

"Spoken word, verily, must be of Him alone,
All else is but futility and pain."

MOTHER'S WORDS

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

The way to God-Realization and Peace.

2.

When the mind is centred in God in unbroken awareness there is hope of full vision and revelation.

Endeavour to remain ever consecrated at His Feet by engaging in worship, japa, meditation, the study of sacred books, or in devotional music — whichever of them you feel inclined to at any particular time.

3.

Whether you like it or not, you will have to make the Eternal your constant companion — just like a remedy which has got to be taken.

Verily, of Him is all that need be said,

The rest but vanity, woe.

Without loving God you will not get anywhere. Remember this at all times.

4.

When you first began to learn to read and write, you surely did not examine the reasons for and against it, did you?

You accept what you are told. Even if all sorts of critical thoughts arise, call to mind that they are due only to your lack of understanding: they are certainly not the outcome of pure wisdom. Try to accept as much as possible, appropriate to the occasion. Discard laziness and exert yourself.

It is natural that your mind should find all sorts of reasons for not doing *Sadhana* — yet your aim must be to persevere in doing it. Eschew such thoughts as: "I shall not be able to do it"; "it will not be possible."

Suffering is of the body only. Despite all such discomfort officials and business men attend to their work. How painstaking they are!

Create time for everything.

The purer, the more transparent you can make your mind, the greater the possibilities for spiritual progress.

5.

Be truthful in every way.

Without purity one cannot advance towards God.

6.

Let your mind constantly dwell on the Supreme Reality — endeavour to let your thought be absorbed in THAT.

Be truthful in speech and rigorous in self-discipline at all times and devote yourself to the study of books of wisdom and to *Satsang*. Cultivate the company of those who are helpful in your quest, avoid those that distract you — in other words, associate with the Good and shun the merely pleasurable. If you live in this spirit, the help you need will come to you naturally — unasked.

7.

To begin with keep up your habits regarding bath and diet, so that you may get undisturbed sleep. This will make it easy for you to think of God and to meditate. When the body is healthy it helps to fix your mind on Him. As you progress your diet and sleep will automatically undergo certain necessary changes.

8.

Spiritual inquiry has arisen from that which is the source of you and all that is manifest, that is "*Ishwara*", the Lord of the Universe.

To be sure, there is a way of approach even in terms of gain and loss : not to aspire to God-realization is loss and to aspire to it is gain — although He is Self-luminous. He and He alone is the one thing needful, all the rest is useless. Without Him man cannot live. Leaving Him there is no place to go to. Therefore to exclude Him is impossible, He cannot be set aside. Because He is all in all, such is the nature and the mode of His play. Without Him man simply cannot proceed. He alone is. Through delusion you forget Him. All trouble is due to ignorance alone.

If man endeavours to live his life in the world according to "*dharmā*"; (the dictates of religion and righteousness), he will gradually overcome sorrow and will progress towards peace. Without Him Supreme Peace cannot be found.

9.

God alone is Truth, Happiness, Bliss. Do not desire anything except Supreme Beatitude, the Bliss of the Self. Naught else exists. What seems to exist outside of that is merely illusion. Try to find your Self. All this clamouring is but natural to man. He cries out again and again only to remove his sense of emptiness.

The true aim of man's life is to realize God. The question of renunciation obviously arises only with regard to that which can be renounced. That which is Eternal, that which is Truth is to be embraced.

He who is himself bound will ever be attracted to the bound. This is the very nature of the individual. With the help of the Guru one comes to realize the impermanence of things. Everything is possible through the power of the Guru. Even when you feel you have lost patience, do not relax your efforts, but try again and again. To your last breath never leave off striving. Pray to Him that you may continue to remain at His Feet all the twenty-four hours.

He who has been initiated by a Guru must, under His direction, try to keep his mind every minute of his life engaged in worship, japa, meditation, the perusal of sacred texts, in singing the praises of God, in *Satsang* and the like.

Exert yourself: to the limit of your power however small it may be. He is there to fulfil what has been left undone.

10.

The Lord's is the body, the Lord's is the mind,
The Lord's is all mankind.

Serving anyone is His service only. Endeavour to keep your mind always elevated. Is there ever a time when He is invisible? The discovery of this is all that is wanting.

11.

When you feel power within yourself, when new light dawns on you from within, the more you can keep it concealed in utter calm and stillness, the more will it grow in intensity. If it gets the slightest opening, there is always the fear of its escaping. Be vigilant! He Himself will provide everything that is necessary — initiation, instruction — whatever it may be.

MOTHER AND THE WORLD SITUATION

(Rai Sahib Akshay Kumar Datta Gupta,
Kaviratna, M. A.)

For nearly four decades now the whole civilised world has been passing through a combination of circumstances that is truly catastrophic. Two world wars have come and gone like tidal waves of gigantic fury and proportions sweeping away millions of lives, economic prosperity, sources of national wealth and achievements of civilisation in countries directly affected by them. What is more, the disintegration of family life and debasement of morals have come in as inevitable sequels in appalling measures and are having repercussions in all parts of the world, India included. Even now the din of battle is not silent. Till recently a regular war has been in progress in Korea. Imperialistic hauteur and selfishness are playing havoc in Indo-China, Tunisia and Kenya. Racial arrogance is violently abroad in South Africa. To crown all a third world war of yet more potentiality for evil is threatening from the offing.

Can the Mother's advent at a psychological moment like this be an isolated event or an accident? The

Puranas tell us in their characteristic symbolic way that many times in the past the spirit of the Earth approached the Deity and appealed to Him for protection against calamities of colossal measure that had already set in or were about to come. Did no prayers go up from the earth in connection with the more recent cataclysms? Was there no remedy in God's plan against these evils?

Sri Aurobindo has said somewhere that all events occur first in the spiritual world and are repeated in the material. If so, to fight any evil effectively it should be attacked in the spirit. The attack may perhaps be supposed to have already been initiated here in India, the house of spirituality, under the auspices, among others, of Mother Anandamayi. More than any other godly character she has come and is still coming daily in contact with thousands of men and women and teaching them to be spiritually strong. She does not give herself any rest even when it is physically needed, in this work. These strenuous exertions, though

apparently lightly borne by her, must have a meaning and a big meaning too.

Though most of our young men and women are anxious to imitate western manners and adopt and put into practice social ideas that have come in the wake of the wars in the west and though some of our leaders also are too anxious for making a name in the west by gradually westernising India according to the most upto-date fashion prevailing there, the more sober and thoughtful people in the west know better. They see more clearly than most of our political leaders do, where the true genius of India lies. They know that she can still show the way to real and lasting peace. The idea is catching in the present impasse and hence many ordinary people too in the west, not bothering about its true import, seem to suppose that the present political leaders of India are large-hearted and adroit enough to bring about the much-needed peace for the world by mediation between the contending powers. Peace indeed has ever been India's ideal — peace in every sphere

of life, political, social, and spiritual, for which her great leaders of thought were never weary of planning. Our present day leaders also glibly talk about peace on every conceivable occasion, but they should be wise enough to see that however sincerely made all efforts confined to the political level are bound to fail. It is in the spirit that mediation should be initiated, and bearers of the message of our spiritual teachers, past and present, including especially Mother Anandamayi, should set about the task first.

For after all the contention is between two divergent ideologies — Communism and Capitalism, each with imperialistic ambitions. Each is entirely materialistic in its outlook and has no room for the claims of the spirit. Both require to be re-oriented and re-informed. Materialism has had its day. It has led the west to deeper and deeper slough. To try to supplant it would be madness. It has to be informed with the right spirit. Then it will work wonders. To this all are being gradually trained to look to by our Mother.

MOTHER

A Symbol of Higher Life for Man

(Gangacharan Das Gupta, M. A., B. T.)

Continued from the previous issue

Q.—In what part of the body is the heart-centre located ?

Ma—Is there any place in the body where it is not ? Think of a tree — from the roots right up to the leaves — all was in one seed. Is there any spot in the tree from where a branch cannot shoot forth and put forth flowers and seeds ? The seed that you sow in the soil, lies everywhere in the grown-up tree potentially.

Q.—There are centres of sight and hearing in the body. Is there not any spiritual centre where God reveals Himself ?

Ma—Just as in the tree there are centres of circulation, of rest and of expression, such centres are everywhere in the body.

Q.—Does not the word 'centre' normally mean the middle of something ?

Ma—Let it be in the middle then. (Laughs). Wherever God reveals Himself — that is the heart. The heart is one and many at the same

time. One says, "Here is my heart"; another says "There it is". But what is called 'heart' is one.

Q.—The Shastras tell us where the heart lies.

Ma—Pitajee, you have not taught your daughter Shastras. The location of the heart is at one place. When you say middle, it may mean different spots to different persons. According to popular belief it lies in one's breast.*

Q.—When the heart fails, is it not all over with the man ?

Ma—The heart that fails and the heart centre are different things. The point from where the action of the physical organ originates is its centre. But everywhere in the tree you find the potential seed. From this standpoint the heart is everywhere : One expanding into Infinity, Infinity condensing into One. The point from where 'life unfolds' is your heart.

*Note the difference between the physical organ called heart (हृद्दन्त्र) and the heart-centre (हृद्समर्म).

Q.—How does the seed come into being ?

Ma—It is He expressing Himself as seed. There is no seed without Him.

Q.—In the *Srimat Bhagavata* what is the secret of His *Leela* ? Why does He enter into *Leela* ?

Ma—In all activities—these questions crop up : Whence ? How ? What ? Why ? To solve this riddle what have you to do ? When you observe a thing directly with your eyes, your query ceases to disturb you. To have Direct Vision of the Divine you are asked to read the *Bhagavata*. One who is ignorant, has no question to ask ; on the other hand one who has reached the goal has no question to disturb his mental poise. What is the *Bhagavata* ? *Bhagavan* (भगवान्) and His Expression— (भागवत) they are one and the same. All the expressions of His *Leela*, in forms and attributes, are in the *Bhagavata*.

Q.—Why did He express Himself as He did in His *Rasa Leela* ? Does it not minimise His dignity ?

Ma—This body has no personal opinion to offer. *Bhagavan* played with Himself in these *Leelas*. Some say it is His *Maya* or power of illusion. He splits Himself into two.

One cannot play with oneself. There must be two or more. So He divides Himself into these forms to intensify His Divine enjoyment of the Game of Union, Separation and Re-union. His counterpart in the game is His own *Swarupa* — *Sakti* or *Maya Sakti* which is ever present in Him and under His control. It is said that during the *Leela* of Rama the Rishis desired to enjoy union with Him. But He promised such union when He would re-incarnate as Krishna. All are the creative activities of God ; thus He delights to play with Himself. He has absolute power to do what He pleases. All are His own images.

Q.—At one place in the *Geeta* (गीता) we are asked to engage in *Karma*, or perform ceremonial rites, and at another place to give up *Karma*. How are we to reconcile these two contradictory injunctions ?

Ma—Judge for yourself at what stage you are, when to practise sacrificial rites and when to give them up throwing yourself wholly unto His Mercy. These are stages with their appropriate duties and responsibilities. If you are asked to rely absolutely upon Him, is it possible for you to do it all at once ? You have to train your mind and body by cons-

tant practice and to purify yourself by spiritual exercises. Read the *Geeta* every day. You will find God revealing Himself through His Words recorded there. A doubt may arise in your mind, "How can words reveal Him"? You know before the *Geeta* is read, the book has to be worshipped. By book, His words and their import are meant.

As you continue to practise day after day you will gradually reach a stage when absolute reliance on God will be your final achievement; there is none higher than that.

This body tells you again,—“Read the *Geeta* every day and do some spiritual exercise, you will find answers to your queries revealing themselves in your mind. If your desire to know Him is sincere and earnest and comes directly from the heart, the solution must come. It is inevitable.

“Without steady concentration on one aim no real result can be achieved. The word *Ekagra* (एकग्र), one-pointedness is a combination of two words, *Eka* (एक) one and *Agra* (अग्र) pointedness. Our mind is the swiftest thing in creation. Let the mind move at its own speed constantly towards the One Aim which is God. He will reveal Himself. As long as He is

not revealed through His words in the *Geeta*, never give up the practice of reading sacred texts”.

Q.—Living in the meshes of *Maya*, how can one secure one's deliverance?

Ma—Suppose you are asked to convert a forest into a bare plain. What will you do? You must yourself be in the jungle and start cutting down the trees one after another. To whom does *Maya* belong? It is His miracle—making power. Like Him, She too has no beginning. But there is a way out. Just as you cut your way out through the woods, strive on with the work of forest clearing; the forest will become an open plain. When your utensils are scrubbed they shine with their own lustre. Remove the coat of dirt that hides their brightness and their surface will shine with their own lustre.

Be in the company of holy men as suggested by your Guru. Always bear in mind—all names of God are His Names, all forms of life and matter are His Forms, all virtues are His Radiations. Let the whole of your being be possessed by this thought—“How shall I be free from *Maya*, what pathway will lead me out?” Constant meditation on Him will enable you to become free.

from Maya*. Your sole effort must be to keep Him in mind. Remember
 All talks of love and light on God
 Are the ways that lead to thy Lord.
 Other talks are but useless, vain
 noise,
 They cause pain and loss of thy
 poise.†

2. Another extract from the same diary, when translated, runs thus :—

Kashidham,
 27-9-1950.

Q.—What is the meaning of 'the Vision of God' (भगवद्दर्शन) ?

Ma—It is one where the dual phase of vision and non-vision does not arise.

Q.—Which is the true Vision — the vision of God of the man who has known Brahman, or of the *Paramatma* by the *Yogi* or of His *Leela* by the *Bhakta* (devotee) ?

Ma—Vision of God includes all. It produces some result in some shape. You may have a vision in a dream or in your waking hours. Or when you have a vision of God, the idea of the Master and the servant, of the Whole and its part or of one all-pervading Self (आत्मा) may arise.

Q.—When there is conversation during the vision between the devotee and his master, is not the sense of oneness lacking there ?

Ma—In the *Leela*, there is indeed conversation. Here the Master converses with Himself. If it be not His *Leela*, there must exist the idea of "Give" and "Take" separately, or of "Knowledge" and "Ignorance".

The vision in which there is no such idea of giving and taking is rare indeed.

Each vision produces some result. In a real vision the immediate result is the destruction of the veil of *Maya*. When it is removed God stands revealed. All spiritual exercises are for the removal of this veil. But by what special work of thine such vision would be possible, no one can predict. It may be a slow, gradual process or it may be a sudden flash — it is all His Grace. If we could have His vision as a result of any particular action on our part, He would come under that limitation. But He has no limitation whatsoever. He is ever free. All our effort is intended only to lift the veil of *Maya*. The result depends on His Grace absolutely.

Q.—Is not the removal of the screen simultaneous with the vision ? Does it wait for the veil to be lifted ? We find when a straw is thrown into

* Says the *Gceta*, Chapter VII, verse 14—
 मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां हरन्ति ते ।

† Mother always says :

हरिकथाइ कथा, आर सब वृथा व्यथा ।

the fire it is burnt to ashes instantaneously.

Ma—His ways are of infinite variety, beyond all human calculation.

In what way He would lift us to His bosom is known to Him alone.

In some cases His vision depends on our gradual ascent through *Karma*, in other cases it may be immediate. Those *Gopinis* (गौपिनी गण) who could not join Sri Krishna during the *Rasa Leela*, went straight to *Vaikuntha* from their own houses, merging all their thoughts and desires into Him. When the aim points directly to Him, humility, kindness to all, selflessness make their appearance in the devotee. The devotee comes to feel that His Ways are so various and so unexpected that he knows almost nothing. He becomes painfully conscious of the fact that he does not know himself even. But as he advances, the tone and tenor of his outlook changes; there is sweetness in all his ways. His whole nature becomes gracious, full of Love and Light Divine. He is himself full of joy and spreads happiness wherever he happens to be. His speech, his looks, the movements of his body, all awaken the thought of the Divine.

Two types of devotees emerge at this stage — one in whom the ego functions, the other in whom humility

dominates. The former may have a vision of Divine Light, may hear messages from above and be full of *Ananda* (bliss); he may feel great delight in spiritual discussions in which his ego flares up at times in the heat of the argument. Sometimes the ego lurks within, though there is a look of polish and humility in his external manners. The path of such a devotee is often strewn with danger. The other one, with a strong spirit of humility dominating in the core of his self, has a safe passage through life. In the one the egoistic impulse is strong while in the other humility dissolves the ego. In the former case the devotee calls out "I am That". Here the two dual entities, "I" and "That" remain intact. The devotee here is certainly on the path, but the "I" blocks his way and will make him halt at places. Here lies a threat against his progress, as the "I" is identified with the physical body. This is very subtle and difficult to comprehend.

Q. - Between the "I" of "I am Brahman" (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि) and the "I" of the devotee where is the point of contact ?

Ma—Where the Sat (Pure Being) reveals Himself, the two become one and the same, the screen in-between being pierced. But the movement of

the "I" towards "That" continues and often misses that repose of being firm on the Divine Ground.

Just listen to a real incident. A young girl, aged about 17, approached me. From her very early age she had a strong spiritual bent of mind. She had been initiated by a *Guru* who had a very wide circle of devoted disciples. After her initiation (दीक्षा) by the said *Guru*, she was so deeply absorbed in *Japa* (जप) and meditation (ध्यान) that she hardly had time to have her food and drink. She was of spotless purity.

One day her *Guruji* recited a verse from the *Geeta*, saying, "I am *Atma* and I am *Sri Krishna* too. Just as the *Gopis* lived with *Sri Krishna* you must come and live with me. The *Gopi*-women dedicated their body, wealth and mind to *Sri Krishna*; if you do not do likewise, your accepting me as your *Guru* is absolutely futile". This surprised the girl. She was in a fix. She said with all humility and innocence,—"I can't follow. What do you mean, *Guruji*? Then the *Guruji* began to worship every part of her body putting marks thereon. She said to her *Guruji*, "I fail to understand what you aim at by such worship". Then the *Guru* blurted out—"Ah, poor girl, everything you possess is now mine. We

are both one in *Sri Krishna*". At this the girl bolted away, disturbed by conflicting ideas. She came to this body and gave a detailed account of all that had happened showing the marks on her body impressed by the *Guru*. But the girl was of spotless purity. Her mind was absorbed in *Japa*; she was having visions of her *Ishta* (इष्ट). At this crisis of her life she sought my advice.

This body told her, "Wash away all the marks on your body imprinted by your *Guru*. Turn the direction of your mind. Stop thinking, 'I am *Atma*, I am *Sri Krishna*'. The girl was as pure as a fresh-blown flower at dawn. She said, "I shall give him up, *Mother*. But what should I do with the *Mantra*? It is the name of God. Can there be any taint or sin attached to it?"

This body said—No. Go ahead with the *Mantra*. From now on, look upon *Sri Krishnaji* as your *Guru* and not the one you had."

Here the question arises—Was it proper for the girl to cease thinking,—"I am *Atma*, I am *Sri Krishna*"?

Q.—*Mother*, will it not be sinful to violate *Guru's* orders and to snap up the tie between the *Guru* and the disciple?

Ma—This body tells you, in this case there was no Guru. If there had been, things would not have taken such a turn. Just listen again. From one point of view the girl was the Guru; she served him with food and drink and clothes and did selfless personal service in various ways. But when the Guru asked his daughter (disciple) to live with him, the relationship between father and daughter, between the Guru and the disciple was washed off clean. Obedience in this case would amount to starting life as a wife for an unmarried girl. Can it be helpful towards the realisation of God?

The path is narrow, as sharp as the razor's edge and perilous in the extreme. The idea "I am Atma, I am Krishna—ever pure and free, having no taint of worldly desire"—is a great concept. If you can choose this trend of thought and follow it up vigorously, it may help you to rip open the veil of Maya, provided He wills it. But to live a life of pure detachment from all the needs of the body, from all desires and longings of the mind, all your actions and thoughts need be directed to Him. Always keep alive the sense of discrimination (विचार). Reflect thus: "I feel some joy here, but is it of the abiding type called *Atmananda*, the

bliss of the Self?" There must be keen discrimination between that which is fleeting and that which is abiding for ever. While eating or drinking, waking or sleeping the compass of your mind must always be pointing to God. "What does not lead to Him is a snare to me and it must be shunned by all means in my power",—this should be your firm resolve. Therefore it is necessary to take a vow to observe silence and self-control, to pray to God for a fixed period, to serve the weak and the poor or to fast or ask for alms at a fixed time every day, every week or every month throughout the year. Always think about the concept that the Guru has given you, — I am That (आमि ते गइ है). While walking, moving about, working or resting, always seek refuge in That. You must read those topics which will develop self-introspection, insight into the realities of life; constantly seize opportunities conducive to that end. In all your thoughts and outward actions your sole aim must be to stick to Him steadily at all times.

Q.—Should we not accept the word of the Gurū without any critical thought?

Ma—Where the Guru gives Mantra and desires to live with an unmarried girl disciple, he is not a *Guru* at all.

A REQUEST TO DEVOTEES

(Rajmata Anandapriya of Tihiri)

I feel it is not possible to keep an account of people who may have heard of Mother. Even the number of people who may have paid their homage to Her, apart from those who may have seen Her, seems unaccountable. Some years back, I also was one of those who had only heard of Her, till a copy of "Ma Anandamayee" presented to my husband by one of his friends, stirred a wish within me to see Her. I happened to notice this book, picked it up and found Mother's picture on the front page smiling at me. I liked the picture and started reading the book in the quiet of my bedroom, just before going to bed, as that was the best time when I could read without being disturbed. I used to read a little at a time, liking it immensely and fearing that the book might finish too soon. I found it such a soothing dose before dropping off to sleep that it became a habit just to read even a few lines before closing my eyes. And even after finishing the book, I used just to open it and read from anywhere. It seemed to convey to me new meanings each time I read it, even the same part,

so that it never became boring. I simply looked forward to the time when I would take the book in my hands. There were other books, newspapers etc. that I could read from the worldly point of view, and I did read them during the day; but at night, I felt inclined to pick up only this book out of the many lying on the table near my bed. We do our daily prayers more or less as a duty or routine, but this was something quite different and not an obligation even to myself, as I liked reading it. Things best done and enjoyed are those that we like most. So after a strenuous day spent in worldly affairs, I looked forward to it to get some real rest and peace that each soul craves and looks for in different things in this world.

The next summer I went to Simla and from there I went to Solan and met Mother there. I have already described this story in an article which is going to be published very soon in a book entitled, 'Mother Anandamayee as seen by Her devotees.' I am now going to deal with something quite different.

I can well understand the feelings of those who know Mother and who have learnt to love Her after knowing Her. I know how we want to be with Her always if we can manage it; how we want to feel, think and believe that She is ours, even after having lost everything else and that She loves us individually and collectively. Another remarkable fact is that we do not feel jealous or doubtful of being favoured less than others by Mother. Instead, we feel a kind of relationship towards each other and this feeling is expanding with time. We see new faces at one moment and the next, they seem no more strangers but are our own with Mother as the centre of our being and existence, where every one is content in Her presence. Can we say that we are as happy anywhere else, even among life's greatest luxuries, as we are when near Mother, basking under Her love and care? The greatest of men cannot deny Her greatness in the simplicity and charm that She radiates far and wide, giving a sense of calm and peaceful contentment to any one who happens to be within that radiation, no matter, even if he believes Her to be only a mortal.

I hope I have expressed the feelings of the majority of Mother's followers towards Her, though very inadequately and imperfectly, as it is not possible

for a man to convey fully what we may feel towards a personality like Mother. Feeling as we do, I want to approach all my brothers and sisters with a humble request and appeal which, I hope, will be heeded by all those who approach Ma for darshan. I also feel confident that it will be felt reasonable by all if they will only pause for a moment and think over it. Friends, I am not asking you to do something that is impossible. All I am going to ask you is a little consideration for our beloved Mother.

We all assemble near Ma to feel peaceful happiness. My readers will surely agree with me that to enjoy this bliss, we must undergo a certain amount of discipline also. I know, our happiness knows no bounds when we are near Mother. But at the same time, we should not give vent to our feelings by just pushing each other to be near Her to touch Her feet. We must restrain ourselves to a certain extent, no matter how we may feel. It may, perhaps, be said that there is nothing particularly objectionable in our behaviour towards Mother; but the fact is that we often do not realise that we are making a mistake. So it is rather a difficult duty I have undertaken to point out that some of us, more often than not, do lose their composure and become selfish in

their anxiety and desire to reach Mother's feet, not realising how inconvenient they are making it for Her and for other fellow brethren. I will give you instances of how we could have behaved better when we did not. I will narrate an incident that I have been told by Ma Herself. This incident happened at the Calcutta Asram. It was known that Mother's stay at the Asram on that occasion would be only for a short time. The gentleman in charge of the Asram procured for Mother lots of fruits and sweets which he arranged in several big trays and was anxiously waiting for Mother's arrival. Many devotees also crowded there for Mother's darshan. When She went there, people simply rushed towards Her trying to touch Her feet with the result that the musical instruments for Kirtan were crushed to pieces and the big trays full of fruits and sweets were overturned, making the whole place a mess. When She saw that nothing could be done to control the crowd She just came out somehow, reached the car and went away. (You know, She is very adroit in slipping away all of a sudden ! So we must always keep our mind alert.).

There was another incident that I personally witnessed in Delhi. One of Mother's devotees there wanted Her

to be present during a Nam Kirtan week he had organised at Kali Bari. The first mistake he had made was that he had got Her name printed in the programme without consulting Her. Any way, She was approached by me on his behalf, just to make an appearance at the Kirtan for five minutes and not disappoint him, as even if he had made this mistake, the underlying motive was only to have Her presence in the function. So, though Mother's programme was full at Brindaban where she had been staying for the Holi festival, she without committing Herself to any thing observed, "On our way to Benares via Delhi if we can find time and other circumstances do permit, we shall see to it."

On reaching Delhi Mother went to Dr. J. K. Sen's place where she usually halts when in Delhi. The old gentleman was ill. Mother went there only to see him. Many devotees also assembled there to celebrate Mother's visit by Kirtan. Finding it difficult to make Her way through the crowd to the place where the Kirtan was being held She turned instad to see the old and ailing devotee. And as soon as she had a short interview with him she was proceeding to Kali Bari. In the meantime people instead of waiting

for Her at Kali Bari came in a body to Dr. J. K. Sen's house.

I was with Her at that time but lost Her in a moment, as the crowd rushed to Her to touch Her feet, completely swallowing Her up. I was pushed this way and that, and had it not been for the presence of mind of one of the devotees, who got hold of my hand and pulled me to safety, I would have been a case for the hospital, if not crushed to death. Mother knew that people were waiting for Her at Kali Bari, but it was physically impossible for us to move even a few steps though we tried our best. We asked the people to make way for Her, but who would listen in that crowd and noise? So when nothing could be done, Mother again slipped out and reached the car, which was standing only a few yards off, and drove to the station. Otherwise She would have missed Her train as we had spent much time in the mere struggle to get out. I am sorry to say that after this incident, I and a few other devotees have often been reproached by people in Delhi with taunts and unbecoming words e. g. "Is this her greatness that she could not spare even a few minutes to appear before the eager crowd waiting for her darshan, instead of disappointing them?" We cannot blame them. It

is after all only human nature to blame others without looking for the real cause, not realising that under similar circumstances, any one would have been forced to do the same.

Now I would like to point out what mistakes we unconsciously make and how we could avoid this sort of criticism and rush in future.

1. We must not try to touch Mother's feet as it is forbidden and we must take care that we may not do anything that is forbidden.

2. In a crowd we should bow to Her from the place where we may be standing and not try to reach Her as this is the main and only cause of the crowd getting out of control. Besides, this makes other people feel that it would not be proper if they also did not do the same.

3. In public gatherings, when Mother is approaching, we should fall in two lines, leaving the centre space free for Her to pass and also not prostrate ourselves in Her way as this will be repeated by all persons present there. Once it is started She will not get a chance of even sitting down comfortably. We must consider Her comfort at all costs even if She may seem comfortable in any position. Besides, this would also give us all a chance of seeing Her from close quarters as she passed us. This would be much

than the rush that causes people to crowd each other. It is not at all proper for grown up people to grab at things like children. Our devotion to Her will be no less, and will benefit us much more, if we calmly watch Her and listen to Her when She talks. We can be rest assured that we are all equally in Her eyes and Her blessings are for us all equally far and near wherever we may think of Her. Besides, we can only get what we deserve. She will bestow upon us whatever She thinks best for us, whether we ask for it or not, as She knows what we need for our uplift. So the right thing, when going to see Her, is to keep in mind that we must approach Her with calmness and restraint.

It is generally observed that people are so anxious to see Mother seek to approach Her at any time of the day whenever it suits their own convenience, without considering whether the time chosen by them would at all be convenient to Her. As a result it sometimes actually happens that almost every hour of the day is crowded with intending visitors, leaving Mother hardly any time for eating food and rest. I have often seen people sitting quietly before Her and not thinking of getting up even after midnight ! Evidently they

do not want to leave Her presence. This seems to me highly undesirable. We should take special care to see that we do not in any way encroach upon the time which should be reserved for Her rest and other physical requirements. I would like to insist that Her personal convenience and comforts should be our primary consideration and the guiding principle of our conduct towards Her.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that my readers will consider my request in the same spirit in which it is offered. You must have surely noticed that when people go to some functions or gathering where an important personality is to appear, they just wait quietly in their seats, to listen to that person and not rush about. To us, Mother is a greater personality than any one else in this world, so we must try to behave even better in Her presence than in that of any other great man. As for seeing Her, we can always make an appointment on request and see Her in private, and then we can give our offerings to Her in the form of pranams and presents to our heart's content. After all, any number of people are always visiting Her thus, i.e. after making previous appointments.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Mother's Birthday Celebrations in May and events thereafter

In our last issue we reported Mother's arrival on 30th April, 1953 at Hardwar where She was expected to stay till the conclusion of Her Birth Day celebrations at the end of May.

She stayed at Baghat House (belonging to the Raja of Solan), now known as Shivalaya from the fine Shiva temple built there a few years ago by the Raja Sahib. It has a spacious compound overlooked by a set of rooms especially built for Mother over a Kirtan Hall. The devotees and guests as they began to arrive were accommodated in the various Dharamsalas in the neighbourhood.

Usually Mother's Birthday celebrations begin with the calendar date (19th Vaisakha according to the Bengali almanac) and last till the final Tithi Puja on the actual Tithi or Mother's birthday according to the lunar calendar (which happens to be Krishna Chaturthi i. e. fourth day in the dark phase of the moon in the month of Vaisakha after Akshaya Tritiya). This year the Birth Day celebrations lasted from 2nd to 31st May.

The last two years, Mother's Birth Day celebrations had been held in

Amabala and Khanna respectively in the Panjab under the initiative and management of Sri Avadhutji Maharaj. This year too Sri Avadhutji had arranged for Sahasra Chandi Path i. e. 1,000 readings of the text of the Chandi, which began on 2nd May along with Ghat-Sthapan and the start of the ceremonies and Puja connected with the Birth Day celebrations.

The usual daily programme during the period included Usba Kirtan and Prabhat Peri between 4-30 and 5 A.M., readings from the Geeta and the Upanishads, followed by questions put to Mother and answers by Her from 6-30 to 11 A. M.; and readings from the Bhagavata and discourses by Mahatmas from 4-30 to 6 P. M. The question time used to be eagerly awaited by the gathering when many rare and invaluable utterances, interesting reminiscences as well as witty repartees could be heard from Mother. Once a devotee (Dr. Panna Lalji) declared that while some people took away Her Kripa (blessings) in big vessels, some in smaller ones and some others in cups, he tried to take it away in his bare hands (Anjali). But by the time he

reached home he found that all of it had leaked out through his fingers. So what was he to do? Mother laughingly reminded him that at least his hands remained wet!

In addition to the usual programme and celebrations, there were special features and functions on certain occasions such as feeding of Sadhus, worship of Kumaris (on 16th, 27th and 30th May), Akhand Nam Kirtan, etc. These special functions were more frequent as the final Tithi Puja day approached and visitors and devotees began to pour in from all parts, presenting a bustling and animated scene permeated with a devotional atmosphere associated with such functions and occasions. On 27th May the devotees of Delhi organised an Akhand Nam Kirtan in their characteristic way which made a sure appeal to all listeners and beholders.

Particularly deserving of mention in this connection is the presence and visits from many eminent Mahatmas and religious leaders from Hardwar and elsewhere during the Birth day celebrations. On several occasions Sadhus and Mahatmas were fed and presented with clothes particularly on the opening day and also on 20th May when 550 Sadhus and Mahatmas along with Mandale-

shwars were received with due ceremony and fed and presented with clothes, etc. Many celebrated Mahatmas and religious leaders, some of whom were heads of Ashrams and religious institution in Hardwar and elsewhere, were pleased to grace the occasion with their presence and deliver discourses to the devotees and persons present, such as, to mention a few, Asanganandaji, Sharananandaji, Avadhutji, Swatantranandaji, Paramatmanandaji, Mahisaranji, Krishnanandaji, Bhagavatanandaji, Prabhudatta Brahmachariji, Gopal Thakurji, Prem Pariji and others.

One day the head or Mahanta of "Chaitan Kutir", an Ashram for Sadhus of Vedanta School visited Mother with his followers and invited Mother to his Ashram. Accordingly on 29th May Mother visited the Ashram along with many devotees where after Bhajan and discourses the devotees were sumptuously fed.

On the 31st May when the Tithi Puja was to take place, a fine Mandap artistically decorated with arches and flowers had been put up under the direction of Sri Avadhutji Maharaj by experts especially brought from Brindaban for the purpose. By now the number of devotees and visitors who had come down for the occasion

had swelled enormously filling the place to its utmost capacity. Since morning the atmosphere seemed to have been noticeably charged with feelings of devotion and exaltation. The various programmes of the day were followed with rapt attention and devotion by the assembled persons.

The eagerly awaited Tithi Puja, the culmination of all the celebrations lasting for about a month, started shortly after midnight to synchronise with the actual time of the birth of Mother between 3 and 4 A.M. Mother was brought and seated on the especially prepared Mandap where after a while She lay down and remained perfectly still as if in Samadhi throughout the Puja as She usually does on such occasions. It was a very impressive sight. The spacious compound was filled to overflowing with devotees and visitors sitting or standing hushed and absorbed in the devotional mood engendered by the occasion, all eyes intently bent on the recumbent figure on the Mandap and the worship being performed in front. As the Puja came to an end, the devotees came up one by one and bowed low at the feet of Mother in homage to Her—a most significant and auspicious moment in the eyes of the devotees in the entire proceedings of the day.

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In Passing From
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It was now almost day-break. The people around waited expectantly till Mother showed signs of returning to external consciousness. She got up with some difficulty with the help of Didi and was taken to Her room, walking slowly as if in a daze and not yet steady on Her feet. Prasad was distributed later in the day and devotees and visitors began to leave for their homes. Mother too left for Kishanpur (Dehra Dun) on 3rd June.

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Mother stayed in the Kishanpur Ashram till the 20th June Bhagavata Saptaha was organised there from 12th to 19th June. A large number of devotees and visitors used to come daily from Dehra Dun, which is only five miles off, and participated in the function.

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On the 20th June Mother left for Almora where She stayed till 3rd July. The young students of the Vidyapith in the Ashram and the people there rejoiced to have Mother in their midst after several years. There was a big Toon tree near the Ashram buildings with some rooms built round it. It had become dried up and was cut down during Mother's stay there. As the tree fell, the Ashram buildings escaped with but

might damage, though ordinarily the damage might have been much greater. The story behind the tree is that Bhaiji, one of the earliest and the most outstanding among the devotees of Mother, came to this spot in course of his pilgrimages with Mother and sat under this tree. He liked the place so much that he wished to build a Kutir there for Bhajan. After the Samadhi of Sri Maunananda Parvat, as Bhaiji came to be known later, his body was laid to rest at this spot and in course of time the present Ashram with its fine and commodious buildings had been constructed there. Mother came to the tree and gently touched it. She was heard to declare that there was a good soul inhabiting the tree.

* * *

On Her return from Almora, Mother went to Raipur Ashram (about four miles from Dehra Dun) on 4th July and from there to Kishanpur Ashram on the 6th. It now became known that Mother was shortly to leave for Puri. But She had not been keeping well and had high fever with nausea on the 6th and it was doubted if She would at all be able to undertake the journey as previously arranged. She had, however, sufficiently recovered by the 7th evening when She entrained

from Dehra Dun. She halted for a day each at Banaras and Calcutta, arriving at Puri on 11th July. Ratha Yatra festival, which attracts a vast multitude of pilgrims every year, came off on 13th July and continued for several days. It may be recalled that Mother was at Puri last year also about this time i. e. during the Ratha Yatra festival.

Mother left Puri on the 22nd July for Banaras where She reached on the 24th after spending a night at Dum Dum where a nice little place had been built by a devotee for Her. At Banaras, Guru Purnima was observed in the usual impressive manner and a large number of devotees participated in the function and paid their respects to Mother. She stayed at Banaras till 2nd August when She left for Raipur (Dehra Dun). She was there upto 16th August and came down to Kanpur for a day on the 17th. From there She went to Brindaban via Delhi and stayed there till the 28th when She returned to Banaras.

'Janmasthanami', the Birth day of Sri Krishna, was observed with due ceremony and enthusiasm at Banaras on the 31st August and the day after, attracting many devotees and visitors to the Ashram for the occasion. Mother went to Allahabad

from Banaras afterwards and stayed at Satyashram at the request of Sri Gopal Thakur for a few days during which certain ceremonies connected with the installation of the image of Sri Durga were performed in preparation for the forthcoming, Durga Puja festival.

A few days after Mother's return to Banaras, Bhagavata Saptaha was

observed in the Ashram from 16th to 23rd September in a befitting manner. Mother went to Bindhyachal on the 26th September and returned to Banaras on the 28th. On 6th October, She is expected to start for Kishanpur Ashram (Dehra Dun), where the Dasshera or Durga Puja will be celebrated this year by the devotees of Mother.