

“ Spoken word, verily, must be of Thee alone,
All else is but futility and pain. ”

MOTHER'S WORDS

(Extracts from letters in reply to different people at different times.)

Man's Duty as Man.

9.

All this, which is His creation is under His dispensation and in His presence and it is He.

In whatever state He keeps anyone at any time — it is all for the best, for verily everything is ordained by Him, is *of* Him.

Relative happiness, that is happiness depending on anything, must end in grief. It is man's duty to meditate on God Who is Peace Itself. Without giving heed to that which aids the remembrance of God there can be no peace. Have you not seen what the world is? The one to be loved is God. In Him is everything — Him you must try to find.

10.

Divine discontent arises spontaneously — it is the Divine that awakens it.

To lose all is to gain all. He is merciful and compassionate. Whatever He does at any time is all for the best, though certainly painful at the moment. When He manifests Himself as all-loss, there is hope that He may also manifest Himself as all-gain. To pine for the One who helps towards the light of Truth is salutary, for it kindles the awareness of Truth.

Verily, He is everywhere at all times.

The endeavour to awaken his real nature is man's duty as man.

11.

Human birth — does it not ordinarily mean experiencing desire, passion, grief, suffering, old age, disease, happiness, pain and so on? Yet it is man's duty to bear in mind that he exists for God alone — for His service and for His realisation.

To say, "I don't know, I don't understand", is but ignorance. It is this veil that causes agony and misfortune.

12.

In the field of His play there is both getting and losing. This is but the nature of its movement. Think of Him Who cannot be lost. Meditate on Him alone, on Him, the Fountain-of-goodness. Pray to Him ; depend on Him. Try to give more time to His name and to contemplation. Surrender your mind at His Feet. Endeavour to sustain japa and meditation without a break.

13.

All the 24 hours are to be spent in Quest of God (*Sadhana-Bhajana*). The desire to find God has to be specially fostered. To be a human being means to place first and foremost the desire for Self-realization. Except for the little time necessary for the service of the family, all the rest must be devoted to japa, meditation, the reading of scriptures, worship, prayer and self-dedication. Yearn and cry for Him for His own sake. If opportunity arises seek *Satsang*.* Whenever this is not possible strive to keep *Sadbhava*† enshrined in your heart.

14.

How can one be a human being without fortitude ? To attain to Truth one has to endure all difficulties, ever abiding in patience. It is the obstacles that call forth patience.

15.

Speak the truth to all. Secrecy, slyness and deception amount to cheating. They only taint the mind and set one floating on a sea of misery.

A truthful, pure and holy life tends towards joy and happiness supreme.

* The word "Satsang" has a very wide connotation. It means the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth. It also means a religious meeting and in its widest sense the awareness of Truth in oneself.

† "Sadbhava" is a state of mind in which the remembrance of the Divine prevails.

16.

Ever to seek refuge at the Feet of the Lord is man's one and only duty. Try to engage in worship, the reading of sacred books, japa and meditation in the form that appeals to you most.

When the time is ripe God provides for everything. Try to be aware of Him in your heart.

17.

Work with your hands and keep the name of your Lord (*Ishla*) in your mind. This will improve your work and it may also do good to your family.

To lead family life disregarding religious duty is to embark on an ocean of misery. If family life is sought, it must always be based on the dictates of religion and righteousness.

18.

Do your duty and do it without concerning yourself with the results. There is no higher duty than the search after Truth, Everyone's real duty is to aspire at God-realisation.

19.

What little capacity one has should be devoted to His service in complete reliance, seeking refuge at His Feet only.

It is man's bounden duty to choose and gather about him that which helps the remembrance of God.

20.

No matter what work has to be done at any time, try to give your full attention to it and do it completely. Under all circumstances rely upon God. Verily, He is all-pervading and therefore can be found everywhere.

With your whole being invoke the Lord of Life.

SAMYAM VRATA

(Atmananda)

People often say to Mother : "You ask us to live in the constant remembrance of God, to aspire to Self-realisation. But our worldly duties and our families keep us busy all day long. Even if we set apart a few minutes every morning and evening for the thought of God, for the rest of the day we are immersed in our work, over-powered by our habits, our desires and cares. What are we to do?"

Mother has frequently been heard to reply something like this : "All right, if your time is taken up by your every day occupations and thoughts, at least you can set apart certain days and dedicate them entirely to the "Supreme Quest." If possible let the members of a family co-operate and devise together the programme for those special days, which may be observed once or twice a year, once or twice a month, or better still once or twice a week. Decide that on those days at least you will strictly speak the truth, avoid all gossip and unnecessary talk, keep Brahmacharya, forgo your favourite foods and drinks and live on simple moderate diet. Let the thought of God be with you all the time, read the "Gita" or some other sacred text, seek the company of sages and

saints, do your work as a service to God, be in harmony with all, do not quarrel with anyone.

If on such a day you get even a slight touch of Him, who is your SELF, you will begin to hanker after His constant presence, the thought of God will be with you more and more along with your outer activities and gradually your life will be changed."

Out of this originated the idea of 'Samyam Vrata' to be organized by the 'Sangha'. Our President, Raja Durga Singh of Solan, suggested that as many as possible might join together at set intervals for a week of intense aspiration and rigorous self-discipline in the presence of Mother. For, as Sri Krishnanand Avadhuti said in one of his talks : "Whilst it is difficult for the sadhaka to live up to his resolve when left to himself, literally nothing is impossible in the Presence of Mother. Have firm faith in Mother's Grace."

The Raja of Solan submitted his proposal to Mother, and after praying for Her Blessing and for the precious boon of Her presence on the occasion, the date and place of our first gathering were fixed in due consultation with Mother and Gurupriya Devi.

The first week of "Samyam Vrata" was held at the Banaras Ashram from August 6th, 1952.

This initial experiment proved a great and real success. Everyone was amazed to find that it was not at all difficult to live on such a simple and scanty diet, to sleep less than usual, to keep up many hours of japa and meditation, to attend the Satsang mornings, afternoons and evenings. There was no time left for gossip or for quarrels, no time to even remember all sorts of comforts we had to do without. Everyone felt light and happy and many wished they could continue in this manner in Mother's Presence. A deep peace and a deep joy penetrated our hearts and minds and overwhelmed us. In such an atmosphere things that we have deemed indispensable become superfluous. We actually experienced that when we give full attention to our one real need, which is spiritual, we require only a bare minimum of food and sleep and comfort, and the desire for relaxations, distractions, entertainments and society dies away naturally.

Amongst the 150 or so participants of the "Samyam Vrata" some were used to extravagant comforts and luxuries in their homes. They came rather hesitatingly, wondering how they would be able to stand such a week of austerity and strain. It was a revelation to them

to discover how utterly delightful, how much richer was this simple life in the presence of Mother.

The "Samyam Vrata" started after a night of vigil, entirely spent in Kirtan and meditation, as it was both Jhulan Purnima and a lunar eclipse; and the week terminated with Puja and Kirtan throughout the night of Janamasthami.

Every morning at 3-30 a. m. the rising bell called us from our short rest. Several times Mother Herself attended the Usha Kirtan at 4 a. m. After the usual morning ablutions and at any other time we could spare throughout the day we were at our individual puja, japam and meditation.

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours daily were spent in silent meditation in Mother's presence : 8-9 a. m., 3-4 p. m., 8.45-9 p. m. and 11.45 p. m.-12.15 a. m. After the reading of the "Gita" in the morning Mother usually replied to questions, or related incidents from Her early life, and sometimes Sri Krishnanandji spoke. In the afternoon the 'Bhagavata' was read and then Sri Krishnanandji Avadhut gave some inspiring and instructive talks explaining the meaning of "Samyam Vrata", about Sadhana, about the attitude of the Sadhaka and other similar topics that gave much practical help to the aspirants.

Sri Gopinath Kaviraj had written down a few simple but very useful instructions about asana, japa and medita-

tion, which were read out and discussed. He also came in person on two or three occasions.

Many residents of Banaras joined the Satsang enthusiastically and kept up the food restrictions and the rules of behaviour in their own homes.

Mother was present regularly at the long hours of Satsang from 7.45 a. m. to 11.30 or 11.45 a. m., from 2.45 p. m. to 5.30 or 6 p. m. and at the evening Kirtan for at least an hour or more. Again at 9.30 p. m. people gathered round Mother informally for half an hour or so on the open platform overlooking the Ganges. There the happenings of the day were discussed and suggestions made for the next day.

As to diet we had three categories to choose from. Class A kept fasts on Ganges water on the 1st and 7th days, had one meal of rice and fruit boiled in milk without sugar on the 2nd and 6th days, and rice with vegetables once daily on the 3rd, 4th and 5th days.

Class B had rice, roti, vegetable stew and curds at midday and milk at night.

Class C the same with dal added.

There was no time to feel hungry in between, and in general everyone felt fitter and stronger than usual.

Mother Herself gave minute instructions as to how the food was to be prepared and by whom, and went round

daily whilst meals were served. As usual but perhaps more obviously than at other times, Mother was everywhere, supervised everything and gave everyone the guidance and assistance he needed.

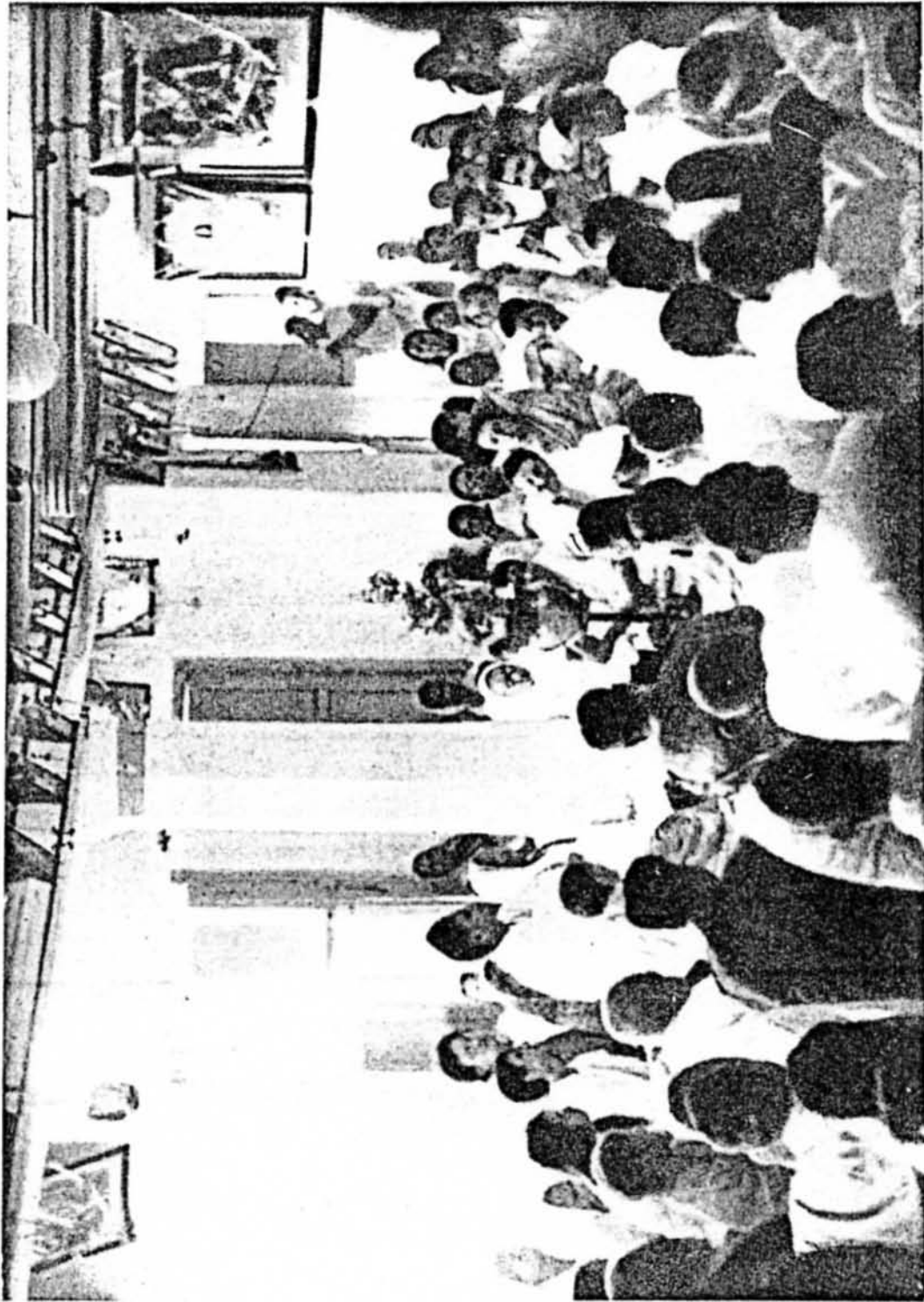
I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that in that week we have gained something lasting, a new strength in our search after Truth, a greater certainty of purpose. We got a taste of how wonderful life can be, when it is spent in Satsang, every minute dedicated to the search of God.



Another similar reunion in the presence of Mother, probably even more concentrated and more delightful, took place at Vindhyachal from January 30th—February 7th, 1953, continuing for nine days this time instead of seven.

The Ashram at Vindhyachal seems an all but ideal spot for such a meeting, being situated on the crest of the charming Ashtabhujia Hill amongst rambling woods and rocks with an exquisite view over the plains and the Ganges, quiet and secluded, yet within easy reach of the P.W.D. bungalow and two other spacious houses that had been put at the entire disposal of the "Sangha" for the two weeks of Mother's stay.

About 100 men and women from near and far participated inspite of the very



U. P. Governor's visit at Banaras Ashram for
Mother's darshan, during devotional week 1952.

short notice that had been given due to the uncertainty of Mother's movements.

It had been suggested from the outset that members, who were unable to attend the meeting in Mother's presence, might practice "*Samyam Vrata*" in groups or by themselves wherever they happened to be. A number of reports have reached us from members at various places, who observed as far as possible in their own homes and ashrams the programme and the mode of life prescribed for the "*Samyam Vrata*".

It may well fill us with joy and hope that the members of the "Sangha" are taking with such enthusiasm to the ideals of "*Samyam Vrata*". Those who have been able to keep *Satsang* or else to live in *Sadbhava* for 9 days and to observe *Samyam Vrata* will find, as many have actually done, that the trend of their lives has been changed, that the spell of uncontrollable habits like smoking, drinking tea, chewing pan and the like has been broken and that this brings a sense of freedom and relief that far outweighs the pleasures of indulgence.

On the last evening at the informal gathering in Mother's room someone

said, "Mother, we feel sorry that the '*Samyam Vrata*' should be over, we want it to continue." Mother replied, "This is the fruit of what you have done in these 9 days;" and then She went on explaining how, when we do things like eating, drinking etc. for enjoyment (*bhoga*), since every action brings forth its own fruit, we are driven on and on to seek material pleasures. Hence it is so important to introduce a counter-movement by acts of renunciation. These also bear fruit and therefore every time we renounce some transient enjoyment or comfort we thereby make a step on the path that ultimately leads to the Supreme Experience (*Mahabhoga*).

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It is the chief aim of the "Anandamayee Sangha" to organize circumstances so as to enable Mother's devotees as well as the world at large to get the greatest possible benefit from the unique and immeasurable Blessing that is Mother's Presence amongst us. We have just had practical proof that gatherings like the "*Samyam Vrata*" at Banaras and Vindhyachal are indeed an important means to this end.

MA ANANDAMAYÉE IN MADRAS AND TIRUVANNAMALAI

By

S. S. Cohen

(Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai.)

It is seldom that Rishis in this country go about to preach their gospels and inspire and uplift the people by their example and inner experience. Usually they are sedentary and, by the power of their mighty tapas and Supreme Realisation, automatically act as giant spiritual magnets and attract to their abodes seekers from many lands and climes. Yet, there are illustrious names in history, e. g. Lord Buddha, Sri Shankaracharya, Lord Gouranga and others, who travelled the length and breadth of the land and showed the way to infinite peace and happiness by their teachings and devotional songs. To this category belongs Sri Anandamayee Mata, the famous saint of Bengal, whose name is known in every household in North India. Although She became known very early in life and began Her peregrinations about two decades ago She had all this time not felt inclined to turn South*— or could it be that

Heaven had reserved Her peculiar activities for the North, while South India was enjoying the ineffable presence of two Rishis of the first magnitude : Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo, who brilliantly shone there for about half a century: Rishis who could have illumined any age by their vivid spiritual lustre? Now that both of these have passed into Mahanirvana and the people have to have a living God who speaks the language of men to turn their hearts and minds to Him, Mataji has come South to fill the gap. She set foot on the soil of Madras on October 27, at about 8-45 a.m. with twenty of Her devotees, headed by Sri Hari Baba Maharaj and Didi, Her personal attendant. She was received at the railway station by some of the most prominent citizens of the City and brought to the spacious bungalow "Abbotsbury", belonging to Sri J. H. Tarapore, in Teynampet, Mount Road. In "Abbotsbury's" vast grounds a

* She visited South India once many years ago, when she was known only to a few:
(Editor's note)

large shamyana with an inner bedroom had been constructed for Her own use out of mats and palm leaves over which whole pieces of new long cloth and beautiful curtains were spread. It was suitably decorated, carpeted and electrified.

Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan of Ramanashram had met Sri Mataji last year in Delhi, and had taken a promise from Her that if she ever blessed South India by a visit, she Mrs. T. should be given the chance to serve Her by making all the arrangements necessary for Her stay, etc. Last September the promise was fulfilled and Mrs. T. immediately contacted the highest in the administrative, juridical and social life of Madras, and with her characteristic tremendous energy in a short time succeeded in forming a powerful Reception Committee as well as making excellent arrangements for the honoured guest's accommodation, which made Her stay of one week a very great success. The people of the City poured in their hundreds to have Mataji's darshan. From the first to the last day of Her stay there was a constant stream of visitors, dozens of whom daily kept waiting for hours to see Her. Her appearance, Her magnetic personality and Her sweet conversation charmed everyone and attracted big audiences to Her bhajans and talks. The language difficulty was a serious bar for

the majority of Southerners to contact and understand Her. The translation from Hindi into Tamil or English proved extremely inadequate to convey to the people the essence of Her teaching. The translators who knew Hindi were not sufficiently conversant with the spiritual subject with which She dealt, and those who were so conversant, did not know Hindi, with the result that the most significant parts of Her answers were either slurred over or distorted. Mataji Herself did not make it any easier for the baffled translator to wade his way through all She said; but out of the depth of Her knowledge of the Supreme She poured out streams of ideas, which kept him whipping his memory to retain all he heard, and his wits to unravel the mystery of Her meaning. Nonetheless the audiences remained extremely satisfied, particularly those who could directly contact Her through the Hindi language.

Her very presence silently exhaled the perfume of purity and joyful innocence which pervaded and won all hearts. Her child-like, guileless laughter, the hope She instilled in the minds of the troubled questioners, the deep sympathy and understanding with which She met their suffering, gave immense solace and turned sorrow to happiness and at times to tears of relief.

Mataji's one-week stay was crowded with engagements ; even the few hours

She could snatch in the daytime for some rest were not without peering eyes and private interviews. Many were these interviews, wherein woes and laments and prayers for redress were made to Her, as it is generally done to the sacred image of the Mother of the Universe in temples. She patiently listened to them all, and with infinite compassion answered sweetly and persuasively. One of the questions was :

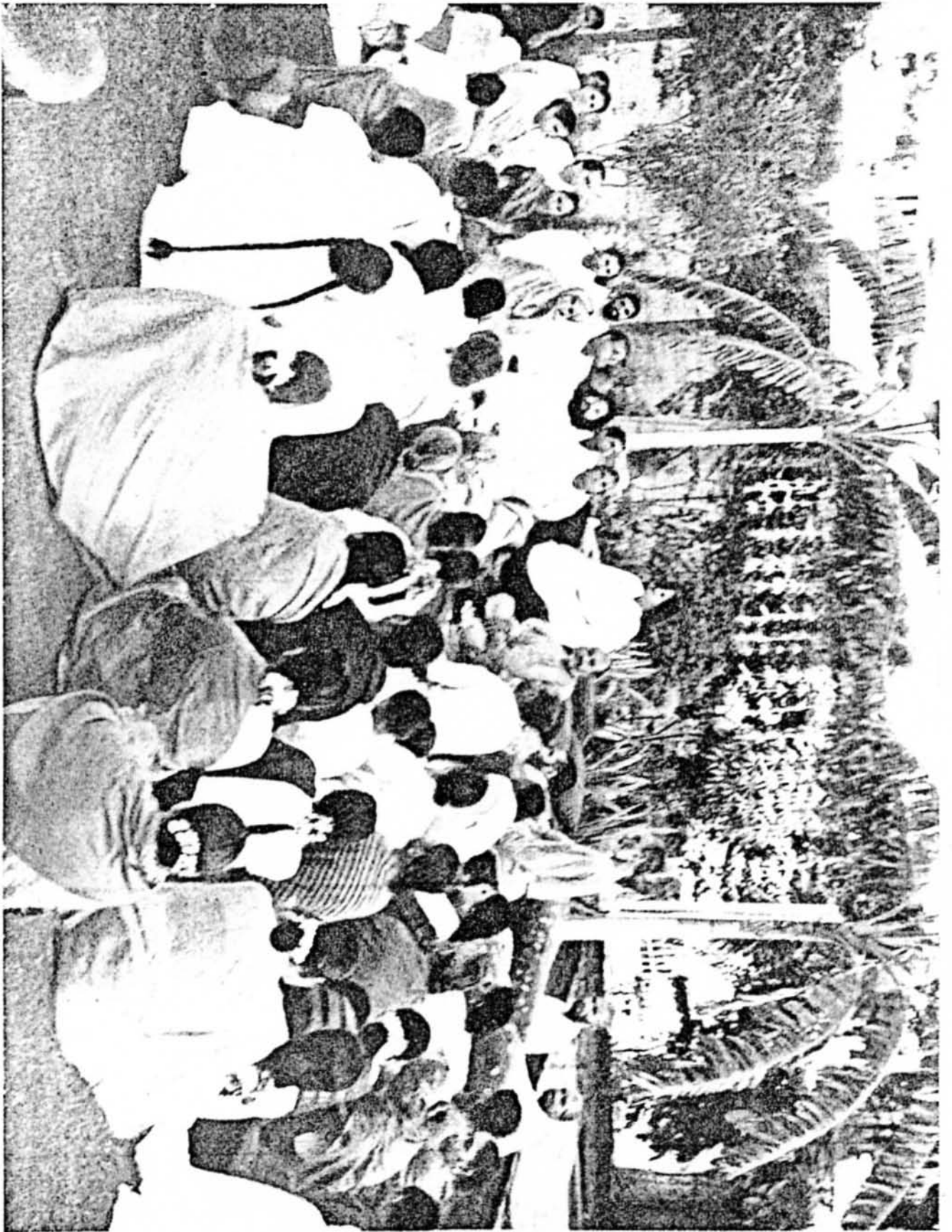
“Do ceremonies performed for the dead actually benefit them? If so for how long?”

Mataji : Yes ; they do benefit them, and for always ; for even if the departed person were reborn, these prayers, being spiritual in nature, would not fail to uplift the soul, which, after all, never dies, but remains the same from life to life, continually progressing in its onward march towards God, till it finally merges in Him and thus attains its Liberation—*Mukti*—, which is Supreme, Everlasting Bliss.

Then knowing the history of the grief-stricken couple who had put the question, she related anecdotes of bereavements which resembled the one they had suffered, and told how in one case the departed child was seen in a dream by his pining mother extremely happy in Heaven in the company of thousands of other children, and how in another case the deep yearnings of the mother caused

the soul of her dead child to take birth again in her womb very soon afterwards, which disturbed his rest and retarded his progress. Grief is thus shown to be most harmful to the beloved-ones whose loss we mourn. The third case She related was that of the death of an only son. The mother seeing the father unconcernedly smoking his hukka in a corner, piteously wailed and, with abundant tears accused him of hard-heartedness, to which he replied : “Do not think me to be indifferent to my son’s death, but just now I am puzzling which son’s death of all the dozens of sons I have had in the last eighteen lives I should mourn.” This gave great comfort to the couple concerned, which made them look upon Mataji as a saviour-mother in whose lap they could always take shelter from the stormy blasts of life.

On the night of October 29, Sri Mataji for the first time answered questions in public. The talk was opened by a young lady who wanted to know the remedy for the fainting spells she had contracted almost from childhood, and which used to seize her whenever she heard bhajans, attended puja, or concentrated on the statue of Sri Krishna in her house. Mataji cross-examined her and for ten minutes gave her full explanation of the import of her complaint and finally exhorted her to practise self-control. “As”, She argued, “you remain



Mother at Gandhinagar, Adair, Madras.

unconscious during these spells, and as they have all this long time caused you no spiritual progress, nor furthered your sadhana, you should consider them unfavourable, and you should therefore make an effort to steady yourself whenever the impulse to faint begins to be felt. Take to japa and strengthen your mind by repeating God's name," and, placing Her hand on the shoulder of the young lady, Mataji, smilingly, and with extreme tenderness, said: "You have had the darshan of Sri Krishna, now I must have your darshan", and folded Her hands before her in salutation, which made everybody laugh, except the young lady who burst into tears out of excessive joy. At this stage a voice asked:

Voice: What is the easiest way to God?

Mataji: Profuse tears.

Voice: And if tears do not come?

Mataji: Then you should seek the company of those who shed tears, namely *Satsang*. This is the easiest way to God through love and devotion.

On the next night, the same voice rose:

Voice: People are asked to worship God, to sing His praise in bhajan, to perform puja, to repeat constantly His name, and they do all this without knowing what God is. Will you please explain?

Mataji: God is all-knowledge, and one cannot know His true nature till one attains Self-realisation. Then one will find Him to be none other than oneself,

the only *Atman*, the only Self there is, that He is with form as the world and without form as *chit*, Pure Consciousness. In the meantime prayers, worship, japa, dhyana, etc. have to be performed.

A lady stood up and asked with warmth: Lady: How can our minds be free for prayer and meditation when we are so much burdened by work and family responsibilities: — husband, children, etc.? What should we do in that case?

Mataji: Let the work be done of its own accord without your exertion. Work without the feeling that it is you who are working. Take it as if it is God's work, done through you as His instrument. Then your mind will be at rest and peaceful. That is prayer and meditation.

Sri Anandamayee Ma has a partiality for temples and ashrams, and takes great interest in visiting as many of them as possible. It is erroneously stated in certain quarters that the *Muktas*, the Enlightened One has, by merging with the Absolute, cut himself off completely from the world and its activities. These *Muktas*, on the contrary, enjoy the world without the sense of participating in it, and in all the actions they perform they are free from the sense of doership and thus free from sorrow and delusion. They see the Divine Mind in the multitude of forms, colours and qualities which fill the universe in an eternal Play, which is all joy and bliss. They experi-

ence this gigantic Play within their own mind, which is also God's and themselves its detached spectators. Yet, Mataji looks at the murti in a temple as the outer symbol of the Formless God in a special sense, and feels the devotional fervour which, for decades and centuries, lakhs of worshippers have poured out to it.

So, on the 28th morning She and Her party motored up to the big temple in Mylapore and to a few smaller ones in the City. On the 29th at 5 a. m., they visited the famous temple of Conjeevaram about fifty miles from Madras; and on the 30th, the Seven Pagodas (Mahabalipuram), where ruins of many old Hindu shrines exist in profusion. On their way back they climbed to the world-renowned Tirukazugukuntram mandir on the top of a hill, where two eagles come every day from a very long distance at about 11 a.m. just to feed from the hand of a special priest and return with clock-like regularity in fair and foul weather and without a single day's break in all the many centuries of which tradition speaks. As Mataji's knees were too weak to permit Her to climb the great number of steps, she was carried to the top in a Palanquin.

Ramana-Bhajan is being performed on the last Thursday of every month in the house of Sri P. S. G. Rao in Adyar,

Madras. Mataji had accepted an invitation to attend it. As in this month it falls on the 30th, She and Her party went in the evening of that day to Gandhinagar, Adyar. In the garden of his bungalow Sri P. S. G. Rao had made excellent arrangements for the bhajan. Mataji sat on a sofa under floral decorations, and facing Her at the farther end squatted scores of Brahmins who chanted in rhythmic cadence the Veda verses which have been daily recited in Ramana-shram at Tiruvannamalai during and after the life-time of the Master, followed by "*Upadesa Saran*" in Samskrit, the verses which He himself (Sri Raman Bhagawan) had composed. The very large audience spread out on the lawn, in the whole open space and the verandahs of the bungalow. Mataji's presence, the large exhibited photograph of the Maharishi and His all-pervading influence, the *Veda parayanam* and the incense uplifted and thrilled all present.

Sri Mataji's evenings were usually devoted to visiting outstanding places of interest, e.g. the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, the Ramakrishna Math in Mylapore, the Gujarati Sangha, the Bengali Club, and the gardens of certain people, one of which was that of Sri J. H. Tata-pore. It must be incidentally mentioned here that Anandamayi Ma never enters a house where a *grihsta* lives. All She

does to bless the person concerned, is to enter his compound, sometimes even without stepping out of the car, halt for a few minutes and then leave. At Sri Tarapore's, however, She did come out, but stood on the car platform, and, opening the big box of apples offered to Her along with other fruits, with Her own hand distributed almost all its contents to those present, not excluding the gardener of the bungalow. The Tarapore family and those who received prasad directly from Her hand felt themselves singularly blessed by this special mark of Her Grace. At the Gujerati Sangha and the Bengali Club there was music, but more than the music in the former place, there was the riotous joy of the children who swarmed every inch of it, even in laps, over shoulders and backs, and under knees. The Bengali music was exquisite.

On some days there were at "Abbotsbury" three darshans, namely :

10 to 11-30 a.m.

4 to 5-30 p.m.

7 to 9-00 p.m.

The first two items were variable according to the circumstances and the engagements of the day concerned, but the last-one did not vary, and was solely reserved for bhajan, except the last fifteen minutes, when all remained in silent meditation. These attracted large crowds which were accommodated in the wide

open space of the garden just outside the shamyana. On the last five nights after 9 p.m. when the majority of the audience dispersed to their distant homes, the minority, which was appreciably large, moved into the shamyana ante-room and filled it to capacity. Mataji then came in, sat on the sofa and answered questions, some of which have been reported above. That was a happy time for all to have direct contact with Her through speech. On one of the last nights a question was asked, as to when and at what age and through what sadhana She had attained Enlightenment. She laughed in her characteristic child-like way and said that She was not aware of any date or time when She had attained Enlightenment, that She knew of no sadhana deliberately performed, nor of any suddenness in spiritual Illumination, which made a distinction between a life that had gone and a new-one that had taken its place, that She was now as She had ever been. We have had to draw our own conclusions.

On another night, November 1, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Madras, undertook the difficult task of translating Mataji's answers on the spot, and on the next day he gave the following written record of the talk :

"Where questions arise, there is answer too. Who questions whom? There

is only one *Atman* everywhere : you are that. Where there is duality, there is misery. You are non-dual, eternal. You seek and desire truth, knowledge, bliss; because you are that. No one wants *Mrityu, Ajnana, Duhkha*, (Death, Ignorance, Sorrow). True, evil has a fascination for man, who, attracted by it, falls. This is due to *vasana*, which means non-recognition (*na*) of the existence of God (*vasa*). To counteract it, one must be attracted towards God, one's true Self. You are *Purna* (complete).
 Question : How to distinguish *purnata* from *apurnata* ?

Mataji : You are *purna*, and so you ought to know. There is the veil of *ajnana* ; but in the midst of that, there is the door of *jnana*. You have to find yourself. Of course, the guru will help you. You can begin from anywhere. What is required is *ekag-rata* (one-pointedness). Enquire : "Who am I ?" and you will find the answer. Look at a tree : from one seed arises a huge tree; from it come numerous seeds, each one of which in its turn grows into a tree. No two fruits are alike. Yet it is one life that throbs in every particle of the trees. So, it is the same *Atman* everywhere.

"All creation is that. There is beauty in the birds and in the animals. They too eat and drink like us, mate and

multiply ; but there is this difference : we can realise our true nature, the *Atman*. Having been born as humans we must not waste this opportunity. At least for a few seconds every day, we must enquire as to who we are. It is no use taking a return ticket over and over again. From birth to death, and death to birth, is *samsara*. But really we have no birth and no death. We must realise that.

"Question : How do we know there is re-birth ? There is the function of breathing in the body. As soon as it stops we die. How can we say that we are born again ?

"Mataji : Yes; that is ignorance. Why go so far as re-birth ? One does not know what will happen the next moment. Yet, there is knowledge. Those who have crossed the veil of ignorance tell us that we are the eternal *Atman*.

I am only a child and do not know how to lecture or give discourses. Just as a child, when it finds something sweet and good, takes it to his mother and father, so do I place before you what is sweet and good. You take whatever pleases you. Mine is only a child's prattle. In fact, it is you alone that question and you alone that answer. You beat the drum, and you hear the sound."

Mother addresses every man as 'pitaji' and every woman as 'mataji.'

At a very early hour on November 3, Mataji's car was ready to take Her to Pondicherry, the next stage on Her journey. Although it was very early in the morning, a number of admirers had collected earlier still to bid Her farewell. Their hearts were full and heavy at parting from Her. I looked at a particular face usually imperturbable, in which I was interested, and read in it a solemn, pensive emotion, which a month ago I could not have dreamt it was capable of feeling for any saint or any religious institution, and I heartily rejoiced. It was one of the miracles Mataji had performed in the short space of only one week: She had relieved the long pent-up sorrow of my friend.

TIRUVANNAMALAI

After attending one or two functions of the routine programme of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and spending the night in one of the Ashram houses near the seashore at Pondicherry, Mataji motored to the beautiful temple of Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram early next morning. Nataraja symbolises the Supreme Brahman dancing the Cosmic Dance as the manifested universe: the Formless Intelligence assuming countless forms and movements in an eternal Play.

Mataji was scheduled to arrive at Tiruvannamalai on the same day, the 4th, at 12-30 midday, when Mrs. Taleyar-

khan in concert with the Trustees of the big Arunachaleswara temple and the local officials prepared to receive Her with temple honours. But exactly at 11 a. m., i. e. 90 minutes before the scheduled time, Her car quietly glided into Ramanashram; thus leaving Trustees, officials, elephants, and priests cooling their heels in the shade of trees on the Chidambaram high road, waiting for Her, totally unaware of Her early arrival.

A few minutes afterwards She went round the Ashram to see the places sanctified by the holy presence of Sri Ramana Bhagavan in His life-time. Before His samadhi, She reverently stood with folded hands, and enquired about how the sacred body had been buried, and whether there was a lingam on the samadhi. The lingam She could not see because it was covered with flower garlands. Then She entered Mathurbooteswara shrine, which was built over the remains of the Master's mother and climbed to the *sanctum sanctorum*, where She was shown Sri Chakra and the sacred lingam. At 5 p. m. She attended the usual *Veda parayanam* near Sri Maharishi's samadhi, and between 7 and 9 p. m. the bhajan programme, as in Madras.

All the Ashram devotees and many members of the Managing Committee who had come from Madras, gathered in the Ashram at 9 a. m. on the next day, the 5th. The ceremony of laying the

foundation-stone of the Meditation Hall, which is proposed to be built over Sri Bhagavan's samadhi, was performed, and at its end, Sri Anandamayee Ma approached and strewed flowers over the foundation stone to the joy of all present. Then She made the eight-mile pradakshina of Arunachala Hill by car.

At a darshan gathering on the 6th morning, Mataji replied to questions.

D. M. put the first question :

D. M. : The other day in Madras you said that if one has no tears to shed in the search for God, one should resort to *Satsang*. I have had *Satsang* for many years, and yet, I see no appreciable improvement in myself.

Mataji : Your being here now and your asking the question are tears. By tears is meant perseverance in the search with devotion. How can you say then that you have not benefited by those years of *Satsang*? But for them you might not have reached even so far.

A discussion ensued in which some of the Ashramites, Avadhut Baba, and lastly, Sri Hari Baba took part, which made Mataji laughingly remark : "You have to-day roundly caught him (Sri Hari Baba who seldom opens his mouth). Catch him again if you can."

On the same night, She delighted the Maharishi's disciples by leading the bhajan in calling the name of Bhagavan "Oh Bhagavan", "Eh Bhagavan", "Ha Bhagavan", etc. — for about ten minutes, suitably changing the modulations of the tune and the words of the appeal at each call. Her delicate, pure voice has the youthful timbre of that of a girl in her teens, which makes the glory of Her spiritual state all the more captivating. It did captivate a neighbour at my left, judging from his loud groans and by what he later told me. Said he : "Seeing and hearing Mataji, I get flabbergasted. I am one of those half-determined seekers, who hang between the material and the spiritual, inclined to lose hold neither of the one nor of the other. Mataji seems to be my conscience in human flesh... Now the question is, to leap or not to leap." I answered that he should first test his knees, and should he find them weak, he should lie down and continue to groan.

The bhajan that night — the last night — was closed earlier than usual, as a Ramana devotee took the congregation to the big Hall and showed them some films he had taken of Sri Bhagavan sometime before His last illness. The Master was not at His best in them: general debility had already overtaken His constitution, and the rheumatism in His knee-joints had turned his legs shaky. Yet; His

countenance had not lost any of its radiance and dignity, and His movements any of their gracefulness, which must have told volumes to Sri Anandamayee, who had not seen Him in the flesh. After the brief show, a member of the Managing Committee approached Mataji and with folded hands begged Her to visit our Ashram again, to which She smilingly replied; "I am not going anywhere: I am always here. There is no going nor coming — all is *Atman*," which very much reminded us of the very words of our Divine Guru, Sri Ramana Bhagavan.

On the 7th, at 5 a.m., Mataji stood under the arch of Sri Ramanashram gate in clear moonlight with Sirius brilliantly twinkling overhead. She looked around, and, seeing the small circle of Ramana bhaktas gathered to see Her off, affectionately bade them farewell, then entered Her car and sped away on Her journey in the direction of the Southern Cross,

extremely satisfied at the reception given to Her here, and at the peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram. Sri Hari Baba expressed a wish that their stay might have been a month instead of only three days. He was the next centre of attraction; but although self-asserting and strict in matter of time, a thing Sri Mataji never bothers about, he throughout effaced himself. His quietness and his very kind heart endeared him to all those who got to know him intimately.

Farewell, beloved Mataji, and, to speak the language of men, God be with you in your holy mission to bring peace and good cheers to the thousands of your children who need them, and who eagerly crowd to behold Thy divine face, and, seeing it, turn their minds and hearts to God. "God, after all", say they then, "*does exist, and not only in some remote world in this far-flung universe, but here and now*".

OUR GOAL

(A message from a well wisher)

'Ananda Varta' in its first voyage had reached many a home. Some of the old and all of the new devotees of Mother had probably not a glimpse of it yet. We believe they all want it and hope that they will get it this time. Despite its shortcomings, of which we are keenly aware, we are sure it serves and will continue to serve as a living link between the members of the Anandamayee Sangha.

The celebration of the 'Devotional Week' under the auspices of the Sangha at Vindhyachal recently in the presence of Mother highlights the necessity and importance of an association like the Sangha. Brought into being at the request of Didi (Gurupriya Devi), nurtured under her maternal care, the Sangha is, to-day, a well-developed body, members of which are not only aware of an affinity among themselves, but are lit up with a flame of devotion for Mother, which in time, we hope and pray, will kindle the slumbering embers in the hearts of all. For this noble work the flame should burn out all the dross in us and bring out the pure gold. Let each and all of our such efforts be canalised. Here we meet, discuss, reflect on the glories of Mother and draw the inspiration to take it back to our homes, fan the flame and nurse it, so that next time when we meet, we meet with purer hearts and clearer eyes.

NOTES & COMMENTS

'Ananda Varta' makes its appearance again after a long interval. Handicapped as it is in various ways and faced with many problems, it can hardly claim to have turned the corner yet. We hope our readers will bear with its growing pains of adolescence. Launched to bring together the devotees of Mother and infuse in them spiritual ardour and devotion to Her and help them to attain the goal, 'Ananda Varta' has, we believe, a definite mission to fulfil. We on our part wish to assure our readers that we shall spare no pains to make it worthy of the noble objects it has set before itself.

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In many ways the present issue marks a departure from the earlier one. Our initial difficulties compelled us to restrict the scope of 'Ananda Varta' severely in the first issue viz. to be no more than a sort of bulletin giving bare reports of Mother's movements and a few of her sayings or teachings. This however proved to have a very limited appeal and could hardly satisfy our readers. We are now gradually feeling our way to bring it more in line with the established journals by including articles of general interest containing reflections and impressions about Mother,

etc. We wish to draw the attention of intending contributors to this fact.

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Another departure—we hope it will be equally welcome—has been to make 'Ananda Varta' trilingual by opening its pages to articles and contributions in Hindi and Bengali, in addition to English. In the first issue, only Mother's sayings or teachings were printed in the three languages, the rest being in English. We hope that this will bring 'Ananda Varta' within reach of a larger circle of Mother's devotees.

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In the present issue will be found an article or two dealing with Mother's recent tour in South India in the company of the Sadhu Babas. It was our intention to give a brief account of the whole tour in this issue—in fact this is one reason for part of the delay in its publication. But owing to certain unavoidable circumstances, we are compelled to hold it over for the present. We hope to bring it out by instalments in our future issues.

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In response to suggestions and requests from some quarters and particularly of the Sadhu Babas, Mother set out from

Puri on the 20th October, 1952 with a small party of fourteen including Sri Hari Baba, Sri Avadhutji and others, to visit the sacred places and temples of South India. She returned to Vindhya-chal on January 26th having been away for a little over three months. Starting from Puri, She visited in the course of Her tour, most of the important towns and places of pilgrimage in the South, such as Waltair, Ramakshetra (Guntur), Madras, Pondicherry (Sri Aurobindo Ashram), Arunachala (Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram), Kumbhakonam, Tanjore, Trichinapoli, Rameshwaram, Madura, Trichur and Kanya Kumari. From there She proceeded to Dwarka via Coimbatore, Mysore, Bangalore, Pandharpur, Poona, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Junagadh, Prabhash and Porbandar. From Dwarka She passed through Rajkot, Morvi, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Bhimpura, Chandod and Khandwa and reached Vindhya-chal. She halted for varying periods from a day or part of a day to a week or more at these and other places according to circumstances. Often while staying at some place, She would make it the base and visit by car the renowned temples and sacred places far and near, sometimes covering as much as 100 or 200 miles to reach some spot not easily accessible by rail.

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Mother's visit received some measure of publicity in the press and in some important towns and cities local committees consisting of prominent citizens were formed to welcome Mother and take charge of the arrangements to be made. But for the most part, the task of looking after the comforts of the party and doing whatever was needful in connection with Mother's itinerary in the South was taken up and executed very admirably by a few individuals working in co-operation, such as Mrs. Taleyarkhan, a devout Parsee lady from Gujerat who had been long with Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Kantibhai Munshaw, an old devotee of Mother from Ahmedabad and others.

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In most temples and places visited by Mother, She was received and shown around with great ceremony and courtesy by the people in authority and the priests. In some important cities and towns such as Madras, Madura, Trivandrum, etc., Mother was accorded tremendous ovation. In Bangalore a civic reception was arranged in Her honour, in which the Mayor read out an address to Mother. The usual evening 'Sat Sang' (i.e. religious meeting with discourses and Kirtan) and 'Mauna' (fifteen minutes' silence,) which were observed throughout the tour, wherever Mother happened to be, often attracted,

in the larger cities and towns, huge gatherings, sometimes exceeding ten or twelve thousand. Princes who had been till recently rulers and heads of states with their families, as of Travancore, Mysore, Morvi, etc., ministers of state and other high dignitaries, eminent Sadhus and religious leaders and men of all classes and creeds flocked to see Mother and pay homage to Her.

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The universal respect and honour shown to Mother, the pomp and ceremony, the huge crowds and ovations, all this naturally fills the hearts of Mother's devotees with joy and delight. One significance of these, it will be generally agreed, lies in the fact that they demonstrate the deep-seated and instinctive veneration that the mass of Indians have for, and the spontaneous homage they pay to, the values of the spirit and the personalities who embody them—a trait which, be it said to her credit, India has preserved intact through all her varying fortunes down the ages. We rejoice that our countless brethren in the South had the opportunity to have Mother's Darshan and to come in contact with Her beneficent, healing and transforming influence. Only those who have had the good fortune to be with Mother for some time and felt Her grace have some idea of what this means.

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Wherever there is genuine aspiration for Truth and the higher values of the spirit, wherever the heart cries out for peace, joy or light in the presence of Mother or addressing itself to Her, Mother's benediction flows out swiftly to fructify, to console, to transform or to illumine. That is why we believe that more and more—and sooner than many of us are inclined to believe—the world and humanity at large, weary and torn with misery and conflicts, will turn to Mother in their eager and desperate search for peace and truth. It is for Mother's devotees to help the world to discover the unique and inconceivable fact of Mother and the inexhaustible spiritual power and grace ever flowing from Her. One of the reasons why the Anandamayee Sangha with its 'Ananda Varta' was brought into being was the need to focus and canalise our efforts in this direction. May they succeed in their task by the grace of Mother!

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Shortly after Mother's return to Vindhyaachal, the Anandamayee Sangha organised the Second Devotional Week (though actually it lasted for nine days in the present instance) from 30th January to 7th February, 53. An account of this as well as of the First Devotional Week will be found in this issue.

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Shivaratri which fell on 12th February this year is an important festival at Banaras, the presiding deity of which is Shiva according to ancient tradition. Mother came to Banaras from Vindhya-chal on February 10th. Her presence lent a special interest and enthusiasm to the usual Shivaratri celebrations there. These celebrations include a 36-hour fast, a night-long vigil and worship of Shiva every two and half hours four times during the night. One noteworthy feature in this year's celebrations was the participation in the worship of Shiva by different groups— one of the girls of the Kanya Peeth, another of the Kumaris (young unmarried girls) of the neighbourhood and also others of the devotees present at the Ashram. During the night, each group sat in a circle with an image of Shiva in the centre, profusely decorated with garlands and flowers. Each person there performed the worship of Shiva four times during the night, the intervals between the Pujas being spent in Kirtan, etc. Mother spent most of the

night moving from group to group while they were engaged in worship or Kirtan, staying for sometime with each. An unwonted sense of elevation, of joy and a spirit of devotion permeated the atmosphere in which the strain of the fast and the night-long worship were forgotten or seemed hardly noticeable. The worship too ceased to be a mere ritual but became intense glowing experience.

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Leaving Banaras on the 10th February, Mother proceeded to Brindaban in the company of Sri Hari Baba at the latter's request on the occasion of the Holi festival as in the last few years. The Holi Purnima is also the birth-day of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Navadwip whom Sri Hari Baba holds in deep veneration. During these functions, which are observed by Sri Hari Baba and his followers in a very impressive manner, the celebrations continue for a month and include a varied programme of Kirtan, discourses, Krishna Leela etc.

Dear brother/sister,

Herewith the 2nd number of the 'Ananda Varta' which is being sent to all members of the Sangha. Originally we had planned to keep it a small bulletin. But there is such eagerness for news about Mother and for Her teaching that it has now become a magazine with articles in Bengali, Hindi and English. There can be no doubt about the value of a periodical that publishes in 3 languages Mother's *Vani* (sayings), news about Her movements, incidents connected with Her and information about Her ashrams and the various activities that are growing up around Her. To receive reports of Mother's sayings, you will agree, must be such a blessing and inspiration to every reader that it is well worth trying to have this magazine appear at shorter intervals inspite of its shortcomings. We intend to bring out a third issue specially illustrated in time for Mother's birthday. The cost will be about Re. 1/ per copy. The first issue was sent free to all members of the Sangha. It goes without saying that funds are necessary to continue its publication regularly. We feel confident that you will be gladly contributing towards the expenses of paper, printing and postage for this as well as for the 3rd number in advance.