

"Of Thee alone must be the spoken word,
All else is but futility and pain."

MATRI VANI

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

The Importance of the Sacred Thread.

1.

If you are not seeking God, you might, at your own sweet will, throw anything whatsoever away — why only the Sacred Thread? The desire to obey impulses of this kind will most certainly arise in those who do not aspire after God for His own sake, who do not love Him; for it is their attitude towards life, their natural bent. If you have the power to destroy, why have you not by this time done away with all the obstacles that are hampering you? Nobody of himself has the power to lift as much as a blade of grass. It is His Will, the Almighty's Will, that alone prevails. At times, it is true, man is made to suffer, yet thereby also He, the Fountain-of-Goodness does what is for the best; but to realize this is perplexing for the average person.

To be without a Sacred Thread, without the *Gayatri*, is inauspicious, may be harmful for a Brahman. To what extent are you able to judge which is the right path for you? All-beneficent is everything that He does, who is Goodness Itself.

Of Him is all that need be said, all that is to be known. The rest but vanity, woe.

2.

Mataji sent the following message to someone who had discarded his Sacred Thread out of grief over the death of a beloved member of his family:

So you have cast away your Sacred Thread? Well, well! Of course you are bound to do what gives you peace of mind. In this world when a man dies his wife does not accompany him, neither does the husband go with his wife when she passes away, nor the son with his dying father. Has anyone ever been able to go with his nearest and dearest when they depart from this world? Surely, this is self-evident! Everyone has to live his life according to the results of his past actions.

Now that this misfortune has befallen you, have you given up eating, have you renounced your wife and children, your friends and relatives? Have you left off wearing clothes, or sleeping, or talking to people? It is true that you have been plunged into a sea of misery. But what possession of yours has gone with him who died? Only just your Sacred Thread? Your parents' gift of love and esteem, so precious as an aid on the way to the Eternal Goal of human life! If to-day you resume the Sacred Thread in honour of him who has left this world, it will keep his memory alive in your heart. You had accepted it for his sake, this symbol of all that is an aid towards immortality. To discard the Sacred Thread, once it has been assumed, is a matter of deep regret for the ordinary man. Surely you could keep it in remembrance of him who has passed away!

One should not pray to God for any person; all prayer has to be solely for That, which when it is found, All is found; the wearing of the Sacred Thread is also meant for this purpose.

On Various Subjects.

1.

Yes, if you can observe silence and be in harmony with everyone all round, it will be excellent. Try to remain without the help of signs and gestures for as long as possible.

2.

A rosary that is to be used for *Japa* must be knotted according to the prescribed rule.

3.

Such, mother,* is the innate tendency of a man of the world. To gain knowingly is detrimental indeed.

4.

At one time you emphatically declared that if only you could secure suitable employment, you would, in a right royal manner, cultivate the spiritual side of life along with material comforts and pleasures. That you have kept your word as to worldly enjoyment is more than obvious: but in what dark cave, in what inaccessible abyss, have you hidden away the tender plant of spiritual aspiration? When will you start making an effort to bring light into that dark cave? Delay not! The day that is gone never returns. Invaluable time is slipping away. Devote your days to the endeavour to draw close to the Lord of the Humble. When extreme old age supervenes, you will be too sluggish, too feeble to concentrate on God's Name. How will you then make up for what you failed to do in good time?

5.

To see *Mahadeva* appear and dissolve Himself into your body, accompanied by a manifestation of light are undoubtedly good signs. Even the faint vision of a spiritual form (*chinmayi murti*) is very auspicious.

6.

The appearance of *Kashi Vishvanath* in the centre between the two eyebrows does happen to those who practise meditation. The seeing of figures from the waist up to the neck in a great variety of shapes and presenting themselves in many different guises, is quite common with *Sadhaks*. When you have no definite proof as to the identity of a particular apparition, you must not, at the mere sight of

* Mataji addresses every married woman as 'mother'.

his form, take it for granted that it is he and no other. The fact is that the Sadhaka's spiritual Energy (*Shakti*) manifests itself in countless ways according to his special method of approach. If you take refuge in the form seen, which represents the outer manifestation — although in an obscure way — of that spiritual energy which is intimately connected with man's innate urge towards God (*Bhagavad Bhava*), it will lead you to God-centredness, it will help you to everything that favours a consecrated life. It must be borne in mind that He manifests Himself in everyone in this way through the development of His Divine Energy (*Tat Shakti*). Heart and soul have to be put into the attempt to convert religious practices such as *Puja*, *Japa*, meditation (*Dhyāna*) into living experiences, so that their inner significance may become revealed.

7.

Your mother may not show her affection outwardly, yet she is and always remains your real, genuine mother. Even though you may want to put God the Mother aside, She will not leave you. Are you not Her offspring? Keep in mind that everything is under Her dispensation. She provides for each the right thing, at the right time, in the right way. Yes, certainly, it is to be welcomed if the desire for the Real awakens. A mother is she, who has the capacity to define and measure out to her child exactly what he needs. It is because she knows how to make allowance for her child, how to forgive, that she is called mother.

8.

Who are the truly wealthy? Those who are possessed of the Supreme Treasure — they only are really rich and live in abundance. Poor and destitute must be called the man in whose heart the remembrance of God abides not. To depend solely on Him is man's one and only duty.

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(5.*)

Question : In the Shastras two kinds of teaching can be found concerning life after Self-realization : the one refers to living in the world as a householder, and the other to remaining in detachment in the nature of a spectator. Which of the two should be followed ?

Mataji : I see you are alluding to the story of *Chudala* and *Shikhidvaja*. Do you mean to imply that worldly life is possible after Self-realization ?

From the audience : No, in the case referred to here, a trace of ignorance still persisted. It was but a stage ; at that time *Chudala* was not yet fully enlightened.

Mataji : For a Self-realized Being neither the world with its pairs of opposites exists, nor does the body. If there is no world there can obviously be no body either !

Question : But the body, surely, does exist ?

Mataji : Who says, the body exists ? There is no question at all of name and form. To wonder whether a realized man sees anything outside of himself is also beside the point. Who is there to whom he can say : "Give, give !"† Yet this state of wanting is precisely the reason for one's belief in the reality of the body. Therefore since there is no world and no body, there can be no action either ; this stands to reason. To make it quite clear : after Self-realization there is no body, no world and no action — not even the faintest possibility of these, — nor is there such an idea as "there is not." To use words is exactly the same as not to speak ; to keep silent or not is identical — all is THAT alone. There simply can be no question of "talking" or "not talking." Please try to understand this ! What actually is it that

* The Bengali original appeared in "Ananda Varta", Vol. II, No. 2.

† A play upon words ; *de* = give ! and *deh* = body.

appears to you to be worldly life after Self-realization? Yes, of course, what is expounded in the *Bhagavad Gita* is all true. Yet here the aforesaid holds good, for this body responds strictly to the line of thought and to the spirit in which a question is asked. Consequently what is the opinion of this body and what is not? If there is a line of approach, there must be a goal to which it leads, and beyond that is the unattainable. But where the distinction between the attainable and the unattainable does not arise is THAT ITSELF. What you hear depends on how you play the instrument. For this body the problem of difference of opinion in no wise exists.

Question : Does Mataji then give out sound* like a musical instrument? (Laughter).

Mataji : According to your ear. Whether the sounds you hear Her utter make sense or not, is for you to judge. Here (with Mataji) the question of striking a chord or not does not arise. Whether your Mataji is good for nothing or useful, *you* will have to decide, because she is your mother and also your daughter. Whether she is worthless or of any service, father will be able to tell. (Laughter.)

From the audience : If father knew, would there be any escape for Her?

Mataji : This was said merely for the sake of argument. But it is not like this either and the word "not" is also incorrect. Now where will you proceed? Moreover, where is "where"?

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6.

Question : How can meditation on a particular part lead to meditation on whole? One can be completely concentrated only on one point. It is said, one is absorbed in meditation a gradual expansion of consciousness takes place when the mind reaches what is beyond its containing capacity, it spontaneously dissolves (*Laya*). Then there is no more meditation, there is Divine Insight.

* A play upon words:—"Baje" means the sounding of a musical instrument well as 'useless' or 'senseless'.

Some hold this theory. How the mind can become all-pervasive by this method I am unable to grasp.

Mataji : When meditation (*dhyana*) occurs spontaneously, then only is it real meditation. It must come about of its own accord, effortlessly.

Furthermore, when you say the mind subsides (*laya*)*, from where does it originate?

The Questioner : From the Self (*Atma*). In the *Shrutis* it is said, it has emanated from the Self like a shadow.

Mataji : Where birth is, there must be dissolution (*nāsha*); is this what you mean? But if it were so, the mind would emerge again?

You say you cannot grasp the all-pervasiveness of the mind; quite naturally so, because it is not a thing to be grasped: it is neither a thing, nor can it be grasped. You experience the pleasures and pains of the world; again, when you enjoy temporary happiness or bliss while in meditation, this also is an experience, is it not? Yet the former is of a slightly different nature from the latter.

When you say you come down from the heights of Divine ecstasy (*Samādhi*), then ascent and descent still remain, otherwise why do you use these expressions? But there is also a state where ascending and descending are out of the question. If you maintain that the mind is absorbed in *Samādhi*, unless it issues from this state, how can anything of the experience be communicated, be it ever so little? Therefore it is still of the mind, albeit of a purified mind. I am speaking from your standpoint. Experiences occur on the path. Between the two types of experience that have just been mentioned there is a difference, nevertheless they are both of the mind though on different levels — even what you call *Samādhi*.

However, there is also another state of being where one cannot speak of ascent and descent and consequently not of a body either. Should the question of the body or of action still arise, it means that this state has not been reached. When you say the mind dissolves (*laya*), into what does it dissolve?

* *Laya* means the dissolution of something that however potentially still exists.

The Questioner : Into the Self, of course.

Mataji : Just as salt dissolves, so does the mind — is this your idea? From a particular angle of vision it may appear thus. In the case of a dissolution (*lāya*) of this kind a perfect Yogi can resuscitate the mind again and make it function once more.

The Questioner : I was thinking of absolute destruction (*nāsha*).

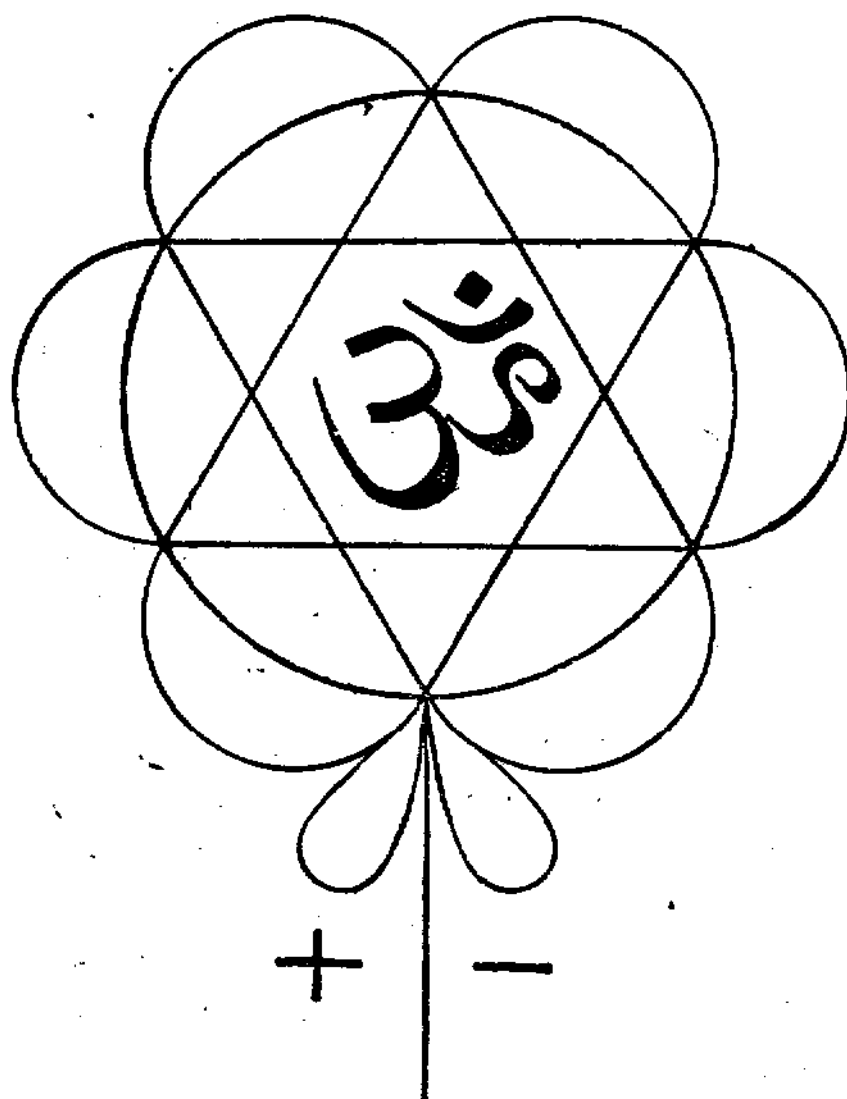
Mataji : Destruction (*nāsha*) or dissolution (*lāya*)? *Na Sha* means 'not He', (*na sva*) 'not the Self', this surely is what is termed destruction? Where destruction, is destroyed there is THAT. Do you call the annihilation of the ego-mind (*manonāsha*), its dissolution into something else (*laya*)?

(To be continued.)

YANTRAM—What it means ?

By

Swami Pratyagatmananda.



'YANTRAM', in ordinary use, means a mechanism or organ for doing work in an effective, systematised manner with a view to achieving a definite end. Such work, evidently, implies three things : the end, setting the principle or rule of

action; the Means, setting the combination and co-ordination of the forces doing the work; and the Method, setting the necessary conditions and practical lines of such action. In scientific analysis, the first gives formula and equation; the

second, diagram and design; the third, function according to plan, and in respect to given or assigned conditions. Basically speaking, these three are *Mantram*, *Yantram* and *Tantram* respectively. One may call them Rule, Ruler and Ruling; or Principles of Law, Code and Procedure; and so on. With respect to anything that is or becomes, they answer the three root questions: *Why* is it so? *What* makes it so? and *How* is it so? Obviously, the three are inter-related. In the word 'YANTRAM', one should seize upon the root *Yam* (pronounced as 'Iyam' and not as 'Jam'), note what that root means and implies, and correlate it with the root principle (*Vijam*) of *Vayu*, which is also *Yam*. *Vāyu* is cosmic *Prāna* or *Elan Vital*. It is the cosmic Fund of both potential and kinetic power as a whole, that is, without abstraction and limitation as material, vital or mental. When this power as a whole operates as a system of Control ('*Yam*'), as a 'Ruler', with respect to a given end or objective, it is *Yantram*. It is essentially, therefore, a Power-disposition and design, not a mere model representation, picture or graph.

It is superficial thinking to look upon the 'Mystic Yantram' as symbolic or pictorial. It is dynamic-

Shakti-lekha. But in the understanding and appreciation thereof it is more suitable to begin with the sketch drawing, graph, and so on. But the initial approach should be such as to open up newer and fuller vistas of complete dynamic import and significance.

The Means (*Yantram*) will signify nothing unless we can show it in the context of the entire movement from beginning to end; unless the picture of the event can be exhibited in its entire dynamic set-up. A boat on the river pulled by two ropes in two directions making an angle gives no intelligible meaning of its actual movement unless we are able to resolve the resultant effect into its constituent parallelogram. This instance is typical. Examine an organism, a crystal, a molecule, an atom. Inspect any planned structure in human or natural scheme. The structural design is laid upon a functional plan, and that, again, upon a dynamic scheme or power pattern. It is the *how* that controls ('*Yam*') and rules. What is *this* behind any situation that presents itself, any event that takes place? That is the *how* end-all question. And power, as we have noted, is only abstractedly segmentally 'physical'.

Nevertheless, it is the analysis of physical science and mathematics that sets the first model and draws the first sketch suggesting the fuller and more basic pictures. We are in quest of fundamental 'ground plan'—the heart and core picture of Power, in other words, of *Hrillekha* (हृल्लेखा).

In this vital quest, it is possible that one can catch or miss the 'direct home line'. Even systematised, a scientific pursuit has oftener than not strayed off the right track and missed the correct orientation. It has been said that intelligence is a tool-making organ. So there has been no lack of tools, instruments, appliances. They serve a variety of ends and purposes. But of what positive lasting, fulfilling and harmonising value have been most of these ? Are they in affiliation to the 'far-off divine event to which all creation moves' ? Do they even suggest that there may be, all appearance to the contrary notwithstanding, 'a divine purpose and end' at all inspiring the basic scheme of creation ?

The question cannot, particularly at this critical world juncture, be evaded or postponed. Without boldly facing this, we cannot quit the fatal quicksands of mal-adaptation and vicious circle, both subjective and objective, in which we have been caught.

Hence Power (*Shakti*) as a whole has to be understood and appreciated with its appropriate *Mantram*, *Yantram* and *Tantram* in the senses above noted.

We imagine, for instance, that we are now near, if not actually at, the core picture of at least material being and behaviour. Our equations have, at any rate, a reassuring look of thorough and compact reasonableness. Deceptive is not that look.

But the equations have, in practical application, ominously equivocated and not helpfully equated the basic queries and discrepancies in the appreciation of creation and existence. So, possibly, only a side-door to an ante-chamber of what Reality resides in has been opened.

Yantram, in its fullest context and co-ordination, must evolve from the First Principles of Creation.

The potency of *Yantram*, or Power Diagram, in all relevant dimensions, varies in geometrical ratio (so to say), according to the refinement and purity of the power field composition. Hence what controls the intra-atomic field of energy is enormously more powerful than mechanical, chemical or molecular systems of control.

If by *Prana* is meant not simply vitality or biological entity, but an

all-pervasive cosmic principle of renewing and creative activity, then prāṇik control ought to be more powerful than atomic. Modern science and modern methods must now essay to make that Prāṇik control available in an increasingly helpful measure. For in such availability lies all hope of harmonised, creative progress. The consummation of such progress can be reached only by opening *Hṛllekhā* (हृल्लेखा) of things by Yoga where the Spirit reigns as Perfect Power and Perfect Harmony.

Therefore, *Yantram* must be traced from the Magnum Matrix (Perfect Power positing itself as the Perfect Bindu), down to our appreciated planes of Magnitude, Number and Space-time. *Yantram* should affiliate all our known and appreciated matrices to the Magnum Matrix and this affiliation necessarily bears the character of a logico-mathematical descent.

The above diagram looks, apart from the internal scheme of the interlaced triangle, like a flower in partial bloom, with six symmetrical (say, parabolic) petals joined at the stem axis by two others, one at each side of the axis, which are still 'hidden' and enfolded. The two 'hidden' stem-buds are marked with plus and minus signs.

Basically, this means the six-phase functioning that becomes patent (or manifest) in the analysis of any creational entity or event (as pointed out elsewhere); and the two hidden axis buds are, or represent, the Mystic Ardha Matrā, on either side of the Bindu and its axis of self-projection : they link up, both in the sense of evolution and of involution, what is patent and manifest with what is radically there as the potent and un-manifest. The entire scheme is supervised by Om at the core or *Hṛllekhā*. Om itself in its 'rise' shows this 8—phase pattern in dynamic creation. These, for instance, represent the 8—phase pattern : Parāvyakta (*Bindu*), Vyaktāvyakta (*Setu*), Vyakta (*Udita Nāda*) A, U, M, Avyakta (*Vilaya Nāda*), Vyaktāvyakta (*Setu*).

Ponder also over the relation of this diagram to the famous mystic mantram :

पूर्णमिदं पूर्णमदः पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

This is Full, That is Full : The Full evolves from the Full :

The Full taken from the Full remains the Full.

In this mantram, the two mystic words, viz 'udacyate' and 'ādāya' (taken out and taken in stand respectively for positive and negative *Stem Buds* or *Ardha matrā*).

THE GOLDEN ORANGE

By

Richard Lannoy.

I have been asked to write an article far away from India, physically far from Mataji, living in surroundings so remotely different from the Ashram. Upon my return to England my thoughts have naturally dwelt frequently on all that I learnt in India, particularly since I received great inspiration during the months spent near Mataji. But England is even further away from India than I had expected. The readjustment has caused me much thought, because I believe that ultimately one can and should reach a point where time and place are no longer intrinsically important; that one should be able to abide peacefully in the abode, the home, of no recognizable geography.....

Surrounded on all sides by the undoubted seriousness of writers and thinkers of many different kinds, I feel nevertheless that something is lacking in the direction that they have set their thoughts. I keep on remembering a kind of dream, and this dream is of an orange.

The scene is the Banaras Ashram into which, by some miraculous means a man from London has been transported and this is what he sees.

There is a movement in the cluster of figures and She is leaving the room now. We watch Her go outside and standing on the step, She pauses for a moment, not looking at anyone, but beyond them, quite still, and we notice with what perfect beauty She stands, and we are close enough now to see Her face clearly. It ripples: there is a kind of fulness, a richness of modelling, it is as if we were looking at a Rembrandt, with every line and slightest variation of modelling containing behind it a tremendous power, so that the volumes, their density, their delicacy, their lightness are the shape of the character itself, a power which is both dark and mysterious and also radiant. The smile is not only a line, a shape, a movement, but the colour of the thought played upon by light. And we observe the eyes,

and there is an immensity of distance between them' and a darkness around them and they have an extraordinary colour, the colour of looking through Autumnal leaves at the sky. Above the eyes the brow is tall and lofty like an arch, fluted upwards delicately with very fine lines. A movement quivers across it and it is like the uplifting of the threads in a loom, when the warp mingles with the weft. But suddenly we find that we are looking into the midst of a dark fire, and in the fire there is a bright incandescent speck of seering light; She is looking right at us, or rather into us and we become confused, for something pierces us and we feel as if we were suddenly looking down over a precipice that unexpectedly looms up under our feet. It lasts for an instant and leaves a filament of slender fire in the spine.

There is a great throng of people on the terrace and She moves about, saying a few words here and there to smiling people. There is a bright effervescence in the air and we catch a glimpse of it in the swish of Her white raiment, a hand poised, a gesture, Her voice. For a moment She turns to one close at Her side and has a quick conversation with him. In half an

hour She is leaving for another town: arrangements must be made. All the time people are pressing forward, then prostrating before Her, and we notice that every time this happens She is different. To someone in whose bend and gait we can discern real devotion She responds with a slow, very sweet smile, and as it were, collects Herself very precisely, delicately folding Her hands inside Her white shawl; but even if She does not turn, and She does not always smile, one sees a quiver course through Her body, and the expression of Her eyes becomes soft, very gentle for an instant, a softness which the camera can catch just as it can reproduce the fire or the joy of other movements. As these people prostrate themselves, their masses, the direction of lines, the fall of drapery, tilt of head, all flow into one whole. It is like an expert draughtsman who, assembling a group of figures which in reality appear separate unrelated blocs, by a few dynamic lines welds them into a compact, related composition. Her face registers not only Her own response, but something of the heart of the one bowed before Her. Even though at times She attends to practical matters as She walks among

crowd, supervising the baggage and sending people scurrying here and there with last minute arrangements, She has time to turn to those who come to Her; She gives advice, She listens intently, She directs, and throughout She is utterly calm. There is never a moment of hesitation either in Her movements or Her words. Usually we can tell and respond to the artistry, conscious or otherwise, with which a cultivated person measures his pauses and hesitations. The inflections of face and voice in one who waits for an instant before replying, or considering, or pondering, fluctuating between decision and shyness, all these things can be done with grace, with subtle shades of meaning. But with Anandamayi Ma there is no hesitation, no doubt, no pause to collect Her thoughts, no puzzling, no mystification or clouding of the eyes. Only when She is seen can this be verified, but it is true, and one comes to notice it very quickly, so striking is the contrast to the usual ways of men and women. She speaks of "effortless being" of spontaneity, not with the look of one visualizing a distant, scarcely attainable ideal. When She says these words you are looking right at them, for She is a picture, a map, a

complete living representation of them: the word made flesh.

A visitor, a distinguished industrialist, has just arrived. He walks over to Her and devoutly prostrates himself and She tilts Her head and smiles sweetly. They talk quietly, at once entering upon some practical matters, for he is a great devotee. She turns and they go into Her room and for some minutes we hear voices in earnest conversation. With more than a dozen Ashrams She has many things that require attention — which She gives with Her characteristically scrupulous observation of detail. We wait until She comes out again. It is time for Her to leave. At the last moment someone comes up to Her, bows and gives Her an orange. As She walks by She looks at us, smiles, drops the orange into our hands and is gone.

The crowd disperses and we go out into the street and we walk along past the shops, eyes down in thought. We have seen Her, the famous Anandamayi Ma we had heard about in London. We have listened to Her words, seen Her walking among Her people, a cluster of humble followers and among a great multitude of people. We have heard of great men, statesmen, philosophers, writers

who have come to Her. They come to Her little room and talk and go away, and we hear that sometimes they come again. They write to Her, they see Her when their busy lives permit. There are many such whom we know for their achievements in the world of men. We read of them in the newspapers and we forget that they too have their inner lives.

All of a sudden we become aware of the orange; we look at it. It is bright gold, lumpy. It seems touchingly absurd. We laugh as we remember that sparkling smile She gave us and we put it in our pocket. We walk on wondering. This is the wonderful sage we have been told about. What did we see? A very beautiful and so our thoughts continue. But what did we get from all this? What did we get from Anandamayi Ma? An orange. A simple, lumpy, homely, domestic orange. As we walk along we feel it in our pocket and in a moment a flood of recollection comes up. We remember how we hung up a stocking, as is customary among Western children, on Christmas eve, and next morning we experienced that delicious sensation of feeling the orange in the toe of the sock. And we remember the time when

we stole an orange and made the little boy cry who had lost it. Now, we get an orange from Anandamayi Ma! That smile She gave us and Her eyes — we remember it all minutely, and suddenly we want to run back, we want to tell Her all about the orange, only to remember that She has left for another city, that somewhere She is smiling, perhaps about the orange. Instead we are reminded of the story of the poor little boy in the story-book who could not go home at Christmas because his parents were penniless, so he painted them a picture and sent it as a present, and on it were great golden, gigantic golden, five seer oranges. Then we pull ourselves out of these thoughts, straighten up and remember who we are. We have just met Anandamayi Ma and She gave us an orange. We hold it and look at it carefully. It is very golden. Already we want to read about Her, what She says, what is Her teaching. But the sounds and sights of the strange city claim us. Then we forget.

A little later, perhaps when talking to some friends the matter comes up again. We are asked what was our impression and find that the replies we give are not only evasive, but extraordinary.

clumsy. So we ponder over the matter. Goodness, happiness, love — what are these things? Do they really transcend all other matters? What do they mean; what is their significance in a tragic world, shattered by war, suffering, starvation? She has some very special quality. We call it Joy. It seems so awfully insignificant, almost scandalous. Such a simple naked thing is Joy. Such a tormented, anguish-ridden place is the world. Joy. What is Joy? How can Joy be of any importance? People nevertheless prostrate, not before skill, not before technology, but before Joy. Why? Like a child She gave an orange and like a child we received it. If we were to write now to our London friends and tell them about it, they would say it seems so silly, so trivial. Yet this enigma has disturbed us and we like to muse about its implications, although our brains are unequal to the task, helpless before such an elementary question as: what is Joy? The mind becomes completely vacant and all our so-called maturity the bright ideas, clever thoughts we had a few moments ago, where have they gone now? All we can do is to remember that inexpressible, beautiful appearance of Anandamayi Ma.

Here the dream fades, leaving the Londoner irresolute, perplexed.

By seeing Mataji the Londoner or in fact anyone, is reminded of the child that lies hidden beneath the premature adult preoccupations. The orange reminds us of the tedious and stupid efforts we make to increase self-importance and to hide the lack of true spiritual maturity. Mataji calls out of us a response of our only true seriousness and at first we are at a loss to know what to do at all, because that seriousness still has the frail innocence of childhood in spite of superficial adult competence stifling it. We are often desperately afraid of inconsistency, afraid that we shall discard a seriousness that befits a serious age, for the sake of such a scandalously naked, simple thing as Joy. When we make this initial discovery, Her presence inspires us and everything becomes beguilingly simple. Many are the occasions when people new to the Ashram totally forget all their worries and responsibilities, even the taking of food, for nothing matters but the chance to sit at the feet of Mataji. As time passes, life in the Ashram under Her guidance becomes a subtle intermingling of extreme simplicity and ease, the absence of worry, the doing of happy, lovely, restful

things, until gradually She helps us to assume more serious tasks, in themselves simple, yet requiring utmost concentration and fully mature responsibility, real *Sadhana*, has begun. It is then, and only then, that the meaning of joy begins to dawn—when it becomes the focus of all actions, reshaping them, remoulding the entire cast of the mind, so that the deepest roots of action are gradually cleansed and the magic of childhood, the golden orange, is no longer absurd and unreal, but the source and repository of all we do. This is the philosopher's stone, the ancient symbol, by which all that it touches becomes golden too. The afflictions of the world which have reached such gravely disturbing power in the present age cannot be aided by ideas alone, nor by our accute awareness that they exist, nor by technological research and social development plans, while the orange remains just a humble, domestic,

edible orange, and our childishness an awkward reminder of lost innocence. To find in Mataji a beautiful being and a loving generosity, the giver of the golden orange, is but a beginning. But it is the only beginning to chose. She is there, and this is the measure of Her supreme greatness and the very essence of Love, to guide us at every moment, step by step, as we begin to alter everything we believe in, everything we do, till the magic pervades our entire lives, even our most desperate worries and the most complicated problems of contemporary life. Beyond the beautiful gift, beyond Beauty, beyond the inviolable innocence of the child within us, She promises the way to illumination, to *Ananda*.

"Sustained effort ends in effortless being—in other words, what has been attained by constant practice is finally transcended and then spontaneity comes."

MOTHER'S HOME IS THE HEART.

By

Kenneth Grant

Mother's glories are not unknown to Her devotees in England, because through Her incalculable Grace Sri Bhaiji's book has found its way to these shores. Therein is unfolded such a tale of rapture and wonder that the heart melts into bliss at the contemplation of Mothers words and at the sight of Her physical vehicle which enshrines the Light of the Spirit.

Her radiance and splendour are boundless and not confined to India alone, for She abides verily in the Heart and not in time or space. It is in the Heart that one finds Mother ever responsive to one's yearnings towards Her. She stretches forth Her all-merciful hand to the least of Her devotees and consoles them with the doctrine of undecaying Bliss.

It is difficult to describe what Mother means to one for She is too deeply identified with one's inmost heart, with the core of one's being, to be objectified sufficiently for description in common words. Yet one may express the matter as

nearly as possible by saying that She is that infinite Void beyond the reach of conceptual thought which shines resplendent as the sun at noonday in the clear unclouded sky of azure emptiness. Sri Bhaiji puts it in a supremely beautiful way when he says in one of his songs to Her:

"The Sun and the moon, Mother,
are Thy twin ear-drops,
the deep blue of the immense sky
Thy hair and the universe
Thy glorious Body."

And this "glorious Body", I think, means the body of Bliss, the Body of the Adamantine and Eternal Consciousness assuming the mind-shapes of rapture which constitute the universe as we know it, and not the mere physical vehicle of Mother, beautiful indeed as it is.

But how may a Bhakta of Ma describe the Bliss which is Mother? She is all-embracing and includes all things in Her immensity, even as the ever-vacuous sky contains the planets and the clouds and the star-dust and untold millions of worlds

in its illimitable and vaulted body. How can anything express that wonder? Nothing can, for She is Nothing that we can think about, sing about, write about, or know about, for to know Her is to *know Nothing*, which is the void substratum whereon all this universe has its illusory being, its incomprehensible Lila.

But for Mother's Lilas we would be unable to envelop Her image in our minds at all; it is through Her immeasurable Grace alone that we are imbued with the knowledge of Reality through the veils of Her shining words, which breathe the echoes of Truth on the breezes of our lives which are mere dreams and reflections in the tranquil lake of Her unruffled Mind.

It is only through the doctrinal approach that we may come near to expressing Mother in words, for She teaches that Truth which has existed from all time and beyond all time: That the Self alone is real and all else unreal. Mother helps us in realizing this truth by bringing clearly to our minds the inexhaustible store of Her Lilas that we may contemplate them and derive rich spiritual benefits therefrom. Through Sri Bhaji's words we come to a close intimacy with Mother,

because She manifested a little of Her infinite Light in him and by Her Grace he was enabled to write in words some echo of Her own spontaneous and unutterable Realization.

One of Mother's characteristic sayings is: "This body is like a drum; just as you will beat it, it will produce a corresponding sound. I find that there is but one playful master-tune ringing through the whole universe." And this means, I think, that each devotee can see in Mother only the image of his own degree of attainment, exteriorized in a vehicle perfect in its ability to express that attainment in modes of spiritual consciousness operative on the dualistic planes of conceptual thought. This is the reason why no one devotee can embrace Mother entirely by his verbal descriptions or intellectual comprehensions, for as soon as he *knows* Mother as *She is*, he has already become Mother and exists in pure Being where only the Adamantine and Advaitin Consciousness abides as the Sole Reality. Thus has Mother declared Herself to be the void substratum of all ideas and forms, the pure and undefiled and ever-shining vacuous Consciousness which alone is real and which is instinct with undecaying Bliss.

Mother's words, whatever they may tell us, do but show the way to merge with Her. They guide us with their subtle and beautiful power to ever more rarefied strata of Being, where the world about us is seen as a shimmering veil concealing realities of which individuality can never be a part. Only by surrendering the individuality, or ego, may we partake of Mother's Supreme Sacrament, which is the full realization of the void nature of all dharmas.

Set as a jewel of burning flame—the flame of everlasting Consciousness—Mother abides, constantly calling to us Her devotees to seek Within and consume our individualities on the pyre of Her brilliant purity.

And if we die to the body and

to the mind, to the individuality as well as to hopes of future lives on earth or elsewhere, then we shall be taken up into that flame—the outer veil of the Pranava Om — which merges in that undying Silence which is the mantra of the Void.

That flame is depicted on the cover of 'Ananda Varta', and it is the humble prayer of this devotee that Mother shall absorb us all in Her infinite Compassion and consume us utterly so that we at last may come to the knowledge that Mother alone *is*, and that there never were any separate existences apart from Her, for it is Her Lila that She divides Herself in twain as the Mother and the wayward child. We are all Her children. Let us return to Mother *now*.

DIARY LEAVES

By

Atmananda

(2)*

Usually when people return from a journey they greet their family more or less briefly, and only after refreshing their body by washing, bathing, eating and drinking, they attend to all other business. Not so Mataji. First of all Her family does not only comprise the whole of humanity; all sentient beings as well as so-called inanimate things receive Her loving attention with one exception: Her own body. So when She arrives She has a smile, a kind word, a garland, a flower or a tulsi-leaf for everyone who has come to welcome Her. At once the whole place is lighted up with joy and a sense of fulfilment.

Next to human beings She lavishes Her grace on plants. She takes keen interest in every tree, every creeper, plant, shrub and flower. She often strokes and caresses them affectionately and does not only give minute instructions as to how they can be made to

grow better, but also sees to it that what She suggests is carried out then and there.

She inspects the kitchen and the dining-rooms, the *Satsang* hall and the rooms that have been got ready for visitors, inquires about every little detail, gets a carpet moved here and a picture changed there; has a phone-message conveyed to one person and a note sent to another; scrutinizes those who had been ill when She last saw them and those who are in indifferent health at the moment, and speaks words of comfort and advice. When at Banaras She also goes to greet the cows and calves, each individually. Then She may recount some incidents from Her recent travels, tell of old bhaktas or new people She has met. In fact everything imaginable is being attended to for an hour or two or longer until at last one of Her attendants succeeds in getting Her to retire to Her room.

* See Ananda Varta, Vol. II, No. 2, Page 185.

I noted this down when She arrived at Banaras some time ago. But of course there are instances when Mataji behaves quite differently. At times She seems utterly distant; Her eyes look far away, She is obviously deeply preoccupied with something that we cannot perceive. There is a hush in the atmosphere and everyone present just gazes at Her in mute awe and wonder.

She is entirely unpredictable—all possibilities are contained in Her.

* * * *

Mataji was taking Her evening stroll on the terrace of the Banaras Ashram overlooking the Ganges, while a number of people stood lined up on either side. Mataji had just told me something and I prostrated. She did not notice it, as She had already turned to someone else. She suddenly stepped backwards, with Her foot right on to my back. For a second my mind stopped functioning, became dazed, then thoughts started pouring in. What was this? Mataji had nearly fallen, had literally walked over me, yet there had been no pain, no weight, no pressure; it felt as if a hand had lightly touched my back. How was this possible? I stood up as quickly as I could.

"Does it hurt much?" asked Mataji. "No, not at all. How light you are!" I could hardly speak for amazement. "Very light?" laughed Mataji and walked away. "The weight of a flower," remarked an old Sannyasi who had witnessed the incident.

* * * *

An elderly lady with a Western education asked for an interview with Mataji. She was well-to-do and childless, but had adopted a couple of young children, whom she was looking after to the best of her ability. Religiously inclined from her childhood she had given much thought to spiritual matters and met quite a number of saints and sages.

"Mataji, I want Self-realization," she said, "and quickly too! For so long have I been after it and now I am getting on in years."

"Self-realization is not in time," replied Mataji, "why do you want to bind it to time?"

"Anyway before I die I must attain," insisted the lady. "I really mean it. Please, tell me how to get Self-realization!"

"You must keep still as much as possible and meditate in solitude," was Mataji's advice. "But since you are so keen on Self-realization, why

have you taken on yourself the care of those children? This obliges you to pay far too much attention to worldly matters." "But I do not want to withdraw from the world. Why can't I realize here and now, in the midst of my worldly activities?"

Mataji shook Her head: "It can't be done. Look at it in this way," She added with a smile, "when you want to write a letter you don't do it in public. You take your pen and paper and sit by yourself. Once it is written you may read it out to everyone."

"Once the Self is realized the question whether to live in the world or in seclusion does not arise. But while you are striving for it, you must be by yourself."

* * * *

A Punjabi lady had come for Mataji's *darshan*. "Do you attend to your Japa regularly?" asked Mataji. "I do," was the reply, "but my mind does not become still." "All the same you must not give up the attempt," warned Mataji. "My children are so noisy," complained the lady, "not always, it is true, but no sooner have I sat down for my *puja* than, without fail, they get quite uproarious." Mataji smiled: "Suppose you stand at the

seashore wishing to go into the water. Can you wait until all the waves have subsided?"

* * * *

Mataji told someone who is a worshipper of Sri Krishna: "Try to see Krishna in everyone and in everything." He answered that he could not possibly do so with regard to the particular person with whom he had just been angry — in fact he could not bear him. "To remain calm in the solitude of your room is easy enough," remarked Mataji. "It is when you are with people who get on your nerves that you have to prove your faith and devotion."

* * * *

The other day at Almora someone wanted to know what '*Maya*' was. It often happens that when learned men are present, Mataji will not open Her mouth until each one has had his say. This time also various opinions and theories had been advanced before Mataji spoke. "One day the great sage Nārāyaṇa came to Sri Krishna and said, 'What actually is this *Maya* of yours?' '*Maya*?' replied Sri Krishna. 'All right, come for a walk with me.' They trudged along for some time, when a village came

sight. Sri Krishna said: 'I am feeling very thirsty. Will you please get me a glass of water?' Narada went to the village while Sri Krishna waited for him. Narada entered a house and the housewife sent her beautiful young daughter to fetch the water. When she returned with it, the woman said to the stranger: 'Why don't you marry her? She will make you a good wife.' Nārada thought: 'She really is beautiful,' and he agreed. They had a son and a daughter and lived in great happiness for several years, until one day torrential rain caused a flood. Water penetrated into the house. Narada piled up the furniture and put his family on top of it. But it was of no avail, the water kept on rising and the house became submerged. They all went up on the roof, but the water rose higher and higher. Finally Nārada had to guard his whole family and keep them afloat. The situation was precarious. First his mother-in-law lost strength and got drowned. Narada consoled himself: 'Well, she was old, and might have died anyhow.' Next his little daughter was taken away by the turbulent waters. 'My son, is still alive!' Nārada thought. However, soon the boy also let go his grip and disappeared into the rushing stream. As long as I have a wife I may

have other children,' reflected Narada trying to keep up his spirits. But his wife was unable to hold out much longer and after some time she also shared the fate of the others. Nārada was getting both desperate and exhausted. Gasping for breath and about to give up the ghost, he found himself standing near Sri Krishna. What is the matter with you,' questioned Sri Krishna, 'and where is my glass of water?' Narada replied: 'Now I know what your Maya is!'

* * * * *

One night at Brindaban a most animated discussion was in full swing when one of Mataji's bhaktas, a learned old Sannyasi, who as a rule takes a very active part in all argument, fell fast asleep and was snoring peacefully, quite oblivious of what was going on around. Mataji called out to him once or twice without any response. Everyone was highly amused. At last someone by way of a joke dropped a *rasa gula*, (the famous juicy Bengali sweet) into the half-open mouth of the sleeping man. Even this did not have the desired effect, neither the hilarious laughter that followed. But when the sweet syrup began to trickle down his throat, he could not help waking. As so often happens, Mataji made this playful episode

an occasion for utterances of profound wisdom. She spoke about *Rasa* (रस). There is a difficulty in translating what She said, for the Sanskrit word *Rasa* means any juice from water to nectar, essence, pith, as well as delight of every kind, gross and subtle, also Supreme Delight. There is no equivalent in English.

This is what Mataji said: "Unless *Bhagavad Rasa* is instilled into man, unless the nectar of the Divine penetrates deep within him, his slumbering soul does not awaken. *Vedanta* is also *rasa*, just as *Bhakti* is *rasa*; why should *Vedanta* be described as dry? It is a well-known fact that poison neutralizes poison. Similarly, when transcending nature's delights which are fleeting, man tastes of the delicious flavour of his true being (*Svabhava Rasa*), of Supreme Delight (*Param Rasa*) then the excruciating anguish of the poison of mere worldly enjoyment is destroyed. Beyond bodily pleasures such as eating, sleeping, moving about and so on, lies Joy Supreme. Don't you recite: '*Brahmānandam Paramasukhadam*', 'Absolute Bliss, Supreme Happiness.' HE is Happiness Itself, Happiness is His very essence. Earthly happiness has its opposite — sorrow. But where happiness is in its essential form (*Ananda Swarūpa*), unconditioned, there the opposites —

joy and misery — find no place; where solely *Sva Rasa* is there can be no question of *a-rasa*, of the sense of dryness, of emptiness, of the anguish of God's absence. He is the Fountain of Joy — Joy and Joy alone is His Being. A state exists in which there is only Bliss, Beatitude, Supreme Felicity. At your level joy has its opposite, you speak of the joys of heaven and of the torments of hell. But where Eternal Bliss is, — Bliss in its own right cannot be expressed, it is entirely beyond words. There — what is? what is not? To speak means to float on the surface; what language can express that which is neither floating nor diving deep?"

* * * *

A gentleman who lives in a far-off hill-station in the Himalayas had come for Mataji's darshan and stayed for some days. During his journey back home he wrote the following letter to which Mataji replied "In detail, paragraph by paragraph, as follows:

The letter: At the time of parting, when with a broken heart I did *Pranam* to you, I knew that I had found something, but I also felt as if I were losing something. In this mood I went my way.

Mataji's reply: Where nothing is there is everything. All efforts are for the sake of this realization only.

To do *Pranam* means to pour oneself out at His feet, to become closely bound to them and thereby united to Him, to become His who alone is. When doing *Pranam* in a temple or anywhere else, you should not hold back anything, but give yourself without reserve.

The letter : To know you always near although physically you may be far away, this experience can only come by your Grace. It seems impossible for me to attain it through my own efforts.

Mataji's reply : You must know Him in such a way that no place remains where He is not. According to *Vaishnavite* terminology there is *virāha* and *milana* (separation and union). But this *virāha rasa*, this experience of profound yearning for God, is not like the worldly sense of separateness, which means not knowing the other, being unfulfilled.

Everything comes by His Grace alone — this of course is a fact. You experience as your own the power He has vested in you. Apply it in His service to the utmost of your capability, whatever be the nature of your approach, whatever your line.

The letter : While I was near you, I forgot all about my home. I did not give a single thought to my family affairs and cares. But the nearer the train carries me to

my home, the more my domestic hopes and worries crowd into my mind.

Mataji's reply : Just as thoughts about your home crowd into your mind as you draw nearer to your dwelling-place, so also the closer you get to God, the greater grows the joy derived from the ever-increasing variety of the experiences of the Divine. Indeed as you advance towards your real home, you realize more and more of this Joy. You are on the way to finding yourself, be it as the servant of the Lord, or as a part of Him, or as the ONE SELF. You must seek what will take you to EKA RASA, the state of undifferentiated Being, of Oneness, where nothing remains to be known, to be attained.

The letter : Grant me the strength, the power to become firmly established in pure devotion, in truthfulness and sincerity. I desire no other wealth except the abandonment of myself at the Feet of the Lord.

Mataji's reply : All desire must be for God only. Whatever you do, whether with your hands or with your brain, do it as His service. Whatever you accept, physically or mentally, accept it as God coming to you in this shape. If anything is to be given, it is yourself surrendered at His Feet.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

For the last several years Mataji has blessed Banaras with Her presence during the *Jhulan* and *Janmastami* celebrations. These festivals are occasions of rejoicing for every Hindu family and Ashram, but more especially for children. The child Krishna, Divine mischievous Gopal tremendously fascinates the imagination of every boy and girl.

At the Banaras Ashram there is a small residential school, called "*Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Kanyapith*," where girls are brought up according to the ancient ideals of *Brahmacharya*, while at the same time they are taught all the subjects of the modern curriculum and prepared for the matriculation and other exams. During the *Jhulan* week (as in previous years), every night at 9 p. m., when the Satsang was over, Mataji was being invited upstairs to the girls' hall as the chief guest at their artistic performances. Every night the decorations of the hall were changed into more and more lovely ones, every night a new programme of religious songs, dances and dramatic scenes was displayed. The culmination was a really exquisite

dramatic representation of the main incidents from the life of *Sri Gauranga*. Many in the audience were moved to tears.

With what simple means and few accessories the plays were made effective! Watching these children perform night after night, in Bengali as well as in Hindi, we became ever more delighted and also ever more thoughtful.

Modern education is largely outward turned. Children are given every scope to observe and get acquainted with as many interesting people, things and progressive activities in the world as possible. Here on the contrary, hidden away in a lane on the banks of the holy river, students and teachers lead a strict secluded life, devoid of outer distractions. Not for the sake of discipline or austerity, but with the definite purpose of giving them a taste of *The Good* which alone is worth having, laying a solid foundation for a life of dedication, under every circumstance, to the search of the *Higher Good*. These children never go to a cinema or any other worldly entertainment, they do not even

home during their holidays. But do they miss anything? From where do they get such a remarkable sense of art and beauty? Who teaches them to play-act with such intelligence? Every single one of them took part in several items and they all showed surprising talent, skill and depth of feeling. Where else can one find such a school? It is true, it consists of only about 20 students. But what do numbers matter? Does not one man or woman who is egoless and divinely inspired influence millions and for centuries? These children's lives are not only occupied with studies, work and play; much of their time and thought is taken up by Kirtan and devotional music, by the reading of scriptures and of the lives of saints and sages, by ritual, japa and meditation. There is practically no time or opportunity for gossip and quarrelling, for idle chattering, the display of fashion or any of the vain pursuits that drain so much of the energy of most children and grown-ups. We see the sparkling eyes and the quiet happiness on these girls' faces. We hear them laugh and sing whilst they are about their work in the house or in their tiny garden. The Brahmacharinis seem possessed of an inward richness, of a sense of inner security

and poise which is very rare with the very young and even at an advanced age. We have begun to wonder whether this unassuming, insignificant little school may not perhaps prove to be a very significant educational experiment?

* * * *

Last March on the eve of Mataji's departure for Brindaban, a devotee came to inform Her that somewhere at Banaras a beautiful large *Vigraha* of Gopal, made of black stone was kept in the house of its *pujari*, its owner living at Pakistan. Since the latter had for the last three years been unable to send money for the *Puja*, the priest was eager to find another home for the *vigraha*, failing which he had decided to immerse it in the Ganges, as he could no longer afford the expense for the *Puja*. On hearing the story it was generally felt that it might be a good idea to take the *vigraha* to the new Ashram at Brindaban. A Brahmachari was sent for the image. But there were difficulties. The *Pujari* hesitated to part with the image without the formal consent of its owner; moreover, he wanted the expenses incurred for the worship during three years, refunded. The Ashramites declared that there was no object in

spending money on the *vigraha* and the matter was left at that.

However, on Mataji's arrival at Banaras on August 9th, a message was sent to Her by the priest that he was now willing to hand over the image to Her Ashram free of charge. At once Mataji sent Brahmachari Raghunath Das Goswami in Her own car to bring 'Gopal' to the Ashram. As soon as the *vigraha* arrived, it was exhibited to everyone on the elevation of the terrace. Kirtan was sung and incense burnt. Mataji Herself put a couple of garlands round 'Gopal's' neck. Every night during the *Jhulan*-week Gopal was placed on the swing in the girls' hall and was present during their artistic performances described above. At *Janmastami* the image was the object of the Puja at the *Chandi Mandap* during both nights. On *Janmastami* day came the blind wife of the *Pujari*, in whose house the image had been worshipped for the last 31 years. With tears in her eyes she related a number of details, connected with the *vigraha*. Once one of her relatives dreamt that Gopal was not satisfied with the worship offered to him. Later her son dreamt that Gopal said: "Do not remove me from Banaras!"

On the morning after *Janmastami*, before the *Vigraha* was finally given a place in the room adjoining the *Annapurna Temple* of the Ashram, photos were taken "of Mataji together with the image." At Ranchi during the recent *Durga Puja* a lady from Calcutta was struck with surprise when she saw the pictures. She is a great admirer of Sri Ramana Maharshi and had never worshipped Gopal. Four years ago, however, she had a strange dream, which she related to Mataji when she met Her two years later. She dreamt that she was sitting on a terrace overlooking the Ganges, when a small boy of very dark complexion came up to her and stood on her lap. She asked him who he was and he pointed to a shrine nearby, saying: "The one who lives in there and I are one and the same. Worship me!" He then changed into a tiny baby and lay in her lap. On seeing the photos of the stone image of Gopal, the lady recognized with certainty the black little boy of her dream. She felt strangely moved. Accompanying Mataji to Banaras and seeing the *vigraha*, she confirmed the correctness of her impression and also verified that the place where she had sat in her dream

similar surroundings as the Ashram terrace. She was evidently profoundly touched and expressed the desire to arrange for a special *puja* for Gopal. It was celebrated on Oct 10th, before Mataji left for Brindaban and everyone present partook of the *prasad*.

This is only one example of the innumerable strange things that constantly happen round Mataji. To comprehend the reasons why She does or says anything, is far beyond our limited capacity of understanding.

* * * *

There was yet another new feature at *Janmastami* this year. The customary plastic representation of the principal scenes of Sri Krishna's early life at Gokula, Brindaban and Mathura was, at Mataji's suggestion, arranged in the open air. The small garden that has grown up where the *Mahayajna* was celebrated from 1947-50, proved an ideal site. The elevation erected over the place where the sacrificial fire (*Yajna Kunda*) had been kept, provided a natural '*Mount Govardhana*'; the *Rasa lila* was staged under the tree near Mataji's kitchen, the river *Yamuna* made to flow through the two little ponds and the black snake placed in one of them, while 'Mathura' was on the

terrace across the path. Although slightly disturbed on one day by a short shower of rain, the charm of this miniature 'Brindaban' amidst trees and creepers was undeniable.

After the *Puja* late at night on August 21st, Mataji went round showering rose-petals on all the trees and plants and on all people present, saying. 'All the trees and plants are *Gopal*, everyone is *Gopal* to-day.'

The next morning the '*Nandotsava*' was observed. It is a sequel to *Janmastami*, full of frolics and laughter, the rejoicing of the cow-herds over the birth of Sri Krishna. Some of the children of the *Kanyapith* dressed up as *Gopas* and *Gopinis*, carrying on their heads large earthen pots containing curds, danced round Mataji, who was seated on their closed verandah. But gradually Mataji and all of them came outside with their cymbals and drums and pots of curds, and collecting at 'Brindaban' sang Kirtan with ever increasing enthusiasm moving round '*Mount Govardhana*'. Mataji led the Kirtan for a while, rousing everybody to join in the chorus. When Mataji sings it always is more than a mere song. All women present began to take part in the circumambulation, whilst the men stood watch-

ing from a slight distance. Suddenly someone with great force banged down a pot of curds. It broke into a thousand pieces, its precious contents splashing in all directions. This is part of the celebration. Does it signify the breaking of the shell of the ego, that imprisons each one of us? If only it had really happened! Many scrambled to pick up a piece of the earthenware and marked each other's foreheads with the sacred curd. Now pot after pot was handed to Mataji who distributed curds in large quantities, turning right and left, backwards and forwards with great smartness and swiftness to satisfy the clamouring crowd. Her face was beaming. She was obviously quite oblivious of the pushing and the noise, of being wedged in between women and children — and all the while the Kirtan was mounting to ever higher waves of rapturous joy. At last everyone had received his share of the curds, — and to be sure it was not only curds that we got! The Kirtan calmed down and was brought to an end. Everyone prostrated. Mataji went inside, followed by the girls with their musical instruments. A few Brahmacharis came out and began to take down the canvas roofing and to dismantle "*Brindaban*." Some

of us stood around as in a dream, still under the spell of the '*Nandotsava*'. Then we remembered that we were in Bhadaini, Banaras and that it was lunch-time. Strange! Where had we been all the morning?.....

* * * *

From August 16th to 19th, between Jhulan and Janmastami, Mataji had visited Vindhyachal accompanied by Dr. Pannalal and a very few others. On returning, the party halted at Chunar.

We have to remind our readers of an incident mentioned in Bhaiji's book '*Mother as Revealed to Me*' (*Matri Darshan*). In September 1927 Mataji took the train to Jaipur from Chunar. When Bhaiji came to see Her off at the station, She indicated to him a certain spot near the hillock on which the fort is built and told him: "Go there on your way from the station. You will find a garland of hibiscus flowers (*Java Kusum*) there. Take it with you and preserve it carefully." Bhaiji did as he was told. When Mataji returned to Chunar She saw the garland. Later, when She went to Dacca, it was found that Brahmachari Kamalakanta who daily used to offer a garland of hibiscus flowers to the image of Kali, had forgotten to do so.

the day Bhaiji found the garland at Chunar. From where the garland came and whether it was connected with the one left unused at Dacca is a puzzle which we cannot solve.*

Some two or three years ago, when Dr. Pannalal motored to Vindhya-chal with Mataji, She showed him the place at his request and Kirtan was sung there by some Bhaktas who happened to be present.

A few months ago Dr. Pannalal's son-in-law was transferred to the region of Mirzapur and Banaras as conservator of forests of the Eastern Division of the U. P. Dr. Pannalal had for some time been eager to plant some trees, a *Panchavati*†, at that memorable spot at Chunar. His son-in-law agreed to arrange for it and he secured Mataji's consent to be present. Her-self at the ceremony on the afternoon of August 19th. The function took full two and a half hours. Vedic Hymns and other sacred texts were chanted. Brahmachari Kamalakanta, who had forgotten to offer the garland at Dacca in 1927 and who now stays at Vindhya-chal, took active part in the ceremony. Mataji gave suggestions

throughout. It was pouring with rain and everyone was drenched. Dr. Pannalal felt very remorseful at having been the cause of what he considered an ordeal to Mataji. He was very gloomy even the next morning at Banaras, but Mataji called him and laughing merrily said, "Pitaji, would you believe it, it did not hurt me at all to be drenched to the skin; on the contrary my rheumatic pain has considerably improved due to this prolonged rain bath. Don't feel sorry, everything happened exactly as it should have."

* * *

On the evening of August 22nd, the day of the *Nandotsava*, Mataji left Banaras for New Delhi, where on the 26th the inauguration of a new Ashram at a colony called "*Chandraloka*" 8 to 10 miles from New Delhi, took place in Mataji's presence. Sri Haribabaji Maharaj also came for the occasion.

For many years the devotees of Delhi had been trying to build an Ashram for Mataji. A plot of land was purchased, but they were unable to raise sufficient funds for a building. However, when recently a

* The garland is even now being preserved in the Banaras Ashram.

† Banyan, Ashvatha, Bel, Ashok, Amlaki. A seat under a cluster of these five trees is supposed to be very auspicious for meditation.

devotee very generously donated another piece of land, the previously acquired plot could be sold and the money used to start building. A few rooms were ready for the use of Mataji and Her party during Her sojourn in August. A circular Satsang hall in the centre of the Ashram is planned. It had then come up to plinth level.

An all-night Kirtan was held in the new Ashram. Many women attended, who had never before stayed up for a whole night in this way. To their own amazement they felt so inspired that they were not aware of any fatigue.

One day the High Commissioner of Pakistan, Raja Gaznaffar Ali Khan came for Mataji's Darshan and seemed profoundly impressed.

On August 30th Mataji left Delhi for Kanpur, remaining there for half a day only. At 3 A. M. the train passed through Ettawah. Even at that most inconvenient hour a large number of devotees came to the station with offerings.

Mataji's party, headed by Didima, reached Banaras on Sept. 1st night, but Mataji Herself went on to Calcutta. She passed through Mogal-Sarai without informing the bhaktas at Banaras. Putting up at Dum-Dum She went straight to the hospital to see one of Her old devo-

tees, Sri Manmohan Ghosh, the architect of the greater part of the Banaras and Brindaban Ashrams. It is largely due to his skill, hard work and rare artistic sense that the Banaras Ashram is considered to be one of the most beautiful and imposing structures on the river front. Manmohanda is one of those unusual people, who never speak about their devotion or crowd round Mataji. Yet in his quiet way he has by his actions given ample proof of his sincerity and wholeheartedness. Several months ago he fell seriously ill and had to repair to Calcutta to seek medical aid. In the course of his treatment one of his legs unfortunately had to be amputated. When Mataji suddenly appeared in his room at the hospital, he was almost beside himself with happiness. Forgetting his condition he tried to advance towards Her and literally fell into Her arms. He clasped Her with both hands, as if never to let Her go again. He and his wife cried for joy and tried their best to persuade Mataji to stay for another day, but She was in a hurry to get to Banaras and left the same evening, reaching the holy city on the 3rd morning, after two nights in the train. It was only after Mataji left the hospital at noon, that people

Calcutta were informed of Her flying visit. She gave Darshan at the Ashram at Ballygunj before boarding the train.

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The Anandamayi Ghat, upon which the Banaras Ashram is erected, was in a more or less precarious condition ever since the high flood in 1948. Although large scale repairs were being carried out every winter for the last three years, a number of cracks periodically appeared in the Satsang hall and some engineers expressed their doubts as to its safety. Some 20 months ago Mataji declared that She would not enter the hall for one whole year. Mataji never gives reasons for what She does. Any how, the hall was emptied of carpets, pictures, fans etc. and locked. Thereafter the Satsang had to be held in other parts of the Ashram, which are not nearly so spacious or convenient. According to some engineers the hall was for some time even in danger of collapsing and falling into the Ganges. It was a sad prospect that the beautiful hall in which Mataji had sat day after day for several years whenever at Banaras, and which is associated with so many unforgettable, inspiring memories, might have to be abandoned to the river. Luckily this danger

seems now to have passed for good. It was therefore decided that the hall should be restored and reopened for general use on the occasion of the *Srimad Bhagavata Jayanti*, which has become an annual function at the Ashram and it was held this year from 5th to 13th Sept. Dr. Pannalal was instrumental in calling a Pandit from Brindaban, a young man in his late twenties, who in spite of his comparative youth is a remarkable expert in the reading and expounding of the *Srimad Bhagavata*. He delighted the very large audience not only by his learning, but even more by his melodious voice and great sense of humour. A loud-speaker was installed in the courtyard of the Ashram, so that the Ashramites who were busy with housework, as well as the overflow of visitors who could not find places in the hall, were able to listen to the talks from anywhere on the premises. A *Bhagavata Saptah* is nothing unusual in Mataji's Ashrams, nevertheless everyone was agreed that this one was a specially successful and enjoyable function.

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As soon as it was brought to completion, on Sept. 13th evening, Mataji motored to Vindhyachal for a night and from there to Allahabad.

Usually She visits this town round about that time of the year, at the request of Sri Gopal Thakur, to attend certain ceremonies connected with the installation of the image of the Goddess *Durga* in preparation for *Durga Puja*. On the 16th night She was back at Banaras. The day of the 17th was spent at Vindhyachal, where the District Magistrate of Mirzapur and his family had lunch at the Ashram. Again on the 19th afternoon Mataji returned to Vindhyachal for a couple of hours, accompanied by Sri Gopinath Kaviraj and others. In the morning She had been present at a feast given yearly to one hundred sadhus at the Banaras Ashram, on the anniversary of Sri Akhandanandaji's *Maha samadhi*.

On Sept. 22nd a large party including Didima and Didi left the Banaras Ashram for Ranchi, to assist with the preparations for the forthcoming *Durga Puja*, whereas Mataji Herself proceeded to Calcutta and paid another visit to Manmohanda, who is still ailing. On the 24th morning She arrived at Puri and after a stay of barely two days travelled from there directly to Ranchi.

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About a year ago Dr. P. R. Ghosh, a young dentist of Ranchi was

building a new house for himself. When meeting Mataji last November during the *Samyam Mahavrata* at Calcutta, he was so impressed that he decided to offer the house to Mataji as an Ashram. Thereupon the devotees of Ranchi approached Mataji with the urgent request to inaugurate the new Ashram on the occasion of *Durga Puja*. Although other plans were already under consideration, they were scrapped in favour of Ranchi. Invitations went to bhaktas all over India. But the people of Ranchi, who had no experience in arranging a gathering of such magnitude, started getting nervous. They were wondering whether they would be able to raise the necessary funds and to manage efficiently such a huge and elaborate function. But Didi reassured them, and by Mataji's grace everything worked out without a hitch. Whatever was needed turned up invariably at the right time.

The whole town seemed to be interested. The large pandal erected in the open space near the Ashram was mostly packed and yet there was pindrop silence. Mataji knows the art of converting every half-hearted on-looker into an active and enthusiastic participator. During the *Puja* one group sang *Kirtan*, another

was engaged in Japa, a third in *Devi Bhagvata Path* and yet others sat absorbed in silent meditation. Whoever approached the pandal was startled by the overwhelming atmosphere of a Divine Presence.

Durga Puja is supposed to have been performed for the first time by Sri Rama as a thanks giving for his victory over Ravana. Mataji therefore suggested that the reading of the whole of the *Rāmāyana* should be accomplished during the *Navaratri*, along side with the Puja. Some Sannyasis and Brahmacharis took turns in the chanting. Moreover, in the evenings of the four main days of the Puja, certain portions of the *Rāmāyana* were recited and expounded in a most

lively, dramatic manner by a famous expert, who kept his listeners spell-bound for hours together.

On October 8th Mataji left for Banaras, from where She proceeded to Brindaban on the 10th at the request of Sri Hari Babaji Maharaj. On the 14th She was once again in the train, travelling to Hoshiarpur where She stayed at the *Sachchidanandashram*, returning to Brindaban on the 24th in time for the *Dipavali* festival.

By the middle of November Mataji is expected to reach Bombay, where the fourth *Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata* will be observed at the Sri Lakshmi Narayan Temple, Santa Cruz, from 18th-24th November.
