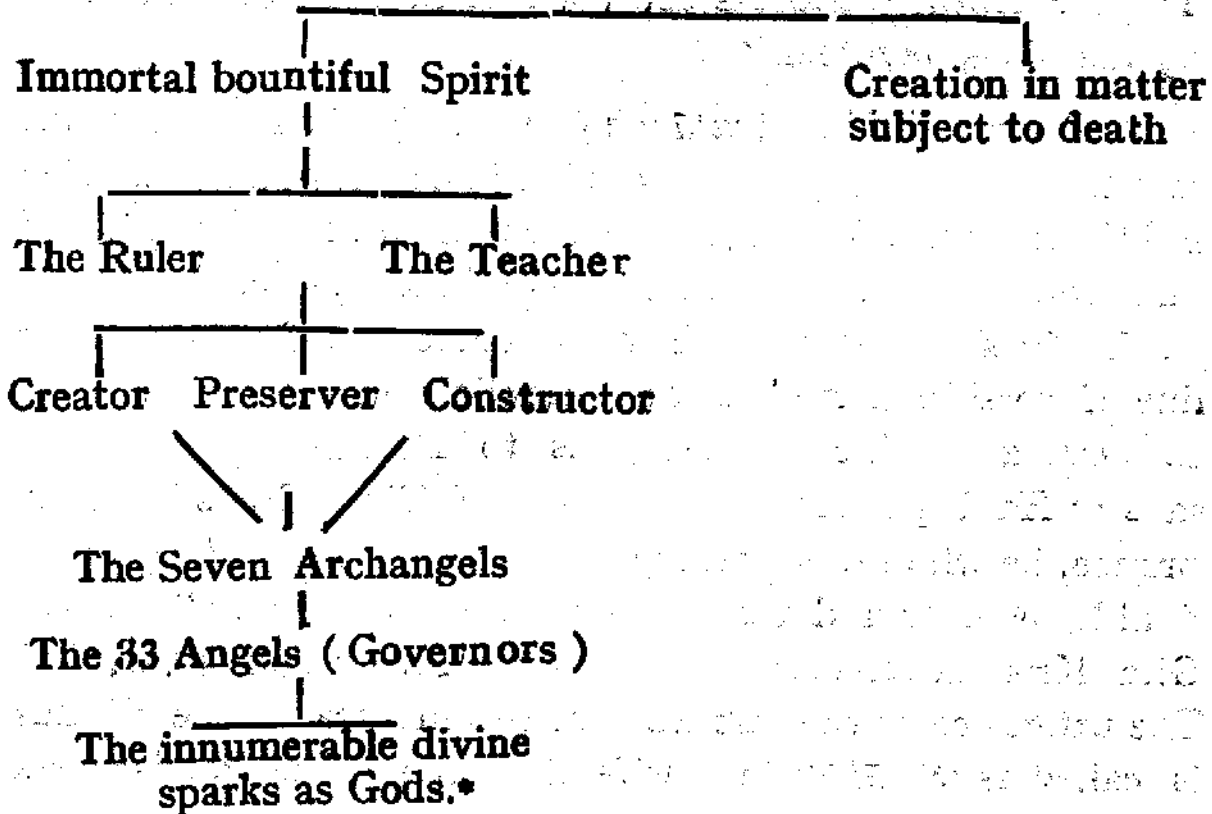
The Parsis form a small minority in India. We find in literature that there are only about one lakh of Parsis in

India and their religion owes its origin and development to Zoroaster alone. They say that Zoroaster got the teaching from *Ahura* (God) and in every function of their life they mention full of gratitude the name of Zoroaster. Their sacred book is called *Yazashna* and their language is, after Pehlevi, 'Pazand,' which is now current.

The Parsi scheme of God and Creation is :

God (as boundless time before creation)

The source of existence in limited time.



* Reference : 'Message of Zarathushtra' by D.K.S. Dabu, M. A.,

Universal Religion.

By K. G. AMBEGAOKAR, I.C.S. (Rtd.)

The history of religions in the world presents a curious and depressing feature. While religions in themselves have an ennobling, unifying, cementing and strengthening effect, they have at the same time proved to be the source of the greatest persecutions and the bloodiest struggles, turning humanity into warring camps. The division of the same religion into dogmas and denominations, like the Roman Catholics, Protestants and Puritans among Christians, Shias and Sunnis among Mohammedans and the various sects under Hinduism, have led to even worse strife, intolerance, and cruelty of which the Spanish Inquisition with its tortures and burnings stands out as the most glaring and disgraceful example. It is extremely disheartening to reflect that such horrors should be perpetrated in the name of religion. What is the reason for this and is there no remedy ?

The primary cause appears to be the fact that humanity generally gets only a partial illumination about the Divine Reality and even the prophets of some of the faiths may not have had a complete understanding of it. Their followers had probably even less comprehension and propagated doctrines hardly contemplated or countenanced by the founders. Also some kind of rituals are bound to be a feature of religious worship and what was intended to be a means of attaining the end became in course of time the goal itself, leading to further exclusiveness and insincerity. Moreover an enthusiast for any cause always wants to convert everyone else to his views, religious fanatics are keenest on proselytizing and this causes more discord with other faiths and practices. Nothing has caused greater misunderstanding and misery than religious and denominational differences. Is there no way of stopping this senseless discord and disharmony even among seekers of the Divine ?

The answer obviously is that we must have a religion which is universal, which is not tied to one particular prophet or worship of God in one special form. After all, the fundamental basis of all religion is belief in one God who creates and sustains everything in the universe. The real difficulty lies in the fact that the conception of that God differs widely in different faiths. In some he is all compassion and love, in others he assumes a terrifying aspect before which everyone must tremble, in still others he is destructive and ruthless like the forces of Nature. The mystics say he is ineffable, intangible and immanent, all this is beyond the comprehension of the ordinary mortal. All the same it is possible to reconcile all these conflicting conceptions because the One Ultimate Reality must be all this and more. The universal religion must be one which brings about such reconciliation and synthesis. Is there such a religion ?

Some would say that Vedanta is such a religion. The pure religious faith of the Hindus, free from all ritual or idol worship may qualify for this position, but it would be best not to identify the universal religion with any existing faith. It must be non-denominational and at the same time be able to include all faiths, creeds and forms of worship. It can be called universal only when it can open its arms and embrace everyone, whatever the designation of his own personal religion. It must not do violence to that faith, only make it nobler, higher, all-inclusive. Tolerance for every type of approach to God is the first essential. It must be a forum where Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, followers of Taoism and Confucianism, all can meet at the same level.

Whether we agree that Vedanta can provide such a common meeting-ground or not, it is undoubtedly true that where the teaching partakes of the basic principles of that system there is room for inclusion of all faiths. My own Guru is a Mohammedan, a disciple of Sai Baba, and at his feet sit men, women and children drawn from all creeds and

communities. Names of various Hindu Gods as well as of Allah are chanted but what we meditate on is the one Ultimate Reality and His identity with our own imperishable Soul or Self. We lose ourselves in the love of the Guru and through him strive to reach the Infinite.

Here we have what Aldous Huxley calls 'Perennial Philosophy,' which he describes aptly in the following words. "The metaphysics that recognises a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethics that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being."

He goes on to say—"The nature of this one Reality is such that it cannot be directly and immediately apprehended except by those who have chosen to fulfil certain conditions, making themselves loving, pure in heart and poor in spirit... The divine Reality can be directly apprehended only by a mind in a state of detachment, charity and humility... Based upon the direct experience of those who have fulfilled the necessary conditions of such knowledge, this teaching is expressed most succinctly in the Sanskrit formula, *tat tvam asi* ('Thou art that'); the *Atman*, or immanent eternal Self, is one with *Brahman*, the Absolute Principle of all existence; and the last end of every human being is to discover the fact for himself, to find out who he really is."

This, in a nutshell, gives the basic principles of a Universal Religion. Here there is no narrow dogma and being based on eternal truths realized by the greatest seers of all religions it does not go against the teaching of any religion. It is undoubtedly the essence of Vedanta but need not be identified exclusively with it. The mystics of all religions including Christianity and the Sufis of Islam accept it as the basis of their faith. That is because those who have received the call and taken to the path must ultimately arrive at the

same goal, wherever they may start from and whichever way they pursue. Ramakrishna Paramahansa proved this by following not only the Yogic and Tantric methods but also the Christian and Mohammedan practices, from all of which he reached the same One Ultimate Reality. It is not something based on mere speculation or belief. It is what the sages have experienced and seen for themselves. The main reason why this knowledge is not available to ordinary persons or even the highly intellectual ones is that it needs absolute purity and humility, as pointed out by Aldous Huxley.

In Bhavan's publication, "Hinduism, doctrine and way of life," C. Rajagopalachari says :—"The essential in 'enlightenment' or *jñāna* is a firm and effective conviction regarding the soul as distinct from the body and its imperishability..... There is that in me which cannot perish ; indeed I am that and not this body or the senses working in this body ; I cannot be hurt by anything that can happen except by the evil that I think or do ; the evil things that come from within me defile my soul, not anything that comes to me from outside ; the evil that others do touch my body but it cannot touch the soul. This is the faith that is common ground for all religions:.....

"The phrase used in Vedantic literature to express the realization of one's soul as a thing apart from the body and its senses is that one should *see* the soul. Intellect and feeling alike must directly and clearly get the vision. Intelligence, enquiry and instruction apart, goodness and purity of life are necessary to enable one to 'see' one's soul which is hidden within one's inmost being. A wall or a hill or a tree is visible to saint and sinner alike. Why should character be a condition prerequisite for spiritual knowledge ? The answer is, the soul is not a material limb or organ of the body. It is not located in any particular part of the body. It permeates body and mind. Unless the mind is clear, that which permeates it will not assume a distinct form or become known. It is one thing

to see external objects, but it is altogether a different process to perceive an entity which permeates and is hidden in our own being and whose imperceptibility is due to our passions. Introspection may enable us to analyse our minds and we may ratiocinate about the subject. But to 'see' the soul, we should not only direct our eyes inwards but calm the mind and clear it of passion. Purity of thought and a state of detachment almost amounting to joy arising out of the liberation from external stimuli, will remove the turbidity of the medium through which we have to see. It should be easy to appreciate that at the back and beyond of the mind, so to say, cannot be seen unless the medium is clear and free from passion. It is not intellectual ignorance that blinds our vision, but desires and attachments. These prevent us from 'seeing.' If this truth is realized, it will be understood why a virtuous and pure heart is necessary to see the soul within us. The mind and the senses must be properly brought under control in order to realize the spiritual substance within us which is distinct from the body. Our reason must be cleared of the delusions born of passions and desires. With unremitting attention, the understanding must be made to control the mind and the senses."

I have given this quotation at length, not only to prove the validity of the experience of the Rishis but also to point out another tennet of this universal religion, viz. that each one of us can aspire to the same spiritual realization and attain it, if we will only make the effort by self-purification and concentration. To expect to see God without ridding our mind of its hankerings and making it quiescent, is like looking at the firmament with our naked eyes; if we want to probe into the mysteries of the sky we must at least furnish ourselves with a clean and powerful telescope.

In his book, "The Inner Reality," Paul Brunton has a chapter entitled, 'A Sane Religion,' in which he says, "Before you can begin to worship God, you must forget yourself, and before you can forget yourself you must learn to control

your thoughts and silence your mind. The next condition of worship is an intermediary between yourself and God who will be a focus until you yourself are sufficiently strong and illumined to do without outside help. So, if you have these four qualifications: humility and a child-like attitude to begin with; forgetfulness of your personal life for the time of worship; mental quiet and your own personal relation with some human intermediary who will help you to effect the connection with God until you are able to obtain it for yourself, then you are prepared to worship, and your worship will be in silence and secrecy. This is the true worship which will bind you to God, and because it binds you to God it is *real* religion. It is not then necessary for you to subscribe to orthodox religions or go to church.

“How will this work out in your own inner reaction towards life? First of all, you will adopt the attitude of goodwill to all men, because you will know that everyone has sprung from a common origin. The best way for you to help others is to know that they are essentially divine. Therefore the second manifestation of real religion is *Tolerance*. Tolerance means understanding the plan behind the Universe. And that plan involves the evolution of all creatures. Just as matter has evolved out of Primal Light, so human beings themselves must grow and evolve amidst stumbling and falling. The third essential is *hope*, which means that you know, or, at least, have a tremendous faith that behind the worst conditions and circumstances there is still a divine plan working. You know, amid the blackest despairs of yourself and mankind, God’s will is being done. Hope also means believing in the presence of a divine power which is here to help you if you want it. The fourth and last of the determinants of real religion is *service*. We must reach an inner dedication, a desire to be constructive in life, and to do something worth-while for mankind, no matter how small the service be, how limited the scope. It does not matter *what* you do, but *how* you do it, because the attitude you

take towards your work, and the efficiency with which you try to do it will be the expression of your religion. Real religion is beyond rituals, blind adherence to dogmas or allegiance to customs and habits which are antiquated, futile, empty and unreasonable. It is sane and rational practical religion."

As both Paul Brunton and C. Rajagopalachari point out, such a religion has the further advantage that it does not conflict with the latest findings of science. The latter says: "The God of Vedanta is not an anthropomorphic creation with human capriciousness and desire for Power. Divine sovereignty is explained in the Bhagavad Gita in language which anticipates and meets the difficulties that modern science raises against religious cosmology. According to the Gita, the sovereignty of God is exercised in and through the unchangeable law of cause and effect, that is, through what we call the laws of nature.

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
 मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥
 न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
 भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ।
 प्रकृति स्वामवष्टभ्य विमृजामि पुनः पुनः ॥
 भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥
 मयाध्याक्षेण प्रकृतिः सृजते सचराचरम् ।
 हेतुनानेन कौश्लेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥

"All this world is pervaded by Me, in form unmanifest; all things abide in Me, but I stand apart from them. And yet beings are not rooted in Me. Behold the scheme of My sovereignty! Myself the origin and the support of beings, yet standing apart from them. Using nature which is Mine own, I create again all this multitude of beings, keeping them dependent on nature. In the scheme of My sovereignty, nature brings forth the moving and the unmoving, and in consequence of this the world evolves."

A study of the Upanishads will show that Vedanta postulates that the universe is the result of a gradual un-

folding of the creative power inherent in the primordial substance. In fact it may be said that the philosophy of Hinduism anticipated the basic theories of biology and physics. The very approach to things in the Upanishads, the insistence on adherence to truth and on tireless investigation is remarkably in the nature of an anticipation of the method of science.

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसां ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।
अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रोयं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः॥
सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।
येनाक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामा यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥

“Truth, penance, true understanding and purity of life are essential requisites for the revelation of the spirit within. When thus revealed, He shines spotless and resplendent within oneself. The seekers who have freed themselves from sin are vouchsafed the vision. Victory is ever with truth. Untruth cannot win. The path to the Divine is through truth. The sages with desires quenched walk on that road to reach the Ultimate Being.”

The most important feature of this universal religion is that it does not merely enable you to realize God, it can make you God ! This follows from the basic tenet that* “man bears at the centre of his being the divine spark which is capable of subduing to its own purposes all the vestures, physical and psychological, in which it is wrapped and of finally becoming one with the Supreme Spirit. According to the Upanishads the *Ātman*, or the spirit in man, is covered with five layers of non-*Atman*, namely those of *annam* (matter), *prānam* (life), *mānas* (mind), *vijñānam* (intellect) and *ānandam* (spiritual bliss). But when man’s ignorance is removed and he realizes the unity of all things

* From Upanishads—an anthology by D. S. Sarma, Bhavan’s Book.

in God he is able to overcome all these limitations. "A seeker approached Ramana Maharshi and asked, "Can you show me God?" and the Maharshi replied, "I can not only show you God but enable you to be God."

It may therefore be called 'Super Religion' and that is probably how such a religion can function. It seems hopeless to expect such a separate new religion to be established because its tennets will be beyond the understanding of most people. Even the Gita says :—

क्लेशोऽधिकरस्तेषामव्यक्तसक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिदुःखं देहवद्विरवाप्यते ॥

"The difficulty of those whose thoughts are set on the Unmanifested is greater, for the goal of the Unmanifested is hard to reach by embodied beings."

Therefore, the ordinary man must start with his own religion, worshipping, adoring and praying to his personal God and be led gradually into the higher realms of knowledge by one who is himself enlightened. Fortunately, this is the part the great spiritual leaders in India are playing. As I have said, my own Guru is a follower of Islam and naturally what is daily recited at his place is the Koran. But he is leading us to the Ultimate Reality and hence people of all faiths flock to him. The greatest exponent of this way of leading people Godwards in India today is Sri Sri Mata Anandamayi. Obviously it is the orthodox Hinduism that is practised in her Ashrams, though readers of Ananda Varta must be seeing reports in every issue of religious functions relating to all the main Gods of Hinduism—Krishna, Rama, Shiva, Durga, Kali—being performed without any special partiality for any particular deity. This enables her devotees to worship his or her own *Ista*. It is clear that Ma encourages and attends such functions because they are necessary for the preparation of the devotees for leading them to the Ulti-

mate Reality. But the core of her teaching is "you have to realize the God in yourself and become one with him." This is the Universal Religion in practice and that is why we see foreigners following other faiths like Christianity and Islam come to her for guidance. Those of us who are fortunate enough through her *kripa* to have a glimmering of the truth must tirelessly follow the Universal Religion.

"When all work is done in the awareness of God, and if this attitude comes of itself, there is hope that the ego may lose its hold."

— Mataji.



*Mataji at Suriya,
November, 1965.*



Dehradun, May, 1966



—*Birthday Celebrations, May, 1966*

Matri Lila

(April 20th—July 30th, 1966.)

On April 20th Mataji reached Kishenpur by car from Kankhal. The people of Dehradun are singularly fortunate in being blessed by Mataji's presence for these three and a half months up to date. Two or three days after Mataji's arrival some newly built rooms on the roof of the main house at Kalyanvan were inaugurated and at once occupied by Brahmacharis of our Ashram. A meal was cooked in the new kitchen and all Ashramites and many guests invited to partake of the *prasāda*. Mataji stayed at Kalyanvan for a few nights, first in the main house upstairs and then at "Amar Kutir", the house that was later put at the disposal of Sri Haribabaji Maharaj for two full months. On April 27th another house further down the hill within Kalyanvan was ceremonially opened in Mataji's presence. Sri Haribabaji arrived with his party on April 29th. He and his devotees were put up at Kalyanvan in three houses and several tents.

From May 3rd to 8th Mataji's 70th birthday was celebrated in Mr. & Mrs. M. L. Khaitan's grounds, adjoining Kalyanvan. The whole function and all arrangements were extremely well planned and everything proceeded in great joy and harmony, without a hitch. A spacious pandal beautifully decorated in blue and white with great simplicity and dignity, served as a *satsang* hall. At a considerable distance another much smaller pandal was erected, in which 100 Durga Saptah Shati were recited throughout the celebrations. Three very pretty and comfortable thatched huts, put up specially for the occasion, housed Mataji, Didima and Gurupriya Devi with their attendants. Mataji is very fond of staying under a thatched roof. She remarked that she had been born in a thatched house shaded by a neemtree in

Kheora and here again she lived for a week in a thatched hut under a neemtree. In her parental house there had been a *Narayan Shīlā* and this time also the *Narayan Shīlā* (about which we wrote at great length in the February issue) was placed in Mataji's hut. Quite a number of tents provided accommodation for visitors. Large kitchen and dining tents, an office under canvas and several huge water tanks served everyone's convenience. The old Panchavati house was converted into a kitchen for Mataji and the round platform of the Panchavati, covered by a thatched hut, was used for the uninterrupted *japa* that is always sustained during the whole of the birthday celebrations.

A number of prominent Mahatmas graced the function with their presence and delivered interesting and enlightening discourses. Amongst them were Mahamandaleshwara Sri Chetan Giri of Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh ; Swamis Sri Sadananda and Bhajanananda of Paramartha Niketan, Rishikesh ; Dandiswami Sri Vishnuashram of Sukhtal ; Swami Sharananandaji of Manav Seva Sangh, Vrindaban ; Sri Krishnananda Avadhutji ; Sri Chakrapaniji of Vrindaban ; Sri Yogesh Brahmachari of Calcutta. The programme continued from early morning until late at night, with kirtans and bhajans sung by the Ashramites in the intervals between the lectures. The last two nights some first class artistes of the All India Radio entertained the audience with their beautiful songs until midnight. After his daily talks in the late afternoons, Sri Krishnananda Avadhutji would request Mataji to sing, which, to the delight of everyone present she did in her inimitable way on 3 or 4 occasions. On some days Mataji replied to questions for half an hour. One day someone wanted to know how to overcome anger, "Drink a glass of cold water and look at your face in a mirror, and your anger will soon vanish," said Mataji laughingly. Then she explained very clearly that anger cannot be conquered as long as there is desire. Whenever a desire is thwarted, anger arises ; and when a desire is

fulfilled there is attraction for the thing obtained. Both are essentially the same. Desire will persist so long as there is the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. Therefore, while anger can be controlled or suppressed, yet the seed will remain. Thus, only when identification with body and mind ceases and the Self is realized can anger be finally overcome.

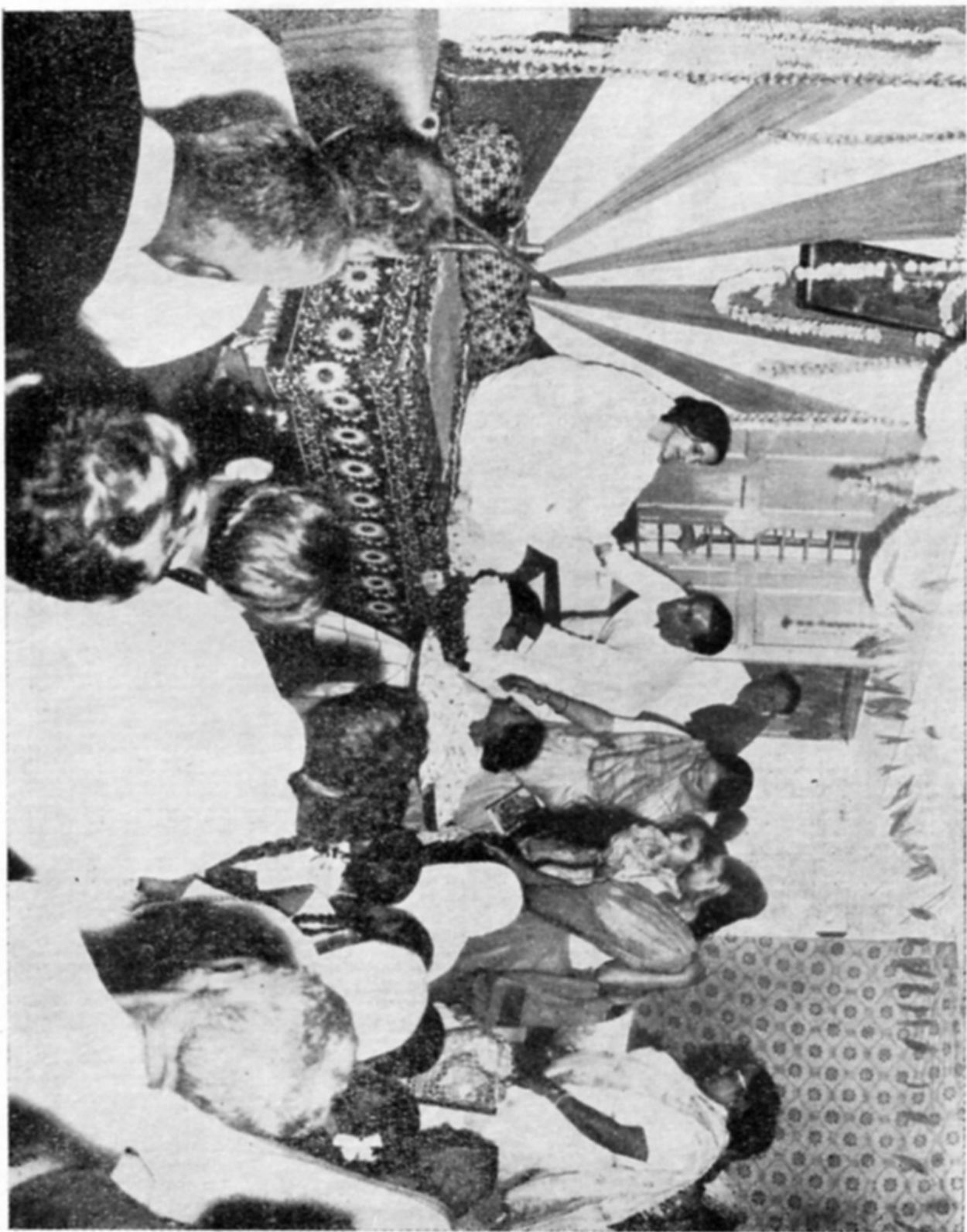
From May 5th morning to 6th midday the whole of the Ramayana was recited in the Rama Mandir at Kalyanvan as a part of the celebrations. The full-moon night was spent in kirtan by women and there was puja during the first and the last nights. It may easily be imagined how little sleep we were allowed throughout the festivities. One day 108 kumaris were given a feast and a dhoti each. On another day special food was taken to the Cheshire Home by jeep and also distributed among the lepers of the leper asylum and the leper colony of Dehradun.

As usual, Mataji was present during the *tithi puja* which forms the culmination and end of the celebrations. This time two priests had to officiate, as one of them did puja before the famous *Nārāyan shilā*. As customary in the morning after the *pujā*, everyone queued up and ascended the dais to offer *pranāma* to Mataji who was lying perfectly still even for hours after. In spite of the huge attendance, everything proceeded in great order.

The next day Mataji and all the ashramites moved back to the Ashram. A day later, while Mataji gave *darśana* in the hall in the morning, the *Nārāyan shilā* was brought and Mataji touched everyone's head and heart with the *shilā* and placed it on their hands for a second. Professor Tripurari Chakravarti of Calcutta had requested Mataji to be allowed to touch *Nārāyan* before his departure and thus Mataji declared that everyone present would be granted the same privilege. She also said that henceforth this would be repeated twice a year, namely, on the completion of every birthday celebration in May and every Samyam Vrata in November.

Needless to say that Mataji's birthday is celebrated with great enthusiasm not only in all her Ashrams but also in the homes of many devotees in India and abroad, who are unable to come in person to offer homage to Mataji. It may be interesting for our readers to learn in what an original manner an ardent European devotee celebrated Mataji's birthday. The following is translated from a letter: "You can imagine how often and with what intensity I remembered Ma and all of you during those days. I prepared myself for this birthday in a most childish way, but I just felt like it. I spring-cleaned my whole flat with an insane thoroughness: to the most hidden corners and re-arranged all my drawers and cupboards, washed everything washable and put up new curtains. Literally in my whole life I have never made order in a similar way. I also tried to make order within myself, but that is much more difficult. When starting right in earnest, one has the feeling of being carried away by one's own disorder as in a flood. On my entrance door I pinned a piece of paper on which was written (in Hindi, so that nobody could read it): "Avoid unkindness, untruth, impurity." Thus I tried to celebrate Ma's birthday by watching attentively for a few weeks my feelings and thoughts with a view to keeping the three prohibitions mentioned above. I decided to sleep on the floor whenever I failed to observe those three rules. Finally I had to give it up because I could never for a single night sleep in my bed anymore. No doubt an extremely naive and primitive method of self-education, but a good remedy against self-conceit. Mataji's birthday week I celebrated daily with her, with lots of lovely flowers and much candle light and music and thinking of her with deep gratitude."

We are happy to be able to report that Sri Haribabaji Maharaj has completely recovered from his recent illness and was able to hold *satsang* as usual four times daily.



—Dhanbad, November, 1955.



Courtesy—Mr. S. N. Sopyry.

However, he does not beat the gong anymore and circle round as he used to, but does the kirtan sitting down and clapping his hands. Besides, since he has been asked by the doctor not to walk or talk much (he completed his 81st year in March) he also had to give up his daily morning and evening walks and although he used to hold the evening *satsang* in our Ashram hall from 7-30 to 9 p.m. or later, throughout his stay at Dehradun, one of his diiciples would read out the daily story from the lives of *bhaktas*. Mataji was present during that time every evening, and not only the hall but also the four verandas were crowded with people. The morning and afternoon meetings were held in Sri Haribabaji's house and Mataji sometimes went there at 4 p.m., and afterwards together with Sri Haribabaji watched the outdoor games played by his men in Mrs. Khaitan's grounds to which there is a connecting door from Kalyanvan.

Mataji quite often gave fairly long *darśanas* at about midday in the Ashram hall. A number of important personages came to see Mataji during her sojourn at Kishenpur, some Ministers of the Central and U. P. Governments, Swami Chidananda, the head of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh with his party. One evening the famous Sivabala Yogi of South India came and sat in the hall for about two hours in perfect stillness with his eyes shut, while kirtan was being performed. But finally he opened his eyes and had a short conversation with Mataji. One morning we witnessed an interesting discussion of Mataji with Swami Anand of Gujarat who was close to Gandhiji. One evening Sri Prabhudutt Brahmachari of Jhusi came and had a lively discussion with Mataji concerning his campaign against cow slaughter and the fast he wants to start in protest to it. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj stayed in our Ashram for some time. Since his health was indifferent, Sri Haribabaji suggested that *Ramarchana* and *Kirtan* should be performed to help his recovery and that every one should devote some extra time to *japa* or the reading of his favourite scripture, etc.

The health of the great scholar did improve, although he is not quite well yet.

On June 20th the fifth building in Kalyanvan was opened in Mataji's presence with *Nārāyan puja* and *kirtan*. At the moment a kitchen and store room is being constructed behind the two temples in order to cook *bhoga* for Rama. Kalyanvan has completely changed during the last 2 or 3 years and contains no more thick jungles as it used to be for such a long time.

Sri Haribabaji and his entire party left on June 28th evening. The next morning the recitation of the whole of the *Rāmāyana* was begun in the Ashram hall. Barely one and a half hours after its completion at nearly midday on June 30th, the reading of the *Srimad Bhāgavata* commenced everyone taking turns, some reading in Sanskrit, others in Hindi. It took 2½ days and 2 nights, ending at about 11p.m on *Guru Purnimā*. This festival was celebrated on July 2nd from early morning until midnight, many having come from far and near to offer their obeisance and gifts to Mataji and Didima. Special Puja was performed in the Siva temples both at the Ashram and at Kalyanvan. Mataji gave *darśana* practically throughout the whole day, first in her room, then in Didi's room, then on the platform in front of the temples, then in the hall, and so forth *ad infinitum*. The next midday, a devotee from Bombay asked Mataji to sing kirtan of a particular *mantra*. After much hesitation, Mataji at last started singing and continued for 20 minutes in an extraordinary tone of voice entering an unusual *bhāva*. The kirtan was then taken over by the brahmacharis and then by the brahmcharinis of the Ashram and continued throughout the day whenever there was no other programme and through the whole of the following night until 1 p.m. the next day, when Mataji herself led the kirtan to conclude. This improvised kirtan will remain unforgettable to all who took part in it. The moment it ended, one of the brahmcharinis was asked to start silent japa of *Rāma*

mantra which was kept up again for 24 hours, followed by *akhanda japa* of another 24 hours of each one's own *mantra*. This was concluded on July 5th.

On July 6th morning Mataji, Didima and a few companions shifted to the house of the late Parasuram Dhammi in the town. Sri Parasuramji was an ardent devotee of many year's standing, who had done a lot of service for our Ashrams. His daughter recently built several rooms on the roof of the house, reserved exclusively for the use of Mataji and her party. Mataji remained there for three nights and *satsang* was held twice daily on the spacious open roof.

To celebrate the anniversary of the consecration of *Rāma Mandir* at Kalyanvan, which had taken place in July 1964, the entire *Bāmāyanā* was again recited on the veranda of the temple from the morning of July 8th until the next midday, when Mataji alighted in time for the last chapter and *ārati*. Mataji then sat under a tree and started singing "Jai Rāma, Sri Rāma, Jai Jai Rāma" which was taken over by the women and continued for the rest of the day and the following night.

Mataji motored to Hardwar on the 15th noon with a very small party and stayed over night in our Ashram at Kankhal. We are extremely sorry to say that while coming back to Dehradun on the 16th morning, Mataji's car met with an accident in the town. A public bus ran into the car sideways at the crossing of two roads. Mataji saw the bus advancing without being able to stop and she stretched out her left arm as if to ward off the danger. Thus everyone was miraculously saved through Mataji's grace, only the car was badly damaged. She herself, however, got a very bad cut in the left palm which bled profusely and also received severe shock on the left side of her body. We are somewhat relieved to know that radiological investigations do not give signs of any dislocation or fracture. As Mataji does not accept any kind of medical treatment and her

wound also could not be properly attended by a surgeon, we only pray to Mataji to have the *kheyāla* to get the wound healed in no time and keep her body fit.

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It is wellknown to all her close companions that Mataji's health keeps best when kirtan is sung in her immediate surroundings. The inmates of the Kishenpur Ashram therefore decided to start "*Akhanda Kirtan*" on the 16th July evening which continued uninterruptedly for 10 days and nights. At the time of the daily functions of the Ashram, one person would recite the mantra of the kirtan silently to keep up its continuity. A different mantra was started every 24 hours. Mataji, who had already for some time before the accident tried to arrange for uninterrupted kirtan on every possible occasion, seemed to take great interest in the kirtan and herself gave the mantra with its tune for each following day. In fact, it seemed that Mataji was using the poor condition of her health, to fire the enthusiasm of the mere handful of people to continue. The constant recitation of the Name produced an ever increasing atmosphere of harmony and bliss, which is tangible and felt by people who come to the Ashram. On July 26th evening, *ārati* was performed in Mataji's room to celebrate the *Purnāhuti* of the "*Akhanda Kirtan*." Mataji then suggested that the kirtan should from then on be performed in the day only, namely, from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is continuing up to date.

We are glad that Mataji has been taking complete rest in the Kishenpur Ashram. *Darśan* hours have been strictly curtailed and it is hoped that all of us will give her the opportunity to take sufficient rest in the present state of her health.

We are happy to report that Mataji's condition is improving steadily, although she does not come downstairs as yet. Once daily the door of her room is opened for half an

hour and all have *darsana* from the veranda outside of her room. On July 28th people were greatly moved to have *darsana* of Ma's left hand without the heavy bandage for the first time since the accident. Only the cut is still covered by a small pad.

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We regret to report that during Mataji's stay at Kishenpur the news of the death of a number of devotees was received from the Varanasi Ashram. On May 23rd Swami Sarvananda, a *Sannyasini* in the early forties who had been a heart patient for several years, passed away in the Ashram. On May 25th she was followed by Satyananda, Sri Gurupriya Devi's aged eldest sister in whose house in Varanasi Mataji used to put up on many occasions before the Varanasi Ashram was started. She took *Sannyāsa* during the Kumbh Mela in Hardwar in 1962 and was lying ill for the last 2 or 3 years. On July 5th morning, Chintamani Devi, popularly known as "Thākurma", a very old lady, who had been a child widow and cooked *bhoga* for the Annapurna temple for many years, left her mortal coil. The same night Sri Manomohan Ghosh, the architect of the Annapurna Temple, who had recently lost his eldest son, also passed away. He had been deeply devoted to Mataji since the days of Dacca. Being an invalid for the last few years, he stayed in a house near the Ashram and Mataji would pay him a visit whenever she went to Varanasi.

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Mataji is expected to be in Vrindaban for a Bhāgavata Saptāh that is to begin on August 18th and also for the *Jhulan* and the *Janmastami*, when on September 8th a new temple in the Ashram dedicated to Radha Govinda is to be consecrated. This year the *Durga Puja* is expected to be celebrated in Bombay from October 20th to 23rd. The next *Samyam Vrata* will be held in our Vrindaban Ashram from November 20th to 26th.