

Ananda Vartā

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



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India—(Postage free) Rs. 6/- only

Foreign—(By Sea Mail) Rs. 10/50 or 15 shillings or \$ 2.00

„ (By Airmail)—Rs. 25/- or £ 1-10-0 (Europe etc.)

„ „ —Rs. 35/- or \$ 5.50 (North & South America.)

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

Mātri Vāni

Nothing has happened—to be able to understand this is very fortunate. If you can understand that nothing has happened, you have indeed been blessed with inner vision.

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Having turned to this side, the sense of want awakens. And proceeding further there is the first stage of passing from this condition of want and emptiness to one's true nature: the realization that without Him the world is darkness: nothing of this world seems attractive. It cannot be said that you have reached that state. To yearn for Him also indicates progress.

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All the time you have the desire to find, the acute feeling of lacking something. Just persist in your *sādhana* and for the rest, He will make it complete. By perfect grace comes perfect illumination. In the measure as you exert yourself you will receive.

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Action is necessary in order to remove the veil of ignorance. Using to the full the intelligence He has given you, proceed with your work. His grace is without motive or cause. Why He has not shown His mercy to you He knows best. Verily, all is His and He does according to His Will. Where there is a motive, there is the desire for fulfilment and the enjoyment of the fruit. I have acted and therefore I

have reaped the fruit. The fruit of what? The action is one's own and thus the consequences are equally one's own. God is everyone's, there is but one Self (*Ātmā*). To begin with, one does not realize this and therefore questions arise. At the stage at which you are at the moment, from there it looks as you have described.

* * * *

No matter what be anyone's line of approach, at first there is torment and perplexity, one is unable to find. After that comes a state of suspense, of emptiness as it were; one cannot penetrate within neither does one derive satisfaction from worldly enjoyment.

* * * *

Take care not to be contented at any stage. Some aspirants have visions, others realizations. Or someone experiences bliss, great happiness and thinks he has himself become God. On the spiritual path, before true Realization supervenes, one may get caught in supernormal powers (*vibhūtis*). To become entangled in his kind of thing constitutes an obstacle.

* * * *

The Beloved (*Iṣṭa*) has to be realized as the aim of life. The whole creation is a manifestation of God's supernal power (*vibhūti*)—He Himself as creative power. The *Ātmā* is one—yet again, who appears as duality? None but He. It is impossible that no experience should come to one who treads the spiritual path. The fact that one has chosen this line proves that there is already some connection from before. Forgetting that God is the sole Beloved, one has come to love sense objects. When anything besides God is contem-

plated, there is divided affection—*du iṣṭa, duṣṭa**. When will this pernicious misunderstanding be uprooted? It is important to discriminate minutely. If you examine yourself you will see : what have I been doing the whole of today? For how long have I remained without the remembrance of God? How much you think of the Beloved and how much of that which is harmful (*anīṣṭa*), which takes you towards death—become aware of this.

In Kishenpur, on September 20th, 1968, Mataji gave some rules for the behaviour of the inmates of the Ashram, in response to someone's remarks and questions. The following is the translation of what Mataji said in Bengali.

(1) When elders or superiors talk do not interrupt by commenting on what is spoken about. You may give your opinion only if you are asked. If you have anything to say on the matter, you may afterwards in private tell the elder : "In connection with what was said, such and such thoughts have occurred to me".

(2) When an elder or superior is conversing with some one, one should not disturb by saying something or by chatting. If one has something important to say, one may do so after the elder has stopped talking.

(3) When conversing with one's companions one should neither make fun of anyone, nor pass critical remarks about others.

(4) With antagonism at the back of one's mind, one should not talk about anyone in either praise or blame.

(5) Do not judge your companions or discuss them with others.

(6) If someone insults or abuses you or accuses you unjustly, think : "Lord, Thou hast in this manner given me a blow to teach me a lesson. Be pleased with me again !" Do not hate the person who has dealt the blow.

* *Du iṣṭa* two Beloved ; *duṣṭa* wicked.

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- (7) Do not feel or speak unkindly about anyone,
- (8) Be truthful in speech and action.
- (9) Speak little and only when necessary.
- (10) Be always cheerful.
- (11) Remain calm, firm, serene and serious.
- (12) Talk to everyone with calmness, serenity, steadiness and equal consideration.
- (13) Cherish only what pertains to the Supreme Quest (*Paramārtha*).
- (14) Your conduct must be gentle and exemplary.
- (15) Be honest and frank in what you say.
- (16) The search after Truth must continue at every moment. When by the accumulated force of the sustained practice of discrimination between the Real and the unreal, of *japa*, meditation, ceremonial worship, the study of scriptures, singing the praises of God—whichever of these be the main line of approach for any particular person—one becomes engrossed in the Supreme Quest, then one cannot remain without the remembrance of God, and consequently foolishness, wrong knowledge and suffering are removed. To be a human being means to aspire to God-realization. Man's calling as a human being is to find God.
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Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

RECORDED BY PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

(*Translated from Bengali*)

Ranchi, 20th June 1965.

Question : How will in your absence the devotees derive the greatest benefit from this spiritual gathering ?

Mataji : Ma Kali, Gopal and Lord Siva have their abode in this Ashram. If you wish to benefit by their nearness, you must keep in mind that they are actually present here. Every day remember this at some time or other. They never stop giving *darsāna*, as it were; practise their presence all the time. You may not hear or see them, yet you will receive the blessing of their *satsang* from this. And whenever you feel the urge, sit in meditation near the statue of Kali. The more you meditate the better for you. Ma Kali is here for your good. In dream or during meditation She sometimes speaks to one or the other.

There is another thing to be remembered: Whatever exists, exists in your mind, Therefore try to see Him within your mind as much as possible. To man alone has been given the privilege and the capacity to attain to God-realization. Know your Self! Try to find out who you really are! Not to try for this amounts to suicide. So long as one harbours desires one cannot realize the Self. If desires prevail at the time of leaving the body, one has to take a return ticket and will be born again. To pass away while desires are lingering means death. Living for the gratification of one's desires is like slow poison. By that poison one is gradually delivered to death. Sense objects (*vishai*) are poison (*vish hai*) and they provide man with a return ticket for rebirth. Having obtained the rare boon of

a human body, if you wish to stop this round of birth and death, you must engage in *sādhana*. Desires ever generate new desires. Just as a creeper spreads, so also does the creeper of sense enjoyment expand and increase.

Mahātmā means great soul. *Jīvā* (individual) means that which is bound; and 'world' signifies constant change and flux. Like a leech, the *jīvā*, by its very nature, on leaving anything hooks on to something else. This is how the world of the individual is fashioned : birth, death and rebirth. And thus it appears as if God were far, far away. From this idea of God's remoteness arise foolishness, suffering, bereavement, agony, sorrow. Wife, son, daughter do not stay according to one's wish. So long as one is not independent of circumstances there is bound to be sorrow. The world (*duniya*) is based on duality; duality breeds pain, conflict, darkness. And in darkness there is the fear of falling. The learned men, the scholars of the world are all in danger of falling. Someone gets angry about a lie, yet he himself also tells lies. You should at least speak the truth, since Truth is your real nature. Lies come automatically to the individual. All the same you are longing and searching for Truth, because you are in fact pure, true, enlightened, free and tranquil. In order that That may shine forth which you actually Are, you must give up the notion of God's remoteness. Renounce that foolishness, that misery. If a person is fortunate enough to understand that he has to know Himself, then only *sādhana* will begin. Know your Self, that is to say, know God! One has to establish a relation with Him : either that of Master and servant, or of Mother and son, or as a part of Him. The spark is a particle of fire, but both have the power to burn. Similarly, the world, God and the individual are not separate. Wherever a *jīvā* is there is Siva and every woman is Gouri. You are father, son and husband all in one. Likewise, God Himself is the master as well as the servant. Water, ice and steam are of one and the same substance. The Formless and form

are both *Brahman*, *Brahmagopal*. Behold Him everywhere, sing His name. He appears as Sitaram, as Radhakrishna, Siva-Sakti and as Sakti and Her worshipper. It lies in the nature of the *jīvā* to desire woman if he is a man, and to desire man if a woman. But when one becomes aware of one's divinity then the *jīvā* is transformed into Siva. The inner and the outer are in fact one. But to make it intelligible to the mind, one has to talk of them as separate.

There are people who say : "Let God remain where He is, I am enjoying my life fully"—as if this enjoyment could last ! This is called foolishness, the fallacy that God is very distant. In order to get rid of it one has to obey the Guru's instructions and cultivate the company of saints, sages and seekers after Truth. In the midst of the attractions of form, sound, touch, taste and smell sustain the remembrance of Him. In the *mantra*, in the name received from the Guru, God Himself is present; repeat His name ! *Akṣara** (letter or syllable) is that which is beyond decay. In the *akṣara* also God is present. So long as an aspirant has not found a Guru, he should repeat whatever name appeals to him or her most. Or if someone prefers, he may contemplate light. What is light ? A reflection of the inner Light. When that inner Light becomes revealed, then there will be full illumination. All power is located within the head. There His form has to be revealed. Every single one of the innumerable forms existing are reflections of Him; why then should one clamour for a special name and form ! While you move in the sphere of name and form, hold on to Him as name and form. Or if name and form be foreign to your temperament, contemplate the light of the *Atmā*. The outer light is a reflection of His Light. He is present also in every *kriyā*. Make use of the *kriyā* received from your Guru. In all beings is He alone, be they plants, animals, birds or hu-

* *Akṣara* means both 'letter' and 'undecaying'.

man-beings—He resides in them all. Live with the remembrance of him.

This body does not advise you to renounce your home and repair to the forest. Wherever you may go, as long as you are not free from desire, there will be your home with all that it entails. No matter where you may be placed, there itself meditate, engage in *sādhana*. Just as when drops of water keep on falling, even stone is pierced, so by sustained practice the veil of ignorance will finally be rent.

For the aspirant who is a householder, his wife is an embodiment of the divine *Śakti*, his son of Balgopal. While leading a family life do your work as the manager of the Lord. When the call comes for you to leave, none can accompany you. Of course, it has happened many times that husband and wife who dearly love one another get drowned together. But this is the fruit of delusion and not a desirable death. They are suicidals. One should drown for God. The human body is meant to be dedicated to God, to be employed in the service of Him. The householder has to mould his life after the model of the ancient *Rishis* who had wives and children equally worthy, and lived as prescribed in the *Sāstras*. And one who has taken *Sannyāsa* must observe the rules and regulations of the *Sannyāsa Āsrama*. God is my very Self, the breath of my life, He is not distant but exceedingly near. Wherever you are and in whatever condition, there itself begin to practise *sādhana*. Hold on with tenacity to Him who will liberate you from all worldly ties. You need not abandon anyone, only cling to God with all your strength. The bonds of family life caused by delusion (*moha*) are not to be fostered. With detachment, rising above delusion, live a life of service.

Why are *sādhus* called *mahātmās*? Because they have grasped the Sublime and hold on to It. *Paramātmā* means Supreme Self; none is above or beyond It, none outside of It. The *Paramātmā* Itself is present within you. Tread the path that will reveal your inner being, that line must

you choose. Act precisely according to your Guru's instructions. And until you have secured a Guru, meditate on the name and form that attracts you most, that gives you peace and bliss.

This body (Mataji) is like a musical instrument: what you hear depends on how you play. What is gone never returns. What you have to do, do it today, do it at once.

Question • Mataji has said, what has to be renounced amounts to very little, but that which has to be embraced is the really great thing. Is this correct ?

Mataji: That which can be renounced and that which can be embraced—both are transitory. Where there is no question of renouncing or embracing, there He stands revealed. Embrace what eternally IS. Embrace THAT which, when gripped annuls the duality of renouncing and adopting. Embrace Him who is unembraceable. He cannot be grasped by the mind. You alone ARE, you, poised within yourself. Thus grasp THAT which, when caught hold of, leaves no question of embracing or relinquishing.

Question: Why does the mind change from moment to moment ?

Mataji: This is its very nature. One has to go beyond the mind. But this has already been discussed at length.

This body (Mataji) does not go anywhere does not take anything from anyone, does not look, does not eat or speak. As you play the instrument so you hear the sound,

Matri Satsang

SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDA GIRI

(Translated from Hindi)

6th December 1947.

Question : "Better death in the discharge of one's *dharma*..... (*Svadharme nidhanam shreya...*)" says the Bhagavad Gita. What actually is this *svadharma* ?

Mataji : Whatever one's Guru tells him to do that is everyone's *dharma*. *Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas* and *Shudras* have each their own particular *dharma*. In actual fact, whatever the Guru shows you that is your *dharma*. Regardless of whether by fulfilling one's *dharma* one progresses or declines one should attend to it. This is why the Gita says : "Better death in the discharge of one's *dharma*...."

Question : The Gita also says : "Abandoning all *dharmas* come unto Me alone for shelter (*Sarva dharmān parityajya māmekam sharanam vraja.....*)". Are these two statements not contradictory ?

Mataji : There is no contradiction. Take refuge in God. Your natures differ. This is why the Guru will show you the path. With a spirit of renunciation worship God. Seek shelter in the Self (*Ātma*).

The Questioner : There are all sorts of Gurus. Gurus of the people, Gurus who teach, Gurus who give initiation, and so forth.

Mataji : He who helps you to attain to God-realization He is indeed the supreme Guru. To serve his parents is also the *dharma* of the son. If he serves his father and mother as manifestations of Reality or as forms of God, such service will actually reach God. In the householder's Ashram a son's duty is to serve his parents and to be devoted to them.

Question : Suppose a son does not serve his parents but only serves God, what wrong is there in this ?

Mataji : If a *sādhaka* serves God as he should, the service of his parents will never become an obstacle. One who with a sincere heart worships God cannot possibly hate anyone. If he develops real faith in God, he will have faith in all. When genuine faith in God awakens, then there is no more doubt. Such a man's character becomes completely transformed.

Question : I have heard it said that saints and *ma-hātmas* are God's dwelling-place and therefore their whole bodies radiate God's power. Why then are passion, anger, greed, delusion, pride, envy and so on not destroyed when a man touches their lotus feet ?

Mataji : If you touch their feet with the sincere belief that they are God's, these enemies of yours will certainly be destroyed. Something important has to be said in this connection. *Pranāma* must be done in the proper manner. You people do not make obeisance as it ought to be done. To do *pranāma* means to offer oneself entirely at the feet of the Lord—everything that is in oneself. What will be the result of such total dedication? The emptiness that is caused by giving everything will be filled completely with God's power. Just as when a pitcher is to be emptied of all the water, it has to be turned over, so you should dedicate at His feet without reserve everything that is in you, whatever it be, and become empty. Having thus created a vacuum within yourself, God's power will occupy you wholly. But *pranāma* of this kind hardly ever occurs and therefore touching the feet of saints does not give the proper result. The place where a saint sits also becomes divine. If he is really God-possessed, then divinity will shine through him. By divine radiation everything can become divine. If there were genuine yearning for God in your heart, you would most certainly find Him. In the measure as you give, you will receive. Just as butter melts by the proximity of fire,

so saints have the power to transform the lives of men by their mere touch. But saints do not interfere with the working of *karma*. Except of course in some very special cases—this is a different matter. As a rule *karma* is left to work itself out.

Question: Why does Realization not come even though one spends all the twenty-four hours at the feet of saints and sages?

Mataji: Out of the twenty-four hours, how much time do you give to God? If someone stays day and night with saints serving them, he will no doubt reap the fruit of it. If full realization does not occur, it does not mean that one has failed. The aspirant must be determined to accomplish his task at all costs, even unto death. This must be his attitude of mind. The spiritual path has to be pursued until complete Realization. So long as Rama has not been found, how can one be at rest? A man who yearns desperately for God, is actually lying prostrate at His lotus feet. He has no other interest at all.

There are two ways that lead to God. One is to do service at the Lord's feet and the other just to break the door that hides Him and to enter in. Perform *sādhana* in such a manner that there is no time at all left for any other undertaking. So long as you have not wholly realized God, do not rest. By behaving in this way, your life will be changed. Ceaselessly think of God and of God alone. While eating keep in mind that you eat solely for God's sake. Why should you sustain your body? This rare boon of a human body has been granted to you for the single purpose of doing *sādhana* in order to realize your Divinity. Those who are householders have to serve also their wives and children. But you, a *sādhu*, are free from worries. Your life belongs exclusively to God. If a *sādhaka* is truly burning to find God, then all his actions, bathing, eating – everything will be done only for God. By clinging to your

sādhana with firm faith and adamant determination you are bound to find Him. But if you will not live in this way, well, according to what you associate with, you will reap the fruit. This is why this small child always says: God is everywhere indeed. From whichever point you may start, God is there itself. Holy Kashi and sacred Vrindaban are actually within you. By using force one does not receive. Force is not *satyagraha* (adherence to Truth). By firm adherence to Truth God will be found.

Prayer is undoubtedly effective. Just as when the roots of a tree are watered, the water reaches every leaf and the tree remains fresh and green ; so, if you dedicate your all at the Lord's lotus feet, everything will become right. By making obeisance to sages and saints, a subtle link with them is formed. As you can take water from the ocean according to your capacity, exactly similarly can you absorb God's power depending on your capacity. As you give, so you will receive.

Question : Ma ! When one is attacked by inner enemies such as passion or greed, will they be put to flight by the invocation of the name "Ma" ?

Mataji : If you invoke Her sincerely from the depth of your heart, then your desires will be burnt up as water is dried up by fire.

Question : Ma ! Have we to do everything ourselves or will Ma also do something for us ?

Mataji : (laughing heartily) : In actual fact it is like this : If God did not make you act, would you be able to do anything ? It is the nature of the individual to think highly of his own capacity and might. Do not imagine that it is you who are doing everything. Unless God causes you to act, you are completely helpless. Make yourself a blank. Surrender yourself at the Guru's lotus feet. In the measure as you efface yourself, you will be fulfilled.

Question: What is the meaning of 'good omen; and' 'bad omen'? I have been told that, although Brahmins are pure, to come across a Brahmin is an evil omen.

Mataji: To meet a Brahmin is very auspicious indeed. Everything depends on what one believes. You believe in somethings and so it happens. This reminds me of the following: An Englishman was to travel somewhere. Someone said: "Don't go now. The planetary constellations are unfavourable." But the gentleman paid no heed to the warning and went on his journey. When he was on high sea, a terrible storm made the boat sink. With great difficulty the gentleman reached the shore by swimming. When he arrived people said: "This is all due to that hostile constellation." Thus, everything happens according to one's *karma*.

Question: Well then, is a bad planetary constellation an obstacle or not?

Mataji: It is said that an inauspicious planetary constellation may even cause death. This is why good works should be begun on auspicious days. Will you listen to a true story? When this body was a child, it stayed in the house of its uncle. While there, some neighbours were celebrating a wedding and their relatives had come for the occasion. Kali Puja was performed in their home and everyone was engrossed in the *pūjā*. Amongst the guests was a woman with her small daughter. As about 3 a. m. the *pūjā* was over. The child had fallen asleep, but the woman woke her up when *prasāda* was being distributed. The child was crying bitterly and her mother was unable to appease her. None of the people present could calm the child. Finally her mother lost her temper and said: "Very well, *marjao*;* I shall leave you here by yourself and go to take *prasāda*." When the woman returned after a little while the child had

* *Morjao* literally means "die!" but is used in the sense "do as you please, I have had enough trouble."

disappeared. Everyone started looking for the little girl. After a long and troublesome search the child's dead body was found in the jungle. What lesson can one learn from this incident? Never, never utter anything unpropitious. A mother's scolding is done for the good of her child and is therefore a blessing. Even so no unpropitious word should be pronounced. In the world there is the auspicious as well as the inauspicious. This is God's *lila*. God Himself is beyond both. All the same, one should never say anything that is not benedictory. A *sādhaka* must be specially vigilant about the words he utters. Never, never must he allow anything to escape from his mouth that might amount to cursing. For him all talk must be about God alone, all the rest is painful and vain.

A Little Anthology

ON RENUNCIATION

That man attains peace who abandoning all desires, moves about without attachment and longing, without the sense of "I" and "mine." This is the state of dwelling in God; having attained this, no one is ever deluded. Being established in this knowledge even at the end of life, one attains oneness with the Supreme.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

After real meditation worldly pleasures become unalluring, dull, entirely savourless. What does *vairāgya* signify? When every single object of the world kindles as it were, the fire of renunciation, so as to make one recoil as from a shock, then there is inward and outward awakening. This, however, does not mean that *vairāgya* implies aversion or contempt for anything of the world—it simply is unacceptable, the body refuses it. Neither dislike nor anger will arise. When *vairāgya* becomes a living inspiration, one begins to discriminate as to the true nature of the world; until finally, with the glowing certainty of direct perception, the knowledge of its illusoriness arises. Each and everything belonging to the world seems to burn; one cannot touch it At present, what you enjoy does not impress you as being short-lived, rather does it appear to make you happy. But to the extent that the spirit of detachment is roused, the relish of such pleasures will die down, for are they not fleeting? In other words, death will die. Now that you are advancing towards that which is beyond time, the semblance of happiness brought about by mundane things is being consumed. As a result, the question, "What actually is this world?" will arise. So long as the world

seems enjoyable to you, such a query does not present itself. Since you are progressing towards that which transcends time, all that belongs to time will begin to appear to you in its true light.

—*Mataji*

The sense of possession is a great obstacle to the realization of God. The idea of "I" and "mine" must disappear entirely before the aspirant can find absolute freedom and peace in union with God. Verily, everything belongs to the Lord who dwells in the hearts of all creatures and things. Attachment to any external object narrows our vision, fosters egoism and gives rise to the false notion that we are separate from God, i.e., from the universal life and spirit. The whole universe is permeated through and through with God. The visible and invisible worlds are all He. There is nothing and none but He. All, all is He. Such is the Truth, where then is room for the ideas of "I" and "you"—"mine" and "yours?" All are He!

—*Swami Ramdas*

Jñāna never comes without renunciation of lust and possessions. With the dawn of renunciation is destroyed all ignorance, all *avidyā*. Many things can be burnt by means of a lens held in such a manner that the rays of the sun fall on it directly, but you cannot use it so in the shade of a room. Even so with the mind. You must take it out of the dark cell of this world and expose it to the full blaze of Self-effulgent Divinity. Then alone true renunciation will come, and with it all ignorance will be destroyed.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

Whoever leaves this world behind him passes away from mortality, and when he has passed away from mortality, he attains to immortality. If thou desire to reach this abode

of immortality, and to attain this exalted station, divest thyself first of self and then summon unto thyself a winged steed out of nothingness, to bear thee aloft. Clothe thyself with the garment of nothingness and drink the cup of annihilation. Cover thy breast with a nothingness, and draw over thy head the robe of non-existence. Set thy foot in the stirrup of complete renunciation and, looking straight before thee, ride the steed of non-being to the place where nothing is. Thou wilt be lost again and again, yet go on thy way in tranquillity, until at last thou shalt reach the world where thou art lost altogether to Self.

—Attar

When we realize that we have desired so much in this life and gained so little, then the spirit of renunciation comes. Desires are the cause of all our suffering. So long as we have any selfish desire whatever, we shall have to live in the world of variety ; but the wise man realizes that this is perishable and gives it up. So long as a man is hungry he will ask for food. Only when his hunger is satisfied will he refuse it. So, as long as a man is hungry for the world, as long as he has desire, he clings to the things of the world ; but when his hunger is satisfied, then he is ready to give it up and the life of consecration begins for him.

Worldly men think that the religious man is foolish : but they will grow and change. If the child asks how sugar tastes, you cannot describe it , he will have to taste it for himself. So that state beyond desire is indescribable and you will have to taste it for yourself to know what it is. The Seers of Truth may tell you what is to be seen and felt in that state ; but only as you have experienced it for yourself, can you know what it really is. Each must have his own experience. We cannot learn from the experience of others.

It is true that when we try to lead an ideal life of absolute devotion and renunciation, we have to go through

many trials in the form of criticism and condemnation from the world ; but also is it true that the joy one feels in the spiritual life, even in the midst of all external suffering, is infinitely greater than any pleasure that the world can give us. So we should discriminate and stand by the Ideal, whatever may happen to us.

—*Swami Paramananda (of Ramakrishna Mission)*

Once the venerable Anuruddha lived at Sāvatti, in the house near the Salalā Tree. There he addressed the monks as follows :

“This river here, the Ganges, brethren, flows to the East, is bent toward the East, directed toward the East. Now suppose a large group of people approaches, carrying mammoths and baskets, and they say : ‘We shall make this river, the Ganges, flow to the West, bend it toward the West, direct it toward the West.’ What do you think, brethren : can this large group of people actually make the Ganges flow toward the West, bend it toward the West, direct it toward the West ?”

“Verily not, brother.”

“And why not ?”

“The Ganges, to be sure, brother, flows to the East, is bent toward the East, is directed toward the East. Impossible it is to make it flow to the West, to bend and direct it toward the West, whatever fatigue and pain this large group of people might undergo.”

“Similarly, brethren: if a monk who has cultivated and frequently practised the four Foundations of Mindfulness, is surrounded by kings and ministers, by his friends, acquaintances and relatives, and offering treasure, they entreat him: ‘Come, my dear man! What do you want with these yellow robes? Why do you go about with a shaven head? Come, return to the lay life where you may enjoy your treasure and do good deeds!’ But, brethren, that a monk who has

cultivated and frequently practised the four Foundations of Mindfulness, should give up the training and return to a lower state, this is not possible. And why not? There is no possibility that a mind turned for a long time toward detachment, bent toward detachment, directed toward detachment, should return to a lower state."

—from the *Samyutta-Nikaya* of the Pali Canon

If one is to find the way to spirituality — *Paramārtha* — he must never be tempted by worldly happiness. The path to God is difficult. The only thing to be done is to surrender yourself at the Feet of God. As long as the mind dwells on worldly happiness and comforts one cannot feel even the slightest touch of God. As long as the heart is not weeping for God, how can one hope to get a glimpse of an experience of God? This is the way to *Paramārtha*. He who is really and truly yearning for God, the longer time he can devote to the repetition of mantra — *japa* — to remembrance of God — *dhyāna* — to the praises of God and reading of sacred books, the greater is the possibility of getting the touch of God and of progressing. One must always try and try anew. He should not even give time to wonder whether there are results or not.

—*Mataji*

Some Recent Significant Trends in Contemporary Western Psychology

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PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

Introduction: Western Psychology is a branch of modern western science which is empirical and positive and is based on inductive methods. It is directly connected and based on biology and physiology. All its conclusions are arrived at by the application of experiments of the statistical method. Naturally, therefore, its theories are more objective and materialistic than purely mental and spiritualistic, as those of psychology (science of mind) are generally accepted to be. Most of the branches of western psychology are behaviouristic in their dealing with their particular problems, mind as such playing very little part. Recently, however, there are some trends in the field of western psychology, which indicate a significant drift towards mentality or spirituality, which bring it closer to Indian psychology. They are Psychosynthesis, Psychosomatics, and Parapsychology.

Psychosynthesis :

Psychosynthesis is a very recent trend in western psychology which has been founded by Dr. Roberto Assagioli of Italy. Like Sigmund Freud, he was originally a medical man. He took his medical degree at the University of Florence specialising in neurology and psychiatry. After having practised various methods of psychotherapy, such as suggestion, persuasion, and psychoanalysis—he evolved a new and comprehensive method, aiming at a complete reconstruction of the personality, called Psychosynthesis, which he developed under the influence of study of Indian philosophy. It embodies many truths and practices of

Indian psychology, such as Yoga. Dr. Assagioli has applied the truths of Psychosynthesis not only to cure patients, but also has used them as principles and methods of education and self-education and reform of criminals. In 1926 he founded the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Rome. Dr. Assagioli is a great writer and lecturer. He has extensively travelled in Switzerland, England, France, Holland and America. A lot of his papers and articles have been published and translated in several languages. A book by him on Psychosynthesis has also been published in 1966 by Hobbs, Dorman & Company, Inc. New York and Buenos Aires, giving in clear details the principles and application of his theory. Psychosynthesis takes a wider, and deeper view of human personality than any other school of modern psychology, including psychoanalysis. It includes in the concept of human personality its consciousness, its conscious Self or I, its unconscious discovered by Freud and his followers, which it classifies under three strata, namely, the Lower Unconscious, the Middle Unconscious, the Higher Unconscious or Super Conscious. It admits also the Collective Unconscious, discovered by Freud and Jung and others. Besides the ordinary ego or I, Psychosynthesis admits the existence in human personality of the Higher Self, corresponding to that core of being which is called the *Atman* by Indian psychologists. Thus, according to Psychosynthesis, human personality consists of 1. The Higher Self, 2. The Conscious Self or "I" (corresponding to "*Aham*" of Indian psychology), 3. The Field of Consciousness (corresponding to our waking life-*Jāgrat Awastha* (Vedanta) 4. The Higher Unconscious or Superconscious, 5. The Middle Unconscious, and 6. The Lower Unconscious. All the normal, abnormal, mystic, religious and social phenomena of human life are accounted for by this comprehensive concept of human personality by this school of psychology.

In order to be healthy and whole psychosynthesis advises a process of unifying or synthesising the multiplicity

of our personality in one organic unity round a dynamic centre at two different levels :— 1. At the level of the little self, leading to personal psychosynthesis. 2. By discovering the Higher Self, at the level of the Higher Self, thus leading to the possibility of spiritual psychosynthesis. The fact is that ordinarily we know neither our little self nor the Higher Self. We are wrongly identified with other aspects or factors of our personality and are controlled by that with which we are identified. We ought to awaken ourselves to our real selfhood by disidentifying ourselves (both as our little selves and as our Higher Selves) and thus truly awakening our selves into our real Selves. According to psychosynthesis as according to Vedanta, dis-identification with what we are not, is very essential for Self-realization. For awakening into the Self, disidentification from the not-self is very essential. Psychosynthesis has discovered the principle underlying all Indian *sādhana* that we are dominated by everything with which our self is identified. We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify ourselves.



The Higher Self, according to psychosynthesis is very similar to the *Atman* of the Vedanta. It is transcendental, but reflected in the individual conscious self which is changing, unsubstantial and illusory, as in the Advaita Vedanta.

Modern psychology, since the time of the publication of William James' 'Principles of Psychology', has neglected *Will*, as a great factor in human personality. Psychosynthesis has rediscovered the power of will and conscious effort, as an essential power of the conscious self with the help of which healthy psychosynthesis of personality can be effected, and all ills cured.

Indian psychology of Yoga and Vedanta with similar concepts of human personality as those of psychosynthesis,

now can join hands with modern western psychology, by making itself practical in the interest of mankind, and psychosynthesis may learn to be more theoretically sound and practically effective by adopting the yogic and vedantic methods of meditation and Self-realization.

PSYCHOSOMATICS

Psychosomatics (or Psychosomatic Medicine) is a recent doctrine of medical psychology which has released psychology from its materialistic behaviouristic and physiological bias that all mental activities are dependent upon bodily activities or changes. Long ago Freud had explained most somatic or physiological changes of hysterical persons as conversion in the form of bodily symptoms of the repressed mental urges or repressed ideas, but now it has been established that all emotions, conscious or unconscious, are direct or indirect causes of several somatic (bodily) illnesses, which are now named "emotionally induced illnesses." In 1928, Dr. George Draper published a paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* under the title, "Disease, a Psychosomatic Reaction". Later on several such papers were published in other journals and the term psychosomatic came into vogue. In course of time a series of monographs, entitled, "Psychosomatic Medicine, Experimental and Clinical" were published by the above mentioned journal. The Editorial Board consisted of representatives from the relevant disciplines of medicine, such as Neurology, Physiology, Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis, etc. The Tenth International Medical Congress for Psychotherapy held in July-August, in 1938, devoted a major section to psychosomatic problems. A group of investigators of Chicago working under the leadership of Alexander in Chicago, studied diseases of the digestive system and came to the conclusion that in most of them important psychogenic

factors were etiological factors. Recent investigations have disclosed that every bodily illness has its psychological etiological component, that the bodily disorders are mostly psychosomatic, resultants of emotions. Any emotion, according to this school of thought can set the autonomic systems and the adrenals in motion, which in turn, affect the heart, the lungs, the circulation and other visceral functions.

Usually psychosomatic disorders are temporary, as emotions are, but there are circumstances which tend to make these conditions chronic. Continued emotional stresses and strains may transform the temporary psychosomatic disorder into a chronic somatic disease.

Here are some interesting quotations from a writer who has made use of the theory of psychosomatic medicine in advising people how to keep healthy, as free from emotionally induced illness.

"Fully 85 per cent of all headaches are emotionally induced." "It was learned by careful study during World War II that the thing we have called *muscular rheumatism*, or myofibrositis or fibrositis, is almost invariably produced by emotional tension." "Fully 30 per cent of the skin trouble in the United States is what the dermatologists call the neurodermatitis". "Fully 50 per cent of the patients who complain of an ulcer-like pain are found not to have an ulcer but merely an emotional muscle pain of the stomach". "85 per cent of the patients complaining of pain in the back of the head, radiating down into the neck have their pain as a result of emotional tightness in the muscles".

According to this author, John A. Schindler, M. D., author of "*How to Live 365 Days A Year*," 75% of pain in the back of the neck, 90% of the lump in the throat, 50% of ulcer-like pain, 50% of gall-bladder like pain; 99.44/100% of gas; 80% of giddiness; 80% of headaches, 70% of constipation and 90% of tiredness are psychosomatic; that is to say

all these symptoms are caused by emotional tension. No one, according to him, is immune to emotionally induced illness.

Emotionally induced illness is a physical, not a mental disease. It produces thousands of symptoms, varying from such homely ones, 'as pain in the neck' and 'gas' to such complicated ones as 'nephro scellerosis' and 'peptic ulcer'.

An emotion produces chemical and physical changes in the body (either on the face, where they may be seen by others, or internally, where they are felt by us)—changes that are the *feeling* of every thought we think. For example, in the emotion of anger, the chief central manifestation is reddening of the skin of the face, a widening of bloodshot whites of the eyes, contraction and tightening of the lips, clenching of the fists, a tremor in the arms, and very often a tremor in the voice. Internally, when you become angry, your blood immediately clots quicker than normal. When you become angry the number of blood-cells increases by as much as half a million per cubic millimeter. When a person becomes angry, the muscles at the outlet of the stomach squeeze down so tightly that nothing leaves the stomach during anger, and the entire digestive tract is affected so that many people have severe abdominal pains during or after a fit of anger. The heart rate goes up markedly during anger, often to 180 or 220 or higher, and stays there until the anger has passed. The blood pressure rises markedly and speedily from a normal of 130 to 230 or more, blowing some blood-vessels in the brain. Part of the manifestations of the emotion of fear is a squeezing down of some of the vessels of the brain—this produces the faint.

Part of the manifestations of the emotion of disgust is a contraction of the stomach, violent enough to cause vomiting.

The emotional effects produced through the autonomic nervous system are less severe than those produced through

the endocrine gland. A common nerve effect is a tight muscle; a tight muscle is painful, whether it is in a leg, in a blood vessel, or in the stomach. Thus emotionally tight muscles produce pain in the back of the neck, in the stomach, in the colon, in the scalp, in blood vessels, in skeletal muscles. Emotionally tight muscles produce ulcer-like pains, gall-bladder like pains, common headaches, migraine headaches, and a great host of clinical pictures. Another blood vessel effect is neuro-dermatitis which constitutes 30 p. c. of all skin diseases. The phenomenon we ordinarily term 'gas' is in reality an emotional spasm of muscles in the small intestine. Most belches are emotional muscle effects in the stomach.

Hyperventilation syndrome : Hyperventilation means breathing too deeply, or too fast or both. This is a symptom emotionally induced in which chemical factors play a leading role. Hyperventilation produces cramps at night. A person under emotional stress is likely to hyperventilate, breathes more rapidly than normal without being aware of it.

Emotions produce diseases by stimulating the glands :

The unpleasant emotions can stimulate any or all of the many hormones. What is more, a very acute emotion will produce immediately a profound effect to a much greater degree than will any other type of stresser. Emotions influence the pituitary gland to produce somatotropic hormone (STH) which helps the body to mobilize its defences against any kind of infection, which produces the picture we know simply as 'being sick'. STH is stressed by dark, dismal, futile, despairing emotions. Asthma can be generated by emotions, and be made worse by emotional tension. Cases of asthma created by emotional stress are usually the more serious cases and more difficult to control than those acquired on infectious basis.

Psychosomatics brings western psychology closer to Indian psychology, making mind as important a factor in

human personality as the body. Both the *Mahabharata* and the *Yogavāsistha* say that when the mind is disturbed, the body gets sick, and when the mind attains equilibrium, the body gets well. Yoga is the all-cure of all illness of the human personality, as the control of all the emotions of man becomes justified. The more peaceful the mind, the healthier the body remains. Thus as by psychosynthesis, by psychosomatics western psychology is brought much nearer to the age-old concepts of Indian psychology.

There is much more possibility of closer co-operation of the two in advancing the cause of growing knowledge of human nature for the greater benefit of mankind.

(To be continued)

Siddhas or Narthas of South India

Their Life and Thought

T. KRISHNAJI

Yoga Daršana or the Science of Yoga has been practised since ancient times in India, Tibet, China and other countries. For western thinkers, mind is still a mystery. They assume that it is geared to the sense organs. The latest achievements in parapsychology, extra sensory perception, etc. compel them to recognize the intuitive capacity and the unrecognized powers of the mind. (New Frontiers of the Mind by J. B. Rhine). Mind control by psycho-physical discipline is known as *Yoga* and its practice aims at the purification of the mind preparatory to *jñāna* and *bhakti sādhanas*. Yoga is the link for all schools of philosophy. Patanjali, the seer-philosopher, author of the *Yoga Sutras*, divides the *yoga sādhana* into four stages: *Sādhana*, *Sāmadhi*, *Vibhuti* and *Kaivalya*. Yoga with its eight limbs (*astānga*) aims at a restraint of the senses, at allowing the mind to regain its true nature. Yoga is not union with God but "isolation of the Eternal from the originated and the whole scheme of yoga technique is to realize the eternity of the individual human soul outside of space and time." Man suffers *viyoga* or separation from his true Self or Being; *yoga sādhana* makes possible the recovery of the lost kingdom.

Patanjali, in the '*Vibhuti Pada*', refers to the acquisition of occult powers, thaumaturgy and super-normal powers through *yoga sādhana*. As the aim of *yoga* is *kaivalya* or liberation, Patanjali cautions the *yogi* against the exhibition of such powers. They thwart the true aim of *yoga*. The *yogi* who achieves fulfilment or *Siddhi* is called a *Siddha* or *Natha*. His occult and supernormal powers

transcend the limitations of normal capacity, time and space. The *yoga* of Patanjali is theistic and the *yogi* has to adore God, eternal and all-pervasive, to obtain His grace. All the *siddhas* are monotheists, devotees of the Supreme God Siva, the *Adinātha*, who is the greatest *yogi*, the spiritual preceptor, who revealed the *Agama Śāstra*.

The *Yoga Sutras* speak of *Siddhi* attainable through human birth, using medicine, mantra, austerities and *samādhi*. Patanjali is reputed to have written a treatise on medicine. Health has to be preserved for *sādhana*.

Kapila Rishi was a born *Siddha* and Lord Krishna says in the Gita : "I am Kapila among the *siddhas*." Mandavya Rishi became a *siddha* through medicinal herbs and Narada through *mantra*. Viswamitra got *siddhi* through *tapas* or austerities. Sage Vidyaranya, in his *Sarva Darśana Sāngraha*, refers to *Raseswara Darśana*, that advocates the preservation of the human body by revitalizing it through *rāsa* (mercury), medicines called *kāya sādhana* to ward off disease and death. The *siddha* school of medicine is in vogue in South India. The *siddhas* lay special emphasis on *kāya sādhana*. Revana Siddha of the 12th century A.D. speaks highly of human birth, "great is birth, great is the human life" and as the body is the vehicle for *sādhana*, its powers of endurance have to be re-vitalized. The *Natha Siddhas* expound the theory of preserving the nectar oozing from the moon (*sahasrāra*) and that "an immortal and spiritual life can be obtained by revitalizing the human body and thus making it immaculate."

It is interesting to note that the *siddha marga* is followed in other countries too. Hakuin Zinji (1685-1764), great Zen Master of Japan, practised meditation rigorously and ruined his health. He discovered sage Haku O, aged about 240 years, who lived on top of a hill far from the madding crowd. Haku O told Hakuin that meditation should not be "unmeasured." He said further : "When the spirit is disciplin-

ed, the mind becomes concentrated, when the mind is concentrated the elixir is produced, when the elixir is produced the form becomes fixed and when the form is fixed the spirit is perfected. It should be known that the elixir is certainly not an outward thing...and when the divine elixir is produced, there will be no end to the counting of years." (The Embossed Tea Kettle). The existence of *siddhas* aged 1000 years in the *Siddha Ashrama* at Mount Kailas has been spoken of by the great savant saint Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj. (See 'Serpent in Paradise', and "Life of Swami Visudhananda" by Gopinath Kaviraj).

Although we divide the *siddhas* into *Natha Siddhas*, *Siddhas* of Tibet and *Siddhas* of Tamil-Nad, there is an undercurrent of close affinity, mutual influence and inspiration between them all from Pasupathinath to Rameswaram. The *yoga sādhana* is the common culture of All India. The 84 *siddhas* of Tibetan tradition include Matsyendranath and Gorakhnath. There are nine *Natha Siddhas* and eighteen *Siddhas* of Tamil Nad. There have been many *siddhas* revered all over India but they are outside the enumerated *siddhas*. Sri Ramalingaswami, Sri Visudhanandaji. etc were great *siddhas* and mahatmas. The *Siddhas* and *Nathas* of Tamil Nad were great devotees of God *Śiva* and His *Śakti* and they spread devotion to God *Śiva* and His *Śakti* all over India.

There is no authentic information regarding the lives and times of the *Siddhas* and what we know is merely from traditional accounts, mostly legendary. The Nine *Nathas* are : Gorakh, Jalandhar, Charpati, Adambaksha, Kanipha, Matsyendra, Chauranghi, Revana and Bhartrihari. Matsyendra and Jalandhar (King of Jalandhar) were taught *siddha marga* by God *Siva*. Adinath, Kanipha, Minavathi and Raja Gopichandra were the disciples of Jalandhar. Gorakh and Chauranginath (a Pala King of Bengal) were disciples of Matsyendra. Of all *Natha Siddhas*, Matsyendra and

Gorakh are outstanding. In about the 6th or 7th century A. D. they went to Nepal and gave relief to the country from famine. Since then they have been deified and worshipped as the patron saints of Nepal and the footprints of Gorakh adorn the crown of Nepal's ruler. Gorakh is also revered as an incarnation of God Siva and has some shrines. He left a number of writings on *Natha* cult. He had *darśana* of Lord Dattatreya and one of the works, *Jñāna Deepa Bodha* is a dialogue between Gorakh and Dattatreya, revealing the essence of *Vedānta* and *Siddhānta*. (This has been published recently by Sri Yoganathaswami, Varanasi.) There is affinity between the *Natha* and *Avadhoota* sects.

"Gorakh" means one who protects cows. Tirumular, a *Siddha* of Tamil Nada too had protected cows. It is suggested by scholars that Gorakh hailed from Andhra Desa, Punjab, Bengal, Saurashtra and Maharashtra, etc, and that he lived in about the 10th century A. D. *Siddhas* live long and thus it is not improbable that he lived from the 6th or 7th century to the 10th century A. D. and his field of activity was not confined to any one state. Dr. V. Raghavan says: "Gorakh and his teaching pervaded the whole of Northern India" (Saint Singers of India. Prabhudev Siddha, 1157 A. D). A close associate of Basava, the founder of the Lingayat Sect, had met Gorakh on the Sri Saila Hill. Gorakh told him that through yoga his body had become *vajra kāya*. Prabhudeva silenced him saying " *māya* is *chāya* and *chāya* is *māyā*. What is the use of an adamantine body, it is but an illusion and a show". Charpata and Gaininath were the disciples of Gorakh. Gaininath gave spiritual initiation to Nivrithinatha, who became the preceptor of his brother Jnaneswar, the greatest mystic philosopher of Maharashtra. The philosophy of Jnandeva, Sphurtivada or emanation theory is also a doctrine of the *Natha* Panthis.

Bhartrihari, a *Nātha Siddha*, was a king of Ujjain, who in a moment of *vairāgya* gave up everything and became

an ascetic. He was the author of Niti, Sringara and Vairagya, hundred verses on each like the triad teaching of Valluvar, the great South Indian moralist, and a *siddha*. Revana Siddha was a great Lingayat teacher (Renukacharya) who performed *tapas* in the *kada siddha* hills and identified with one Kada-siddha. Probably the reference to Revana Natha may be identified with Renukacharya.

Eighteen Siddhas have been named in the Tamil Nad but there has been no authentic information about their lives and times. There are traditional legends and their poetic preachings. Thirumular, a great *siddha*, travelled from the Himalayan regions to the south to meet Sage Agasthya. At Thiruvaduthurai, he saw the pitiable plight of a herd of cows weeping over the death of their cow-herd. Thirumular entered the dead body and drove the cattle home. As he had saved the cows from their sorrow, he may also be named Gorakh. He is said to have lived in the 6th century A.D. and is one of the 63 saints, Nayanmars, devotees of Siva, of Tamil Nad. He wrote an authoritative work on Śiva Siddhanta called Thirumanthiram.

Śiva Vakyar, a *siddha*, was a great devotee of Śiva. He changed his faith and became a staunch devotee of Visnu. When Śiva came to see him, he refused to see any God but Visnu. Śiva was pleased at his intense devotion to Visnu and graciously named him 'Bhakti Sara'. He was a contemporary of the early Alwars, Vaishnava saints, Poegay, Pey and Bhuta Alwars. As a *siddha*, his poetry reveals him as a critic of ritualism, orthodoxy, and scriptural authority.

Pattinathar was a rich man of Kaveripumpattinam. He lived in luxury in the 10th century A. D.. His spirit of dispassion was roused by a lad leaving with him an eyeless needle and a message that at the time of his death not even an eyeless needle would accompany him. He gave away his riches and left home as an ascetic, extolling devotion

to God Śiva and inculcating due observance of the virtues of truth, compassion and charity. He went to the bedside of his mother before her death to fulfill his promise to her and cremated her body. His kinsmen deserted him but he discharged his filial duty like Sri Sankaracharya. Pattinathar attained his *mahāsamādhi* at Thiruvathiyur, a suburb of Madras city, and his *samādhi* is a place of worship. Bhadrageeri was the king of Tuluva country. He was associated with Pattinathar and became a *siddha*. The above mentioned lived prior to the 10th century A. D. and the other *siddhas* of Tamil Nad belonged to the 16th or 17th centuries A. D.

Pambati Siddha sang a song called "Snake Dance Song" extolling the supremacy of God Śiva. He derides idol worship, caste and the Agama Śāstra. In his song he compares the human soul to a snake. Karuvuru *siddha* is identified with one Thirumalika Devar who founded a monastery and worked several miracles of raising the dead etc. He disappeared mysteriously. Ahappey *siddha* was a *jñāni* and preached realization of God Śiva through *jñāna*. Idaikattu Siddha composed a song in which two shepherds hold a spiritual dialogue, inculcating restraint of the senses and realization of God in one's own heart. Kudumbai Siddha says : "The ultimate spiritual life is divine bliss." Kaduvel Siddha denounces the evils of anger, fraud, drink etc and advocates an ethical life and devotion to God. The other *siddhas* were Auvai, a woman yogi, Siralan, Kumara, Devar, Muthu Thandavar, Venkadar, Arunagiri and Thirumai Gaittavar.

There is another traditional list of *siddhas* which includes Agasthya, Chattamuni, Kaka Bhusundar, Suryander, Bogar. Most of the names are legendary. Bogar was a *siddha* of the 6th century A. D. or earlier. He came from China with a companion, Pulipani, whom he had taught medicine and alchemy. Bogar was a Taoist. His *samādhi*

is within the precincts of the Palani Temple. It is said that he entered an underground passage by the side of his *samādhi* and disappeared. "A *siddha* is one who passes into the unseen when his hour is struck, not by death but by vanishing from sight into space, because his body is a transmuted body, so immaculately ethereal in composition that death cannot touch it." (Palani Devashtanam Bulletin).

The religion of the *siddhas* is devotion to God Śiva and to lead a high ethical life. So they preach devotion to God—God within the heart or outside in the shrines; and censure social evils, moral lapses and formal religious usages. They were *ativarnāśramis*, (beyond the four *āśramas*), and so they boldly denounced social evils. Their language is symbolic and incisive. They were held in high reverence and their life and conduct was holy. All the *Siddhas, Nathas* of South India believed in 36 Tatvas, and the common ground of philosophy is Śaiva Siddhanta. Yoga is the heritage of all. The *siddhas* of the Tamil Nad enriched the Tamil language by their poetic preaching. They exhort us to wake up to spiritual life. They played a notable part in arousing the people to religious and spiritual life. Though many *siddhas* belong to the past, they exercise profound influence over the people even now. Though they seem to be dead, they are alive, revered and worshipped by the people of India. They have contributed richly to the religious life of the country.

Vaishnavadevi-A Tirtha of the Himalayas

Saroj

Far from the madding crowd, among the peaks of Trikuta mountain at a height of 780ft is situated the cave-temple of Vaishnavadevi. The way to this pilgrims' place is from Katra, a small hilly town at a distance of 31 miles from Jammu, from where the journey of 13 miles is covered on foot or on horse-back.

According to mythological sayings, Bhairon, the Rakshas, got enamoured of Bhagwati Durga, the Goddess Vaishnavi and made an attempt to win her over. But the Goddess rendered all his attempts futile by encaving herself for six months at a place known as Adi-kumari at a height of 4783 ft. It is a marvellous spot where pilgrims feel the vibrations of divine love while passing through the narrow-mouthed, oily-surfaced, uneven cave known as "*garbhavāsa*" that was originally the abode of the Goddess. It is hardly 4 yards long, but the way one goes round it is an ordeal for everyone.

Later Bhairon's head was shorn on a hill named after the demon and his body was thrown miles off at the cave sacred to the Goddess Vaishnavi, the Śakti of Vishnu. After slaying the demon, Bhagwati graced him by assuring his salvation through the continual passing of Her devotees' foot-steps.

It is said that the cave was carved out by the stroke of the Goddess' *trident*. The cave is extremely narrow, allowing merely one row of not more than twenty devotees at a time. Therein, the darkness above and the coolness of Charan-ganga water below, present a highly mystical atmosphere to the pilgrims. The first five yards from the entrance are covered by prostration. Then, wading for about 90 yds. in

the icy cold water, devotees find a wide canopy of rocks, where the universal force, the eternal Śakti of Brahma got itself personified in the forms of Mahasaraswati, Mahavaishnavi and Mahakali. The waters oozing incessantly out of Bhagwati's feet, the miraculous access to the *darbar*, the narrow entrance of the temple, all make devotees consecrate themselves at the sacred feet of the Divine Śakti.

The pilgrimage to Vaishnavadevi continues round the year. However, *Navaratri*, the nine days' period in Chaitra and Ashwini each year is considered to be specially sacred to the Goddess Durga.

The pilgrimage commences with a roaring jayakar of '*Jaya Mata Ki*', '*Jaya Mata Ki*', Journeying for about 1½ miles from Katra, the pilgrims come across Vana-ganga, the sacred stream brought into being by a shot of Bhagwati's arrow. It is essential to take a dip in Vana-ganga, either while going or coming back from the pilgrimage. Later, they reach Charanpaduka, which is one mile away from Vana-ganga, situated at an altitude of 3378 ft. Here, as the name of the place indicates, the foot prints of the Goddess are noticeable.

The first halt is made at Adi Kumari which is 4783 ft. above sea level and 5 miles distance from Katra. Adequate arrangements are made here for lodging and boarding. Then begins the ascent to the rocky path of Hathimattha, called so on account of its steepness. The route onward is irksome and tedious. However, wondrous is the effect of Mother's name so that the pilgrims' enthusiasm knows no curbing at any pace. Moreover, the harder the path the greater the zeal of the devotees and the breath taking journey is accomplished easily by all. Neither tiny tots nor haggard skeletons of eighty notice the difficulty in reaching the *darbar*. Whenever devotees feel the loss of energy, the sudden '*jaya-ghosh*' of '*Jaya Mata Ki*' exhilarates them and gives them vigour for their march.

Covering the distance of about ten miles, pilgrims reach 'Sanjhi-chhatta' (सजी छत) a peak tucked high up in the Himalayas at a height of 7840 ft. This spot commands a panoramic view of snow-capped Himalayas, the eternal protectors of Bharat where gods reside and sages repose. The cool, balmy, placid air of this spot is very refreshing; from here one covers a distance of one more mile and then reaches Bhairon, a hill, 6583 ft. above sea-level. Here ends the ascent as the route onward goes down right upto 3 miles. The descent is still more laborious since the way is so far unpaved. Whatever be the hardships of the track, a continuous stream of devotees trudges on with zeal and zest, bearing the stress and strain for the one glimpse of the Goddess Vaishnavi whose name floats everywhere in the air.

On reaching the *darbar*, devotees are bound to take a bath in the Charan-ganga, the icy-cold water of which benumbs the whole body for a second; still the bath is indispensable as it takes away all the fatigue of the journey. Afterwards they wait for an entrance into the temple with the essential *pujan-samigri*. It is quite surprising to note that even during off months like May and June, people throng the court yard of the temple waiting for hours and hours for *daršana*.

No suggestions to broaden the mouth of the cave are possible as the mason is liable to be cursed if he raises a chisel at the stones of the holy cave. It appears as if Bhagwati is pleased by the continual rush of Her devotees who go on waiting patiently for Her *daršana*. It is a trial of perseverance for the *bhaktas* and probably the more long-suffering they are, the more blessed they feel.

The return journey can be made the same day if people do not feel exhausted. The lodging and boarding arrangements are laudable near the temple. *Halwa* prepared there is especially tasty. Each devotee can be provided with blankets in time of need. The fact that all the edibles, in this

age of *dalda*, are fried and cooked here in pure ghee, needs special mentioning.

It is said that Swami Vivekananda visited this holy place in the course of his pilgrimage through *Uttarakhanda*. Guru Govind Singh was also blessed by the Goddess Vaishnavi.

This is how Vaishnavadevi, the *tirtha* of the Himalayas, the shrine of the Goddess Durga, has been a source of inspiration to millions of pilgrims and is likely to remain so for ages to come.

Mātri Līlā

(15th SEPTEMBER—15th DECEMBER 1968.)

As already mentioned in the last issue of 'Ananda Vārtā', Mataji alighted in Kishenpur from Delhi on September 10th. On the 12th she went to stay in Raipur for two nights. On the 14th Sri Gurupriya Devi commemorated the anniversary of her father Sri Akhandanandaji's *Mahā-samādhi* by giving a feast to Sadhus at the Kishenpur Ashram. There was kirtan for a few hours round midday. At 12 o'clock Mataji suddenly appeared quite unexpectedly in the hall of the Ashram. When the feast was over she returned to Raipur for another night and the next day. On *Mahālāya* day, September 22nd, special kirtan was performed during the solar eclipse. Mataji was present for two hours and at the end of the eclipse sprinkled *Gangajal* on everyone.

On the 23rd of September, the first day of *Navarātri*, Mataji shifted to her charming new cottage in the compound of Mr. & Mrs. Khaitan, next door to Kalyanvan. Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja and the 19th Samyam Mahavrata were all celebrated in a large and beautiful pandal in the same compound and Mataji remained in her new house until November 8th. On the 23rd of September an earthen pitcher (*ghata*) filled with sacred water brought from the Ganga, Jamuna, Gangotri and Jamnotri, etc was installed in the Mandap constructed of bricks that opened out into the pandal. The *ghata* was worshipped daily as a symbol of the deity until the installation of the traditional image of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, etc., on September 28th, *Saptami* day. On the first day of *Navaratri* Professor Tripurari Chakravarti arrived from Calcutta and started that very evening a course of highly interesting talks on the Valmiki Ramayana that continued for full 21 days. He

stayed on for the Samyam Saptah, and after the Ramayana talked on the Mahabharata. His lectures attracted many people from Dehradun who attended regularly. Mataji was always present and thus we had *darśana* every evening for two hours and longer even in the intervals between the festivals, during which Mataji was visible most of the time until late at night. One day Professor Chakravarti was invited to talk about Vivekananda at the Kishenpur Ramakrishna Mission. Mataji also paid a visit to the R. K. Mission on that occasion. A large gathering was held there in the open air.

From September 28th to October 1st Durga Puja was celebrated. Many guests had arrived from various places, as far off even as Calcutta and Bombay, and some remained for several weeks. Two ladies, hailing from Germany and France respectively, also participated. A huge crowd flocked from Dehradun on the main days of the Puja. On *Ashtami* and *Naomi*, feasts and presents were given to 108 *Kumaris* each day. As always in Mataji's presence, every detail of the puja was performed to perfection. Mataji was extremely active and saw to everything in person, paying no attention to her unsatisfactory health. There was exquisite music during the ceremonies. Over and above the proceedings in the pandal, one hundred *Durga Sapta Satis* were chanted in the puja room of the yet unfinished house of Mr. & Mrs. Khaitan, and on *Naomi* day this part of the function was duly completed by a *yajña* performed in front of the house.

Mahamandaleshwara Sri Swami Maheshwaranandaji arrived on *Saptami* and stayed for three days in one of the cottages at Kalyanvan. He delivered three brilliant, very witty and entertaining talks on the significance of Devi, of Durga Puja and so on. But actually all his discourses were on *Advaita*, the one theme he discusses in endless variations. "Do not imagine", he said that the devotees of Krishna and those of Durga worship different gods. These are different.

aspects of the One. Just as different organs have different functions: The eyes cannot hear and the ears cannot see, yet they belong to one body. When you injure your foot, your eyes weep, your tongue shouts for help and your hands attend to the wound. Why should this be so, if they were not one?" He used parables and amusing stories to illustrate and make intelligible profound truths.

Every evening for half an hour Brahmachari Nirmalananda would explain the meaning of Durga Puja. What he said was in fact for many a necessary part of the celebrations. It was interesting, instructive and thought provoking. There are two sides to the puja: the inner and the outer. In actual fact Devi resides within the heart of every human being. She is outside only by projection. The priest has to identify himself with his object of worship to make the puja effective. The worship is different on each day. On *Saptami* the bathing of the deity is the main item, that is to say, purification. On *Ashtami* the actual, most elaborate worship of the goddess is the central idea; and on *Naomi* one is to dedicate oneself with all that one is to the object of worship. What God wants as offering from us all is the ego, that and nothing else. All offerings are but symbolic of the variegated aspects of the I-ness. Mataji often tells a story in which someone asks: "What does God eat?" The reply given is: "God eats the ego." On *Daśami* the living presence of the goddess is withdrawn from the image, so that we may feel Her presence within our own being. The goddess has been projected outside only to remind us, to make us aware of Her constant presence within us. Why is the image immersed in water? It is said that the gods reside in water. Thus the image is not thrown away into water, but returned to the realm to which the goddess belongs.

At the end of the evening programme Mataji daily replied to questions or told stories with great vivacity. Responding to a general request, Km. Chhabi Banerji sang

special Bengali kirtan for three and a half hours on October 3rd. On the 5th night, full moon, Lakshmi Puja was performed to a beautiful image of the goddess. On the 6th a lunar eclipse was observed by kirtan. The next morning, during *darsana* time in her room, Mataji talked at length about Naimisharanya, urging everyone to attend the forthcoming function there in our new Ashram from November 21st to December 5th. Naimisharanya is a very special place. It is said that Kali Yuga cannot touch Naimisharanya. Mataji, amongst other things, related about the floods there in October 1960, just before our Samyam Vrata was to be held. The whole area was deep under water and the officials who had undertaken to assist with the arrangements suggested the shifting of the function to Lucknow. Wires and trunkcalls were sent to Mataji to obtain her permission. In the meanwhile, Swami Paramananda was in Naimisharanya in order to prepare for the gathering. "Since Mataji has sent me here," he said to the officials, "I shall not give up the attempt to arrange here itself." They felt that he must be either crazy or lacking in intelligence to attempt the impossible. One day, Mataji, who was in Dehradun, asked for a glass of water and drank it up to the last drop, saying ; "Just as it takes no time to empty a glass of water, so God, if He so wills can withdraw the floods in no time." Within three days the water had all flown off. People said that they had never before witnessed floods subsiding at such speed. However, the place where the pandal was to be erected was just a mass of deep, soaking wet mud. Swami Paramananda hired a hundred kulis and had the whole area covered with a thick layer of sand. Only the night before the *Samyam Saptaha* started, could the pandal be completed. Many of the tents were pitched after the *vratis* who were to occupy them had arrived. But the function took place as scheduled and was one of the best and most memorable we had ever known. Mataji remarked jokingly that the Gomati had come in person to cleanse and purify the whole place with her waters in

preparation of our gathering, which comprised the reading of 108 Srimad Bhagavatas by 108 pandits for a week, following immediately the *Samyam Vrata*.

Practically during the whole period of about four weeks between *Durga Puja* and the *Samyam Vrata*, Mataji would give *daršana* in her room from 11-12 midday. The lovely, spacious room, which commands a panoramic view of the mountains, was always packed, with people overflowing into the corridor and the adjoining rooms. Varied and interesting conversations often ensued. The above is only one example.

The same evening at dusk, a young devotee who is an electrician, was called to do some repair. He ran down to Mataji's house by a shortcut without path. On his way he put his foot on a thick black piece of wood (as he thought) but found it to be a king cobra ! It stood up, waving its huge hood and slapped his leg but did not bite him. He stood quite still for some time, fearing that the snake might chase him if he moved. At long last, shouting 'Ma' he bolted away. The cobra remained where it was. Mataji asked him to sleep in her house that night.

One morning an old English gentleman came for Mataji's *daršana* who had been a Government official at Dacca when Mataji lived there over forty years ago. Now having taken up work at the Welham School in Dehradun, he asked permission to bring his students. Thus, on October 18th evening, 41 boys arrived with one of their teachers. Mataji asked them questions about themselves and their school and then talked to them as she usually talks to children. They sang to Mataji. At the end they expressed the wish to put a picture of Mataji up in their school. It was presented to them. Mataji distributed sweets and flowers to them and touched each boy's head.

Another evening a bus full of Europeans hailing from various countries came for Mataji's *daršana*, led by their Guru, an Indian Swami who is running an Ashram in Germany. Yet another day Sri Swami Chinmoyananda,

who has an Ashram near Bombay came from Uttarkashi with a number of his disciples and delivered a talk.

On October 18th-20th the Delhi Kirtan party performed *Nāma Yajña* of *Mahāmantra*. All present took active part, the men singing all day and the women all night. On October 21st, Divali night, Kali Puja was performed until the small hours of the morning. In the evening of *Annakut*, Mataji distributed trays and trays of sweets to all who approached her in a very orderly queue. It took hours. After the Divali functions, the Mandap was converted into a dais to seat the speakers at the *Samyam Mahavrata*, which took place from October 29th to November 4th.

Each *Samyam Vrata* seems more wonderful than the preceding ones and each has its own distinctive note. Most participants look forward to it from one year to the other. The fasting on *Gangajal* on one or two days, the restricted diet on the other days, the very strenuous programme, forgoing many comforts, sitting still for hours together, are not felt as hardships anymore. A great abiding joy and a rare sense of unity were the keynote of the whole gathering, which was remarkably well organized and disciplined. There was no crowding round Mataji in the pandal at any time. However, after the morning session, Mataji would sit in the open and those who wished could approach her individually to do *pranāma* and offer garlands or flowers to their heart's content. Of foreigners five American gentlemen and two French ladies took part in the function. There were fewer talks and more music this time, since a few of the *Mahātmās* who usually grace the *Samyam Saptah* with their presence were unfortunately unable to come. The discourses by Mahamandaleshwara Sri Chaitanya Giri, Sri Swami Vishnuashram, Sri Swami Sharananandaji, Sri Avadhutaji, Swami Govind Prakashji of Ramatirtha Ashram, and others were all of a high order and much relished by the Vratis. Mataji was truly indefatigable. Not only did she sit through most of the satsang, but she was guiding and

supervising all arrangements. Every day during meal time she would, for instance, go to Kalyanvan, where food was cooked and served, and make sure whether everything was as it should be. She would in person welcome and see off every visiting *Māhātma*. Needless to say, she made time for private interviews and attended to visitors who came for part of the week or just for a few hours from distant places. There were a thousand and one things that she did. Notwithstanding unsatisfactory health, her energy seems unlimited and neither do the limits of time and space exist for her, now as before.

On the day the *Samyam Vrata* started, Dr. Mukerji, an ardent and much loved and respected devotee of many years' standing, to our deep regret passed away in Dehradun. How great was our astonishment when we heard that Mataji had been to see him a few hours before he left his body during that busiest of busy times!

Mataji was very generous in her replies to questions during "Matri Satsang", the last item of the daily programme. Everything she said has been preserved by tape recorder and we hope to publish some of it in subsequent issues of Ananda Varta and also some of the talks given by the *Mahātmās*.

Mataji was expected to leave Dehradun on the 5th of November, but at the last moment decided to remain for three more days. Sri Goswamiji, Chakarpaniji and Swami Ananda stayed on and talked to us every evening in the Ashram Hall. On the 8th evening Mataji boarded the train to Lucknow from where she motored to Naimisharanya the next morning.

On several occasions we have written about Naimisharanya in the pages of this magazine,* since our eleventh *Samyam Vrata* was held there in the grounds of Sri Narad-ananda Ashram in 1960. In 1961 a plot of land measuring

* See 'Ananda Varta' Vol. VIII, No. 4, February 1961, "Samyam and Bhagavata Saptahas in Naimisharanya" by K. G. Ambegaokar.

about 15 bighas was acquired by the Sangha on the Hanuman Tila, the highest spot of Naimisharanya. A beautiful little Puran Mandir was built there and inaugurated in Mataji's presence in December 1967.† Since then a regular small Ashram has grown up round the Mandir, which opens out into a fair sized circular hall. The hall has so far a canvas roof. To the right and left of the hall, there are two sets of living rooms that were occupied by Sri Haribabaji Maharaj and by Sri Swami Akhandanandaji during the recent function. A small house has been constructed for Mataji, Didima, Didi and the attending girls, and at some distance another house for the general kitchen with a few small living rooms. A generous *bhakta* has donated a motor for the well and pipes have been laid on for water supply. The beautiful pandal from Dehradun, originally brought from Calcutta, was shifted to Naimisharanya with all the workmen, loudspeakers and other equipment. There also it proved a great succes, although the enormous crowd of local visitors had partly to sit outside. A large number of tents were pitched in the Ashram grounds and nearby to accommodate guests who arrived from all over North India. Two dharmasalas and other rooms in the neighbourhood were also at our disposal besides the Prayag Narain Kshetra on the banks of the Gomati just below the Ashram, which houses sadhus in tatched huts among idyllic surroundings.

In 1960, 108 pandits led by Sri Agnishwatta Shastri (Batuda) had recited the Bhagavata in Sanskrit, while Sri Swami Vishnuashram had expounded in Hindi. This time Batuda alone was responsible for the Sanskrit reading while Sri Swami Akhandananda Saraswati explained in Hindi for full 15 days, from 9-11 a. m. and from 3-4.45 p. m. Profoundly learned, a brilliant speaker as well as an expert on the Bhagavata, he made clear the symbolism of many

† A picture of the Mandir will be found in 'Ananda Varta', Vol. XV, No. 4, April 1968.

passages that seem obscure or even devoid of meaning to the ordinary person. His exposition was really masterful. The whole audience listened spell bound day after day. Mataji was present throughout and also for Sri Haribabaji's satsang from 7.30-9 p.m. Some Mahatmas, such as Swami Sharana-nandaji, Sri Govind Prakashji and others came from distant places, listening to the Bhagavata and also gave short talks in the evening. It was altogether the most beautiful and concentrated gathering, fully worthy of the sacred spot where thousands of Rishis are said to have lived. It will not easily be forgotten by those who had the good fortune to be present. Among the visitors there were high Government officials and several Rajas and Ranis.

On December 6th everyone dispersed. Mataji, together with Sri Haribabaji and Swami Akhandanandaji, motored to Lucknow where satsang was held in the compound of the residence of Sri Rameshwar Sahai, retd Conservator of Forests. At night Mataji boarded the train to Delhi and remained there till 16th.