

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

MOTHER'S WORDS

(*Replies to letters from different people at different times.*)

The Way to God-Realization and Peace.

12.

The intense desire for God-realization is itself the way to it.

13.

When you leave everything to Him who is the Fountain of Peace, then only is there hope of peace.

14.

Be anchored in fearlessness. What is worldly life but fear ! When you live in the stronghold of fear, must you not be afraid ? It is futile to expect fearlessness there.

That you may be delivered from all sorrow you should endeavour to seek refuge in God alone.

15.

This is the time to mould yourself. You will have to resort to renunciation and fortitude. So as to be released from the evil propensities acquired in previous lives which lead to pain and suffering, try to make your heart the consecrated shrine of the All-Good ('Sadbhava') and desire desirelessness. The first thing is to feel drawn towards God.

Be unfailing in service. Whatever has to be done for anyone, do it in a spirit of service.

There is yet another matter to which special attention must be paid : sloth has to be abandoned altogether. Where it is a question of good works ('Satkarma'), disinclination and lethargy have to be completely ruled out. The difficulties that may arise when doing anyone a service should be borne cheerfully.

16.

Invoke Him, rely upon Him. Wherever you may be you are in His arms. If happiness is to be found in this world you have to aspire to God-realization.

What worldly life is you have seen : day in and day out one is immersed in an ocean of misery. This is what is called 'Samsara', (life in the world).

17.

Through the stream of Godly thoughts lies the path that leads to the destruction of 'Karma'. So long as the goal has not been reached, one is bound to reap the consequences of right action, wrong action and inaction according to *Karma*, the law of cause and effect.

18.

Losing hope is losing all indeed. But has this loss of everything occurred ? Is not the heart bubbling over with desires and hopes ? This is only natural — it is the innate tendency of the individual.

Perfect resignation gives deeper joy than anything else. Accept it as your sole refuge. Whatever God does at any time is wholly benign. If you can bear this in mind you will be at peace.

19.

The more time is devoted to the thought of God the greater the gain. Where worldly life is, there is want : this is its very nature. If — with or without inclination — you can keep your mind consecrated to his Feet, there is promise of peace.

20.

To expect peace from worldly life is in vain. Try to live exclusively in His presence and do all service from a sense of duty. The world is certainly not an abode of happiness. The sole hope of peace is to take refuge at the Feet of God.

21.

Keep your thought on Divine things ('*Hari Katha*'). To surrender mind and heart and body to Him who is their Lord gives peace ; but to expect peace from the world will of a certainty bring sorrow in its wake. Try to live a life of holiness and asceticism, that is, abide in a state of Godliness and virtue. Why dissipate mind and body by useless worry ? What He does — whatsoever — is all for the best. Why, by harbouring only longings and desires invite sorrow ? In whatever circumstances you may be placed, reflect thus : "It is all right, it was necessary for me ; this is His way of drawing me close to His Feet ;" and try to remain content.

By Him alone should your heart be possessed.

AMARA VĀNI

(2)*

Question : What are the benefits to be derived from Hatha-yoga** and what are its drawbacks ?

Matoji : What does "Hatha" mean? To do something by force. 'Being' is one thing and 'doing' quite another. When there is 'being', there will be the manifestation of what is due to be manifested owing to the *Prana* functioning in a particular centre (of the body).

But if Hatha-yoga is done merely as an exercise in physical gymnastics, the mind will not be transformed in the very least. By physical exercise bodily fitness is enhanced. One hears quite often of cases where the leaving off of the practice of yogic postures

("Asanas") has resulted in physical disorders. Just as the body grows weak from lack of adequate nourishment, so the mind has need of suitable food. When the mind receives proper sustenance man moves Godward, whereas by catering to the body he only increases his worldliness. Mere gymnastics is nutrition for the body.

Now viewed from the stand-point of 'doing.' Sustained effort ends in effortless being — in other words, what has been attained by constant practice is finally transcended and then spontaneity comes. Not until this happens can the utility of Hatha-yoga be understood. When the physical

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**Hatha-Yoga is yogic practice through the medium of the body. It has different features all intended to purify the body with respect to the three humours *Vayu*, *Pitta*, *Sleshma* (nervous energy, bile, phlegm). When these are in harmony there is health.

Hatha-Yoga is a stepping-stone to a higher Yoga, called Raja-Yoga. "Ha" represents the solar portion of the nervous system—"Pingala", and "tha" the lunar portion—"Ida". When the two are combined by the Yogic process, the central canal running from the base of the spine right up to the crown of the head will be opened. When this is opened the mind as well as the *Prana* move into it and the consciousness begins to function on higher and higher levels. The consciousness of the outer world is made to disappear for the time being and the inner light and the inner sound (*Nada*) are awakened.

†*Prana* is the vital energy that functions in various forms in the body for its preservation. It is closely associated with *Manas* (mind); the one cannot work without the other.

fitness resulting from Hatha-yoga is used as an aid to spiritual endeavour, it is not wasted. Otherwise it is not Yoga but *Bhoga* (enjoyment).

In effortless being lies the path to the Infinite. Unless Hatha-yoga aims at the Eternal it is nothing more than gymnastics. If in the normal course of the practice His touch is not felt, the Yoga has been fruitless.

One comes across people who by engaging in all sorts of yogic exercises like *neti*, *dhauti** and others of this kind have become seriously ill. At Nainital I recently met a young man who had ruined his health completely by practising Hatha-yoga. He was suffering from persistent diarrhoea, which simply would not stop. He and some of his friends had decided to become experts of this Yoga and to start a college where union with God would be attained through Hatha-yoga. But they one a fell ill.

A competent teacher who understands every change in the movement of the disciple's *Prana*, accordingly either speeds him up or holds him back — just as a helmsman steers a boat with the rudder held firmly under control all the time. Without such direction Hatha-yoga is not beneficial. He who would guide must

have direct knowledge of everything that may occur at any stage, must see it with the perfect sharpness of direct perception. For is he not the physician on the path to the Supreme! Without the help of such a doctor there is fear of injury.

Everything becomes smooth once the blessing of His touch has been felt. It is just as when bathing in a river one at first swims by one's own strength, but, caught in the current, whether a good swimmer or not, one will simply be carried away. Therefore it is detrimental if this 'touch' is not experienced. One must enter into the rhythm of one's true nature. Its revelation, acting as a flash of lightning will attract one to it instantaneously, irresistibly; there comes a point where no further action is needed. So long as this contact has not been established, dedicate to God whatever inclinations or disinclinations you may have—devote yourself to service, meditation, contemplation, to anything of this kind.

As a rule you perform your daily worship in the usual manner. That you feel the desire to practise some extra japa or meditation shows you have caught a glimpse, however faint, and there is then hope that gradually

**Neti*, *dhauti* are Yogic exercises for the internal cleansing of the body, like swallowing a long tape or inserting a thread into the nose, etc.

the rhythm of your true nature may emerge. In this field there is still the sense of "I" (*Aham*), but this I is turned towards the Eternal, intent on union with Him. Whereas actions done with a view to fame or distinction are of the (lower) ego (*Ahamkara*) and therefore obstacles, impediments.

Whether you practise Hatha-yoga or Raja-yoga or any other Yoga, it can be harmful only if pure spiritual aspiration is lacking. When doing *Asanas* and the like you will see they will, as it were come about by themselves as soon as your true nature finds expression. By what signs is this to be recognized? There is a sense of play, a deep delight and constant remembrance of the Supreme Being. Indeed this is not the outcome of the practice of worldly observances. What has been referred to here is what can only become revealed spontaneously—of its own accord. This is why the constant remembrance of the Supreme Being has been specially mentioned. Man's true nature flows towards God alone.

Further, sometimes when sitting in meditation you will find that *Rechaka**, *Puraka*, *Kumbhaka* have come about

without your making an effort of will. When your true nature expresses itself — because it is inclined towards God — the knots of the heart are dissolved by its light. If during meditation you find perfectly correct *Asanas* forming of themselves — the spine becoming erect of its own accord—then you should know that the current of your *Prana* is directed towards the Eternal. Otherwise when you are engaged in *Japa* the right flow will not come and your back begin to ache. Even this kind of *Japa* is not without its effect, although its special action is not felt. In other words the mind is willing but the body does not respond and therefore you do not get the exhilaration that comes with the flavour of the Divine Presence.

To let the mind dwell on the objects of the senses still further increases one's attachment to them. When intense interest in the Supreme Quest awakens, even more time and thought are given to religious discourses, religious philosophy, the remembrance of God as immanent in all creation, until thereby every single knot is dissolved. One is stirred by a deep yearning for God; "How can I find Him?" As a result of this the rhythm

**Rechaka* is a conscious process which aims at expelling breath, *Puraka* at taking in breath and *Kumbhaka* at the retention of breath either within the body (*antah Kumbhaka*) or out of the body (*bahih Kumbhaka*) during which the conflicting tendencies of the incoming and outgoing breath will be in abeyance.

of both body and mind will grow steady, calm, serene.

Some of you naturally conceive a desire to do *Asanas* and the like as spiritual exercises. If in this no wish to show off is present, it will be easy to enter into the rhythm of your true nature. But if the mind is held captive by the body, these exercises become mere gymnastics.

Some aspirants are being driven in the direction they are meant to go, although in the earlier stages they are not conscious of this, or even if they be, it is beyond their control.

Some men have gone to bathe in the sea. They have made up their minds to swim ahead of everyone else and consequently they will have to look back. He whose one and only goal is the ocean has nothing else to look at and nothing else to consider and then, what is to be, will be. Give yourself up to the wave and you will be absorbed by the current — having dived into the sea you do not return anymore. The Eternal Himself is the wave that floods the shore so that you may be immersed. Those who can surrender themselves to this end will be accepted by Him. But if your attention remains on the shore, you cannot proceed — after bathing you return

home. Aiming at the Supreme, at the Ultimate will lead you on through the movement of your true nature. There are waves that carry away and waves that bring back. Those who can give themselves up, will be taken by Him. In the guise of the wave He holds out His hand and calls you: *come Come COME!*

Question: How can we benefit spiritually by action?

Maaji: By engaging in *Karma-yoga** for its own sake. As long as a desire to distinguish oneself is lurking, it is *Karmabhoga*, (working for one's own satisfaction). One does the work and enjoys its fruits through the sense of prestige it brings. Whereas by relinquishing the fruits it becomes *Karma-yoga*.

Question: How is it possible to work without desire?

Mataji: By doing service with the feeling that one is serving the Supreme Being in everyone. The desire for God-realization is obviously not a desire in the ordinary sense. "I am Thy instrument, deign to work through this Thy instrument." By regarding all manifestation as the Supreme Being one attains to communion which leads to liberation. Whatever work is undertaken let it be done with your whole being and in the spirit: "Thou alone worketh",

**Karma-Yoga* is such action as may lead to union with the Divine.

so that there may be no opportunity for affliction, distress or sorrow to creep in.

Another point: If the attitude "through my shortcoming the work has not been well done, I could have taken greater pains over this service," is not persisted in, the work will be done carelessly. Therefore as far as it lies in your power there must be no neglect. Beyond that feel: "Whatever happens is in Thy hands, I am but the tool". Because of this put your body, mind and heart into any service you may do and for the rest take it that what comes about was destined to be. "Thou hast manifested Thyself in this way as it was ordained and so has it been wrought."

Question: Even when there is spontaneous action it is still action. Hence if there is no other Guru how can our doubts be cleared?

Mataji: There are two kinds of action — nay an infinite number of kinds. However this requires explanation. When *Asanas* begin to form they speak just as you and I do. In what manner? When the purpose for which the *Asanas* are done becomes disclosed, when that which can be attained through any particular yogic posture is accomplished. This may be called its language.

When a sick man moves about too much he overstrains himself and gets

breathless. Naturally everyone's breathing changes its rhythm constantly according to the way one sits or moves, only one is not aware of it. One who has control over his breath can transfer it at will to any level.

In the beginning those of you who practise yogic postures, do not know which leg to cross first and which after and whether to inhale or exhale while doing so. Consequently what you do is in part incorrect. Why? When you want to open something and you do not know how it is done, damage may ensue. When *Asanas* form spontaneously you will notice that your legs are folded and unfolded in the correct manner and in harmony with the breath. It is a sign that the Guru is at work, when the *Asanas* and the breath are in perfect concord. While before one had no knowledge of the posture, it is now clearly understood.

Viewed from the angle of the mind: one watches oneself as a witness, like a child as it were; one feels: "Someone is causing everything to be done and at the same time the movement of my mind is being stilled."

When the vibrations of your body and of your *Prana* have reached a stage where there is great competency in everything relevant to the Supreme

Quest, you will find yourself voicing spiritual truth : this is the spontaneous action of this stage. And when you become established on the level of a Rishi to whom Mantras are revealed, that is to say when the vibrations of your body and *Prana* have become centred there, words that are the expression of this level will issue from your lips.

There is a state in which you may have neither knowledge nor understanding of what is taking place, as for instance when a yogic posture of which you are ignorant forms unawares. Who has brought it about ? The inner Guru. In a similar way when a *Mantra* bursts forth, the solution to your problem and the inner significance of the *Mantra* ('*Tattwa*') in its supramental form ('*Pratyaksha Murti*') appear directly before you : together with its essential essence its plastic form is revealed. At that moment you come to know what the inner Guru is, He who works within. Not only have your doubts been dispelled, you have also gained understanding of the *Mantra*'s esoteric meaning. This is real vision (*Darshana*). Here you receive a response without being aware of how it has come about.

Another variety is when the true nature of the instrument becomes revealed. At this time the *Mantra*, the *Tattwa*, the *Guru* and the *Ishta** are revealed all at once. This is an example of receiving revelation with the full knowledge of all its phases and aspects.

I am engaged in Japa or meditation. A question arises in my mind. In a flash the reply is there : the Guru has told me this — what has come to me is the Guru's own teaching.

There is a line of approach through action and another one through the mind, or to be more precise, in the first case action predominates, in the second the mind, although concentration of the mind is necessary in both. They work together, yet there is predominance of the one over the other : when *Asanas* are the means, action prevails, but when *Mantras* are used, the mind.

Another query : Who is it that guides me from outside ? It is also He, for verily there is no other.

What has just been said are fragments from here and there. They have been given so that everyone may get what is helpful to him and as much as he is able to grasp.

*The *Ishta* is the 'Beloved', the object of one's worship, of whom the *Mantra* is the sound form.

SHRI ĀNANDAMAYI — THE MOTHER

(Acharya Srimad Gopal Chandra Chattopadhyaya)

The holy name of Mataji Anandamayī is more or less well known throughout the length and breadth of India by now. Among her devotees and admirers may be counted men, women and children, ranging from saints, sages and the most learned down to the un-lettered and uncultured innumerable ordinaries — people apparently free from any religious and spiritual recognition. Whoever happens to come within her widely-pervading sweetness of nature, feels attracted towards her, not knowing at all the why and how of it.

From times immemorial, the soil of India has had the good fortune of being blessed with the birth of many a great soul — personages of incomprehensible wealth of spirituality. The present day India and its spiritual firmament have been graced with the advent of a Being in the person of Mata Anandamayī, who is thoroughly unique in her manifestation of humanity in all its different shapes and aspects. Heretofore, super-human manifestation of Divinity has been, in India as anywhere else, in manly garb generally ; but in Mataji

Anandamayī, the advent has been feminine in form with an effulgence of Motherliness all about her, making the question of sex altogether a matter of no moment. All big religious personalities, of all ages and climes, have got, as a matter of course, certain particular forms of religious worship and observances. They invariably are persons of deep devotional propensities. But the life and mode of Ma Anandamayī is a different phenomenon altogether. She seeks none and needs nothing — either of Heaven or of earth. She is full within herself in every sense of the term. Her wisdom is fathomless, and the ways of her living, very simple and wonderfully attractive ; her very presence is astonishingly illuminating.

In the very prime of her life, all forms of Hindu religious worship — Vedic, Yogic and Tantrik practices — as also many other mystic religious performances, appeared in her person, even as spontaneously as the sprouting of branches, leaves, flowers and fruits from the trunk of a tree, without any asking or any form of hankering on her part. These mys-

terious religious experiences are not to be seen in her now-a-days, except on rare occasions and by a very selected few of her personal following, proving conclusively the existence of their roots in her even to-day. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that aspirants of truth always get all the necessary information and guidance from Mataji about any religious and spiritual practices they require. But now-a-days she seems to be full of everything and rigidly clinging to nothing, like the all-embracing wide-open boundless sky.

A question has been asked, as is usual in this part of the country, almost from the very beginning of her known existence, as to what she really is—a super human Existence, a Deity of Deities, or the Creator of all creation, the God of all religion Himself Incarnate. All sorts of answers, according to one's light and faith, have been vouchsafed on this topic from time to time, reaching very little homogeneity of thought. In spite of everything said or heard, people generally live on their own convictions. Some have taken her to be a personage of unfathomable wisdom; some have seen in her positive manifestations of this or that Deity and there are many who

are inclined to think that Mataji Anandamayi must be an incarnation of the Divine Mother Herself.

The promise of God's descent on Earth to make Heaven of it, to dispel all evils and to have only what is good, is a tacit or direct consolation offered to men by almost all the established religions of the world.

Moreover, the One, who is to come, is not really as far away from us or as foreign to us as we have grown accustomed to think. As a matter of realized truth, He who is to come at some unknown indefinite point of time, has, to the Knower, already come and is already a permanent resident in all living hearts even before the counting of time in creation began. So, people in general intuitively feel tempted to assert, whenever any such occasion arises, that so and so is an Avatar. But such assertions of ignorant faith can be of no practical value at times of storm and stress. They are as easily believed as they are forgotten. Many people of this land theoretically know what a man or a woman should be like, after his or her personal communication with God Himself manifest in time and space and directly visible to the naked eye. Thus, when such believers, living almost constantly in close touch with the One, Whom

they declared to be none other than God incarnate, find themselves far away from Divinity and feel themselves deeply anchored near about the place where they were, they are naturally disillusioned and see their fond conviction completely shattered.

The Divine can be seen and known by the Divines only. Even to-day, there are persons in India who can see and know the Divine descent and speak about it with authority. Many such persons have made unqualified statements in public, and there are others who have positively felt that Mataji Anandamayi is the Divine Mother herself — none other than She Herself. But such declarations of immense spiritual value have not yet proved as effective as they should have been, because of a peculiar reason for India.

There are many Indian sages and saints, who from a very long time past have acquired a special habit of looking down upon women as a class. So they think thrice before they make any declaration publicly in unequivocal terms about the uncommon greatness of a personage, who is after all a woman in appearance. They seem to be afraid that such a course may, knowingly or unknowingly, lead to a lowering of

the high moral standard which they have so long held aloft, and may also end in loss of personal prestige — so very important to a preacher in particular — with their respective socio-religious fold, as also with the public in general.

The most desirable would be like this: If the sages and saints would help the ignorant people with a quota of their glorious enlightened knowledge and would kindly condescend to share with the common people their natural love and untutored affection for the mother, this unusual phenomenon of the Mother's Advent might prove of inconceivable benefit to the world as a whole.

But let alone guesses. Mother says — What is only hoped for may or may not be true, but what actually happens is the truth.

The Mother is here. She has come and, as of universal necessity, her existence will, in due course of time, unfold to us the nature of her mercy and grace she has come to shower on us all. Nobody will be deprived of his or her dues to the extent it can possibly be assimilated.

It is apparent that the zone of her affectionate fold is widening every day. Let us wait and see what actually follows in future.

But in the meantime, let us try to determine, with as much certainty as is given to an ordinary man, the one common bond of attachment that binds all sorts of people, men and women, with Mataji Anandamayi.

It is the fact of her unbounded fathomless ocean of motherliness. She is motherliness personified — a mother in every form of her being. A seer is necessary to see and know the Divinity correctly. A vast amount of knowledge is required to gauge the depth of different kinds of learning. A selfless devotion is needed to have intuitive vision of a Deity or the Divine. But the self-existent intuitively known motherliness on earth is a virtue which can be understood, may be in different degrees, by all sorts of living beings — from the seer to anyone who is somebody. Everybody is acquainted with motherliness, in some shade or other, by the very fact of his or her birth.

As the worship of the transcendent God may be performed with ease and certainty by taking hold of any of His spiritual manifestations vividly present in man, such as mind, life or any other attractive sentiment, as the case may be, so also communion with the personified Divine may be most easily effected with the help of the most eloquent expression of his or

her personality. In Mother Anandamayi, the fact of her unending flow of magnetic motherliness, to some extent, shared by beings, animate and inanimate, may certainly be the basis and ground of any relationship with her.

To many an uninitiated person the words 'mother' and 'motherliness' carry very little significance. To some, mother's affection does not carry them beyond the threshold of their own little home and its surroundings. But in truth, Mother means everything — the origin, the growth and the assimilation of all in one. The creation is nothing more or less than Mother's affection in its romantic and variegated forms. Thus if one only clings fondly to the Mother's divine affection, which is open to all and common to share, a solid beginning of Yoga, consciously for some and even unconsciously for many, will be made, leading all, in course of time, to the fulfilment of their aspirations as certainly as day follows night. Devotees of the Divine Mother and motherliness will, in due time, unmistakably know that the Divine Mother and motherliness are not two different entities as they may now appear to be.

The very fact that the One becomes, to anybody and everybody, more motherly than one's own mother

herself, more easily acquainted than all previous acquaintances, is a greater miracle than any miracle shown or known anywhere.

The over-flowing natural love of Mataji Anandamayi for everyone and everything is a feature, the exact nature of which may be tasted and tested by any human being, if only he so desires it.

It has been seen as a matter of fact that even rigid and astute sadhus and sages, who approach the Mother and live in her company for some time, become as much fascinated by her overwhelming divine motherliness as an other ordinary mortal being. From babes of months to veterans of ages, the charm of her magnetic personality has its play.

Those who by long practice have grown too sex-conscious will find to their utter amazement that before the solid rock of Mataji Anandamayi's motherliness personified, sex-notion of any order has simply no place.

The more one tries to portray the magnificent motherly picture of the Mother, the more one clearly feels that one is attempting an impossibility. I feel absolutely certain that my hope of scizing something positive of the Mother and of conveying it to

others, if possible, has altogether failed. Then why make an attempt at all? It has two hidden aspirations behind it.

In my heart of hearts, I feel tempted to request and pray to all men and women of all countries and of all different religions, to try to come and see our Mother with their own eyes — a life's chance certainly for everybody. The venture will prove a distinct revelation to anybody who takes the sporting chance. There are, and may be, ambiguities in all the different elucidations of the Mother, attempted by different persons from various angles of vision; but the benign graceful presence of the Mother is self-illuminating. It fills of its own accord all voids of any nature, wherever it penetrates, and convinces all concerned in a way which is super-humanly convincing.

For me, my vain attempt has its personal value. It is a task which pleases me equally in its failure as in its so-called success. I feel more and more elated, as I find all my attempts to present even a coloured view of the greatness of the Mother futile. I feel glorified even if a glimpse of the Mother's greatness, even momentarily, touches me. My thousand pranams to the Mother Divine—MATAJI ANANDAMAYI.

I WONDER

(Ranjan)

I can only say about my own feelings regarding the 'Samyam Vrata' in Calcutta and to my mind, to say the least, it was a wonder.

Calcutta true to the tradition in which it was born and brought up during the British rule is really a nursery for all sorts of luxuries and sensuous enjoyments. There are cinemas, theatres, dancing halls, restaurants of various kinds and what not? Ballygunge in Calcutta reflects more than any other locality the real character of the city and 'Samyam Vrata' took place at Ballygunge for full 7 days—starting on the 14th of November and terminating on the 20th. Mother Anandamayi Herself came and stood firmly at the centre of the whole show and was shining as a divine - inspiration to thousands of people of Calcutta who gathered around Her and particularly to about 300 men and women of Calcutta who actually participated in the 'Samyam Vrata' from day to day. Not to speak of elderly people, even young men and women bore the strict discipline and rigour of 'Samyam' very cheerfully without the slightest

murmur. Undoubtedly, this was something unique in the history of Calcutta and I do not know if there is any parallel to this in any of our ancient scriptures or 'Purasas.'

To appreciate the real significance of the matter, it is desirable that certain facts should be cleared up. For the last 8 or 10 years Mother had been saying to people around Her, who were 'Grihis'—and people irrespective of caste, colour, religion or sex belonging to diverse schools of thought always gather around Mother wherever She might happen to be—to set apart certain days, say a particular day of the week or month or some fixed days which should be dedicated completely to the supreme. On those days we should try to live with God and in God, always thinking of Him. For those days, a vow should be taken that nothing but truth should be spoken, strict 'Brahmacharya' should be observed, ignoble passions like anger, etc. should be controlled, very simple and moderate food should be eaten, Gita or some sacred texts should be read, all our necessary daily work should

be done in the spirit of service to the Divine so that there may be a harmony with everything and every body around us in that light. This is the origin of 'Samyam Vrata' and the real inspiration for 'Samyam Saptaha' came through Jogibhai (Raja of Solon). He proposed to Mother that as many as are willing should observe a week of 'Samyam', at certain intervals, living in the ideal suggested by Mother and in Her presence. Mother blessed the idea.

Since its beginning, this was the 3rd Samyam Vrata that was performed at Ballygunge in Calcutta. It was an intense week of devotion and negation of our sensuous enjoyments and pleasures. It was performed quite close to my house and I had a chance of observing it rather closely. A huge pandal was erected and decorated not in the ordinary line but in a way to suit the atmosphere of the great Devotional Week. In the early hours of the morning before the actual break of day 'Usha Kirtan' was heard, which, as it were, purified the whole atmosphere of the locality. A little before 7.30 in the morning I saw not only the 'Vratīs' (those who actually took the Samyam Vrata) but many others rushing to the pandal with 'asan' in their hands to sit for silent meditation for full one hour. The door of the pandal was closed punc-

tually at 7.30 A. M., and was not opened till 8.30. Every body sat in silent meditation and Mother was sitting there on a dais at the side showering Her divine blessings on every head and as the centre and source of all inspirations. Amongst the lot that gathered for meditation there were not only elderly people but young men and women and I saw some young girls, perhaps in their teens also sitting in silent meditation.

At 8.30 A. M., when the door of the pandal was opened there was another rush of people eagerly waiting outside and soon the huge pandal was full to its utmost capacity. Punctually at 8.30 after the meditation was over, sacred texts like Upanishad, Gita, & Chandi were read and every body in the pandal was welcome to join. After the readings which lasted for almost an hour, there were Bhajan, Kirtan and speeches by eminent people on religious subjects. Mention may be made of Swami Svatantranandaji, a Sadhu from Gujrat, who attended the celebration and who spoke for about an hour every morning on various aspects of religious philosophy and made the difficult subject so interesting and so easy that every body in the pandal enjoyed and appreciated it. I know of an England-returned young lady, a relation of mine aged about 25 years,

who would never miss the speech of Swami Svatantranandaji, whatever might happen.

The morning programme lasted till about 11.30 and towards the end, for about half an hour or so, came the time for Mother to say something. I did see and very clearly too how everyone of the huge crowd was eagerly waiting for the moment when Mother would open Her lips. Mother never delivered a speech. She answered questions—questions coming from all sorts of people in the pandal—simple questions from simple unsophisticated hearts, or very abstruse questions on philosophy and religion from scholars and pandits. Mother answered them all in Her usual inimitable way and I only hope that the words of Mother have been taken down by somebody correctly and in the true perspective, because I am certain that the words should go down to history as the sayings of one of the greatest in the line reflecting the Highest and the Supreme Truth.

At about half past twelve rang the bell for the 'Vratis' to take their morning meal. Vratis were divided into 2 classes—Class I and Class II. The diet as prescribed for Class I was as follows :

(Only one meal a day at noon)

1st day—Water of the Ganges only and nothing else.

2nd day—Charu and Poyphala (i.e a preparation of boiled milk with sugar and pieces of different fruits).

3rd day—Vegetables and a quarter of a seer of milk.

4th day—Anandamayee Brahma-Khichuri (i.e., rice boiled with ghee and vegetables).

5th day—Charu and Poyphala.

6th day—Khichuri prepared with rice, pulses and vegetables.

7th day—Water of the Ganges only.

Regarding Class II, the diet was as follows :—

Noon—(1) Rice or Roti.

(2) Pulses or vegetables.

(3) Dahi (curd).

Night—Milk only.

There was, of course, no restriction regarding drinking of water. It is needless to say that except for the diet mentioned above, the vratis were not expected to take anything else. Tea was forbidden and smokers had to forego their smoke for the period. Those who were addicted to chewing 'pan' had to give it up also. But where the wonder comes in, is, that I saw that there were people amongst the vratis—quite a good number nursed in the Calcutta school of luxury—who were very hard smokers (some of them smoking at least 50 cigarettes a day) gladly

giving up their smoke for the period. I saw many ladies and gentlemen very severely addicted to chewing 'pan' with tobacco leaves giving it up without the slightest grumbling. They did welcome, as it were, all the restrictions including the scanty diet supplied during the whole week. Tea was given up by those who were severely addicted to it as if it was of no consequence. I looked at their faces and found them smiling and a peculiar kind of joy was clearly visible there. What was the source of this inspiration I often asked myself and the answer was there ready before me — the source of all inspiration and joy, OUR DIVINE MOTHER.

The afternoon programme started again at 3 0' clock sharp and five minutes before that the bell rang. I saw all the vratis as well as a lot of others rushing to the pandal with asanas in their hands to be in time for the afternoon meditation as the door of the pandal would be close punctually at 3 p. m. I have been living in Calcutta for years and years and I had had occasions of seeing people rushing for popular cinema shows or an exciting foot-ball match. But I never saw before this, people rushing for a seat in a pandal to take part in a silent meditation which would last for full one hour. And like the morning meditation it did last for full

one hour with Mother sitting at a side on a dais overlooking the whole pandal. During the meditation special direction was, and it was observed by everybody, that no one should move from his or her 'asana' during the time. In case of unavoidable necessity one could leave the place moving out silently and carefully so that others would not be disturbed and not to enter again. Special instruction was given regarding the meditation and it is not necessary to state the details here. At 4 0' clock the door of the pandal was opened and there was another rush of people eagerly waiting outside and soon the pandal was full to its utmost capacity. The afternoon programme lasted till 5.30 p. m., and there were lectures on Gita and speeches by eminent Sadhus and scholars. In this connection special mention may be made of Avadhutji (Shri Krishnanandaji Avadhut) who spoke for an hour every afternoon and his speech was of great interest to all, especially to the learned section of the people assembled there. Bhajan and Kirtan continued after 5.30 p. m., till the evening programme started again.

The evening programme started at 6.45 p. m. It began usually with lectures on the Mahabharat followed by Kirtan and from 8.45 to 9 p. m., there was 'mauna' (silence) in the

presence of Mother. My impressions regarding the matter will not be truly reflected if I do not say a word or two about this Great Silence and I do consider it "Great"! I have always been impressed with this silence, and the way it was done in Calcutta impressed me very deeply. The huge pandal, where by then more than a thousand people including ladies and children had gathered whose only interest, as I could see, was to have a look at Mother, went absolutely quiet as soon as the bell rang for the silence. The lights were put off and Mother was sitting there on the dais like a shining marble statue with a dim light kept burning near Her. The silence observed during the period was so intense that one could actually hear a pin dropping. I cannot say about others, but looking at Mother in the dim light and in that silence I did feel that She sat there, as the embodiment of the GREAT DIVINE LIGHT in the universal darkness.

The last item in the programme was the mid-night meditation. It lasted from 11-45 to 12-15 at night, but it was not compulsory for the vratis to join. Yet, quite a good number joined the midnight meditation. That is very shortly a bare outline of the daily programme of the Devotional Week.

Why, I often asked myself, was

this great Samyam Vrata celebrated and particularly at Ballygunge which, as I have already stated, reflects the real character of Calcutta? Why Mother Herself came and took Her stand right at the centre of the function, turning as it were the faces of hundreds of men and women of Calcutta from the life of luxuries and pleasures to the light of a great divine life? Why, I often asked myself during the whole week of Samyam Vrata and I got an answer. I do not know if that is the real answer and I do not want to bind anybody to my conclusion.

India is independent to-day. She has got rid of the British Rule and she is politically free. But is political freedom the real freedom of India? Should India which at one time had given to the whole world the great message of real freedom—freedom from material bondage—be satisfied with political freedom only? Years and years ago, at the very dawn of world civilization when India was already at the highest peak, India uttered the great cry

“आत्मानं विद्धि” (Know Thyself)

“सोऽहम् अस्मि” (He is me)

and thereby preached the highest truth. It was in India that great kings and monarchs had gladly given up their crowns and accepted poverty

in search of real emancipation (mukti). And it would not be out of place to state here that I saw during the Samyam Vrata, not one, but three Rajas (the Raja of Solan, the Raja of Tehri with Her Highness the Rani and the Raja of Aumb, hereditary Chiefs during the British Rule) sitting like humble people in ordinary dress at the feet of Mother during the whole week in intense devotion.

However, that is our India, and political freedom is the least part of

her destiny. To realise herself she must get back to that highest peak again or else she will never attain the real freedom. Is that the reason why Mother whom I consider as the Embodiment of the Divine Shakti has revealed Herself in India? Is that the reason why we see in Mother the great dance of Mahakali all over India? Is that the reason why Mother came to Calcutta—Calcutta of all places, and the great Samyam Mahavrata took place here?

I wonder !!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

(The usual account of Mother's movements to date is unavoidably held over till the next issue).

The Samyam Saptaha and the Supreme Quest (Mahavrata) of Life :

On the occasion of the Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata recently celebrated at Calcutta from November 14 to 20, Mother said, "This is but the start of the Journey".

To keep up constantly this supreme quest in the journey through life, the Bhaktas and children of Mother assembled there for the occasion, expressed their desire in the presence of Mother, as the function came to a close after the midnight meditation on the holy Rasa Purnima (full moon) night, that the entire circle of devotees should observe the following course of spiritual discipline or Sadhana throughout their lives:

1. To observe Mauna (Silence) thrice daily—from 7 to 8 A. M. in the morning, from 3 to 4 P. M. in the afternoon and 8. 45 to 9 P. M. at night, i.e. to engage in Japa or medita-

tion during these periods for any length of time, however little, one can manage, even if it be for 5 minutes only. If it is not possible to observe 'Mauna' thrice daily, then it may be observed twice or at least once every day.

2. To observe on the first Thursday of every month (according to the Bengali calendar), the course of discipline prescribed for the Samyam Saptaha to the best of one's capacity, i. e. to follow the instructions regarding food etc. and to engage in Japa or meditations, reading of sacred texts, religious discourses etc. as far as possible.

In this noble enterprise, each will be blest with Mother's Grace and find fulfilment according to the degree of the zeal and enthusiasm brought to bear on it.

Report on observance of Samyam Saptaha from other places—

We take this opportunity to acknowledge and convey our deep satisfaction at the numerous reports

received from all parts of the country about the observance of the Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata by devotees who could not attend the recent function at Calcutta. We regret that

it has not been found possible to make acknowledgments individually.

We hope, however, that we shall continue to receive such reports on similar occasions in the future.

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