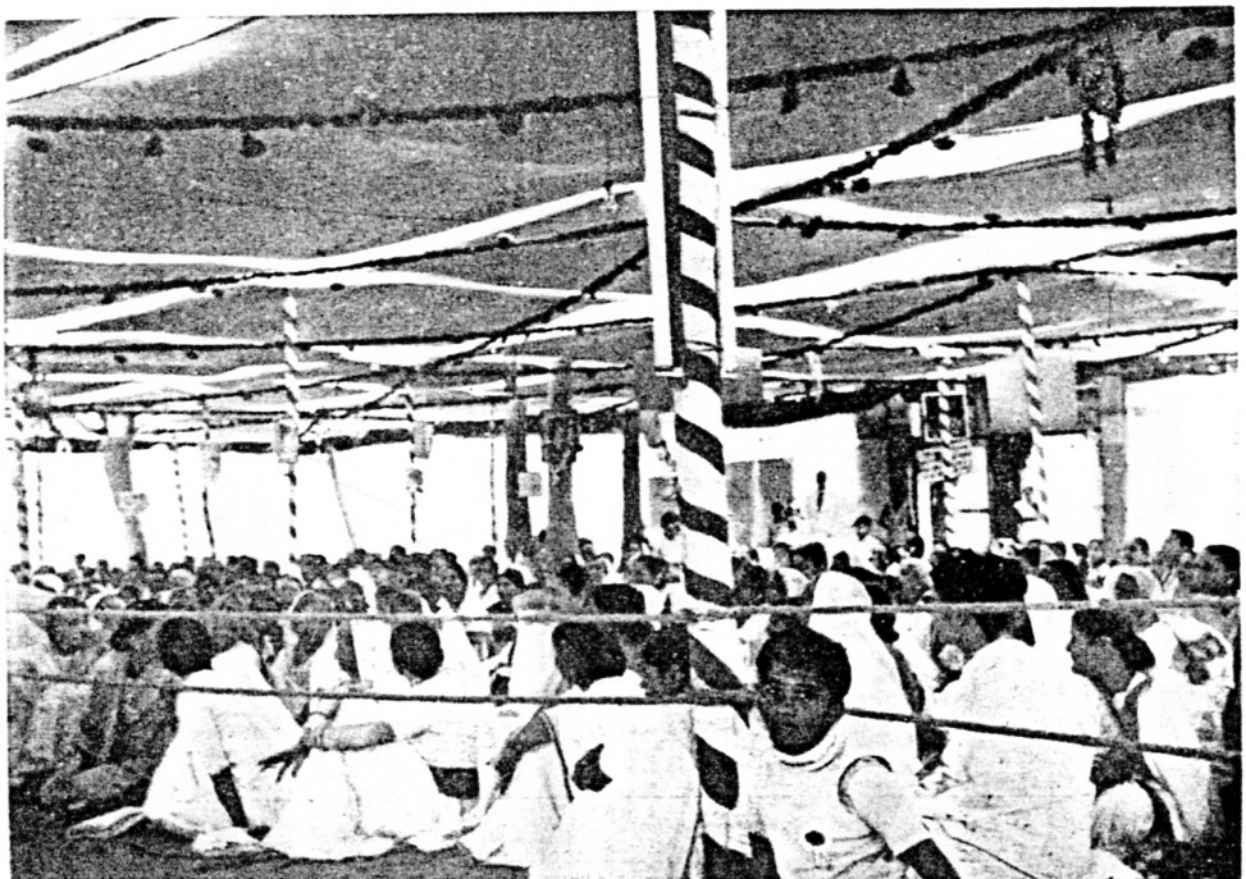
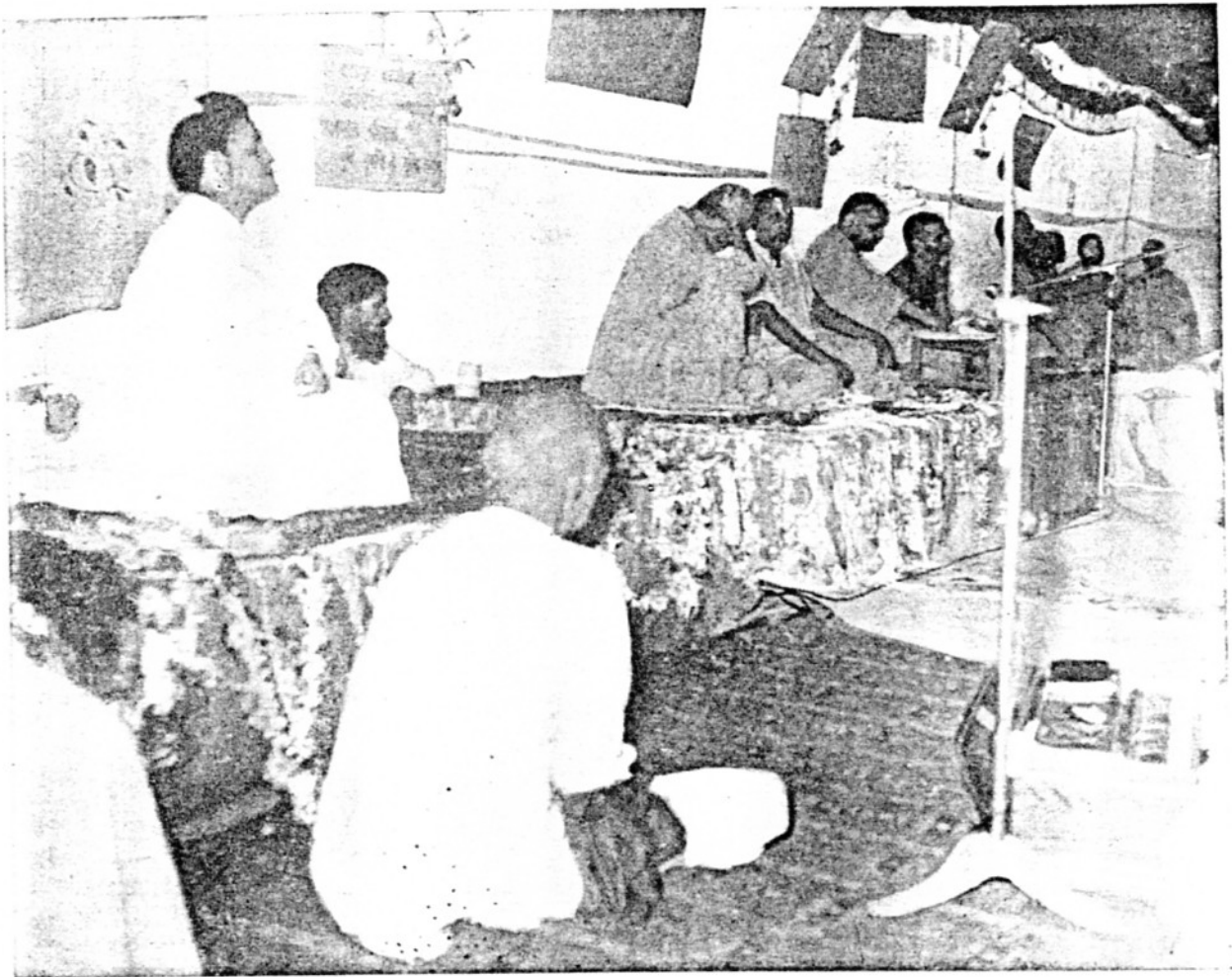


Mahatmas addressing the audience during the 'Samyam Mahavrata' held at Juhu, Bombay from Nov. 18th—24th, 1954

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“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.*)

On Various Subjects.

9.

Explain to the parents that everyone is born conditioned by his actions in former births. In this world health and ill-health are bound to alternate. Have the parents not experienced sufficient proof of this ? They will have to resort to patience. When they are so agitated and upset, how can they cool-headedly attend to all that is required of them ? Depression itself may cause sickness and will in any case tend to aggravate the diseased condition. Everything is His. He has afforded them this opportunity for service. One has to do one's duty to the limit of one's capacity and try to rely on Him who is the Lord of all.

Do not the parents realize that no work can be done well while in such a state of excitement ? To be agitated is to be confused. That they should feel anxious is but natural — are they not the parents ? Nevertheless it is necessary to use discrimination : everything is His and what has befallen them is also His dispensation. Were it possible to create circumstances by one's own volition, everyone would arrange matters according to his liking. As it is, one should endeavour to depend on Him to whom everything belongs, and for the rest do one's duty to the best of one's ability.

10.

Why should he feel so very disheartened? Why make himself so miserable by excessive worry over the fleeting things of this world? Let him be brave and calm in the performance of his duty, bearing in mind that it is God who causes everything to happen; whatever He allows to take place is exactly the right thing. One must strive to become an instrument in His Hands and cease from worrying so much.

11.

When the Mahatma of Khanna* Sri Triveni Puri Maharaj left his body, Mataji sent the following message to his great bhakta Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta. "Under the semblance of union and under the semblance of separation abides He, the Supreme Himself."

12.

To the enquiry whether *diksha* (initiation by Mantra) is necessary or not, Mataji replied: "When *diksha* is necessary it comes about at the appointed moment. One should try to keep one's mind on the thought of God and have firm faith that at the right time He will do all that is needful."

13.

Without the name and the remembrance of God there is no hope of peace on earth. Let duty come first and foremost.

In *Ram*, who is the dispeller of all sorrow, there is *aram*—rest and ease; where *Ram* is not is *vyaram*—discomfort and disease.

* A small town in East Punjab.

14.

Invoke God's name — whichever of His names you prefer — and spend your days in a spirit of service.

15.

Let His name be ever with you ; imperceptibly, relentlessly time is creeping away.

16.

It is through the search after Truth that man can elevate himself. This he should regard in the light of a duty.

17.

Only by the remembrance of God may peace be expected. Set all hopes on Him.

18.

It is incumbent on man to contemplate that which kindles awareness of God.

Mataji's Amara Vani

(6)*

(Continued from the previous issue.)

Question : How am I to grasp this ?

Mataji : It is for the Guru to point out the method ; he will show you the way to understanding and instruct you as to your *sadhana*. It is for you to keep on practising it faithfully ; but the fruit comes spontaneously in the form of Self-revelation. The power to make you grasp the Ungraspable duly manifests through the Guru. Where the question : "How am I to proceed ?" arises, fulfilment has obviously not yet been reached. Therefore never relax your efforts until there is Enlightenment : let no gaps interrupt your attempt, for a gap will produce an eddy, whereas your striving must be continuous like the flowing of oil — it must be sustained, constant, and unbroken stream.

That you have no control over the body's need of food and sleep does not matter, your aim should be not to allow any interval in the performance of your *sadhana*. Do you not see how, whatever you require in the way of food and sleep, each at its own appointed hour, is without exception an ever recurring need ? In exactly the same manner must you aspire at uninterruptedness where the search after Truth is concerned. Once the mind in the course of its movement has felt the touch of the Indivisible — if only you can grasp that moment !—in that Supreme Instant all moments are contained and when you have captured it, all moments will be yours.

Take for example the moments of confluence† (*Sandhiksana*) at dawn, midday and dusk, in which the power inherent in the contact-point where coming and going meet, becomes revealed. What you call electric light or electricity in general is nothing but the union of two opposites : thus does Supreme

* The Bengali original appeared in 'Ananda Varta', Vol. II, No. 3.

† *Sandhiksana* (सन्धिक्षण) means the moment of transition from one period to another in the flux of time. The two periods represent two conflicting movements or currents in the flow of time, while the moment or *ksana* represents the neutral point of relative stability between these two periods. In the last resort this point is eternal and holds within itself the secret of all that exists or is possible in creation.

Being flash forth at the moment of conjunction. Actually IT is present at every single moment, but you miss it all the time. Yet this is what you have to seize — it can be done at the point of juncture where the opposites melt into one. Nobody is able to predict when for any particular individual this fateful Moment will reveal itself; therefore keep on striving ceaselessly.

Which exactly is that great Moment depends for each one upon his particular line of approach. Does not the moment at which you are born determine the rule and the course of your whole life? Similarly what is important is the Moment at which you enter the current which is the movement of your true being, the Going Forth, in other words the Great Pilgrimage. Unless this happens perfection cannot be attained. This is why for some disciples the Guru fixes special times for *sadhana*, such as dawn, dusk, midday and midnight; these are the four periods usually prescribed. It is the duty of the disciple conscientiously to carry out the Guru's orders, which vary according to the temperament and predisposition of the aspirant. The same method does not suit everyone. The average person can have no knowledge of the particular combination of factors necessary to bring to completion the hitherto neglected facets of his being; for this reason it is essential to obey the Guru's instructions. That decisive Moment is bound to manifest as soon as by your attitude as well as your actions you are ready for it. Therefore try to follow closely the path indicated by the Guru and you will see how everything just happens spontaneously.

Within the twenty-four hours of the day some time must be definitely dedicated to God. Resolve if possible, to engage regularly in *Japa* of a particular Name or Mantra while sitting in a special posture and gradually add to the time or the number of repetitions. There is no need for a daily augmentation. Fix the rate and the interval at which you will increase, say weekly or fortnightly. In this way try to bind yourself to the Quest of God; wherever you may be, take refuge in Him, let Him be your goal. When by virtue of this endeavour you become deeply immersed in that "current" and devote ever more time to it, you will be transformed and your appetite for sense enjoyment will grow feeble; thus you are reaping the fruits of your accumulated efforts. In this connection you may also come to feel that the body is liable to depart at any time, that death may arrive at any moment.

Just as there is ever new creation in the universe, so also does your mental and psychological reaction to it undergo constant change. If you proceed in the manner indicated you will observe that as a result your outer interests will gradually fall away and your vision turn inward. The more ardent your pursuit, the vaster the possibilities that will open out for you, and in proportion to your advance suffering will diminish and not increase again. It is also said, is it not, that *Karma* is extinguished by *Karma* — that is to say the effects of past actions are neutralized by counter actions. Indeed, if it be anyone's destiny this may be achieved in a very short time.

Look, even when the body is not given food, it does not stop the assimilation of nourishment ; we are told that in such cases it starts consuming its own flesh. Therefore just as you keep your body well nourished, so must you take equally good care where your spiritual well-being is concerned and then only will you flourish in that respect. Who can tell at what moment the flame of illumination will be set ablaze ? For this reason continue your efforts steadily without flagging. Gradually you will get more and more deeply absorbed in Him — He and He alone will take possession of your thinking and feeling : for the mind ever seeks that which gives it proper sustenance and this cannot be provided by anything save the Supreme Being Himself. Then you will be carried away by the current that leads to your Self. You will discover that the more you delight in the inner life, the less you feel drawn to external things. In consequence the mind becomes so well nourished with the right kind of food, that at any moment the realization of its identity with the SELF may occur.

As regards *Laya* (the dissolution of the mind), if you mean its dissolution into THAT, then what you said was correct. *Jada Samadhi*, which is like a trance, where the mind is in a kind of stupor, is not what is wanted. On the contrary, you have to realize what the mind is, *who* it is. The mind subsides into THAT — is this what you intended to express ? *Laya* may signify either that the mind has nowhere to go to, in other words can no longer find its way and hence subsides into latency ; or else it merges into THAT, which is Self-revelation, and consequently there can be no possibility of a separate existence of the mind. Where Self-effulgence is — how can the question as to whether the mind gets dissolved or not, arise at all ?

This has been replied to from the standpoint from which you asked. You began by enquiring how meditation on a particular part can lead to meditation

on the whole Surely, the whole is contained in the part ; it is in order to arrive at the realization of this truth that you have to follow the Guru's instructions which are instinct with his power.—The aforesaid gives but a faint idea of only one aspect of the whole matter.

Again, look, there are instances when one loses consciousness while sitting in meditation. Some people have found themselves swooning away, as it were, intoxicated with joy, remaining in this condition for quite a long time. On emerging they claim to have experienced some sort of divine bliss. But this is certainly not Realization. A stage exists in meditation, where intense joy is felt, one is as if submerged in it. But who is it that gets submerged ? The mind of course. At a certain level and under certain circumstances this experience may prove an obstacle. If repeated time and again one may stagnate at its particular level, and thereby be prevented from getting a taste of the Essence of Things.

Once genuine contemplation (*Dhyāna*) has been established, worldly attractions lose all their appeal. In the event of an experience of anything pertaining to Supreme Reality or to the Self, one does not say, "where have I been ? I did not know anything for the time being" ; there can be no such thing as "not knowing." If it is possible to describe in words the bliss one has experienced, it is still enjoyment and therefore a hindrance. One must be fully conscious, wide awake. To fall into a stupor or into yogic sleep will not take one anywhere.

After real meditation worldly pleasures become unalluring, dull, entirely savourless. What does detachment (*vairāgya*) signify ? When every single object of the world kindles as it were the fire of renunciation, so as to make one recoil as from a shock. Then there is inward and outward awakening. This however does not mean that detachment implies aversion or contempt for anything of the world — it simply is unacceptable, the body refuses it. Neither dislike nor anger will arise. When dispassion becomes a living inspiration, one begins to discriminate as to the true substance of the world, until finally the knowledge of its illusoriness arises with the glowing certainty of direct perception. Each and everything belonging to the world seems to burn — one cannot touch it. This also is a state that may ensue at a particular time.

At present what you enjoy does not impress you as being short-lived, rather does it appear to make you happy. But to the extent that the spirit of detachment is roused, the relish of such pleasures will die down, for are they not fleeting? In other words death will be recognized as death. Now that you are advancing towards that which is beyond time, the semblance of happiness brought about by mundane things is being consumed. As a result the question: "What actually is this world?" will arise. So long as the world seems enjoyable to you, such a problem will not present itself. Since you are progressing towards that which transcends time, all that belongs to time will begin to appear to you in its true light.

If after coming down from the state of contemplation you are capable of behaving as before, you have not been transformed. When there is real meditation, which evokes indifference to the world, you will begin to pine keenly for the Divine, you will hunger for It and realise that nothing transient can appease this hunger or satisfy you.

How am I to make it clear to you, father? People come to this body and tell of their sons and daughters having got into a car and driven away without even looking up to see whether their father and mother were weeping at the parting. They are quite unmoved by their parents' grief. You see, this is precisely what it is like at a certain stage on the Path; wordly enjoyment cannot possibly touch you. You feel: "Those whom I had believed to be my very own are merely related to me by flesh and blood, what is that to me?" Nobody deliberately puts his hand into fire or treads on a snake; in exactly the same manner you just glance at the objects of sense and turn away. Then you will get into the current that takes you in the opposite direction, and later when you have become detached even from detachment, there is no more problem of detachment or non-detachment—what is, is THAT. Some say, by sustained effort one may attain to Enlightenment. But is it true that effort can bring about Enlightenment? Is Illumination dependant on action? The veil is destroyed and when this has been accomplished THAT which IS stands revealed. What is known as the fruit of effort is nothing but the illumination of the particular aspect towards which the effort was directed. UNVEILED LIGHT (*Niravaran Prakash*) is He Himself, the Eternal.—The Guru knows which is the right line of approach for any individual.

Question : At times we feel that sense objects really exist, at other times that they are merely ideas. Why does one and the same thing appear so different on different occasions ?

Mataji : Because you are in the grip of time*. You have not yet reached the state where everything is perceived as the Self alone, have you ? Herein lies the solution of the whole problem. "To feel" is excellent, provided your feeling gives impetus to the Supreme Quest ; for nothing is ever wasted. What you have realized even for a second will at some time or other bear fruit. In this wise what water, air, the sky, etc. are and hence what creation is, the knowledge of the real character of each element flashes into your consciousness one by one — just like buds bursting open. Flowers and fruits come into existence only because they are potentially contained in the tree. Therefore you should aim at realizing the One Supreme ELEMENT (*Tattwa*) which will throw light on all elements.

You asked about sense objects : an object of sense (*vishaya*) † is that which contains poison, is full of harm and drags man towards death. Whereas freedom from the world of sense objects, (*Nirvishaya*) where no trace of poison remains, means immortality.

Question : But something of the burning pain of renunciation is still left over ?

Mataji : What is it that produces the sensation of burning ? A sore surely ! Because of it there is inflammation ; but whose sore is it ? Unless there is a sore there can be no smarting. Therein lies the deception : so long as Reality is not revealed the sore will persist. If the inflammation is a healing process, it is of course beneficent. A patient who becomes unconscious is not aware of his agony — you can see how man is drowned in pleasure, loss and affliction — this surely is not what is wanted ! This is the way of the world with its never-ending conflicts. ‡ Can you tell why one feels anguish ?

The Questioner : One is pulled in two directions, towards God as well as towards sense enjoyment—this causes anguish.

* A play upon words / *Samaya*=time. *Sva-maya*=everything is perceived as the Self.

† *Vishaya*=sense object, *Vish*=poison, *hai*=is.

‡ *Sangsar*=world, *sangshay*=conflict.

Mataji : You have a desire to give up, but you cannot let go, such is your problem. Let the desire awaken in your heart, its stirring is a promise that the time is coming when you will be able to give up.

You obtain a coveted object, but still you are dissatisfied, and if you fail to get it you are also disappointed. The disillusionment you experience at the fulfilment of your wish is wholesome ; but the torment of the unfulfilled hankering after the things you could not secure drives you towards that which is of death, towards misery.

The Questioner : The hunger of the senses can never be appeased, the more one gets, the more one wants. The fulfilment of worldly desire only begets greater longing.

Mataji : This world is itself but an embodiment of want and hence the heartache due to the absence of fulfilment must needs endure. This is why it is said that there are two kinds of currents in human life : the one pertaining to the world in which want follows upon want, the other of one's true being. It is the very nature of the former that it can never end in fulfilment, on the contrary the sense of want is perpetually stimulated anew. Whereas the latter aims at bringing to completion the activities of one's true being, at establishing man in his divine nature. Thus if he endeavours to fulfil himself by entering the current of his true being, this current will eventually lead him to the perfect poise of his own true being.

Question : And the anguish of not having found, the anguish of the absence of God ? I have no wish for sense pleasures, but they come to me. I am compelled to experience them.

Mataji : Ah, but the anguish of not having found God is salutary. What you have eaten will leave a taste in your mouth. You wear ornaments because you wish to and so you have to bear their weight. Yet this weight is fated to fall off, for it is something that cannot last, can it ?

Question : Are there instances when an Enlightened person may be in ignorance ?

Mataji : You call a person enlightened and in the same breath say he may be subject to ignorance ? Such a thing, father, is quite impossible. There is however a state of attainment which is not maintained at all times, where what you suggest may apply, but never in a case of final Realization.

zation. In whatever way you may perceive an Enlightened Being, He remains what He is. How can there be a possibility of ignorance in what is termed Knowledge Supreme? When you speak of ignorance with reference to a Realized man it is an example of Supreme Knowledge being mistaken for ignorance. Therefore you also talk of ascent and descent. Since there is no question of a body for one who is liberated, how can there be rising up and coming down? Nevertheless there is a state of achievement in which ascent and descent do exist, really and truly.

Mother's Transcendence

By

Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma, Ph. D.

Mother very often says, "All theories are true". Her devotees accept the statement merely because it comes from the lips of the Mother; but a questioning remains in the hearts of most of them. It is the purpose of the present article to show that the statement of the Mother is philosophically quite sound. Mother's statement is not merely a general remark like that of Herbert Spencer when he says that there is 'a soul of truth in things erroneous'; neither is it exactly identical with Ramanuja's contention that there is no error at all. Mother wants to emphasise that everything is true in its own place and that as soon as the particular standpoint from which a theory is formulated is correctly perceived, its truth becomes at once clear. Mother lives constantly on the transcendental plane from which everything is seen at its proper perspective. The supremely transcendent experience is alone competent to reconcile all apparent contradictions and to harmonise all partial experiences into the unity of a complete system. The

Vedantism of Shankara declares that it has no quarrel with any system of philosophy and is ready to take all systems of philosophy at their proper worth. From the transcendental height it occupies, the Advaita Vedanta can see the respective positions which the other philosophical systems occupy and can thoroughly understand that their differences are due to their different angles of vision which are inevitable because of the differences in their respective positions. Comprehension means a thorough grasp and a perfect vision of all different positions and aspects, and it is this perfect vision that alone can explain all differences and resolve all contradictions. To see the worth and validity of all partial aspects, that is, to realise the partial aspects as *partial* and not complete determinations of Reality, is not possible at any stage, short of perfect vision. The Advaita Vedanta in its perfect realisation sees the truth of everything and declares 'sarvam khalvidam Brahman' and has 'avirodha' and 'samanvaya' or harmony with every philosophical system.

Mother may be called a perfect Advaitin in the sense that She lives on the supremely transcendent level which rises above the differences of all lower positions and simultaneously perceives the relative truth embodied in them.

The apparent contradiction between the two famous vedantic statements 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahman' or 'Everything is Brahman' and 'neti neti' or 'Nothing is Brahman', has puzzled not only almost all western thinkers but has misled many Indian commentators as well. To a perfect Advaitin like the Mother, the two statements not only involve no contradiction but describe the really transcendent character of the Vedantic Absolute. All that there is has arisen out of Brahman;—Brahman is the source and substratum of everything. Brahman is all-pervading and has no limitation either in space or in time. Nothing can fall outside Brahman. There are many who suppose that Brahman and the world are opposed to each other, so that when Brahman shines the world is bound to disappear and conversely, so long as the world appears Brahman does not manifest itself. I have met many devout Advaitins, or rather people who claim to be staunch Advaita Vedantins, who sincerely believe that when Brahman is realized, the world does not and

cannot appear at all. I have pointed out to them that this conception of *Jivanmukta Jnanis* would do away with the foundation of Advaita Vedanta. If the world does not appear at all, how is it possible for the *Jivanmuktas* to teach their pupils and to light the candle of Knowledge in the hearts of the devout seekers? How are we to explain the wandering of Shankaracharya throughout the length and breadth of India and his conquering of the followers of other systems of philosophy and his establishment of the four *maths* in the four corners of India? I was surprised to hear from one of the misled Vedantins that Shankaracharya was not to be regarded as a real *jnanin* who had reached the goal. If the world does not appear at all, *vyavahara* or the leading of daily life becomes impossible; on this supposition the *Jnanin* must either be dead the moment he attains to Knowledge or is to live as lifeless matter (*jada*). The *Jivanmukta* is to keep the flame of Knowledge burning and it is through him that the light of Knowledge is kindled in the hearts of other seekers of Knowledge. If he is dead or is to continue as lifeless matter, the supreme purpose for which the highest Truth becomes revealed in him will be lost, the mighty achievement, the culmination, the reaching of the goal, be absolutely in

vain. If the light of knowledge that becomes kindled in him does not enlighten other hearts but becomes extinguished with him, the *jnana* line cannot continue and this interpretation of Advaitavada becomes suicidal. Moreover, *Istara* (God) who must be supposed to be possessing perfect Knowledge from eternity creates, maintains and rules the entire universe. If God's Knowledge or realisation of the Highest Truth (Brahman) does not prevent Him from performing the greatest *vyapara* of maintaining and ruling the universe, why should the *Jivanmukta* be supposed to be incapable of performing any worldly action (*vyapara*) after the realisation of Brahman? It is an entire misconception to hold that Brahman and the world are opposed to each other. If Brahman excludes the world, then Brahman itself becomes limited by the world and becomes finite. Brahman cannot be in opposition to anything. Its infinitude and all-pervasiveness do not allow anything to remain outside it. The Brahman that is supposed to exclude the world is a limited Brahman existing in the imagination of the pseudo-vedantist and is not the Brahman preached in the Upanishads.

The reality of Brahman reduces the world to an unreal appearance. Brahman and the world cannot be

simultaneously *real*. The finite is taken to be real so long as the Infinite is not realised; but as soon as the Infinite is realised, the finite demanding a finis or a clear boundary in space and time, is bound to be perceived as false. When Reality is perceived to be transcending all limitations of space and time, when spirit, the naked spirit, is seen to have no touch of matter and to have no connection with matter, division in space and time seems to be impossible and absurd, and the *reality* of the finite seems to be a contradiction in terms. If space and time divisions are imparted by the mind, if these are figments of the imagination, if these are superimpositions, they cannot characterise Reality. If the unbounded Freedom, the limitless Infinitude be the Reality, the finite bounded by limitations of space and time cannot also be real. The world is reduced to the level of *false (mithya)* appearance as soon as Brahman is realised. The appearance of the world is not only not barred but is from one standpoint a necessary step in the realisation of true Advaitism. The *mithyatva* (falsity) of *dvaita* (the dual world) has got to be perceived if one is to realise the true *Advaita* position. The *mithya* and the *asat*, the false and the non-existent, are not identical. The *mithya* appears, the

asat does not appear. The world appears but is perceived as false. Hence the world is *mithya* and not *asat*. Those who think that the world does not appear at all to the Jivanmukta confuse the *mithya* with the *asat*. They forget that the Advaita Vedanta is based on the *mithyatva* of the world and not on its *asatta* (non-existence). How can its falsity be realised if the world does not appear at all? The contradiction that is supposed to exist between Brahman and the world for the pseudo-advaitin is between Brahman and the reality of the world. But it is to be remembered that to the Jivanmukta the world appears not as real but as unreal false appearance. There is no antagonism between the Real Brahman and the *false* world. If the world is perceived to be real, then only the contradiction arises. There is no antagonism between the Real and the Unreal because both do not claim to be real or at least of a reality of the same order. If Brahman is *paramārtha sat*, the world is *vyavaharika sat*. If Brahman is absolutely real, the world is only relatively real. A relative reality is as good as unreality, because even the erroneous is relatively real. To the man in error, the erroneous appears as real and is thus relatively real. To the Jivanmukta everything is Brahman; he perceives

Brahman everywhere. Brahman is all-pervading and infinite. It is Brahman that assumes all names and forms and appears as the various things of the universe. The supremely transcendent Reality appears in the garb of different names and forms which are mutually exclusive. The wide differences of the infinite multiplicity and variety cancel one another and point towards the Supremely Transcendent which is above all difference and duality. *Rūpam rūpam pratirupo babhuva tadasya rūpam praticakṣhanayā*. He who has realised Brahman sees Brahman everywhere and the statement that everything is Brahman is a truism to him. Again, it is also very true that nothing is Brahman. The names and forms do not belong to Brahman. If a particular name or a particular form belongs to Brahman, how can another name or another form which is contradictory to it belong to Brahman also? The Relative has value only in relation to its particular position; it is not applicable to the Absolute. The particular divisions of space and time do not apply to the unbounded Freedom. What is limited cannot describe or manifest the unlimited, the Infinite. Hence nothing of the universe can give us any idea of Brahman. This is the truth embodied in the 'neti neti'.

To the perfect *jnanin*, 'Sarvam *khalvidam Brahma*' and '*neti neti*' are identical statements, both describing the transcendence of the Absolute. Mother constantly says that God is in every man and woman and also advises all Her devotees to be in constant remembrance of God. God is in all, God is all, it is true, but before one realises God, it is only blasphemy to regard God and man as identical. The bounded and the unbounded cannot be identical. The finite and

the Infinite cannot be the same. But it is also to be remembered that there is nothing outside of the Infinite and that the finite is nothing but an appearance of the Infinite, nothing but a self-imposition and self-assumption. The finite is the Infinite itself. Hence it is very, very true that the finite is and is not the Infinite, that Brahman is all this and is not anything of all this. Mother's statement that everything is true is philosophically quite sound.

“The Holy Mother Anandamayi as I have known Her”

By

Prof. Bireswar Gangoly, M.A.,

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I met the Holy Mother Anandamayi for the first time at Patna on the 17th February, 1951. She was sitting in the midst of devotees who were singing devotional songs. She appeared to be in a meditative mood. I have since come to know that for Her there are no changing moods; She always abides in a state which is beyond all changes. I went there because a colleague of mine, who had introduced me to Sri Aurobindo's works, had informed me of the Holy Mother's stay at Patna. It was pure disinterested curiosity which had led me there. I did not expect much from an almost illiterate woman, who laid so much stress on "Kirtan", i. e. devotional music in chorus. Though She had been staying at Patna for about a week, I had because of my intellectual vanity, not cared to go and ask Her any questions on philosophy. I was convinced that nothing more than what was to be found in books could

be said by or learnt from anybody. I was however eager to find, if possible, the ideal non-attached man spoken of by Aldous Huxley. It seemed totally with the concept of 'Sthita-Prajna' of the Gita. The lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi had convinced me that a non-attached *Brahmajnani* was possible even in these days of industrial civilisation, nay, in fact the salvation of our industrial civilisation which according to Dr. Joad, has lost the values of life, lay in the leadership of society by such non-attached ideal human beings. I have not had the good fortune to meet Sri Aurobindo or Sri Ramana Maharshi. Could it be, I thought, that fate had at last moved to retrieve my fortune and I was going to have Darshan of a *Brahmajnani*, an event at which, all unknown to me, my whole life-impulse had been aiming.

The uproarious Kirtan, however, disappointed me, as I was of the opi-

nion that such terrible noise must be a positive hindrance to meditation, which is considered the best method of communion with God. After an hour's severe trial, which was relieved only by the Divine Grace of the beautiful face of the Holy Mother, just as I was on the point of leaving, I fell into a sort of trance — almost the first of its kind in my life, and experienced a state of ecstasy, which was broken at about 10 P. M. by a sweet call from the Holy Mother. I felt a sense of great relief and perfect repose when I woke up, and looking at the face of the Holy Mother I found a touch of the Beyond in Her. By that time I had returned to my senses and thought that I might have been under a hypnotic spell. I pulled myself together and got back my critical mood. However before I could put any question to Her, She asked me to narrate my experience. By that time everybody had left Her room and so without any hesitation I related to Her my strange physical, intellectual, emotional and possibly spiritual experience. What astonished me was the way She made definite and explicit what I had groped for in my narration. Ultimately she wound up the whole description by saying that She also had had similar experiences in Her childhood — such is Mother's way to encourage a child. I was naturally

anxious to know from Her the correct interpretation of such experiences.

What followed was a masterly discourse on Yoga. It seemed to me that Her knowledge far excelled that of Patanjali's "Yoga Sutra" in matters of detail, or of Blavatsky's "The Voice of Silence" in sense of realism. I bowed down to Her in love and respect and came away a changed man. Out of the ashes of my philosophical knowledge full of doubts and difficulties was born a devotion that knows no doubt, no break. Her very presence, aglow with a sublime radiance, was sufficient proof that there was a divine Mother, upholding and protecting the Universe. The presence of Mother in the midst of a Kirtan now assumed a completely new meaning to me, namely of a Being, standing beyond the 'Kirtan' and yet presiding over it. The necessity of seeking inferential proofs for such feelings was gone and it seemed to me as though I had an intuitive glimpse of the Lord of the Gita.

Since then I have paid many visits to Her Ashrams at Banaras and Vin-dhyachal, and it would take one long chapter to write down every single event or idea that has struck me as something full of spiritual significance. Apart from the indescribable devo-

tional atmosphere of the 'gnostic collectivity' around Her, reminding one of the Divine atmosphere created by Devarshi Narada of the Puranas or Lord Chaitanya of Bengal wherever they went, the most pleasing and astonishing thing about Her personality is that it offers a wonderful reconciliation of all religious and philosophical views and theories. She does not only resolve conflicts theoretically, but can actually satisfy the contending parties that they are all perfectly correct from their relative angles of vision. I have attended several conferences of philosophers and religious men in India, and always found them unsatisfactory and disappointing. On several occasions when I had the misfortune of offending somebody holding the view of Vedanta of a school other than that of Shankaracharya, the Holy Mother intervened and like Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa Deva of Dakshineswar proved to the entire satisfaction of everybody present that there are as many ways of understanding Truth as there are accepted theories. At the outset I used to think that She reconciled those views in order to please all Her children who are groping in the dark. But no, Her cosmic consciousness enables Her to identify Herself with everyone and thus realize as well as explain the truth according to the particular view held.

Mother often speaks in the terminology of pure monistic Vedanta. It seemed a little strange to me that one who appeared to be immersed in Bhakti and dedicated to this cult based on pure Dualism, should repeatedly speak in terms of the Upanishad such as "only Brahman is true", 'the world is an illusion' or "Thou art That", etc.—concepts which form the very corner stone of Absolute Monism. The theory of three levels of consciousness hinted at by Sir J. Woodroffe and P. N. Mukhopadhaya in their 'The World as Power' seemed to suggest a solution. The three levels correspond to three stages, the state of the *Brahmajnani* who sees one in the many, the state of the ordinary man who sees nothing but the many and mid-way between those two levels of consciousness lies the intermediary plane of consciousness through which a Yogi has to pass. The conflicting statements of many Realized souls who got glimpses of the timeless, spaceless, absolute Brahman and yet had occasion to speak in terms of pluralism can probably be explained by the hypothesis, viz. that they — the Realised Souls, so to say, come to other planes to meet the needs of men.

And yet doubt assails when one proceeds to apply this theory to

MOTHER, from whom Truth flows as its source. In Her case the criterion of Truth as propounded above does not exist.

On the lower pragmatic planes of consciousness the apparent multiplicity has its relative importance, and it is through strenuous efforts or by the grace of the Divine that one can transcend the lower levels of consciousness. In the beginning the Yogi gets temporary glimpses of Truth which cannot be described in language, but the goal of the Yogi is to reach the state of a Maha Yogi, who always lives in absolute Consciousness. Whether we adopt the path of *tapasya*, i.e. deliberate and strenuous efforts at Yoga or that of surrender to the Divine, we have got to get away from this sordid worldly consciousness by annihilating the composite elements in our being. So from an embodied consciousness, in which the conscious Purusha or Soul has been enslaved, we shall ultimately come to a bodiless consciousness, or realise the Purusha free from Prakriti or Lower Nature consisting of body, mind, ego etc. Perhaps *sadhana* ends there and the free soul waits for its final deliverance by the Grace of the Divine Mother, the *Ishwara-Shakti*, when the Divine spark merges in the Infinite.

Mother Anandamayi reminds us of the *summum bonum* of human existence and re-enforces the truth of all the scriptures that we are greater than ourselves, that we are purer than we seem to be, that we are by nature Divine, and that we must realize the Divine in this very life. This body is the temple of the Divine Mother, let it not be made into the devil's work-shop. By surrendering to the Mother we keep our shrine ready for the expression of the Divine within. The Divine pervades all existence, material as well as spiritual. Hence it is the sacred duty of physical-vital-mental man to evolve into a gnostic being, who also functions on the intuitive plane and on the plane of unconditioned joy. Sit near Mother Anandamayi and Her joy will touch you, invade you and you will forget, at least for the time being, that there are things like cares and anxieties in life. Such a temporary infusion of joy may make you ultimately mad for Joy Absolute and a life of *sadhana* may begin.

Put an abstruse metaphysical question to the Holy Mother, and see how spontaneously, without any effort, without the use of inferential processess, She convinces you. Once I had a serious difference of opinion

with a qualified monist and after spending a whole night arguing with him I approached Mother in the morning and She asked me, "By accepting which of the different schools of Vedanta can you accommodate the other schools most conveniently? I replied "Advaita Vedanta." She said, "Oh then his qualified monism can also be reconciled to your pure monism. Why did you then quarrel with him all night long? My son, you have as yet only intellectually approached the truth of pure monism. Had you actually realised the Truth, you would also have realised the relative truth of Mr. X. from the angle of vision of Mr. X. Mr. X may not have had the vision of the One, but if you have come to It, you should accommodate the many in the One which contains the many."

The Holy Mother does not like a philosopher of one school to try and coerce others into submission. Rather does she encourage him to support the view point of other seekers, when he is in their company. A devotee, having blind faith should stick to his blind faith. But a philosopher or a teacher, who knows the different theories of different schools of thought, should make an attempt to explain in the most logical way any particular view, held dear by a particular group of devotees.

Once I had to suffer for my dogmatism in this connection. During the last Dol Purnima Day (the full moon day of the Bengali month of Falgun, in which Lord Chaitanya was born), the Holy Mother was present, when at a religious conference at Brindaban, I delivered a speech on the message of Sri Chaitanya. It was well received. When I was requested to give another discourse the next day at the same conference, I began to explain the fundamentals of the "Synthesis of Yoga" by Sri Aurobindo, which lays special stress on work without attachment as sacrifice to the Lord, in view of the fact that free India needed Divine workers more than hermits living in seclusion or in Ashrams. The source of the thesis of Karmayoga as developed by Sri Aurobindo and as explained by me on that occasion, is what Lord Krishna preached to Arjuna in the Gita. And though everyone present in the audience was a devotee of Lord Krishna, most of them disliked my speech, because of the exuberance of my words. There was such a violent reaction that some learned pandits complained to the Holy Mother about my speech. I of course tried to justify myself, but ultimately became convinced that my talk had been an inopportune one. I was simply amazed to find in Mother a first class logician

with a wonderful sense of realism. She convinced me that not only the philosophical basis of life at Brindaban was quite different from that of other places, but also that an attempt at Divine work by ordinary sadhakas, who have not attained to a certain stage, would lead not to "Karma-Yoga" but to "Karma-bhoga", that is to say, the Sadhaka at initial stages may just rationalise his ordinary actions, which have been dictated by his lower nature. Hence some sadhakas, at some periods of their sadhana may require exclusive recourse to devotion after abandoning works of life. I was reminded of a reference to that effect by Sri Aurobindo himself in his "The Synthesis of Yoga." I came home and after self-scrutiny I discovered

that there is much unnecessary compromise with work in my life ; there is a huge gap, a make-belief, a sort of rationalisation of work that I cannot help doing. There has on many occasions been a slow imperceptible replacement of the Lord of Sacrifice by the Magnified Ego, and I believe it is the Grace of Mother alone, which will help me to annihilate the Ego completely and enthrone Vasudeva, the Divine, in its place, so that ultimately all my work of life, work of love and work of knowledge may be offered to the Lord of Sacrifice, to the Absolute, and not to Prakriti, the lower nature. It is in order to kill such great illusions that we require conscious efforts at surrendering to the will of the Mother, who by Her Grace can surely show us the Light.

DIARY LEAVES

ATMANANDA

(3)

“Never let your mouth be empty, keep *misri* (sugar-candy) in it at all times — namely the *misri* of God’s name. No bitterness will then have a chance of accumulating.” This is one of Mataji’s ever recurring sayings.

Once She visited a town after an absence of two or three years. She noticed that one of Her bhaktas kept a dainty little silver box with him, which he opened occasionally to take something out and put into his mouth. “What do you keep in this box ?” asked Mataji. “When you came here last,” was the reply, “you told me to keep *misri* in my mouth at all times. I have religiously been carrying out your advice; this is why I got this little silver box.” Mataji laughed : “Oh, is that it ? You see real sweetness can be got from God’s name only. What I meant was that you should never remain without the remembrance of God. Nevertheless,” She added, becoming quite serious, “you have done well to practise faithfully what you understood, for there-

by you have learnt a great lesson, which is to keep one thing in mind at all times. It will come in useful when you change over to the *misri* I meant”.

* * *

When the Satsang was over an old man was taking leave. “It is getting late,” he said, “I must be going home.” “Late indeed,” agreed Mataji, “there you are right ; but go to your real home, not to the Dharmasala”. The gentleman had no inkling of what Mataji was driving at. “I am not staying in any Dharmasala, I have my own house here”. Mataji shook Her head and smiled : “Do you call this home ? You won’t be able to stay there for ever. Your days are counted and when your time is over you have to leave. I call it Dharmasala. There are rules and regulations, you may remain for a while and then you have to quit. But this body tells you to find your real home from which nobody can drive you out, which is not of this world.

Dive deep and unearth your real wealth, find your real home in God who is your own Self."

* * *

"Mataji, what is the use of doing sadhana, japa, meditation, ceremonies and all the rest? We go on practising for years; but whether we get anywhere by all this exertion and self-denial we do not know. Does it bring us nearer to Reality?" This is a very common question and I have heard Mataji reply something like this :

"When you wash your clothes you have to apply soap. It is of course true that the clothes will not be clean unless the soap is rinsed off again. But can dirt be removed without soap? The thought of God is the soap that in the end has to be washed away by the purifying waters of the Ganges of Supreme Knowledge (*jnana ganga*). Don't worry about results. In business you give and you get something in return. This is called a bargain, but it is no real gain. If you adopt this sort of mercenary attitude you will not get anywhere. Never leave off your practice until there is Illumination. You must be adamant in your pursuit. The remembrance of God is like a flame. In whichever direction it is blown,

there it will burn up whatever gets into its way. According to your actions you will reap the fruits. No effort is ever wasted. Good works and bad works will yield their harvest in great abundance — for He is extremely generous. Perhaps you will argue: 'I want to be a king, but my wish is not granted.' You get exactly what is due to you—nothing less and nothing more. When a pitcher full of water has a hole, however small, all the water will leak away. This is how it is with you: your concentration is never complete, there is a break in it, you do not want anything with your whole being.

"A dose of poison kills a man. But the objects of the senses act like slow poison, gradually they push you towards death. So long as you are worldly-minded you get a 'return-ticket', you remain bound to the round of birth and re-birth, repeating the same kind of experience over and over again.

"God is immortal. If you aspire to find Him you become a pilgrim on the path to immortality. Try to keep company with the pilgrims of this path and you will realize your Self as the Immortal."

* * *

A great number of people approach Mataji with the following question : "I do not know how to meditate, neither do I feel inclined to do so. I cannot find much interest in spiritual things, but the hum-drum of daily existence has also little charm. What is the solution ?"

"What this little child would recommend for you", replies Mataji, "is to sit under a tree." (Mataji always speaks of Herself as a little child). "But there are no trees where I live," a lady once retorted and on another occasion someone said : "Under a tree ? What kind of tree ? A peepal tree ?" "Yes, a peepal tree," said Mataji. "By tree I mean a real saint. A saint is like a tree. He does not call anyone, neither does he send anyone away. He gives shelter to whoever cares to come, be it a man, woman, child or an animal. If you sit under a tree it will protect you from the inclemencies of the weather, from the scorching sun as well as from pouring rain, and it will give you flowers and fruit. Whether a human being enjoys them or a bird tastes of them matters little to the tree ; its produce is there for anyone who comes and takes it. And last but not least it gives itself. How itself ? The fruit contains the seeds for new trees of a similar kind. So by sitting under a

tree you will get shelter, shade, flowers, fruit and in due course you will come to know your Self. This is why I say, keep Satsang, take refuge at the feet of the Holy and Wise, keep close to them and you will find all you need."

"It is not so easy to get Satsang," people often contradict, "there is no great saint in my town or village." "If you can't get the company of living Sages," is Mataji's counsel, "read books about them or written by them, that is to say study sacred texts and above all try to remain in the Presence of God by the constant remembrance of one of His Names. If you do this you are sure to find a living Guru who will guide you."

* * *

When Mataji visited Meerut on Nov. 6th, 1954, the following conversation took place :

A Sannyasini : How is it that diversity has developed out of oneness ?

Mataji : Developed ? It is there.

The Sannyasini : Is it then nothing more than an appearance ?

Mataji : Your question itself contains the answer.

Question : How can we get Self-realization ?

Mataji : Not by anything. 'Some-

thing' means a little. By doing something you will get something which is not worth anything. God is Wholeness, Totality. When the clouds fade away He stands revealed. In very truth there is One Self, duality has no real existence. *Durbuddhi*, evil-mindedness and stupidity arise from the conception of duality — mine and thine. As a result there is *dūrgati*, hardship and misery and *durboḍh*, difficulty in understanding. The two, the pairs of opposites, (*dvandva*) are nothing but blindness (*andha*).

* * *

Here are two questions and answers from Bombay, during the Samyam Vrata.

Question : God has given us the sense of "I", He will remove it again. What need is there for self-surrender ?

Mataji : Why do you ask ? Just keep still and do nothing.

Question : How can one possibly keep still ?

Mataji : This is why self-surrender is necessary.

Question : God lavishes His Grace on some and not on others. How can one speak of equality and justice ?

Mataji : He does according to His pleasure.

Question : Why should His pleasure be to our cost ?

Mataji : Where there is 'mine' and 'thine' it appears as you complain. Actually He claps His own hands and hears Himself the sound—just the one SELF.

* * *

Mataji is very emphatic about the importance of obeying the Guru's orders implicitly without criticism.

"Be very careful whom you accept as your Guru. Don't be in a hurry. Take your time over it and use your intelligence. But once you have accepted a Guru it is irrevocable and you must surrender completely. If you fail in this, I maintain you have not accepted him as your Guru."

Several years ago some Westerners came to *Mataji* and had a discussion with Her, which throws an interesting sidelight on this question. One of them asked :

"How can I get Self-realization ?"

Mataji : "He is Self-effulgent, it is not you who can bring it about."

"Still, should we not make an effort ?"

"Yes, the Self is hidden by a veil, you have to wear it down by your own exertion."

"What is the process by which this can be accomplished ?"

"Do you really want Self-realization ?"

"Of course, I do !"

"Then are you prepared to do exactly as I tell you without letting your judgement interfere ?"

Here the gentleman became thoughtful and hesitated. He evidently was feeling uncomfortable.

Mataji smiled at him encouragingly.

At last he said :

"I regard Sri Ramana Maharshi as my Guru, but I have not met Him as yet. I intend going to Tiruvannamalai shortly." "Then you must do exactly as He instructs you," said Mataji, "but do you really want Self-

realization ?" "Certainly ; have I not come all the way to India for this purpose ?" "For this and nothing else ?" questioned Mataji once more. "For this and nothing else," confirmed the seeker. Three times Mataji had repeated the question and three times the response had been the same. Mataji became very serious. Her voice was definite and powerful when She spoke : "If this be so, if you want Self-realization and nothing else, it does not matter whether you do as I tell you. If you really want this one thing only, you *will* find a way, there is no doubt about it."

NOTES AND COMMENTS

With the next issue, the Birthday Number, the *Ānanda Vārtā* enters a new phase of its existence. A number of our subscribers have expressed their wish for separate editions in Hindi and Bengali, keeping the English portion in common. We have therefore decided to bring out two editions for each issue, one Bengali-English, the other Hindi-English. Since the volume of the magazine will remain more or less the same as hitherto, but be divided between two languages instead of three, there will consequently be much more reading-material for each language. We feel sure that our readers will greatly welcome this change.

Unless subscribers inform the Managing Editor to the contrary, all Bengali subscribers will receive the Bengali-English edition and all the others in India as well as abroad the Hindi-English one.

* * *

In our last report about Mataji's movements it was mentioned that She

left Brindaban for Hoshiarpur on October 14th, 1954, returning to Brindaban on October 24th for Divali. On Her way to Hoshiarpur She halted for a few hours at the Savitri Devi Ashram at Jullundur and again on Her way back stayed there from Oct. 20th to 22nd. Both times the High Commissioner of Pakistan came to pay his respects to Her. From there She proceeded to Khanna, a small town in the Punjab where one of the very great Saints of our time, Sri Triveni Puri Maharaj spent the greater part of his life. When at Shivaratri 1952 we had his last *darshan* at Hardwar, he looked hale and hearty in spite of his advanced age. We were looking forward to meeting him again at Khanna, where Mataji's birthday was to be celebrated the following May. Unfortunately he left his mortal frame a few weeks before the function began. His great devotee Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta with his usual energy and enthusiasm had at once set to work and managed not only to complete all the elaborate

arrangements for the celebrations, but also in an incredibly short time got a beautiful *Mahasamadhi Mandir* erected for the departed sage. It was up in its main structure so that perpetual Kirtan could be held there day and night throughout the birthday celebrations. This time Mataji found the *Mandir* completed to the last touch. As on the former occasion Sri Avadhutaji himself saw to all preparations for the stay of Sri Mataji, Sri Haribabaji and their parties. Everyone was amazed to see how perfectly every minute detail had been thought out; one could not help wondering at the remarkable efficiency and foresight in all practical matters displayed by a Sannyasi of so many years standing. One day the Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan came for Mataji's *darshan*. Inspired by Her presence he went into some kind of ecstasy, began to perform *Namaz* and recited from the Koran for nearly three hours. He was expected at Jullundur the same evening, but cancelled his journey, so as to enjoy a few more hours of Mataji's company and remained at Khanna over night. He felt that to have met Mataji was a unique and momentous event in his life.

From Khanna Mataji motored to Delhi on October 24th and left for Brindaban the same afternoon in time

for the *Divali* Festival. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture for the U. P., Sri J. P. Rawat, who had met Mataji first at the Kumbh Mela and again during Her birthday celebrations at Almora, was eager to arrange for a celebration of *Annakut* in Mataji's presence at Govardhan. People had already gathered from far and near, when at the 11th hour he himself was compelled to cancel the function due to the sudden death of Minister Kidwai. He expressed his regret by phone and later in person. *Annakut* was observed at Brindaban.

On Nov. 5th Mataji proceeded to Delhi from where She made a short trip to Meerut on the 6th, returning to Delhi on the 7th, and to Karanvas on the 8th. Some years ago Swami Nirmalanandaji, a Sannyasi of repute, had requested Her to visit his beautiful Ashram on the banks of the Ganges at Karanvas. Mataji stayed there for one night and the Swamiji in his turn passed the following day at Mataji's Ashram at Chandraloka, Delhi. On Nov. 12th Mataji went back to Brindaban from where She took the Mail to Bombay on the 13th, alighting there on the 14th morning. The *Samyam Mahavrata* had been fixed for Nov. 18th to 24th.

Ever since Sri S. N. Sopori, a devotee of Mataji, had been transferred to Bombay, he had been trying

to persuade Mataji to bless this city with a longer visit than the usual two or three days. When his proposal to celebrate Her last birthday there did not materialize, he offered to arrange for *Samyam Vrata* in November. Many of us shook our heads, puzzled at his enterprise and courage. How could a secluded place large enough for such a function be found in an overcrowded city like Bombay! At first the Lakshmi Narayan Temple at Santa Cruz was thought of as a suitable site for the Satsang, while visitors were to be distributed at various places round about. But the hall was found far too small for the purpose and besides there was the problem of space to cook in and for meals. The situation looked none too hopeful when about a fortnight before the function was to begin, Sri Sopori approached Sri B. K. Shah, the General Manager of the New India Assurance Co. Ltd., who fortunately knew a way out of the difficulty. He very kindly offered to make available two beautiful bungalows situated in a palmgrove directly on the sea beach at Juhu. They had been lying vacant for 5 or 6 years due to some litigation, and happened to be at his disposal. It is true the palmgrove had grown into a regular jungle and moreover there had been a murder in or near the

compound a few months previous, the body of the victim having been found in a tank on the estate. The houses were known as "*bhuta bungalows*"* and people felt afraid to go near them after dusk. However Sri Shah at once deputed a contractor to cut down the jungle and see to all the necessary repairs. The bungalows although well-built and comfortable, with mosaic flooring, several good bathrooms etc. were in a sorely neglected condition. It seemed quite a miracle to put them into working order in the course of a few days and in addition to this to construct a room for Mataji on the roof of one of the bungalows, as She will not enter a house where families have lived. The room was beautiful and comfortable although it consisted chiefly of cardboard and matting, the materials having been procured from a film studio. A pandal for Satsang measuring 75 × 100 ft. was erected, tastefully decorated and fitted up with lights, loudspeakers, etc. — in fact everything was thought out and provided for in a truly perfect manner. A few flats had also been rented in the close vicinity, and thus the unbelievable actually happened : in the outskirts of the congested city which is suffering from acute shortage of accommodation, about 100 visitors were put up with-

* *Bhuta* means ghost.

out crowding, enjoying comforts they had never expected, besides a wonderful view over the open sea and lofty palmtrees overhead swaying in the gentle cool breeze. It is no exaggeration to say that the place was ideal. Many of us were soon secretly wishing we could stay on after the *Samyam Week*, when lo and behold Mataji extended Her sojourn up to Dec. 4th night, instead of leaving on Nov. 25th as originally contemplated. Although on the first day Mataji did see a shadowy human form hovering about, which might well have been the ghost of the murdered man, the haunted place turned out to be an abode of happiness, harmony and peace, quite like an Ashram. Many things that happen around Mataji have a deep significance and the places specially connected with Her have often been found to have a remarkable history. To mention only a few examples: Just recently a temple of *Sri Vindhyavasini* about 1000 years old has been excavated at the very gate of Mataji's Ashram at Vindhychal. It is believed that this was the original temple which had been destroyed during the Mohammedan invasion centuries ago, whereas the new temple is about two miles away.

Those who have read Bhaiji's book

"Mother as Revealed to Me"* will call to mind that the Dacca Ashram was built on a site where, as Mataji told Bhaiji, some Sannyasis had lived long ago and he himself had been one of them. Actually bones and skeletons were unearthed when the foundations were dug. — When digging the ground on which the Banaras Ashram stands two Shiva Lingas came to light, which are now kept in the Annapurna Temple of the Ashram. In Bombay Mataji was heard to say: "Do you think it is by mere chance that this function is being held here and in no other spot?"

It would amount to unnecessary repetition to write about the *Samyam Vrata* itself, as elaborate reports of the first three *Samyam Weeks* at Banaras, Vindhychal and Calcutta have appeared in the pages of this magazine.† Moreover invitations with its detailed programme, diet, rules and regulations were sent to all our subscribers. Suffice it to say that the whole function was a great success in every respect.

Sri Haribabaji Maharaj, Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta, Sri Swatantranandaji, Sri Chakrapaniji and the Mahant and Sannyasis of the Vile Parle Sannyasashram, were present and gave illuminating and inspiring discourses. The last item of the daily

* *Matri Darshan*.

† See *Ananda Varta* Vol. I. No. 2, & Vol. I No. 5

programme 'Conversation with Mataji' was no doubt the most popular one. Although Juhu is about 12 miles distance from the heart of the city, often 20-30 cars were parked in the compound, while the greater part of the congregation came by train and bus.

Samyam Vrata was observed simultaneously in all Sri Anandamayi Ashrams. We are happy to state that reports have been received from a great number of devotees who kept the *Samyam Vrata* in their own homes, many of them choosing Class A for their diet, taking delight in submitting to the Spartan regime, as they derive great benefit from it. Amongst other things it gives them an opportunity of freeing themselves from old habits such as smoking, chewing pan, drinking tea, etc.

From the outset the Bombay bhaktas had been eager to arrange for a *Bhagavata Saptaha* to follow the *Samyam Vrata*. Nothing had been decided. At the urgent request of the Mahant and the Sannyasis of the Vile Parle Sannyasashram, (where Mataji had stayed two years before) the *Bhagavata Saptaha* was held at the Sannyasashram. Everyone remained at Juhu where the morning and evening Satsang was continued, but every afternoon Mataji used to be present

at Vile Parle for the Hindi exposition of the *Srimad Bhagavata*.

On Dec. 4th Mataji travelled to Bhimpura. The Ashram there is in a beautiful, secluded spot near Chandod, on an elevation at the apex of the bend of the river, with a wonderful view of the surrounding hills. The river Narbada is supposed to be as holy as the Ganges. Since ancient times many sadhakas and saints have practised austerities along its banks. Some of us went by boat to see the places where the Rishis Sukadeva and Vyas are said to have resided, and at Vyas we were shown the room where many years before the Ashram was built, Mataji had spent some time. At present also there are a number of Ashrams in the vicinity. Mahatmas and Mahants came daily to see Mataji and in turn invited Her and Her party to their own places. The villagers of Bhimpura are *Bheels*, a tribe who practise an original kind of Kirtan which they combine with the playing of cymbals and rhythmic movements of the whole body. Every evening they came and performed in the Ashram hall and on the last day the whole of the village, men, women and children, were invited for dinner. Whenever Mataji visits Bhimpura Her bhaktas from Rajpipla (a town close by) leave

their homes in order to camp in the Ashram grounds and act as extremely generous and attentive hosts to anyone who happens to come. On these occasions the place that is usually so solitary teems with life.

On Dec. 10th Mataji journeyed to Ahmedabad, putting up as usual in a specially constructed room in the garden of Sri K. C. Munshaw who always makes excellent arrangements for Her and Her party. This time a *Bhagavata Saptaha* was held in Gujarati in commemoration of his mother who had recently passed away. The spacious, beautifully decorated pandal could not hold the audience and had to be enlarged during the second half of the week. Mataji used to be present for about an hour each at both the morning and afternoon sessions. She also accepted invitations to several Ashrams, schools and private houses in Ahmedabad. The night of Dec. 20th and the following day were spent at the house of Sri Mukund Madhav Thakur. At the Kirtan in his garden Mataji delighted the large audience by singing for quite a long time.

On the next night Mataji entrained for Bhopal, where She was the guest of the I. G. P., Sri S. N. Aga, an old devotee. Her very short visit of one night and half a day was extraordinarily well organized and made the

most of. All the state officials from the Nawab, the Chief Minister and Chief Commissioner down to the last constable came to pay homage to Mataji. On the morning of the 23rd She was taken round the city and received with due honours at the residences of the Nawab and of every one of the chief officers.

On Dec. 24th She arrived in Banaras after an absence of over three months. From Dec. 26th—30th the Gita Jayanti was celebrated by Sri Gopal Thakur, who every year comes from Allahabad for this occasion.

On Jan. 5th, 1955 Mataji left for Rajagriha, where a small Ashram consisting of two rooms had only just been built. The day before Mataji's arrival *Griha Pravesh Puja* had been duly performed. Rajagriha, now a small town about 50 miles from Patna, was long ago one of the six chief cities of India and at the time of the Buddha's death had 18 large monasteries. The Lord Buddha went to Rajagriha after renouncing and again soon after Enlightenment. King Bimbisara entertained Him and His monks at the palace and gifted Veluvana to the order. It is said that Lord Buddha spent several rainy seasons there and also one winter and one summer. After His death the King collected various relics and built a large Stupa over them.

Rajagriha is also well-known for its hot springs that have cured many from all sorts of rheumatic pains, skin diseases and other ailments.

One of the extraordinary things about Mataji is that She hardly ever has a bath, generally not more than two or three times a year. At Rajagriha however she bathed in the hot springs on three nights.

On Jan. 17th Mataji returned to Banaras. In previous issues mention has been made of Didi's (Gurupriya Devi) ill-health. Sri Haribabaji Maharaj who has deep sympathy for the suffering of others has been showing much concern at her indisposition. Being a great saint he believes in God's Name as the panacea for all evils including illnesses and has been anxious to effect or at least speed up Didi's cure in this way. Already at Brindaban he induced his followers to arrange for special kirtans and the reading of scriptures with this purpose

in view. At his advice the "Chandi" was chanted a hundred times (*Shata Chandi Patha*) by ten Brahmins at the Chandi Mandap of the Banaras Ashram from Jan. 19th to 29th, followed by a *yajna* on the 30th. Sri Haribabaji came in person from Bombay and stayed for about seven days. He was present when a new *Anushtan* was started on the 31st, namely *Rudrabhisheka* recited by twelve Brahmins for eleven days, followed by another *Yajna* on February 11th.

On Jan. 27th Mataji motored to Allahabad for two nights and a day, to be present at the *Saraswati Puja* on *Vasant Panchami* day. She went to Vindhyaachal on February 12th for three days and She is expected to remain at Banaras over Shivaratri, after which She will most probably visit Brindaban.

It has been announced at Bombay that the next *Samyam Vrata* will be held at Delhi.