

*The Eternal, the Atman—
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality,
Self-contained—THAT is all in One.*

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

Vol. XXIII

OCTOBER, 1976

No. 4

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Mātri Vāni | | 215 |
| 2. Mātri Satsang | —Swami Bhagawananda Giri ... | 219 |
| 3. Ma's Twin Message and Answers to Common Queries | —Naren Chowdhury ... | 237 |
| 4. Aum Ma | —A Seeker ... | 244 |
| 5. Thoughts on Mataji | —Jyotipriya (Lynn Dalton) ... | 251 |
| 6. When You Came | —Sri Swami Krishnananda ... | 259 |
| 7. What is Sadhana ? How can it be Practised in the West ? | —Ma Suryananda Lakshmi ... | 261 |
| 8. Reminiscences of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj | —Dr. Koshelya Walli ... | 270 |
| 9. Mātri Līlā | | 275 |
-



Mātri Vāni

(Dictated by Sri MA as letters in response to devotees' requests for personal advice and guidance.)

Without God's grace it is difficult to become a pilgrim on the Path, this is perfectly true. All the same, after having set out on the journey it is not right to keep the mind vacillating—that is detrimental. Strengthen your mind and lead a life of *tapasyā*.* The Supreme Lord of this path is God Himself.

* * *

The Mother has brought you forth. When you say "mother" the existence of the father is implied. Is it not said of God : "Thou art Mother, thou art Father, thou art Friend, Beloved, Master, 'Swami' which means *swa-ami* : the Self am I. He alone is all in everyone and everything. He indeed is the Mother; keep this in mind !

* * *

He grants and will grant His touch in His own time. But we have to do our duty, which is to call out to Him. Indulging in vain, idle talk, that is, attending to what is futile, what hinders and obstructs the advance towards Him—ages and ages have already been spent in this kind of pursuit. Now, my friend, return to

* *Tapasyā* Austerities undergone with the definite object of attaining to the spiritual.

your Home ! How much longer will you tarry on the road and bear the hardships that are the wayfarer's lot ?

* * *

When you are learning to swim or walking on a slippery road or in the desert, how does it feel ? With singleminded devotion proceed in the direction of the Supreme Lord of the Goal, whose law is one-pointedness. He is the Fountain of Goodness—bear this in mind. Aspire to perfect tranquillity. In all one's actions one should demonstrate extreme self-control, patience and endurance.

* * *

Wherever they may be, this body (Mataji) is with them at all times. This body does not know how to serve everybody—only what may come about spontaneously at any time : what little they can get done by regarding this small child as their very own, by their love and respect for her while giving her satsang and sādhusang..... Here the door is always open; without any hesitation let them come whenever they feel like it.

* * *

Truth itself protects truth. A hundred activities, a hundred obstructions. Not paying heed to difficulties, if one tries to be completely truthful, no notice need be taken of who has said what by those who are vowed to truth. A person who will speak the truth, perform good deeds and live in an atmosphere of Truth—God Himself becomes his protector.

* * *

A human being can surely be victorious in all respects. It is imperative to keep the mind fully alert. Having spent life after life in the grip of ignorance, one has come to enjoy it; but one will have to change direction. Boldly and stout-heartedly speak the truth; thereby the vigour of truth will increase. It is Truth which is the light on the Path and points out the direction to be taken. Preserving one's individuality in tact while behaving in a polite manner, one will be successful with everyone. Do not allow anyone to keep you under his thumb. Nourish the beauty of your innate disposition by the regular practice of pure, Reality-directed thought so that agitation may not be able to touch you. Cultivate a lofty, munificent and noble outlook.

* * *

The relation between Guru and *śiṣya* (disciple) deserves to be called eternal only when the Guru is possessed of Divine Power and can and does communicate this power to the disciple at the time of initiation. This Power being eternal, the relation between Guru and *śiṣya* is also eternal.

The mantra imparted to the *śiṣya* during *dikṣa* (initiation) must not be an ordinary word but a syllable or series of syllables instinct with life or spiritual energy, capable of functioning actively in the disciple's psycho-physical organism.

No true relation between Guru and *śiṣya* can exist unless it is assumed to be eternal. This implies that the Guru ought to be capable of communicating Divine Power as a matter of Grace.

It is only in the case of a divinely gifted, powerful Guru that a temporary slackening of the disciple's faith cannot do much real harm inasmuch as the hidden Power of the Guru infused into the disciple and functioning within him steadily though unconsciously, has invariably the tendency to come up and lead him to a deepening of his faith,

In a case where the disciple's faith in his Guru is genuine and firm, any limitation in the Guru is not a hindrance. However, as soon as this faith is shaken for any reason whatever, difficulties are bound to arise. For, except by faith which naturally invokes Divine Grace and does not depend upon the individual merit of the Guru, there is no other way to render the relation with the Guru eternal.

Various obstacles naturally are met with by one treading the path of Perfection. Such a life is bound to be a constant struggle for Self-knowledge and God-realization. To realize one's Self is to realize God and to know God is to know one's Self. On this path one can progress only by adhering to truth, fortitude and serenity. Every person truly in search of God should take refuge in a reliable guide and follow such methods of *sādhana* as may enable him to rise above all conflicting and distressing situations of the world. He should accept what is truly uplifting (*śreya*) and reject mere pleasure (*preya*). Is it not fitting for you to try and live always in a spirit of calm, steadfastness and patience ?

Mātri Satsang

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri
(Translated from Bengali)

(13)

Prologue : A very special satsang was held from March 30th to April 1st, 1948, at the Sri Anandamayi Ashram, Varanasi, with the well-known and universally revered Mahātmā Sri Devigiriji Maharaj of Uttarkashi and Sri Ma. In this article I have tried to record as faithfully as possible the actual words that emanated from the lips of Mataji, Devigiriji and other Mahātmās present.

Revered Devi Giriji Maharaj had spent more than fifty years at Uttarkashi in the performance of his *tapasyā*.¹ He left his body and took Mahāsamādhi in October 1950 at Uttarkashi.

*

*

*

March 30th, 1948.

On alighting at the Ashram, Mataji first of all went to the room of Sri Devigiriji who had arrived before Her. Seeing Mataji, the sage at once got up and with obvious delight embraced Her and did *praṇāma*.

1. *Tapasyā* See Footnote on p. 215.

Mataji : Pitāji, I am your little daughter !

Devigiriji : For a long time I have been longing for your *darśana*.

Mataji : It is through Pitāji's grace that he is present here to give us *darśana*. The occasion of meeting mahātmās is divinely auspicious. Only after having Pitāji's *darśana* shall I partake of food. I have come to see Pitāji first.

Devigiriji : *Saccidānanda** is indeed your special diet. Mataji saluted the mahātmā while repeating : ' *Namo Nārāyaṇa, Namō Nārāyaṇa, Namō Nārāyaṇa* | three times.

*

*

*

In the evening Mataji was sitting in the open on the roof of the hall. The venerable Devigiriji Maharaj came to visit Mataji. She stood up as soon as She saw him, arranged for an *āsana* for him, and said : "Pitāji did not come to the Kumbh Mela. A cottage was kept ready for him."

Devigiriji : What could I have seen ? Everything is only a dream, the play of *māyā*.¹

Mataji : Yes, Pitāji, this is very true.

Devigiriji : The body is not responsible for any action; it is subjected to the six stages² inherent in it. (*vikāra*).

* *Saccidānanda* (*Sat-Cit-Ānanda*) The Supreme Reality as self-existent Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

1. *Māyā* : The Supreme Divine Power by which the One conceals Itself and appears as the many.
2. The six changes or stages (*vikāras*) are : Birth, Childhood, Adolescence, Manhood or Womanhood, Old Age, Death.

Mataji : Yes, it is actionless.

Devigiriji : The Ātmā is indeed Rāma.

Mataji : Yes, Ātmārāma : the Self delighting in Itself.

Devigiriji : “*Ramante Yoginah asmin iti Rāmah.*” He who sports in everybody’s heart is indeed Rāma. *Prakāśa* and *Kāshi*³ are one and the same. Self-revelation does not wane or wax. Here one tastes only of the one Divine Ambrosia. (ek ras.)

Mataji : “There”, only one delight is everywhere.

Devigiriji : For him who has attained to Self-illumination without distinction or differentiation, can there be any loss or gain, whether he is immersed in *samādhi* or seems outward-turned ?

Mataji : The question of gain or loss does not arise at all.

Devigiriji : Ma’s *darśana* has been obtained. This has been immensely beneficial.

Mataji : Pitaji loves this little daughter of his and showers his grace upon her without any cause or reason.

* * *

During a subsequent discussion on the Kumbh Mela, Mataji said : “Pitaji himself is like a vessel (*kumbh*) filled with nectar.* What is there for him to

3. Kashi, the old name for Varanasi, is also the name of the *chakra* between the eye brows. If the mind of a dying person is fixed there, liberation occurs.

* *Kumbh* The vessel containing divine nectar over which the *devas* and *asuras* fought, according to ancient Indian mythology. It is said that drops of the nectar fell down in Hardwar, at the Triveni at Allahabad, in Nasik and Ujjain. A *Kumbh Mela* is held every twelve years in these places.

see in the *Kumbh Mela* ?

Devigiriji : I have attended five *Kumbh Mēlas*. What is now left to see ? I like to sit quietly and read Scriptures.

Mataji : Well, this body (*Ma*) is like a bird on the wing. Sometimes it enters somewhere, then again it escapes. As regards ashrams, the entire earth is the ashram of this body.

Devigiriji : No place is better or worse than another.

Mataji : There is no question of place or time here. :

Devigiriji : Only the one delight (*ek ras*).

* * *

Revered *Devigiriji Maharaj* has been invited for lunch to-morrow at the Ramakrishna Mission. *Mataji* asks : "Will you have to go out for your meal to-morrow ?"

Devigiriji : The food does not matter. It is for their joyful participation.

Mataji : Joy is real food. It is the *ānandam* of which one has to partake.

Devigiriji : The bhakta makes a servant of the Lord. Just as Arjun asked Lord Krishna : "My Lord, take my chariot to a point midway between the two armies!"

Mataji : The meaning is quite clear : HE alone exists.

* * *

Mounimā asked a question on the subject of Krishna Līlā. *Devigiriji* said : "Sri Krishna's various *līlās* are all illusory plays conjured up by *māyā* (God's creative power).

Mounimā : But Krishna was the embodiment of *Saccidānanda*.

Devigiriji : What is called *Saccidānanda* remains so through all times, past, present, future. When it is embodied in a being, this happens by the power of *māyā*. Where is Krishna? Show me ! Where there is knower, knowing, knowledge, this is all due to *māyā*. Beyond this lies THAT which IS—where no distinction can be made. “*Deivī hyeṣa guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā.*” “This divine illusion of Mine, caused by the qualities is hard to pierce. “(Bhagavad Gītā, VII/14.)

Mounimā : Sir Krishna, the embodiment of Supreme Knowledge, was God Himself. He played His *līlā* by taking recourse to *māyā*. Whereas what ordinary human beings do is done out of ignorance.

Devigiriji : He does not do anything. He is merely the witness. The kingdom of *māyā* extends as far as the mind can travel. Being, consciousness, supreme bliss are all pastimes of the mind. How can *māyā* be removed? He who realizes by direct perception who he is, can be freed from bondage. *Saccidānanda* is all part of *māyā*. The Thing Itself that knows no distinction is nothing in particular. Supreme Knowledge does not wane or wax. The *Atmā* is said to be beyond the five sheaths.¹ It does not experience happiness and sorrow. Once butter is extracted from milk it cannot be mixed again with the milk. Knowledge does not dawn the moment the mind is becalmed. The mind

1. The five sheaths are : The physical body, the vital, the mental, the psychic, the sheath of beatitude.

remains ever active, day and night. But when at any time the mind is completely stilled, real Knowledge ensues.

Look at Ma here, has anyone ever recognized Her for what She is ? In Her there is no uncertainty, She is permeated by the one Divine Ambrosia (*ek ras mayī*). Only he who becomes like Ma will be able to recognize Her. Ma seems to wander hither and thither, but actually She does nothing. Although people see Mataji coming and going, this does not mean anything. Mataji pervades everywhere. "*Bahirantascha bhutānām acharam charam eva cha.*" "Without and within all beings, immovable and also movable." (Bhagavad Gitā, XIII/15.) Sri Krishna said to Arjun : "Many births have been left behind by Me and thee. I know them all but thou knowest not thine." People say that Sri Krishna used to perform *Rāsa līlā* with the gopis.* But this was in a realm beyond differentiation. Just as a child sometimes plays on his own, so the Lord enjoyed sporting with Himself alone. This is what is meant by *Saccidānanda*. It has to be emphasised that the mind must be stilled. The rest will come by itself. "There the eye goes not; speech goes not nor the mind. We know not, we understand not how one would teach It. Other, indeed, is It than the known, and moreover above the unknown.

* *Rāsa līlā* The love play of Sri Krishna with the gopis. It has nothing whatever to do with human love but is a symbolic representation of the union with the Supreme of the human soul that has attained to the highest type of self-dedication,

Thus have we heard of the ancients who to us have explained It." (Kena Upanishad). HE is far beyond the opposites of knowledge and ignorance.

Question : In Vedanta philosophy as well as in the *Gītā* it says : *Jñānāgni dagda karmāni* : "The fire of Knowledge reduces all actions to ashes." (Bhagavad Gītā IV/37.) Some interpret this to mean that *sanchit karma*¹ and *kriyamāna karma*¹ are destroyed. Is the *prārabhda karma*¹ annihilated as well ?

Devigiriji : When the state of Brahman has been attained, none of the three types of karma can persist.

Question : If there is no *pārabhda*, can the body continue to exist ?

Devigiriji : Even if there be a body, there is no identification with it. After all, what does a mere body signify ?

•

*

•

March 31st, 1948.

During a further discussion, Devigiriji Maharaj said : "There, words cannot reach."

Mataji : There, even "not" does not exist. (Mataji starts to laugh.) No language can arise in that state.

Question : Where the experience of "*neti neti*" is (not this, not this), everything comes to an end. And everything else is due to the ego only.

1. *Sanchit karma* The karma stored up from past lives that need not be worked out in the present birth.

Kriyamāna karma The results of actions performed in the present.

Prārabhda karma That portion of one's past actions which is bound to fructify in the present life and cannot be averted.

Mataji : This question itself is wrong.

Devigiriji : When one arrives at the stage of “*neti neti*,” how can there be questions ?

Mataji : When one has arrived at the conclusion “not this, not this”, can there still be a path ? Where could it lead ? Where Illumination is, there is no more “where and there.”

Devigiriji : Once you have experienced “*neti neti*”, where does Eternity (*Mahākāla*) come in ?

Mataji The path to take is within you.

Question : Does it end there or is there still something else ?
The *Gītā* states : “I am established in the Brahman. There is nobody greater than Myself.”

Devigiriji : Turn your gaze within. All this is nothing but the rambling of the mind. All your “*neti, neti*” is the mind’s enquiry.

*

*

*

In course of conversation *Devigiriji* said that the devotee induces God to act as his servant.

Mataji : Who is the servant ? THAT Itself is indeed the servant.

Devigiriji : No need to say anything else. Look within. Calm the movement of the mind.

Question : I am certainly devoted to the Lord, yet I have to run my household. Recently I incurred a debt of Rs. 3.000/- over my daughter’s marriage. Should I repay the debt or attend to the worship of God ?

Mataji : Even if you forsake your debt and turn to the

worship of God, the memory of this debt will persist in your mind. Of course, in case you reach a state in which there is no more distinction between the one who receives the debt and him who repays it, then this is a different matter altogether. But so long as that state does not supervene, you must continue both to perform your devotions and to repay your debt. Keep on remembering Him to the limit of your capacity. Thereafter it is up to the Lord. Trust in God.

Question : Is it proper to pray to God to enable me to repay the debt ?

Mataji : If you wish to do so, you may. But there is another attitude that can be taken : "Oh Lord, I am not seeking any boon from you. I want only you yourself!" If there has to be desire, let it be desire for Him alone.

*

*•

*•

Question : Yesterday tears could be seen in Devigiriji's eyes when he listened attentively to devotional songs. Was this due to any shortcoming of the mind or of the eyes ?

Nepalda : He was crying so intensely, as if all his supernatural powers had been wiped out.

Mataji : Supernatural powers are not desirable. They have to disappear in any case.

Nepalda : When there is some realization (*anubhūti*), then only ?

Question : Are there supernormal powers that continue for ever ?

Mataji : Yes, there are. Powers that last are displayed in ever new ways.

Later, in the same context, Mataji said : "If tears flow from one's eyes, does it mean that Vedanta has been forgotten ?"

Question : We are told that tears used to stream from Mahā-prabhu's (Sri Krishna Chaitanya) eyes with the force of a fountain.

Mataji remains silent.

Question : God has countless names, countless forms. Which of them should I use for my *japa* ?

Mataji : You have yourself stated that He is of infinite names and forms. Whichever name you like best, you may remember constantly.

Question : Which form should I contemplate ?

Mataji : You should contemplate the form of Him whose name you repeat.

Question : Rama and Krishna are two names. Rama is holding a bow and Krishna a flute.

Mataji : He who is Rama is in fact Krishna, and He who is Krishna is Rama as well. Some consider Rama to be superior and so worship him, others worship Krishna. They are two forms of the ONE. Some say the word 'Krishna' means one who attracts everybody, whereas He who delights to play in everyone's heart is called 'Rāma'. Each name has its own significance. The

One is contained in the infinite variety and the infinite variety in the One.

A gentleman complains : "In the hurly-burly of Calcutta I cannot perform my spiritual exercises. I wish to carry them out sitting at your holy feet."

Mataji : But I am in fact present in your home, in your ashram.

* * *

At night Sri Devigiriji Maharaj and Mataji are sitting on the roof of the Ashram. Melodious Kirtan is in progress. At the conclusion of *Mātri Kīrtan* Mataji requests them to sing : "*Raghupati Raghava Rāja Rām, Patita Pāvana Sītā Rām.*" Thereupon Devigiriji says : "*Mataji* you are Divine Bliss Itself."

Mataji : You are yourself the essence of Bliss.

Later in the night, after the kirtan, Mataji suddenly had the *kheyāla* to go to Sri Devigiriji's room. Thereupon Devigiriji exclaimed : "This is indeed very fortunate, this is most auspicious and propitious. How beneficial it has been to come here!"

Mataji : It is everybody's good fortune. They all have had the benefit of your *darśana*.

Swami Paramānandaji : Narayan Swamiji (who lives near Hardwar) told Mataji : "Don't build any ashrams and don't wander about so much."

Mataji : I replied to the Pitaji : This body does not go to anybody, does not partake of anybody's food, neither does it talk to anybody.

Devigiriji : Quite right. Where can you go ?

Mataji : Where can I go ? Whence can I return ?

Devigiriji : To go anywhere means to be limited.

Mataji : Who will go away ? Where will he go ? How will he go ?

Devigiriji : You have given a perfect reply.

Mataji : There is no learning here, I say whatever comes of itself. The Swami had an idea that I was founding ashrams. But I assured him that I do not create ashrams. Now he never asks me questions concerning ashrams lest I forbid it. This body is like a bird on the wing, sometimes it flies about, sometimes it alights.

Devigiriji : Where there is one Divine Ambrosia, Self-revelation, eternal, immaculate, enlightened, free, how can there, in the light of Supreme Knowledge, be coming and going ?

Mataji : The question of coming or going does not arise at all.

Devigiriji : The Vedas declare that He is the Brahman in its entirety. Going, coming, dying, living—all this is of the body only.

At this point Didima (Swami Muktananda Giri) entered the room. Swami Paramananda introduced her as Mataji's mother and said she had received *samnyāsa* from Swami Mangaliriji.

Devigiriji : Mangaliriji was a very learned and noble person. I have heard someone say that he used to scold his followers severely.

Mataji : He was rough outwardly, but very tender within.

Devigiriji : Such is the sport of mahātmās, their play.

Mataji : The anger of mahātmās is like bubbles in water.

Devigiriji : A mahātmā is the personification of all that is good.

Mataji : He whose gaze is fixed on the highest is excellent in all respects. Whereas he who looks at what is base is himself base.

Didima : There is no inner vision as yet. How does it help to be Mataji's mother ?

Mataji : It will gradually open up. The utterance of a mahātmā can never go in vain.

Devigiriji : Mataji's *darśana* has been obtained. What else is left to be desired ?

Later, when the subject of worship was raised, Devigiriji said : "There are five types of pūjā : The worship of images, silent repetition of a Name or Mantra, (japa) chanting of hymns (*stotras*) inquiry into Truth (*tattwavicāra*) and the contemplation of deities. In true worship there are no rituals whatever.

Mataji : Only He himself, He and He alone !

*

*

*

Devigiriji : Vindhyachal¹ is a very beautiful place but too hot. I have met some mahātmās there also.

1. *Vindhyachal* A place of pilgrimage situated between Allahabad and Varanasi, where Mataji has an Ashram on a hill.

Mataji : If your body remains well, it will be nice for you to go there in winter.

Devigiriji : The body is transient. It is also quite costly to come from so far.

Mataji : Money will be provided automatically. Mahātmās have no financial problems. Arrangements for expenses can always be made.

Devigiriji : I have read about the glory of Vindhyachal in Hindi but could not quite relish it. In Sanskrit it is much more interesting.

Mataji : Water has a certain taste but pure curd has quite a different flavour.

Devigiriji : The scripture on the greatness of Vindhyachal contains a lot of valuable knowledge. For instance, it is written that by sipping *garanāmrita** there, one will be liberated then and there. Without liberation (*mukti*) there is no Knowledge of Reality. At Kashi also, Śiva initiates the dying with a mantra. (Here he recited the appropriate Sanskrit text.)

Mataji : It means the manifestation of what IS.

Devigiriji : Mataji! Boundless is your greatness. Where speech cannot penetrate, where there are no qualities, no actions, what will mere words accomplish ?

* * *

Later that night Mataji walked about on the roof.
Down below Mother Ganga was flowing gently.

* *Garanāmrita* The feet of deities or saints are bathed in water which is then partaken of by devotees.

Mataji's hair was tied up in a coil like the matted hair adorning Śiva's forehead. Ma praised Devigiriji, saying : "His body has been purified by long-practised austerity, the body of an ascetic. What a wonderful mahātmā !"

April 1st, 1948.

Question : Is there no liberation (*mukti*) except through the attainment to Knowledge (*jñāna*)? What kind of knowledge is that ?

Devigiriji : Knowledge of one's true Self is real Knowledge. Knowing how to eat and drink and so forth is not true knowledge. To know yourself fully is alone true Knowledge. First of all listen to your Guru's words of wisdom, then ponder over them, thereafter assiduously put them into practice. Finally you will become absorbed into *samādhi* and then only real Knowledge will supervene. Books can merely show the way. Knowledge comes through steadfast pursuit. Without such constant adherence Knowledge cannot ensue. This unflagging devotion must be fully oriented towards THAT, HE alone is the one and perfect *Atmā*.

Human birth is a rare boon. If one cannot attain in this body, then when will it ever happen? The *atmā* never dies. Real Knowledge should be gained while remaining in this very body.

Question : Strong desires are the main deterrent.

Devigiriji : In worldly life there is no happiness, worldly

happiness is transient. All these kinds of things are nothing but obstructions.

Question : Maharaj, will I ever succeed in getting anywhere ?

Devagirij : Why not ? The process may be spread over several births or, possibly, three births can accomplish it.

Mataji : The question of succeeding or not arises from the mind alone. You should adopt the attitude, "Whatever happens is equally welcome." : This great mantra was the keynote of Haribaba's monumental work at Bandh. The first was, "Let whatever happens take its course." The second was, "Whatever happens or does not happen is all the same to me."

* * *

While speaking about newcomers, Mataji said :
"At no time was anybody not known to me. Even to say "was not" is like drawing a veil over the real state of affairs.

Question : But we do not understand such a state !

Mataji : To whom can one speak of being acquainted or unacquainted ? This cannot be expressed in any language. Even when being silent one is not silent and so language will be created in any case.

Question : Eternally vibrating, yet absolutely without vibration.

Mataji : Whatever you say, so it is. No confusion will result.

* * *

Question : Devotees are said to belong to four categories : the suffering, seekers after knowledge, the desirous of wealth and the wise. How many wise men are there in your circle ?

Mataji : What do you yourself think ?

Questioner : Please reply yourself !

Mataji : There is no inclination to answer.

Questioner : No reply has been given.

Mataji : He who is wise himself can recognize a wise person.

Question : During *yajñas* (fire sacrifices), deities are supposed to attend. How can one obtain their *darśana* ?

Mataji : If they are gracious enough to reveal themselves you may be granted a *darśana*.

Question : In what way can this be achieved ?

Mataji : Start to meditate, then contemplate deeply whomsoever you wish to see.

Question : When absorbed into *samādhi*, does the body become stonelike ?

Mataji : Go into *samādhi* and you will find out. Make a genuine effort towards *samādhi*.

Question : Some mistake sleep for *samādhi*.

Mataji : When one has had a proper meal one feels satisfied. Whether his stomach is full or empty everyone knows for himself. To be in *samādhi* without realizing it is impossible. The question itself is wrong. When meditating or doing *jāpa* one feels blissful. Bliss is self-evident. The question of knowing it or not does not arise at all.

Question : I am unable to experience supreme Bliss.

Mataji : Yet the absence of it is certainly felt. Never relax your efforts due to complacency.

Question : Is there no other way ?

Mataji : Whatever the Guru advocates is the correct way.

* * *

Mataji came to sit in Devigiriji's room. She requested him to stay on for a few more days.

Mataji : The longer you stay the more beneficial for all.

Devigiriji : Mataji's abode is indeed very beautiful.

Mataji : (smiling) : There is Gangā *darśana* whether one sits or lies down. By the sight of Ganga heinous sins are washed away.

Devigiriji : Yes, the sight of Ganga does destroy the effects of evil deeds. (He then recites the appropriate sanskrit verses.)

Mataji : This place his in the very lap of Ganga .

Dr. Vyas : Its waters are flowing right underneath.

April 2nd, 1948.

Sri Devigiriji Maharaji is leaving for Ayodhya. Mataji and others bid him a hearty farewell. Later Mataji said : "What an auspicious constellation ! People came from so many far-off places. Those who were destined to be present were able to gather. How wonderful ! Devigiri Pitaji came down from the mountains and those who were fated to be initiated received their initiation."

Ma's Twin Message and Answers to Common Queries

Naren Chowdhury

In Bhaiji's "*Sad Vāni*" exactly hundred and one (101) different instructions of Ma have been compiled. At the end of Bhaiji's "*Matri Darshan*", twelve distinct instructions of Ma are given. In the books "*Matri Vāni*" and "*Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma*", many more of Ma's sound instructions and Her clear expositions on some abstruse esoteric topics have been compiled and printed. In Gurupriya Devi's "*Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi*" (17 volumes in Bengali & 20 volumes in Hindi), in late Amulya Datta Gupta's "*Sri Sri Anandamayi Prasanga*" (6 parts) and in Ganga Samiran's "*Anandamayi Ma*" in Bengali, Ma's numerous instructions, explanations and replies to questions have been published. From this vast amount of teaching it may not be at all easy to get at the crux of Ma's instructions, which will be Her universal message for all men and for all time to come. In this essay I shall at the outset clearly state just two of Ma's basic instructions which, in my opinion, constitute Ma's Twin Message, and discuss them in some detail.

FIRST MESSAGE. *A seeker or spiritual aspirant can achieve God-realisation through service, provided the service is rendered to God in man.*

According to this maxim parents will rear a son as a Child-Krishna, a daughter as Kumārī or Child-Durga. A

wife will serve her husband as *Parampati* (Supreme Lord); a husband will look upon his wife as Durga or Lakshmi, the Universal Mother. Ma often repeats : "*yatra jiva tatra Siva, yatra nāri tatra Gauri*", i. e. Siva (God) dwells in every *jiva* (living being), Gauri (The Divine Mother) dwells in every woman. 'God is the one master; I am a mere servant; I shall keep on serving him as directed.' This should be the guiding spirit of the householder. The spiritual aspirant has to bear this in mind all the time and in all spheres of life. Thus, God can be realized by performing all actions in a spirit of serving God in man. This view is endorsed by the following aphorism given in the eighteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gitā. 'He, from whom all beings arise and by whom all this is pervaded, by worshipping Him through performance of his own duty does man attain perfection.'

(Radhakrishnan)

In the eleventh canto of the Srimad Bhāgavata we find Sri Krishna sum up His lengthy discourse to his most intimate devotee, Uddhava, with the words :

"Of all the ways of attaining me, the best is to feel my presence in all beings with mind, word, and body."

Chaitanya Deva also said that on the path of devotion, compassion for living beings is essential.

Swami Vivekananda too declared. "He is before you in numerous forms. Ignoring them, where do you seek God? He who has compassion for living beings is indeed serving God."

This principle of serving God in humanity is applicable for all and in all circumstances. To live according to this principle becomes easy through practice. He, the Master is "seated in all hearts." So, nobody can be maltreated. A father or mother who serve their children with the consciousness that God is in them, will not be able to beat them out of anger. Inspired by this noble sentiment, the teacher will not be prompted by fury or impatience to inflict any severe punishment on wayward students.

The influence of the maxim : "*Yatra jīva tatra Śiva yatra nārī tatra Gaurī*" is clearly discernible in Ma's behaviour. She has often declared to devotees : "You harbour for me not even a tiny fraction of the love that I feel for you." This is only too true. It is natural for Her because She unmistakably sees God, i. e. Herself, in everyone of us. So She can love everybody fully and completely. Her love is indeed boundless,

Feeling the presence of God in all is the most effective uniting force in every sphere of human activity—at schools and universities, in farms and factories, in offices and shops, in villages and towns, everywhere. When I am exalted by this feeling, I shall not be angry if anyone abuses or blames me. On the contrary, I shall reflect : "Why am I being abused or blamed? Have I done anything wrong?" Thinking thus, I can calm myself and make myself totally free from faults. If all can act according to this principle, there will be no misunderstanding, no rancour, no jealousy or rivalry. Friendship and a spirit of co-operation will develop. Human society will become united, powerful and

progressive. In this "First Message" we find a harmonious blending of the threefold paths of *karma* (action), *jñāna* (knowledge) and *bhakti* (devotion).

SECOND MESSAGE. *God-realisation is attainable through japa.* This message is not new. We find in the Gītā the pithy declaration : "*yajñānām japa yajñosmi*" of sacrifices I am the sacrifice of silent repetition, "in other words, *japa* is the most excellent of all sacrifices. *Japa* signifies the silent repetition of God's name or a mantra. *Japa* must be done secretly, without moving the lips, neither should any vibration be perceptible in the front portion of the neck; this is our Ma's specific direction. Now the question arises : which name or mantra should a seeker use for *japa* ? The prevalent tradition in India has been to practise the name or mantra prescribed by the Guru. On this point our Mataji stipulates something which is unprecedented, unique. I never heard about it before nor read about it in any scripture. Ma says : "Do *japa* of any name you like best."

"This name you should repeat in your mind inaudibly and imperceptibly, and as far as possible, with every breath—when inhaling or exhaling—at all times, while sitting, standing, walking, eating, drinking, or whatever you may be doing." Some of the names I have heard from Ma are : Hari, Rama, Krishna, Gopal, Govinda, Bhagavan, Śiva, Durga, Śankara, Kali, Ma, Tara, Radhakrishna, Radheshyam, Sitaram; Radhe Radhe Krishna Krishna, Hare Rama Hare Hare; Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare; 'Jai Śiva Śankara Byom Byom Hara Hara; Namō Nārāyana.

Some of the mantras used by Ma's devotees for *japa* are : 'Om Namō Nārāyanaya', 'Om Namō Bhagavate Vāsudevāya;' "Om Ma."

Mataji says : "All names are His names, all forms His forms. Whichever name you choose for *japa*, it will lead you finally to the revelation of Him." She elucidates this point with a very striking example. She says : "A baby unable to utter 'Ma' cries out 'Oa, Oa' !" His mother knows that he is calling her and hurries to the infant. When the baby is able to talk, his mother teaches him to call her 'Ma'. Likewise, whatever name you may use for *japa* at the start, God, the Universal Father, Mother or Master knows that you are calling Him. In due course He responds and, if need be, appears as a Guru or in a dream or spiritual vision and changes the name for a more effective one or for a mantra."

The freedom allowed—or rather recommended—by Ma for any new seeker on the path of spirituality to choose his own name of God relieves him of the difficult and risky task of searching for a suitable Guru. Thus the aspirant is encouraged to start on the long pilgrimage any day with any name he likes best.

*

*

*

I shall now discuss the answers given by Mataji to four common queries put to Her by devotees. I believe these replies will resolve some doubts lurking in the minds of many readers.

Query 1 : Will japa performed when the mind is restless benefit the seeker ?

Answer: Ma has said: "Even if you are unable to concentrate your mind on *japa*, the name you are repeating mentally has its own intrinsic power. It will take you forward, just as fire burns you even if you touch it unawares."

Ramakrishna Deva said: "God's name will do you good, whether you utter it knowingly, unknowingly or by mistake."

Vijay Krishna Goswami said: "If you have an aversion for 'Name,' the remedy is Name!"

Guru Nanak said: "God's name is the cure for all maladies."

Query 2. Which is more effective, sevā (Service) or japa ?

Answer: *"Some persons cannot concentrate when sitting for *japa*. For them it is advisable to purify the mind by doing service. On the other hand, it is also true that unless the mind has been purified to some extent by invoking God's name, *sevā* (service to God in man) cannot be done properly. Yet again some people have been able to perform *japa* in the right manner only after purifying the mind by doing service."

Sevā and *japa* are both necessary. One is supplementary to the other. Together they form an integral *sādhana***

* Gurupriya Devi's "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayī," Bengali Vol. XV, p. 246.

** 'Integral sādhana' means balanced spiritual practices leading to God-realisation.

Query 3. Is Ma ever angry with her child ?

Answer : "***Ma never gets angry. But for the good of the child she often behaves as if she were angry. Thereby the child is benefitted, never harmed."

Query 4. Many devotees of God are found to be subjected to severe trials. What are the reasons for such suffering ? What are its effects ?

Answer : *"Often God gives a light affliction and thereby prevents a much graver one. Sorrow too is one of His own expressions. Through sorrow God often attracts living beings towards Himself. Suffering is also an opportunity.... Dire difficulty demonstrates to man how weak and helpless he is. When he finds that nothing can be achieved by his own efforts, an urge arises in him to turn to God in prayer. When in great trouble, man spontaneously invokes God's help. For God prevents and makes us overcome difficulties. For those who can convert affliction into an opportunity for the invocation of God, affliction is a supreme friend."

— x —

*** Gurupriya Devi's "Sri Sri Ma Andandamayi," Voi. XV, p. 33.

* Gangasamiran's "Anandamayi Ma" (Bengali), pp. 114-115.

Aum Mā

A Seeker

Communion with the Supreme Truth is not a problem of words; it is a problem of life. The one word that can solve all problems of life is "Aum". "Aum" is the sound symbol of the Supreme Truth, known as *Brahman* or *Ātman*.*

Brahman cannot be defined. Words cannot describe It; the senses cannot perceive It; even the mind cannot comprehend It. *Brahman* is nothing in the mind, nothing outside the mind. It is nothing past, nothing present, nothing future. These conceptions are all in the context of time and space. Absolute *Brahman* is beyond both. It has been defined as self-existent (1) Being (*Sat*); (2) Consciousness (*Cit*) and (3) Bliss (*Ānandam*).

Ānandam is a Sanskrit word for which there seems to be no adequate English equivalent. The nearest approach to the idea is inherent in expressions, such as "joy", "bliss", "eternal felicity" and "supreme beatitude".

Absolute *Brahman* is too deep, too subtle and too abstruse for most men. Hinduism has prescribed an alternative to Absolute Brahman, namely Conditioned

* References : (1) Mandukya Upanishad 1; (2) Chhandogya 1/1; (3) Taġttiriya 1/8; (4) Katha 1/2/15-17; (5) Prashna 5/2; (6) Shweta-shwatara 1/14; (7) Chaitanya Charitamrita-Adya 7th (8) Srimad Bhagawata 12/6.

Brahman, known as *Iṣwara*. *Iṣwara* is manifested in different forms such as the God of Creation, the God of Preservation and the God of Destruction; also as *Śakti*, the Divine Mother in different forms such as Durga, Kali, Jagadamba, Mahamāyā, Lakshmi, Saraswati and other manifestations.

The word *Aum* represents both the absolute *Brahman* and the conditioned *Brahman*. It is the primaeval sound. In his elaborate discussion on *Aum* in *Raja Yoga*, Swami Vivekananda has made the following observations :—

“In making a sound we use the larynx and the palate as a sounding board. Is there any material sound of which all other sounds must be manifestations, one which is the most natural sound? *Aum* is such a sound, the basis of all sounds. The first letter A is the root sound, the key, pronounced without touching any part of the tongue or palate; M represents the last sound in the series, being produced by the closed lips, and the U rolls from the very root to the end of the sounding board of the mouth. Thus, *Aum* represents the whole phenomena of sound-producing. As such, it must be the natural symbol, the matrix of all the various sounds. It denotes the whole range and possibility of all the words that can be made. Apart from these speculations we see that around this word *Aum* are centred all the different religious ideas in India; all the various religious ideas of the Vedas have gathered themselves round this word *Aum*. What has that to do with America and England or any other country? Simply this, that the word has been retained at every stage of religious growth in India; and it has been manipulated to mean all the various ideas

about God. Monists, Dualists, Mono-Dualists, Separatists, and even Atheists took up this *Aum*. *Aum* has become the one symbol for the religious aspiration of the vast majority of human beings. Take for instance, the English word 'God'. It covers only a limited function, and if you go beyond it, you have to add adjectives, to make it Personal, or Impersonal, or Absolute God. So with the words for God in every other language; their signification is very small. This word *Aum*, however, has around it all the various significances: As such it should be accepted by everyone."

There may be no etymological connection between '*Aum*' and '*Mā*', but the fact remains that the resonance of *Aum* is inherent in the word *Mā*, the Bengali equivalent of mother. Similarly, the words corresponding to *Mā* in the principle languages of the east and the west have, in varying degrees, the echo of the vibrations of *Aum* and *Mā*. Thus *Mātā* and *Ambā* in Sanskrit, *Āmmā* in Tamil, *Amman* in Urdu, *Mā* in Hindi, *Umm* in Arabic, *Māther* in Persian, *Mama* in Chinese, *Mater* in Latin, *Mutter* in German, *Mère* in French, *Mat* in Russian, *Madre* in Italian and *Mother* in English, each reverberates with the one note from which springs *Aum*.

Again, a new-born baby, yet to be affiliated to its mother-tongue, spontaneously utters a sound akin to *aum* and *mā*. That mumbling note has no place in any dictionary of any language. All the same, it is the best medium of communication between the child and its mother. It is sweet; it is arresting; it has a touch of the divine,

The human mother who feeds her child from her gentle breast is a living image of the Divine Mother. Indeed, the relation between mother and child is one of the prettiest flowers in the garden that is this earth.

The saying on the child of *Ma Anandamayī*, a free translation of which is given below, is illuminating :—

“While the child is in its mother’s womb, its inner power is united with that of its mother, and thus there is Knowledge of Reality. By the yogas of meditation or enquiry or by *kriyā yoga* one must again reach the state of the child in its mother’s womb. The *sādhaka*, the *bhakta*, the *yogi* must become the child yogi in the womb of the Divine Mother. Then the breath will not be broken up anymore. All along there will be only one goal, one aspiration, one inner experience, one realization.....

“While in its mother’s womb, the individual has no connection with the outer world. There is thus no impediment and the blood circulation is not conditioned by the functioning of the breath but evenly flows straight in and out of the mother’s blood stream. By the sight of outer things and by breathing the outer air, man’s concentration is destroyed and the remembrance of his true nature vanishes. It is necessary for the aspirant to hide himself from the obstacles of the outer world by entering the Divine Mother’s womb in the cave of his own heart. Thereby lost remembrance will be restored. Then the mother will take on herself all his burdens.”*

* *Ānanda Vārtā*, Vol. XVII 4, p. 185.

The new-born baby is hardly conscious of its separate existence in the world outside. It still continues to be a mere projection of the mother. Its I-ness, if any, is *mā*-oriented. As the baby grows, it finds alternative objects of attraction, quite apart from its mother. Inevitably, it develops its peculiar likes and dislikes. In the process, the child steadily recedes farther and farther away from its mother and ultimately becomes I-oriented.

This transformation from childhood to manhood is natural. But in the heart of everyone, young or old, high or low, there lingers a child which feels the pang of separation from its mother. In the midst of an adult's day-to-day worldly existence, the child in him occasionally wakes up from its slumber. This marks the beginning of a new chapter in a man's life. He then hears the call of the Divine Mother. The child-approach, sincerely nursed, makes communion with the Divine Mother easy and quick.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said, "Do you aspire after Divine Grace? Then propitiate the Mother, the Divine Energy-Śakti. Yes, She is *Mahāmāya* Herself. She it is who has divided the whole world and is conjuring up the triple device of creation, maintenance and dissolution. She has spread a veil of ignorance over all, and unless She unbars the Gate, none can enter the "Inner Court". Left outside, we only see the external things; but the Eternal One-*Saccidananda*—remains ever beyond our ken."

Sri Aurobindo has laid down guide lines for *sādhana* of the Divine Mother in words as follows :—

“To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, two that always go together : the Grace of the Divine Mother, and on your side, an inner state made of faith, sincerity and surrender. Let your faith be pure, candid and perfect.Let your sincerity and surrender be genuine and entire, When you give yourself, give completely, without demand, without condition without reservation, so that all in you shall belong to the Divine Mother and nothing be left to the ego or given to any other power. The more complete your faith, sincerity and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you, and when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear ? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is Hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength. For the grace of the Divine Mother is the sanction of the Supreme and now or tomorrow, its effect is sure, a thing decreed, inevitable and irresistible.”

The culmination of the Mother-cult has been described by Sri Aurobindo as follows :—

“You are completely identified with the Divine Mother and feel yourself to be no longer another and separate being, instrument, servant or worker but truly a child and eternal portion of Her consciousness and force. Always She will be

in you and you in Her; it will be your constant, simple and natural experience that all your thought and seeing and action, your very being and moving come from Her and are Hers. You will know and see and feel that you are a person and power formed out of Herself, put out from Her for the play and yet always safe in Her, being of Her being, consciousness of Her consciousness, force of Her force, *ānanda* of Her *ānanda*."

A similar idea has been expressed by Ma Anandamayi in simple Bengali words, a free translation of which is set out below :—"If with staunch faith, strong devotion and a heart overflowing with love, anyone can exclaim : 'Mother come, come to me, Mother; it is beyond my power to carry on without you, then the Universal Mother will spread out Her arms towards you and clasp you to Her bosom. Don't look up to Her only as a mysterious refuge in your hours of distress. Remember always, She is very, very near you, guiding all the forces of your life. With that conviction proceed; She will take the brunt of all your responsibilities from your shoulders and give you strength to bear the cross.'"

* "Mother as Revealed to Me", p. 161.

"Faith, devotion, and constant union with God through prayer—these are declared by the sacred scriptures to be the seeker's direct means of liberation. To him who abides by them comes liberation from that bondage of physical consciousness which has been forged by ignorance."

SHANKARACHARYA

Thoughts on Mataji

(4)

Jyotipriya (Lynn Dalton)

Notes from my diary :

October 2, 1973.

It is almost a year now since my meeting with Mataji. In starting this journal I may be keeping my mind more on God; Mataji approves of such practices.....within this folder I am to write only about my relationship with God.

Even at this late date I so often question and doubt, seeking answers to the mystery of life through the intellect. And I question often, too, my relationship with Ma..... not so much who or what She is.....but WHY.....and often, is Mataji REAL or just a figment? I guess because it would all seem so absurd to those who haven't felt Her touch. Only Ma's people really understand.....and we appear a bunch of fanatics which are a dime a dozen. This concern with APPEARANCES, Mataji is showing me just how concerned I am with that.

Is it crazy to refer everything to Her? Surely outwardly She isn't different from many gurus. It is said that Mother gives everyone what they need and want, so we cannot always know by appearances what a person is receiving. One person right next to Her may feel nothing, while another across the room or even across the world, may have

tears streaming down his or her face or become absorbed in bliss when thinking of Her. She really isn't like other gurus, even outwardly. Saints, gurus and sages sit at Her feet in rapture, beg for Her mercy, love Her as Mother. Her history is entirely unique. Do I doubt only because I project what others would think of me? Or in a sense, do I doubt because the whole India-experience seems like a dream and I keep thinking someone has to pinch me before I wake up?

I feel less and less like talking about Her to anyone; I don't want to reveal my gem to their gross sight, to their ridicule.

I think I doubt my own senses. That I could feel so full, so happy, that I could feel Her presence so strongly every day (and others, except Her people, do ridicule this); that I could feel so pushed against the wall that only when I surrender to Her do I feel peace; and relying on Her more and more, beginning to see Her hand in everything.

Yet, who is "She"? Surely not that body in which She resides. Her inner consciousness is God-Absolute; that is what She shows us while weaning us from the attachment to Her form, whether we be near Her physically, or whether we have to resort to pictures, pujas, and images and thoughts. She is universal, showing us that all gurus are one Guru, that it all comes from within, from our deepest heart of hearts, our essence, that part of us which is She. We have to know and feel that and not just say it. Mother shows us that to find fault with anyone is an inner fault of our own.

Who can say how far real devotion can take us, even when devoted to a false guru ? How does one judge a true guru ?

My only judgement, aside from personal feelings, revelations, bliss—does the guru give the direct experience of God ? Does joy, ānanda, grow with each passing month ? Yes, Mataji is doing this. And perhaps my doubts are Her work too.....isn't doubt our greatest avenue of growth; where could faith find room to express without it ?

One moment I will feel I don't need any religion..... that She is universal and all-inclusive (which She is but I am not) then the next moment I am dancing around to kirtan or madly doing puja and bowing before the altar.

Yet I know in my heart all religions are ONE religion, and Mataji says so; so it is only my own exclusiveness which I question and I hope this questioning is Her way of rooting it out.

What Haripriya was saying about having dialogues with Ma and receiving the answer in her own (Haripriya's) voice...the inner voice that is always with us if we would but listen and stand out of its way..... This reminds me how I used to converse with Yogananda and get replies in my own voice. But I have not experienced this so much with Ma, although I would like to talk to Her more; it seems whenever I ask for or about something, a wall goes up and She is stony silent; but as soon as I surrender and let Her arrange things, all is taken care of; prayers are answered of which I was not even conscious and desires are fulfilled in the most scrumptious way. She never lets me assume anything.

She wants all of me. She doesn't want my opinion ! So I experience Her not so much as an inner voice; I seem to experience Her more in "waves" or in visions, or when She comes in a dream and answers a question or fulfills the desire to see Her physical form; mental pictures, feelings of bliss, "crashing energies", Her "presence" or in *bhāvas*.

We can't always tell about the guru by looking at the disciples..... although perhaps we can in the ultimate sense. But just for instance, tastes are so different. One close sister likes Hare Krishna temples (here in the States), the other can't stand them. One likes Satya Sai Baba, the other thinks he's a fake. These are personal trips we get into. We can learn to respect these preferences. Even Mataji's very own are attracted to other saints from time to time, and this is all Mataji in different forms. It is all God. So who can say which teacher is real ? Not the disciples !

But isn't all religious practice good ? Even a Jesus-freak is learning something and keeping off the streets. Even if it deludes one for a while, eventually it may lead to a real spiritual breakthrough, some release from suppression which forces a confrontation with one's self. Religion can be the velvet trap, God is the true Pearl; but *sādhana* is a must until that Pearl shines ever in our consciousness. No one is too good for *sādhana*; even the saints practise it ! And they are our living example, they are not here because they like it, it is a great sacrifice to be on this plane of filth, misery, suffering, despair.

So Mataji brings to the heart that shining consciousness of God; verily She Is that consciousness; yet She will

not let you get attached to Her form. It seems that whenever She wants someone to meditate and really go deep, She sends them away from Her form. But to each one She is different according to their own need, so one can never say for sure..

I did not appreciate India until I left her.. at least not with full consciousness... ..I was so ill for so much of the trip; although I knew vaguely even then I was in a completely different...and blissful...vibration (because I did write about it while it was happening) and upon returning I felt it had been the happiest time of my life because I had spent it with Mataji; and of course India is an integral part of the experience of Her. It is no accident that God incarnates there so often. Even now I become disoriented at times and feel that I am there; this happens often during kirtan, but can happen any time, out of the blue. Or when listening to a tape, I get chills and cry and feel overwhelmed by Mother India, Mother Mataji, and I feel so very, very grateful for having this closeness from time to time. Mataji is our living proof that God does exist. Doubting the existence of God is the source of all our emptiness, and thus of our bad habits, nervousness, all the need to fill that emptiness. Mataji fills the void, if we let Her.

October 3

Early A. M. while thinking of Her, suddenly She was there, She was here or I was there in India with Her, and Her presence was overwhelming, I wept, feeling Her complete stillness and bliss and perceiving the rustle of Her clothing, Her incredibly subtle fragrance. She said, "I am with you my child."

October 6

Mataji is showing me the duality and possessiveness of my nature—of all human nature and that it cannot be suppressed, it has to be faced and dealt with, it is the mind, ego. No matter how hard I fight...the harder I fight the more it will be there. To just say, "I don't know but I am content with whatever Mother wants" is the beginning of intelligence. She makes you squirm and suffer until She gets this admission. And in this She is really fulfilling the Heart's deepest and fondest wishes by making us do what is best. As the Gita says, "what is like poison in the beginning but like nectar in the end".....because what we really want behind it all, the one wish we all share is God-realization, Bliss, Absorption. Mataji removes mental lumps, but She kneads them quite a lot first !

October 8

Mataji makes God real and active in life.....although God seems so beyond comprehension and concept.....something we can only see in *samādhi*.....still, She makes that POWER felt every day, and if I really look, behind all the motion of this world is the stillness, the changless Narayan. He is there, permeating all, yet not of it; as Krishna says in the Gita : "I am in them, but they are not in Me."

Offering everything at the altar does wonders. It clears the mind and makes one's purpose clear. One knows it will work out well because you have made the conscious effort to put it into God's hands. It focuses the mind on God. Mother will fulfill all hopes and wishes as only Divine.

Mother can even more than what you had hoped, giving all that is needed for your ultimate enlightenment in the process. "Your Father knows what you need before you ask for it".

To follow the inner voice, I am beginning to realize, one good way is to pause before doing something, even in little matters, and wait for a moment and listen and feel. What is your true first feeling, your true inner feeling? Usually your first flash is the most correct, the most in tune with Mataji. Actually She is talking to us all the time from within, if we would only listen.

October 13

While reading Daya Mata's account of visiting Mataji, I wept. Ma seemed to be saying "I am yours". The inner conflict today was over money. Mataji answered this so beautifully. After really struggling and feeling at last that whatever happened, however difficult, I would have to be content with whatever Mataji provided, we went to the thrift store and found a few needs momentarily satisfied, very cheaply. So She is watching out for us, help comes if we just put forth a small effort.

One gets tired of trying to make things on this material plane go right and it is especially hopeless when one is poor. For the first time in months I felt panicky and overwhelmed by it all, sucked up into the world, and this is so exhausting and pointless. But after attuning myself to Her, I felt better. It seems silly to ask Her for anything, since She knows our needs better than we do. Why limit myself to what I want when She may have a much better plan for me ... what I really need. And inwardly She is telling me not

to become too involved in work for the sake of money; this leads one astray. Work that comes to you of itself will not divert your mind from God and sādhana.

Suffer, suffer, suffer is the name of the Game and She will not let up for a breather; so all suffering begins to blend into ONE suffering...and there is so much more to go ! But in the end She relieves suffering and takes it away; one has to have patience and it will be realized.

“O spiritual soul, when you perceive that your desires are obscured, your affections arid and disciplined, your powers rendered helpless for inner experiences, do not be cast down; know this to be a blessing in which God is setting you free from yourself and removing activity from you. However excellent the outcome of your activities may have been, your work was imperfect, incomplete and insecure—due to their unclean state and clumsiness—now that God holds your hand you are as one afflicted with blindness, for you are led through the darkness by your divine Guide to a destination unknown to you. Alone you would have failed to reach this place, however well you may have used your hands and feet.”

St. JOHN OF THE CROSS

When You Came

Sri Swami Krishnananda
(Sivananda Ashram)



One day it was that a flash jetted forth,
Bright as the sun, but, then, cool as the moon;
And the gates of this prison were opened in a trice :
And what was there revealed, can anyone here say ?
There was magnificence, beauty, grandeur and love,
Inebriant joy that burst out through all pores.
Marvel ! Thou didst find me in wilderness
At last after frantic searching for ages,
Lone and expecting and seeking Thee all o'er
In japa, meditation, in tapas and in books,
In service of learned and company of saints,
With hopeful ardour for a miracle to come
Some day, at some time : thus longing sustained.

Lo, it was so long when Thou opened Thy eyes
And glanced at me jokingly, looked at me straight
With beaming eye-rays that did soothen my heart.
Hair stood on end, body shook and trembled
In the rapture of joy that took possession of me.
Then what did happen, can I tell Thee'n secret ?
I had full-moon to see, and velvet to touch,
Jasmine to smell, and then nectar to taste,
There was music to hear, and a thrill of embrace
Of an ocean of Force which rent me with delight,
Which took off sensation of body and mind.

Every fibre of being awoke and stood up
 To the touch of that Marvel which was unseen, unheard,
 Bliss and ecstasy and terror and shaking
 From the roots of one's self in that burst of rejoice.

O, Thou has gone, tell me why so early,
 Why hast Thou left me in anguish and pain ?
 The bones are cracking and the flesh is melting,
 The mind in anxiety's awaiting Thy call,
 Thy early return and Thy solacing Grace,
 Ambrosia, honey, the joy of my joy,
 Breath of my breath, O Thou soul of my soul,
 Wrenched are my vitals which 're left moribund,
 Which wriggle and writhe for Thy life-giving touch,
 With Thy graceful, ennobling smile infinite.

Come, come, my dearest and nearest of loves,
 Heart of my heart, Thou art eye of my eyes,
 Sweetest and grandest enchanting vision !

Where art Thou, come, come, I pine for Thy Grace,
 Nectar, honey, milk, essence of essence !
 Terror of bliss that's intoxicating,
 O Terrific Gale of crushing Delight,
 Shatter this fortress of reinforced steel,
 O Flood of Supernal Majesty and Bliss,
 Possess and absorb me into Thy Bosom
 Which's death-destroying, O Transporting Essence !
 I crave for a bath in Thy Oceanic Sweep,
 Inundate me, flood me, with Thy gushing waves :
 Where art Thou, where art Thou, come here and now,

What is Sādhana ? How can it be practised in the west ?*

Ma Suryananda Lakshmi

The above is one of the most frequent questions put to me during the last few years since I am giving discourses in France and Switzerland after having practised sādhana myself for over thirty years. I should like to add that I did so without the people around me knowing anything about it. I specially mention this because silence, secrecy is one of the most important features of sādhana. If I had to give a personal translation of this term, I should say sādhana is an intimate conversation between God and oneself, across and right through one's daily life, for which it is important that the intellects of other people should not intrude. For this conversation is not easy; often we mistake our own ideas for promptings coming from God. What is required is to "let go", "not to interfere" and therefore also to prevent others from interfering with the delicate search for Truth that has to take place within us.

Mā Suryānanda Lakshmi is not a name that I have chosen for myself. I have received it from Him whose disciple I am, although it is true that I have never been in India. For it is not necessary to cross oceans, to travel

* Translated from a French talk published in "Panharmonie", Paris, Sept. and Nov. 1975.

far and wide in search of God. God resides first of all within ourselves and the pilgrimage has to be made within, with the help of the knowledge of those who have pursued this research before us, with us, and for us.

I shall not be very technical. One often lays too much stress on technique. Rather shall I try to make you live one of the steps of sādhana that is nourished by every moment of our life, by every attempt on our path from the finite to the infinite, from time to eternity; for such is our problem. What is required is to free us by the power of the spirit from the limitations we feel in ourselves and in our surroundings, to be born into the fulness of consciousness, the fulness of life that embraces everything that we are able to understand, to attain, to assimilate and to produce. We have to rise from duality to oneness, from perplexity to certitude—a certitude that is not threatened anymore by any possible contradiction, an inner certitude so real and profound that any hesitation or doubt which may arise would be shattered as if hurled against a rock.

Sādhana is an adjective which signifies effective, operating, productive, that which provokes, which causes to appear; this is said of a mantra. The mantra, not a formula used for a particular purpose, but the mantra which is in us the vehicle of our religiousness, of our faith, born directly of the Brahman, of Absolute Consciousness in the Word revealing THAT. For the mantra is the Word of Truth, the creative Word of which the Bible speaks; the Word that begets in us what is true and which has nothing to do with the language devised by our mind. The yogins, sages and

saints belonging to the various religions have proclaimed throughout the ages that the name of the Eternal, the name of God is the Word of Truth which has the power to transform us totally.

A first step in sādhana is to concentrate on God, to repeat within oneself God's name incessantly; so much so as to lose consciousness of the insignificant person that we are whose only worth while aim is to expand into the fulness of light where it effaces itself. Christ said: "Except a man die and be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of God". (St. John, Ch. 3.)

And Indian wisdom equally confirms: "The ego must be blotted out, must disappear so that what man really is may open up, in other words, a particular effulgence of the Divine."

All this is beautiful and and attractive; but how can it be put into practice in our life in the west, in the midst of noise, hurry and worry? It is not so very difficult. All that is necessary is to think of God instead of oneself. To remember God has a powerful effect. It calls forth in us a new vision of everything, a different outlook on whatever takes place. We can cultivate the habit of thinking of God first thing when waking up from sleep. This is very simple and does not inconvenience anyone. Do not say: "Lord, give me this, grant me that", but simply "God" without adding anything. For the Divine is always the Unknown within ourselves, of the life that awaits us. Trying to define or to describe it prematurely, only pushes us further away from Him. He is "other" than all one believes, says or per-

ceives. He is what awaits us at the ground of our being when everything else has been transcended and forgotten, starting with oneself. That one thought of God on waking in the morning is the beginning of self-forgetfulness.

It happens to me often that I find a moment when I can kneel down in a hidden corner of my house and think: "Lord, it is not I who will live through this day but Thou!" God alone IS. To know God is to go beyond all self-willing which ends in the certitude that he alone is and does everything.

The following remark of Sri Ramakrishna is not well known. "It is since I have come to see God in all men that I know God." And St. Francis of Assisi may be said to belong to the same school of thought, he who took great care not to crush even an earth-worm because of its being also a creature of God.

Modern science has proved that everything originates from light, even the densest substance originates from the subtle formation of light. Everything is God, everything in us must become God. One has to learn to let His Will prevail, not to interfere. Sādhana signifies to put ourselves at the disposal of a power that will grow within us by prayer, by love, by dedicating to the Creator all that we are, all that we accomplish. The Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Gospels, the Apocalypse enjoin this on us. It is nothing new, and yet it is new and original every time we discover it in ourselves. Sādhana is a great force that will evoke in us, not extraordinary visions, but divine clarity in our understanding, true and sincere inner judgement free from pride

and egotism. In the school of sādhana one does not become learned but one is sanctified, which is quite a different matter. The criterion for genuine spiritual life is saintliness; nothing less than that, in other words all-embracing love, non-attachment; to spread in the world what in fact belongs to all and not to anyone in particular. Saintliness is the destiny of everyone of us. We are on earth to realise godliness, to live the words : "God created man in His own image." At every single moment He creates man in His image—and this is sādhana. It is enough to let Him do as He wills. But how ?

Here we have to resort to the important conception of the *Ista*, that is to say the Deity that has to be adored so that sādhana may become effective in us. That Deity may have many different names. India is wise not to impose the same divine name on all her people. Very rarely someone notices a feature of the Apocalypse which is nonetheless very obvious ; in the whole of the prophecy, of the revelation of God, the name of Jesus is never pronounced. In the beginning it speaks of the revelation of Jesus Christ that God granted him through His messenger, the angel. But in the text of the revelation itself the name of Jesus is not mentioned anymore. When the vision appears to the apostle John at Pathmos, it specifies itself, saying : "One like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as wool, white as snow and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." And later "— he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks . who is the witness... who has the key...who is the first and the last"

But never is Jesus' name mentioned. And then it goes still further : The revelation specifies : "To him that overcometh . I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." (chapt 2, verse 17.) And this goes even further : "He that overcometh...I will write upon him the name of my God, and mine own new name which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." Suffice it to say that the inner revelation of God does not down here give any particular, definite name. He is all the names in which He clothes Himself according to the needs of times and people, but He is equally beyond all those names. God is what one finds in the deepest recesses of one's being when everything else has been discarded. God's name, the many names of God known to us, are mantras, that is to say, words of truth, born of the truth in ourselves and in the people with whom we walk like, "one like unto a son of man that walketh in the midst of seven golden candlesticks", among the seven planes of consciousness and of life, in the cosmic creation and in ourselves. But the name has to be surrendered at the end of the road. Jesus exclaimed on the cross : "God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The personal God died also in him; on Easter morning the tomb is empty; no form, no name. This is why, although worship of God's name is very important as a sādhana, it is equally important to remember that this name is only a temporary expedient which has yet to be given up.

You may perhaps have heard that in India, at present as well as in olden times, those who perform Durga Puja, get a statue of the goddess (the Śakti of Śiva), worship it

full of devotion with offerings of flowers, food, incense, and so forth. But once the festival is over and the ritual accomplished, the statue is immersed in the Ganges. This is to show that, if the personal God is indispensable in the beginning of one's sādhanā, it is equally necessary to renounce Him, to surrender Him one day to the holy Ganges which symbolizes Infinity and in which all forms dissolve. At the end of the Apocalypse we find "a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God" which fertilises the earth so well that "the tree of life was bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Ch. 22, v 1 & 2)

The *Iṣṭā*, the deity of our choice, is the foundation in the life of sādhanā. We all need an affective centre, a centre that polarizes our energies, a centre for our thinking that will make it possible for us to go ahead with some certitude, with confidence. Here again India is wise, because she does not force upon anyone the choice of that ideal which has to come entirely from within. The question of deciding outwardly to adore such and such a name, such and such a manifestation of the Divine does not arise. That deity has to correspond to our innermost nature so that the relationship may be real, effective and call out the truth within us. I will go so far as to declare that the scholar who dedicates himself to his science, the artist who lives for his art are yogins. They are performing sādhanā provided they act with complete sincerity and are consecrated totally to perfection in their research. God's name must sound

truly and fully in us, it should not be a mere vocable. It must really be the mantra that penetrates our whole being and gradually incorporates its holiness into us. Whatever the spiritual experiences of varying soundness that one may have, there is an infallible criterion to judge whether the experience is genuine or a mere trick of our dualistic mind, for the contrivances of the mind are as frequent as they are cunning: if the experience is sterling it engenders peace, love, unselfishness and not excitement, exaltation or pride.

The saints and the yogins warn us often of that inner snare when the dualistic mind seizes the purest things and transforms them in its own image, forgetting that its calling is to be born itself in God who has created it in His own image and who, from the heights of His ineffable splendour, attracts it to Himself. This is what is called conversion: returning to the invisible from which we have sprung, to the source which is also our sole real goal. Incidentally, I should like to give you the exact significance of conversion. It does not mean to adopt a particular creed or religion, neither is it a change of creed. Swami Vivekananda was fond of saying: "If you go to the Christians, make of them better Christians; if you go to the Mohammedans make of them better Mohammedans; and if you go to the Hindus make of them better Hindus." How many times is it not mentioned in the Bible that a man or even Christ Himself turned or turned round (in Latin: *convertit*). At the beginning of the Apocalypse John also turns round to see from where the voice came which he had heard. Conversion means to turn away from visible and palpable appearances

in order to turn towards the invisible Spirit; to turn away from what we are accustomed and familiar with and what is acquired mentally in order to turn to that unknown in the depth of our being which alone knows God. The Bible marks this transition in a masterly way. In the first verse of chapter 12 of the Genesis, the Lord says to Abram : "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will shew thee." This indeed is conversion and Abram becomes Abraham, which means the friend of the Eternal. The suffix 'ham' in Hebrew denotes greater intimacy. What is the great prosperity promised by God to Abraham if it is not prosperity of the Spirit ? "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee...And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." (Genesis, Ch. 17, v. 6-7.)

Sādhana means to set out towards that 'other' which alone knows God, and from experience I may tell you, it is always very different from what one expected, but if one has the patience to wait for it and the confidence to accept it, it is also infinitely more beautiful than what one looked forward to. Only pay attention, God's gift is not meant to magnify the ego, the individual. On the contrary, it is a sacrifice of the I-ness, a death of oneself and a resurrection into something truer, purer, greater, more competent, which causes in us the manifestation of Truth, of the transcendent Reality of life.

(To be continued)

Reminiscences of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj

Dr. Koshelya Walli (Jammu, Tawi)

“The value of a thing is not known until it is lost,” Ruskin very rightly remarked. The world of today in full of ill-will, deceit, jealousy, and what not—but fortunately even in this world exist, live and move human beings that are incarnations of affection, embodiments of knowledge and selfless action, yet unassuming like the most ordinary man, with a childlike nature full of forgiveness and indifferent to people’s backbiting.

Some men believe in religion, others talk religion while many preach religion but very few live religion. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj was a soul who lived religion. To do good was his very nature.

Ever since I came in touch with him, I saw him indifferent to his health, constantly engrossed in bestowing the gift of knowledge to seekers after Truth and research scholars, and at the same time helping the needy in a hidden way.

As soon as his daily *kriyā* (spiritual practice) would be over, people started coming into his room—no restriction. Nobody knew when he actually got up in the morning and when he went to sleep. His twenty-four hours’ engagement was to live divinity, to talk divinity, to hear divinity and to see divinity.

Simplicity personified, he was not at all aware of his outer frame-body, dress and the like. He lived in his own inner world. His knowledge could have filled volumes without number. He was indeed a moving library.

It was difficult to understand him, for his standard of thinking, his way of living and of looking at things were divine. An ordinary man would utterly fail to make him out. It is rightly said : "Judge not lest ye be judged."

His innate desire was to spiritualize everyone who came in touch with him. He was so generous that the receiver would be astounded and wonderstruck. Full of compassion the Mahamahopadhyāya would forgive when a person repented, and with immense love provide all a man required. "Forgive and forget" was his daily routine of life,

People of today often make a show of their spirituality but this Godman tried his utmost to keep everything concealed as far as his sādhana was concerned. What he really was only Ma knows.

A divine child of Goddess Saraswati, when he started speaking, inspired words would flow from his lips for hours together. The listeners would be spellbound. Pindrop silence prevailed in his room. The people present kept on gazing at his eyes and his luster-surrounded countenance. In spite of his ill-health, when this inspired sage would sit on his cot in a cross-legged posture, expounding some high philosophy and tasting the delight of Divine Talk, he would forget himself in toto; oblivious of his body he did not remember to partake of his meals lying in front of him for

some time. When his attention would be drawn to the food he replied : "You have given me a shock. Don't you know who is speaking ? Is it I who is speaking ?" The person addressed would be flabbergasted and amazed, not knowing from where this soul came, what was the meaning of his words.

In his presence a unique type of peace was attained by all even when he was completely silent. Once a *sannyāsi* came and entered his room; after some time he went outside murmuring something. On the veranda two inmates were standing. The visitor said something to them in a tone that was unbecoming of him, and left. The inmates went inside and told Kavirajji what the *sannyāsi* had said. The Mahamahopadhyāya listened patiently but did not utter a single word in condemnation. Never, never was he found talking ill of anyone. Even if deceived he would remain unmoved.

The relation between Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj and seekers after Truth coming to him for help was very close, tender, and affectionate. Once when he was lying in bed with 101 degrees of fever, a visitor came to study the book "*Paramārthasārā*" with him. The attendant was about to tell the gentleman that Kavirajji was ill, when he himself intervened and conveyed to the visitor very softly and gently that it would not be possible to study the book as he was having high fever. The gentleman went away satisfied. The Mahamahopadlyāya did not allow the attendant to deal with the visitor lest his feelings might be injured in any way.

Who can venture to talk about this *jñāna mūrti*-embodiment of true knowledge? Kashi is known for its presiding deity, Lord Viswanāth. After having seen Kavirajji one felt as if favoured with a *darśana* of the living and moving Lord Viswanath. Verily, he could be called '*Sachala Viswanāth.*'

In front of the Annapurna Temple in Ma. Anandamayi Ashram, three or four devotees recited the *Śiva Mahimna stotra** regularly in the evening hours for some time. The Mahamahopādhyāya was in the know of it. Once when the chanting was about to start, Kavirajji asked whether the recitation had begun. There and then it started and he was replied in the affirmative. From his face with downcast eyes emanated a beam of bliss and happiness. It struck one if by the recitation of the *Mahimna stotra* he was pleased and praised. Suddenly the thought occurred to the mind—was he Śiva Incarnate?

It is said that life is short and art is long. Mahamahopādhyāya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj utilized his time in the best possible manner. His patience and perseverance were limitless. His ultimate aim was nothing less than worshipping God in the guise of men and women by offering the oblation of *Jñāna* (knowledge). He would never get tired of distributing the gift of knowledge to whosoever came to him, inspite of ill-health, intense activity and his busy life. He was found at his best when a visitor approached him out of spiritual thirst. It made him happy to see that a human being was in search of the ultimate goal of life, not

* *Śiva Mahimna stotra* A long hymn in praise of the greatness of Lord Śiva.

frittering away his energy in trivial enjoyments. The dearest person to him was a man in search of truth.

He would do good to people in a manner that his left hand did not know what the right hand gave away. A man of *Satya yuga* he was born in this age of *Kali*. Unbelievable, even after having been the eye-witness of what happened. The photos hanging on the wall of his room at Sigra were not just pieces of decoration but living associates for him. Once at dinner time a cloth was covering the photo of late Kalida. While taking food with downcast eyes, he asked for the cloth to be removed from Kalida's face as it was troubling him. Kavirajji's way of speaking at that time was so touching that the listeners wondered whether he was talking to Kalida in person.

Full surrender to God he had, and at the same time he was always found engaged either in intellectual discourses or in divine talks. Worldly joys and sorrows could not move this great soul and man of God. What an ocean of fortitude ! Amidst the storm he could be seen unperturbed, immersed in his own inner world.

They say, he is gone ! He has left the body made of five elements which we could see and touch, quite true; but he is not gone. Free from the prison of the body, he is living, moving and working more effectively for the welfare of humanity.

My innumerable *praṇāmas* at his feet !

Mātri Līlā

(June 25th—Sep. 21st, 1976)

In the July Issue we have already mentioned that Mataji arrived in Dehradun from Kankhal on June 21st and stayed in Her cottage at Panchavati in the compound of Mr. & Mrs. Khaitan next to Kalyanvan. From June 27th to July 6th the *Devi Bhāgavata* was recited and expounded in the main house in the same grounds. The Sanskrit chanting took place in one of the rooms, while the explanations in Hindi were given very lucidly in the hall by Pandit Satya Narayan Sastri, a resident of Dehradun who had for a long time conceived an ardent desire to perform this service to Devi in Mataji's holy presence. A small pandal was joined to the hall so that there was ample space for everyone to sit and listen to the interesting and often very humorous talks, daily from 8—10-30 a. m. and 3—6-30 p. m. Mataji took great interest in the function, tirelessly supervising all preparations in minute detail. On the first day, when Sri Mahant Girdhari Narayan Puriji came from Kankhal to grace the opening session, Mataji remained present morning and evening. The following days She usually attended for the last half hour in the evening and afterwards sat outside on the open veranda for a while where people could approach Her and do *pranāma*. The function concluded with *havān* on July 7th. Fortunately the monsoon broke later than usual and so there was no disturbance by rain.

On the 8th afternoon, Mataji followed an urgent invitation to the Peshan Hospital at Clement Town, Dehradun, to grace the opening of a new department for heart treatment according to the latest invention. The doctors in-charge had been waiting with the inauguration for many weeks, in order to receive Mataji's personal blessing. They arranged for a beautiful, very moving function and afterwards Mataji and Her retinue were shown round the efficiently run and spotlessly clean hospital. On the way Mataji halted in the gardens of four families of devotees for a few minutes each.

On July 11th, Gurupurnima was celebrated. Literally all day long people thronged round Mataji from 6 a. m. till nearly 2 p. m. in Khaitans' house and then till the evening in the Kishenpur Ashram. Swami Sri Govind Prakashji came in the early afternoon and addressed the large audience, while kirtan was sung for the rest of the time. A truly enormous crowd of devotees from all over India, including over a dozen from foreign countries, had collected and started doing Pūjā and offering their gifts already from the day before, anxious to re-dedicate themselves at Mataji's holy feet and to receive Her special blessing on this auspicious occasion. Mataji had no time to eat or rest but She attended to every single person without the least sign of impatience or fatigue.

The next morning She rested and received only few in Her own room. In the late afternoon, after halting at Kalyanvan and the Ashram, She motored to Kankhal with a fairly large party, following in cars and taxis. At

Kankhal it was comparatively quiet. Mataji would give *daršana* morning and evening. In the evening Brahmachāri Virajananda would read and explain "Amar Vani." Once *Akhaṇḍa Rāmāyana* was celebrated and then again *Satyānārāyana Kātha*. One day two ladies hailing respectively from Belgium and U. S. A. arrived, who were "spiritual healers." Mataji asked various questions and allowed them to examine and massage Her painful knee and then watched them give a demonstration lesson in their art to some of our girls. On July 17th and 18th, Governor Dr. Chenna Reddy paid visits to Ma. On the 24th Mataji proceeded to Delhi by the night train.

*

*

*

Mātri Līlā in New Delhi (25-7-76 to 4-8-76)

(from a Correspondent)

Early morning on Sunday, the 25th of July, Mā arrived in Delhi by the Mussoorie Express. She was all smiles and looked fresh like a morning rose. The *Āshram* was then reverberating with the sound of *Kīrtan* invariably sung from sunrise to sunset on the last Sunday of every month. The previous night a welcome shower had brought relief to the city after a prolonged spell of sweltering heat. The blue sky was serene in the morning; the Sun was glittering on South Delhi's newly grown Green Belt in front of the Ashram; and the shrubs of the garden looked fresh and green. Thus, nature seemed to give Mā a befitting welcome.

The occasion for Mā's advent in Delhi was *Tulsi Rāmāyana Navāha*, a nine-day ceremony comprising the reading of the full text of *Rāma Charita Mānasa* by Tulsi Das and exposition thereof, accompanied by elaborate rituals. In this connection an exquisitely beautiful *Panchayat Murti* of Rama (a group of five statues representing Rama, Sita, Lakshman, Bharat, Shatrughna and Hanuman), prepared by an artist of Calcutta, was set up in the hall and duly worshipped.

The *Tulsi Rāmāyana Navāha* in the Delhi Ashram was the first of its kind to be celebrated in any Branch of Sri Sri Ānandamayi Āshram. The idea of observing a *Navāha* in the august presence of Ma originated years ago from the former Maharajā and Mahārāni of Nābhā. In July when Mā was in Kankhal it was Her *kheyāla* to fulfil their desire. She indicated that the proposed *Navāha* might be held in the Delhi Ashram in July/August and suggested that Sant Chhotaylal Maharaj of Varanasi might be approached with a request for conducting it. The Sant kindly consented and Mā seemed to be pleased. All arrangements were thereafter made at short notice.

Immediately after Her arrival at the Ashram Mā started supervising the preparations for the *Navāha* and granting *darśana* to hundreds of devotees. She also went round the Āshram premises, inspecting the arrangements made for the ensuing Durga Puja and seemed to be pleased with the image of Durga, nearing completion. It being a Sunday, the usual weekly *Satsang* was held in the afternoon and Mā graced the occasion when Sri Nirmalananda Brahmachāri was explaining the *Bhāgavata* in Hindi.

The *Navāha* commenced in the morning of the 27th July. The original text of *Rāma Charita Manasa* was recited by two *pandits* in a room known as Didima's room adjacent to the hall. And Sant Chhotaylalji, seated on a raised dais in the hall, devoted himself to the exposition in Hindi from 10 to 11.30 A. M. and from 4 to 7 P. M. The *ārati* was performed, with remarkable grace and devotion by the Maharani of Nabha. The same schedule was followed on the remaining eight days. The hall used to be packed with devotees inspite of occasional heavy downpours. The speaker's illuminating discourses and sweet songs kept the audience spell-bound. Mā used to be present in the hall whenever possible and warmly received Mahātmās such as Sri Giridhari Narayan Puri, the Mahanta of Nirvāni Ākhārā, Kankhal, Sri Prabhu Dutt Brahmachari and Swami Vidyananda of Kailāsh Āshram. Swami Paramananda regularly attended the sessions and his presence was a source of inspiration to the speaker.

The recitals relating to the birth, marriage and enthronement of Rama Chandra were accompanied by special rituals and distribution of *prasāda*. The concluding ceremony of the *Navāha* was performed with eclat in the afternoon of 4th August and the hall resounded with the vibration of God's name.

After the Ramayana Navāha was thus completed, the venue of *Mātri Lil* shifted from the hall to the *Panchavati* adjoining the Śiva temple. It was just twilight. The sky above was overcast with dark, grey clouds which seemed to be having a mystic message associated with the colour of

Sri Krishna's body. The verdure of the foliage of *Panchavati* reminding Ramchandra's complexion added to the dignity of the scenery and the riot of colours in the rosary relieved the monotony of the extensive pavement. Mā took Her seat on a chair in front of the Durga Mandap beneath a spreading pipal tree. She was surrounded by devotees, eager for *darśana* and *praṇāma*. At Ma's feet was seated a lady who sang a number of songs with vibrations conducive to concentration. When the music stopped, there prevailed pindrop silence, more eloquent than speech. Mā sat mute statue-still, staring into space, speech was automatically inhibited. It was a grand experience for all present.

The time for Ma's departure was drawing nigh. A fleet of cars loaded with luggage was waiting in the courtyard, ready to take off. Later in the evening Mā started for the Railway Station to catch a train for Kankhal. On Her way She visited the Ashram of Prabhu Dutt Brahmachāriji, near Shanti Niketan, Delhi.

During Mā's short stay in Delhi Her body seemed to be out of sorts for a few days when She developed certain alarming symptoms and lived practically on starvation diet. The situation seemed to be grave and caused consternation. Ma's *līlā* with ailments, treated as guests, is beyond our comprehension. Some devotees performed *Akhanda Rāmāyana Pātha* and others arranged daily *japa* from sunrise to sunset on the verandah of the *Śiva Mandir*. When doctors and devotees are in despair, Mā's *kheyāla* reigns supreme. And it is so unpredictable !

Fortunately, on the eve of Her departure from Delhi Mā became free from the distressing symptoms She had

seemed to be suffering from. Her ailments disappeared with a suddenness bordering on the miraculous. Indeed, when She was sitting in the *Panchavati* in natural surroundings, it appeared that Mā was beaming with the glow of health. And when She halted at Prabhu Datta Brahmachariji's Ashram, She behaved like a simple child that lightly draws its breath and finds its life in every limb. Inscrutable are the ways of the Mother !

*

*

*

On August 5th, early morning, Mataji was back at Kankhal. After visiting our Śiva Mandir and Didima's Samadhi, She sat down in the hall and with great vivacity related to us some details about the Rāmāyana in Delhi. The same evening the *Jhulan* festival started. Already before Mataji's arrival a large swing had been fixed and suspended from the ceiling of the hall. It was decorated differently and ever more profusely every day. Ma and Sri Mahantji Girdhari Narayan were present every evening after sunset for the puja that was accompanied by sweet songs. As soon as *ārati* was over Mataji and Mahantji would rise from their seats and go to pull the swing while the girls sang traditional swingsongs. At the end fruit and sweets were distributed to all. The last two nights Mataji gave in to the devotee's entreaties and sat on the swing for just a minute. One morning a party of twelve French men and women headed by a priest of the Catholic Church arrived for Mataji's *darsana* and witnessed the festival in the evening with interest and reverence. A few of them were visibly moved. On some mornings *Rudra Abhiseka* was performed and every midday

the *Hanuman Chalisa*. On the 8th night *Akhanda Rāmāyana* started in the hall by the side of the *Jhulan* celebrations and continued until the 10th morning. The climax, *Jhulan Purnima* (full-moon), fell on August 9th. At about 11 a. m. Mataji motored to Baghat House, Hardwar to be present at the completion of the *Purascharan* of *Gāyatrī Mantra* of Brahmacharini Chandan. Returning after 1 p. m., Ma gave *darsana* to the numerous devotees who had arrived from Dehradun and other places. That night the swing was richly decorated with coloured silks, green foliage, and apples, pears, plums and bananas suspended from the branches. After sunset an elaborate *puja* was performed by Mataji's only brother, Sri Makhan Bhattacharya, who had come from Delhi for a few days. The beautiful *Nārāyan Sila* that was worshipped had originally belonged to Mataji's maternal uncle. Mataji and the Mahantji remained in the hall from 7 to 10-45 p. m. and returned again at 11-30 p. m. for the midnight meditation which is always observed that night to commemorate Ma's self-initiation in August 1922. By 1 a. m. everybody had dispersed.

Raksha bandhan is also celebrated on *Jhulan Purnimā*. Everyone was anxious to present a *rakhi* (bracelet) to Ma and She also gave one to each person. The next day Mataji hardly left Her room.

On the 11th morning She received an interesting visitor and his wife, namely Pandit Ram Sharma Acharya, the founder and Head of two remarkable ashrams, where young women are taught religious culture as well as Cottage Industries, photography, printing etc. The one is called

“*Gāyatri Tapo Bhumi*” at Mathura and the other “*Santikunj*” at Hardwar. Mataji showed great interest and asked many questions. She was told that the girls rise at 3-30 a. m. and do an hour’s *Gāyatri Jāpa* before starting their studies. They are instructed in the Vedas and trained to expound the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata* etc. In Hardwar they have a printing press, probably the only one in India that is managed exclusively by women. Pt. Ram Sharma Acharya has written not less than fifty books in Sanskrit and Hindi, such as commentaries on the Vedas and Puranas.

On August 12th, Mataji left by the night train. Neither Her destination nor the time of departure were disclosed until the last moment. At 6-30 p. m. She came downstairs and, to everybody’s surprise, drove to Sivananda Ashram. She had been requested to grace the birthday celebrations of Swami Chidanandaji at a later date when She will not be able to go to Rishikesh. So She paid a flying visit just before leaving Kankhal. She returned to our Ashram and gave darshan at about 9 p. m. before leaving for the station. Only at the last moment it was found out that Ma was going to Calcutta.

* * *

Mātri Līlā in Calcutta (14-8-76—19-8-76)

(from a Correspondent)

At the weekly gathering of *Maun-Milana*, in the evening of August 12th, now held temporarily in the Mātri Mandir at the residence of Sri and Srimati Kundu at Jodhpur Park, in lieu of Dr. Gopal Das Gupta’s house in Hazra Rd, the

Calcutta devotees had no inkling of any impending visit by Mataji.

On June 30th, Sri R. K. Banerji, while driving along Diamond Harbour Rd. with his family, had chanced to espy Sri Bibhuti Chakravarti's car at the entrance of his gardenhouse at Bhasha. He and his family had only just returned from Puri that morning. The unexpected guests were shown a remarkable spectacle by their host. A perfect, really aristocratic specimen of a Lakshmi owl, well over eighteen inches in height was perched on a lampbracket fixed to the wall of the first floor veranda. The sacred bird was obviously a pet that had escaped from a devoted household, as it had vermilion marks on its forehead. Naturally the bird was worshipped with great veneration by Bibhuti da's family. It remained absolutely quiet on its perch without any signs of restiveness or fear while daylight lasted and then flew away. Little did anybody realize, although this portended an auspicious time to come, that Mataji Herself was soon to bless the house with Her gracious presence !

Late on the night of August 13th, the first authentic rumour started buzzing round certain knowledgable circles that Mataji might arrive by the Doon Express on the 14th morning but the destination and duration of Her stay still remained unknown. Only about thirty devotees turned up at Howrah Station to welcome Her. Accompanied by Her Calcutta host, Sri Bibhuti Chakravarti, by Swami Paramananda and a few others, Mataji alighted from the train looking radiant.

It gradually transpired that Her visit was meant to fulfil the threefold obligations She had assumed to Herself for a possible lightning visit to Calcutta over Holi in mid-March, during which She was to be present at the installation ceremony of the new *vigrahas* of Radha and Govinda at Thakur Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnathji's Ashram near Dakshineswar, and also at the installation of four new deities at our Agarpara Ashram, namely Radha Krishna and Nitai Gour, modelled on the lines of the exquisite *vigrahas* of the Vrindaban Ashram prepared by the late Nitai Pal. The third probable object was to take the opportunity to visit seriously ill and ailing devotees.

Thus Mataji went straight from the station to Thakur Sri Sitaramdasji's Ashram, over ten miles away. From there, instead of proceeding to the nearby Agarpara Ashram, She turned back towards Calcutta, visiting en route a patient convalescing from a serious illness in a Nursing Home, before fetching up by 10-30 a. m. at Thakur Sri Sitaramji's other Ashram, "*Vaikuntha Dhama*", situated on the 12th floor of a skyscraper, built and owned by Sri Gopal Mitra, who combines so well his devoted allegiance to his Gurudeva with his deep veneration for Mataji. There Mataji remained until nearly 5 p. m. by which time the crowd had swelled to unmanageable proportions, so that Mataji had to be hurriedly evacuated by lift to proceed to Her ultimate destination, the gardenhouse at Bhashagram.

Spending the night there, Mataji left at 11 a. m. on the 15th for Agarpara, twenty-five miles away, and by easy stages arrived at the Ashram at 1 p. m. There she gave

memorable *darśana* up to 3 p. m. seated in front of the temples facing the spacious *Nāt Mandir*, now thronged by devotees. She again gave *darśana* from 6-30 to 8 p. m., and even up to late at night attended to those who had arrived from a far to seek Her guidance and blessings.

On the 16th Her activities at the Ashram started before 5 a. m. as all ceremonies requiring Her presence had to be completed within the auspicious period expiring at 6-52 a. m. Chhabi started singing *Prabhāti Kirtan* from 5 a. m. onwards and Sri Radharani and Sri Govindaji as well as Nitai-Gourji were duly installed in the Krishna Mandir which had been without these *vigrahas* for so long.

By 6-15 a. m. Mataji began to inaugurate the new charitable Homoeopathic Dispensary, so ably built in record time by Swami Swarupananda, thus ful-filling a greatly felt need in Agarpara, linking the Ashram to the local population through this concrete socio-charitable service.

Together with Swarupanandaji, Mataji then proceeded to the open land East of the Ashram pond, where a small foundation stone was consecrated by Her for a possible future Matri Mandir. It was then exactly 6-50 a. m. Mataji does not need any watch ! She remained busy in the temples and *Nāt Mandir*, leaving the Ashram at 7-30 a. m. for Bhasha. En route she again visited certain ailing devotees, including the aged widow of the late venerable Ganga-Charan Das Gupta.

The next day was *Janmastami* (Sri Krishna's birthday). Bibhutida had arranged most elaborate and beautiful decorations in the specially constructed pandal for Sri

Krishna's advent. From early evening distinguished singers thronged the hallowed Bhasha sanctuary. Among those who sang till late at night were Sri Vrindaban Das and party, Sir Siddheshwar Mukherji, Sri Sukhendu Goswami, Sri Mohanananda Maharaj's full male choir who performed very melodiously for one and a half hours, and of course Kumari Chhabi Banerji. Mataji was in the pandal from 11-30 p. m. to 2-30 a. m.

The infinite sources of energy at Her command enabled Her to perform next morning a most enthralling dance while Chhabi was singing traditional stirring *Nandotsava* songs expressing the joy of the people of Braja at the advent of the Lord. Here Dasuda excelled himself, acting the part of a joyously dancing cowherd, complete with traditional costume and pichers full of curds. Later we were surprised to learn that the function had been covered by the Calcutta Television authorities and included very briefly in the 8 p. m. Television the same evening.

This function was followed by *Dadhi-Mangal Utsava*, during which Mataji flung handfuls of delicious curds into the gaping mouths of all devotees present, thereby concluding with prasād from Her own hands a memorable festival performed in Calcutta probably for the first time.

Among the distinguished visitors that night were Sri Siddharta Shanker Roy, Sri Devkanta Barua and Sm. Maya Ray.

On the 19th Mataji rested most of the day. Since the hour of Her departure was uncertain, the crowd reached

alarming dimensions, some remaining seated in the hall on the ground floor from 6 or 7 a. m. onwards. Fortunately the kind host provided food for all who cared to partake of it

Mataji eventually left at 3-30 p. m. by car for Howrah, via a few houses belonging to fortunate and needy devotees. But such was the abundance of Her overflowing mercy that She stopped Her car after three miles to enable those frustrated devotees, engaged in following Her in cars, to have Her *darśane* at last, even if for a few minutes.

Days later Calcutta learnt with amazement that Ma's destination had been Vindhyachal, where She enjoyed a well earned rest for four days in complete seclusion, before departing on August 24th morning to Vrindaban for a very busy programme from August 31st to September 9th, i. e. from *Lalita Saptami* to *Purnimā*. A *Bhāgavata saptah* followed by a *Nāma Yajña* is to be held in memory of the late Jitendra N. Dutta, a very great devotee of Mataji, who had given up his mortal body at Vrindaban in Ma's presence just before *Rādhā Ashtami* two years ago.

From Vindhyachal Mataji reached Hathras Junction at about 5 p. m. on August 24th. About two hundred devotees welcomed Her at the station with kirtana. White cloth was spread before Mataji's compartment leading to an armchair. Ma and Her party were garlanded. After sitting for a few minutes and talking to the devotees, Mataji boarded a decorated car and started singing "Sri Ram, jai Ram, jai jai Ram," everyone repeating in chorus. She was taken with Her party in a procession of eight cars and one truck to "Ma Anandamayī Cloth House" in the City where *ārati*

was performed. Three motor cycles with flags acted as pilots to the procession. About two thousand people gathered in front of the house when Ma left by car for Vrindaban after a short while.

The first days there were fairly quiet and restful. From September 1st to 7th Sri Narayan Goswami, a Professor of Calcutta University who is an offspring of the family of Sri Nityananda, the famous companion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, expounded the Srimad Bhagavata in Bengali in the hall in his unique lucid way while the Sanskrit recitation was performed by Goswami Sri Nitaiananda of Vrindaban in the Gita Bhawan. Ma usually graced the beginning and the end of the daily function with Her presence. Devotees had gathered from Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and other places. Yet there was no crowd and the intimacy of the celebrations was delightful. On the 9th *Nāma Yajña* was held, starting with *adhivāsa* on the 8th evening followed by ladies' *kīrtana* throughout the night.* Mataji was in great form round midday when She visited the *kīrtana* before *bhoga* and later went round the *mancha* (circular altar) with us before we went out for *nāgar san-kīrtana*. After returning, Virendra finished the *Nāma Yajña* in his inimitable style—so much so that Mataji went into *bhāva* at 8-15 p. m. With great difficulty Chhabi made Her sing "*Dhara lao*" inexpressibly sweetly before She concluded with *Hari bol* in Her unique manner, and distributed *Hari loot* and fruit. Mercy was overflowing from Her thereafter and we all got bits of it till late at night and the next morning.

* Quoted from a devotee's letter.

"We were overcome by Mataji's *kripā* to the Dutta family over the whole *Bhāgavata Parāyana* and *Nāma Yajña*. Not the minutest detail escaped Her attention throughout and She inspired everyone round Her by Her personal example. Even the floods subsided -"

In the late afternoon of September 10th Mataji motored to Delhi to catch the night train to Hardwar where She arrived early next morning. The same evening Sri Mohananda Maharaj of Deoghar did inspiring kirtan with his entourage for two hours at our Kankhal Ashram in Ma's persence. They were en route back from Badrinath to Delhi-Calcutta.

Mataji remained quietly in Kankhal for the next ten days. On some days She gave *darśana* sitting on the veranda upstairs while people looked up from the courtyard. On the 19th evening She and a number of ashramites followed an invitation to Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, where a *sādhana saptaha* and Sri Swami Chidanandaji's birthday celebrations were in full swing. The next evening She had been urgently requested to grace the opening ceremony of Rāmalilā performances to be held every night through *Navarātri* in the market place of Kankhal. Mataji attended for over half an hour at 8 p. m. On September 21st, She left for Delhi with a large party in good time for *Navarātri* and Durgā Pūjā.

*

*

*

Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja and Kali Puja have been scheduled to be celebrated in our Ashram in New Delhi : Durga Puja from September 29th to October 3rd, Lakshmi

Puja on fulmoon night, October 7th, Kali Puja at Diwali, October, 22nd.

The 26th Samyam Mahavrata is to be held from October 30th to November 6th in Gondal near Rajkot, Mahagujrat at the invitation of the former Raja and Rani of Gondal.

*

*

*

With deep regret we note the demise of Sri Mahavir Prasad Trivedi on July 10th at the age of 89. He was a staunch devotee of many years standing and spent the last six years in our Varanasi Ashram in constant japa and meditation. His health was exceptionally good until the last few months, when it deteriorated due to old age. He passed away in full consciousness at the residence of his son, a Government official at Varanasi. May he rest in peace and bliss at the feet of the Lord !

— ✕ —