

"The ONE who is the Eternal, the Atman,
He Himself is the traveller on the path to Immortality,
He is all in all, He alone is."

MATRI VANI

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

On Various Subjects

29.

Without fail pray to God, He drives away all sorrow.

30.

Rest assured the will of the Almighty reigns supreme. At all times
rely wholly on Him.

31.

It is man's duty ever to meditate upon the One Reality.

32.

He should let his thoughts dwell on God as much as possible. His
feelings are fine and he expresses them in beautiful, sweet sounding words.
But does he practise *Japa* and read the *Gita* regularly? He would do well to
devote some time daily to the study of Scriptures.

33.

Such is the Will of the Almighty. Verily, whatever comes to pass is an expression of His Will. Abiding in patience perform your duty. Depend on God absolutely and hold Him in remembrance—Him and Him alone !

34.

It is possible to practise God's Name under the most adverse circumstances. He causes everything to happen and hence is ever near.

35.

Silent Japa should be engaged in at all times. One must not waste breath uselessly : whenever one has nothing special to do one should silently practise *Japa* in rhythm with one's breathing—in fact this exercise ought to go on continually until doing Japa has become as natural as breathing.

It is of great value to read sacred texts and books of wisdom. Speak the truth. Bear in mind that God's Name is He Himself in one form —let it be your inseparable companion. Try your utmost never to remain without Him. The more intense and continuous your efforts to dwell in His Presence, the greater is the likelihood of your growing joyful and serene. When your mind becomes quite vacant at least try to fill it with the awareness of God or His contemplation.

36.

Let the thought of God remain with you and do service with the conviction that while serving whomsoever it may be, you are serving the ONE who alone exists.

37.

When there is constant effort to grow into awareness of THAT which IS, there is hope that in time this awareness may become permanent.

38.

Always keep yourself in a state which is favourable to the contemplation of the Divine. Thus the right sustenance for the mind will be provided.

39.

One should attempt to dwell in the thought of the Supreme without a break. Then only full enlightenment may come.

40.

Put your trust in God and let your mind be engaged in *Japa* and meditation.

41.

At every moment sustain the flow of His Name and the consciousness of His Presence. Never be without Him.

Mataji's Amara Vani

(9)*

Mataji:—This was said because of the limitation that is the individual's very nature. If someone still sees bondage (which implies duality), how can he be called 'liberated' ? For the liberated there is no such thing as seeing another. Although there is a state (of achievement) where seeing another still exists, can there in reality be a question of liberation and bondage ?

You, with your head, your hands, feet, fingers and toes, with all the different parts of your body are one single living being. Yet again, you may think of yourself not as one individual but a conglomeration of innumerable entities, for in every pore of your skin exist countless living organisms. Moreover you increase and decrease in size, you change in various ways and in each of these conditions you are a different individual. First you were a small infant and now that you have grown up, do you mean to say you are not the same person as that little child ? If you were not, where would be this body of yours ? Do not think this is untrue !

Take the case of your *having gone* to a place, say for instance 'home', of your *going* there and of your *being* already in it. This implies that appearance, existence and disappearance occur together at all times. You should understand that when you raise your foot with the intention of going somewhere, you have already left your place and taken up a new one ; therein lies movement and stability simultaneously. Expressed from one point of view there is stability in the form of movement, yet on the other hand, you have set your foot — but where ? Where it was, there it is.— This is difficult to grasp.

Creation, preservation and dissolution are constantly in process and all of them are within you. Try to fathom the end of yourself, if you can ! You exist, this is why the universe exists : the whole universe is within you. Past and future, this world and the next — indeed everything is

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contained in you. Therefore inasmuch as — with the entire universe held within yourself — you are free, the fact of your eternal freedom stands revealed and the question of anyone being in bondage does no longer arise. You exist, so the universe exists ; this is what has been discussed just now. As was explained by this body the other day, all is contained in everything

You are wanted and someone calls you by the name of Ram. Someone else objects : "Why do you call him Ram ? We donot see Ram, we see Kamal !" Mind you, this body never tells lies, whatever it utters is the pure, unalloyed truth : just as it is true that you are Kamal, it is equally true that you are Ram. This is so in the state where falsehood is never perceived, where whatever anyone may say is true.

Suppose a man is known under a certain name. At his request he is given another name. Does he become the least bit greater or smaller by assuming a new name ? A person remains as dear with one name as with another. Affection which is born of time may of course increase or decrease, but not because of a change of name. Every man is given a name, but he might just as well have been given a different one. You are just as much Ram as you are Kamal ; this is the truth and nothing but the truth. Thus expressed from this view point all names and forms and also the formless — whatever is manifest or unmanifest in the universe — is contained in you. To realize one's Self means to realize all things as identical with one's Self. Fundamentally there is HE only ; HE, the ONE alone is liberated.

This body says that everything is contained in each and every thing. Take the example of this body losing at times its normal character as regards movement, etc. Suppose this body was going in a particular direction, but suddenly, without any apparent reason, would start moving in another direction. The question why I had changed my course of movement did not arise in the way that you were puzzled at Kamal being addressed as 'Ram'. Really and truly everything is contained in everything ; all that has been brought forward just now is to make clear this fact.

Now and again this body talks to you as one speaks either to a very young child or a person of extreme old age ; this, in some way, is what is happening also now. In spite of your being quite grown up, this body addresses the child in you, not however out of mistake or error. You say

it is incorrect, wrong — but in reality falsehood and error are also HE. There is only the ONE, HE and not other.

Mataji spoke again in reply to another question.

Mataji :—The stages of childhood, old age and so forth do not only exist each separately, but also simultaneously and in the same place. He who maintains that two things cannot occupy one and the same place at the same time, has not realized either the ONE or the two and hence how can he realize the Infinite? In a certain state of being there is no question of the ONE, the two or an infinite number, no question of realization or non-realization — what is, is HE. Realization and the rest are mentioned merely in order to help you to understand. Furthermore he who has realized the ONE has thereby realized the two and the many at one and the same time, in one and the same place.

Why is it that you are constantly haunted by a sense of want? Because you believe without the least doubt that your want has been fulfilled, while this is not the case. From your standpoint, to say that everything is contained in the ONE and that the ONE pervades everything, represents a particular angle of vision.

Divinity is complete, whole; nothing whatsoever can be excluded from it. Thus there are and must ever be new expressions according to the varying modes that are being manifested at different times and places. Nothing without exception can be rejected or left out where Truth is revealed in its purity.

Now Mataji replied to another question.

Mataji :—Owing to the fact that your vision is one-sided, you ask: "Is the particular a part of the whole or is everything to be found in one place?" This body maintains that you may put it in any way you like. Where everything is present in everything, whether you call it a part of the whole, or whether you say all is in one place — the question of eliminating or ruling out anything simply does not arise, in other words there can be nothing that is barred. What this body utters depends on what and how much you draw out of it at any particular time. The sound you hear is determined by the nature and the amount of what you play on, the

instrument. Do not imagine that what has been said here represents the opinion of this body. If you declare that this body neither holds nor rejects any doctrine, it is so; but if you say the reverse — whatever you may think, is equally correct.

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During Mataji's stay at Solan in summer, 1952, a Government Official of the Himachal Pradesh and his wife came for Mataji's Darshan. They were meeting Her for the first time. Mataji spoke to them as follows :

Mataji :— If you say you have no faith, this body insists that you should try to establish yourself in the conviction that you have no faith. Where "no" is, "yes" is potentially there as well. Who can claim to be beyond negation and affirmation? To have faith is imperative. The natural impulse to have faith in something which is deep-rooted in man, develops into faith in God. This is why human birth is such a great boon. It cannot be said that no one has faith. Everyone surely believes in something or other.

The word '*manush*' (man) is derived from '*man*' and '*hush*', which denotes the mind's awareness and vigilance. This shows that man's true calling is to attain to Self-knowledge. When children learn to read and write they have to accept rebuke and censure. God too, now and again administers to man a mild beating — this is, but a token of His Mercy. From the worldly standpoint such blows are considered extremely painful, but actually they bring about a change of heart and lead to Peace: by disturbing worldly happiness they induce man to seek the path to Supreme Bliss.

It is of course true that the human body lives on breathing and hence there is suffering. There are two kinds of pilgrims on life's journey: the one like a tourist is keen on sight-seeing, wandering from place to place, flitting from one experience to another for the fun of it. The other traveller treads the path that is consistent with man's true being and which leads to his real home, to Self-knowledge. Sorrow will, of a certainty be encountered on the journey undertaken for the sake of sight-seeing and enjoyment. So long as one's real home has not been

found suffering is inevitable. The sense of separateness is the root-cause of misery, because it is founded on error, on the conception of duality. This is why the world is called 'du-niya' — (based on duality).

A man's belief is greatly influenced by his environment, therefore he should choose the company of the Holy and Wise. Belief means to believe in one's Self, disbelief to mistake the non-Self for one's Self.

There are instances of Self-realization occurring through the Grace of God, whereas at times it can be seen that He awakens in some men a feverish yearning after Truth. In the first case attainment comes spontaneously, in the second it is brought about through trials. But all is wrought solely by His Mercy.

Man thinks he is the doer of his actions, while actually everything is managed from 'there'; the connection is *there* as well as the power-house — yet people say: "I do". How wonderful it is! When in spite of all efforts one fails to catch a train, does this not make it clear from where all one's movements are being directed? Whatever is to happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time, is all fixed by Him; His arrangements are perfect.

An eternal relationship exists between God and man. But in His Play it is sometimes there and sometimes broken, or rather appears to be broken, it is not really so, for the relationship is eternal. Again seen from another side there is no such thing as relationship. Someone, who came to meet this body said: "I am a newcomer to you." He got the reply: "Ever new and ever old indeed!"

The light of the world comes and goes, it is unstable. The Light which is eternal can never be extinguished. By that Light you behold the outer light and everything in the universe; only because It always shines within you, can you perceive the outer light. Whatever appears to you in the universe is due only to that great Light within you, and solely because the Supreme Knowledge of the essence of things lies hidden in the depths of your being is it possible for you to acquire knowledge of anything.

Sometimes it happens that the meeting of people with this body is quite unexpected by them.

(This remark refers to the way the official and his wife met Mataji quite suddenly.)

The human brain may be compared to the root of a tree; if the root is watered, nourishment spreads to every part of the plant. There are occasions when you say your brain is tired. When does this happen? When you are overbusy with outer things. But as soon as you return home and talk to your near and dear ones, your head feels light and you are full of joy. For this reason it is said, because your brain belongs to yourself your own work does not produce weariness. Really speaking all work is your own — only how can you understand this? Indeed the whole world is yours, of your Self, your very own — but you perceive it as separate, just as you see others. To know it to be your own gives happiness, but the notion that it is apart from you causes misery. To perceive duality means pain, conflict, struggle and death.

Pitaji, do take to some kind of *Sadhana*!

The official: It is all in God's hands.

Mataji:—Exactly! Always bear this in mind: "Everything is in God's hands and I am His tool to be used by Him as He pleases. "Try to grasp the significance of "all is His!" and you will immediately feel free from all burdens. What will be the result of your surrender to Him? None will seem alien, all will be your very own, your Self.

Either dissolve by devotion the feeling of separateness or burn it by Knowledge — for what is it that dissolves or burns? Only what is soluble, only what is combustible, namely the idea that something other than your Self exists. What will happen then? You come to know your Self.

By virtue of the Guru's power everything becomes possible, therefore seek a Guru. Besides all names are His Name, all forms His Form. Select one of them and keep it with you as your constant companion. At the same time He is also nameless and formless; for the Supreme it is possible to be everything and yet nothing. So long as you have not found a Guru, adhere to the name or form of Him that appeals to you most, and ceaselessly pray He may reveal Himself to you as the *Sad-Guru*. In very truth the Guru dwells within, and unless you discover the inner Guru, nothing can be achieved. If you feel no desire to turn to God, bind yourself by a daily routine of *Sadhana*, as school children do, whose duty it is to follow a fixed time-table.

When prayer does not spontaneously flow from your heart, ask yourself: "Why do I find pleasure in the fleeting things of this world?" If you crave for some outer thing or feel attraction for a person, you should pause and say to yourself; "Look out, you are being fascinated by the glamour of this!" Is there a place where God is not? Family life, which is the Ashram of the householder can also take you in His direction, provided it is accepted as an Ashram. Lived in this spirit it helps man to progress towards Self-realization. Nevertheless if you hanker after anything such as name, fame or position, God will bestow it on you, but you will not feel satisfied. The Kingdom of God is a whole and unless you are admitted to the whole of it you cannot remain content. He grants you a little only to keep your discontent alive, for without discontent there can be no progress. You, a scion of the Immortal can never become reconciled to the realm of death, neither does God allow you to remain in it. He Himself kindles the sense of want in you by granting you a small thing, only to whet your appetite for a greater one. This is His method by which He urges you on. The traveller on this path finds it difficult and feels troubled, but one who has eyes to see, can clearly perceive that the pilgrim is advancing. The distress that is experienced burns to ashes all pleasure derived from worldly things. This is what is called 'Tapasya.' What obstructs one on the spiritual path bears within itself seeds of future suffering. Yet the heartache, the anguish over the effects of these obstructions are the beginning of awakening to Self-Consciousness.

Glimpses of Mataji's Life

(Continued from last issue.)

Bholanath lost his post in 1924 and came to Dacca to look for work. Unable to find employment he was on the point of sending Mataji home, when She told him to wait for another three days. Within that time he was appointed manager of the Nawab's Shahbagh gardens. He remained in this position for four years.

Mataji gradually began to be known widely and very many people came to see Her daily. But She was still the retiring young wife and kept Her face a little veiled. Men found it difficult to approach Her and were obliged to worship Her from a distance. If Bholanath asked Her to speak to anyone She would do so, but not otherwise. The women of the neighbourhood, however, loved to gather round Her.

Sm. Gurupriya Devi (who now is known as Didi), saw Mataji at Dacca for the first time. Didi has been Her almost constant companion ever since. Bhaiji (Sri Jyotish Ch. Rai), the greatest of all Her devotees, also met Her at Dacca.

Didi, who saw Mataji work, says that all Her movements were very brisk, neat and economical. She could compress a great deal of work

into a very short period of time. She never put off anything to be done later. She could competently deal with unexpected tasks or unexpected guests without getting flustered, and of course no one has ever seen Her getting annoyed or irritated even in the face of severe provocation. The inimitable perfection of human qualities in Mataji would in themselves suffice to make Her unique.

In January 1926 Kirtan was performed at Shahbagh during the solar eclipse. Mataji was sitting with the women in an adjoining room. Gradually Her eyes closed and Her body began to move in rhythm to the Kirtan. Slowly and shakily She stood up. It was obvious to all that She did not control Her movements and was oblivious of Her surroundings. Mataji had a beautiful and graceful way of wearing Her clothes so that no part of Her body except Her face, hands and feet was visible. But now She did not seem to be aware of the fact that Her clothes had become disarranged. Didi and others, seeing Her strange condition, tied up Her sari. Didi writes, "It looked as if Mataji's body was being wafted by the wind. Sometimes She fell and

got up in the same rhythm without appearing to be hurt. In this manner She entered the kirtan room and fell down in the centre of it. A strange effulgence enveloped Her body, which in the lying posture began to revolve at a tremendous speed. I tried to hold Her but found it impossible to check that force. Mataji's body moved like a dry leaf in a strong wind.....After a short while She sat up, and slowly Her body regained its normal condition." This was the first time that Mataji's 'bhava' was publicly seen. Witnesses say that the variety of Mataji's 'bhava' was infinite and indescribable. The learned realized that this was the ideal 'bhava' described in the Shastras and except in the divine personality of Sri Gauranga had never been manifested in any other mortal body.

It became increasingly difficult for Mataji to carry on Her house-work. Didi and others helped Her with this. She had always personally looked after Bholanath, but now all work seemed to fall away from Her.

All changes came about in Her spontaneously, so no one could take exception to this new phase of Her life.

Mataji also followed various rules in the matter of diet. For days, She would eat only three morsels of food once daily. Then again She began

taking boiled rice just nine grains in number. At another time Her meals consisted of whatever one person could give Her in one breath. On two occasions She remained even without water, once for 16 and at another time for 23 days.

Throughout these fasts Her manner was normal and She did not seem to feel the effects of these vigorous observances.

Visitors began to take up much of Her time. At Bholanath's repeated requests She started mixing with people and talking to them. The women folk surrounded Her during the day and the men after working hours.

At that time manifestations of certain miraculous powers became so natural to Her that people were led to take them quite for granted.

Many approached Her to get their sick cured by Her healing touch, while others came to seek spiritual solace. Her words and advice had a living reality and power not easily to be encountered elsewhere. Every individual found his true worth assessed and his questions dealt with accordingly.

Mataji started travelling about a little and in 1928, came to Banaras where for the first time She sat in an open assembly and answered questions on spiritual matters.

Mataji had never studied the Shastris and whatever She said was from Her own direct knowledge. As such the inner realities of spiritual life became invested with a forceful and convincing character all their own. She seemed to be fully versed in the Sadhana of every faith and creed.

In fact She says that books and scriptures cannot give one thousandth part of all that is involved in the paths of Sadhana.

In 1932 Mataji left Bengal and came to Uttar Pradesh with Bhola-nath and Bhaiji. Arriving at the Howrah Station they saw a train just about to leave. Mataji asked Bhaiji to purchase tickets up to the terminus. The train happened to be the Dehra Dun Express and so they travelled to Dehra Dun. From there they proceeded to Raipur, a village near Dehra Dun. Mataji told the villagers that Bhaiji was Her spiritual son. They led the lives of mendicants, putting up in a room near an ancient Shiva temple, which protected them neither from the sun nor the rain. This marks the starting point of Mataji's endless and tireless peregrinations throughout India. There were no fixed plans. No arrangements were made beforehand and frequently She and Her companions started off without money or other necessities. Some-

times She would come to the station and board the first train that happened to arrive. She would stop and make friends with people in the most unlikely of places.

Except for Her strikingly unusual personality, Mataji's demeanour had acquired its normal aspect. She mixed with people easily and freely and quickly picked up the language and customs of the provinces She passed through.

Harakumar's prophecy was nearing fulfilment. Men, women and children of all classes and castes from all over India, professing different faiths and different creeds surrounded Her day and night.

Once someone asked Mataji, "Don't you ever get tired of us? All outsiders surrounding you day and night?"

Mataji answered, "I would, if there were any 'others' for Me. One does not feel annoyed with oneself."

In 1937 Mataji accompanied by a few friends went to visit the majestic grandeur of Mount Kailash. Near 'Manas Sarovar' Bhaiji was overcome by a spirit of supreme renunciation. Sannyasa Mantras spontaneously issued from Mataji's lips.

On their way back Bhaiji passed away at Almora. A beautiful Ashram has grown up around his samadhi.

Bhaiji's devotion and renunciation will ever be a source of inspiration to those who would follow the 'razor's edge' path to self-realization.

After returning from the mountains Mataji went on an extensive tour to Gujrat and the surrounding provinces.

Since then She has visited the southernmost point of India twice and travelled all over India extensively.

The haphazard method of Her travels has undergone a change now. On some occasions Her itinerary is fixed up as long as six months beforehand.

She occupies an unique place in the spiritual life of India now, but She does not claim any such position for Herself. In fact She refuses to sit on a higher level than the humblest of Sadhus in saffron clothes.

She says, "Though this body has aged, I am really a tiny little girl, and beg you all to love and remember me as you would love your own daughter. All young people are my friends, their parents are my parents; as such I am entitled to the affection of all."

Mataji is now 59 years old. She dresses in complete white. Her soft black hair falls over Her shoulders or is sometimes tied in a knot on Her head.

She has no particular message to give to the world, since all messages are Hers. There is no special truth for Her: She for whom All is Truth and Truth is All cannot accept one and discard another.

To Mataji comes he who is highly spiritual and also the complete unbeliever, the old on the verge of departing from this life and the young on its threshold. All differences and distinctions find their true worth in Mataji's understanding. No aspect of life, from the utterly superficial to the most significant, is without meaning to Her.

In fact Her message, "has all the variety and iridescence of life itself and its elusiveness too, so that any reproduction of it can scarcely retain its peculiar consistency and flavour."

Perhaps there is one unifying principle underlying the diversity of Her message, : Rise from the ephemeral to the Everlasting.

Unity of Prophets and Saints

Baron H. P. van Tuyll van Serooskerken

(Continued from last issue.)

Brotherhood did not play its part, not because it was not preached, but because it was not accepted. In Vana Parva, Section 179, on the question, "Does not the distinction of class become futile as long as conduct does not come into play"; Yudhishthira answers, "In human society it is difficult to ascertain one's caste. Whosoever conforms to the rules of pure and virtuous conduct, him have I designated a Brahmana." Also the Lord Buddha declared himself at different occasions against the caste system. More than a thousand years later there came to India a race with a living ideal of brotherhood and what they, among other things, were meant to bring was their ideal of brotherhood. Perhaps they did not bring it in the most friendly way, but oppression is always a warning from God. Great things, agreeable or disagreeable, have always deep roots. When not taken to heart, a more severe oppression or punishment may follow, even in these present times. The destiny of history is prepared by ourselves and let loose by God as a serious warning. Not before 1900 was God's word — already

expressed in the Mahabharata—not to keep the caste system as rigidly as it was done before, beginning to be understood. The caste system was good, even splendid, in the age of Manu, becoming later less fitting, to become obsolete in our days. Of course Mahatma Gandhi did a great work for his native country, but it should go on and not fall back again.

The Message of these days is harmony between castes and nations, between creeds and religions.

Enemies of the past should forgive each other and join hands in building a new ideal. To forgive each other, because God Himself is always willing to forgive, brings a great blessing in life. And as for looking at the past it is always wiser to look at what should be forgiven by others to us than at what we have to forgive them.

People nowadays judge God because of what we, human beings, cruelly did to each other, not seeing that our destiny was prepared by ourselves. To obey God's Word and to listen to the prophets and saints is the greatest virtue mankind can

develop and certainly the safest way for it to take. Only if man wants to listen to God's Messengers and to understand that all the saints and the prophets are a unity and have together one Voice, he will be on a safe way.

Now let me show you, how the three above mentioned saints, Shri Maharshi, Murshid Inayat Khan and Shri Anandamayi Ma bring the same Message by which they inaugurate a new age. Therefore they are more than saints, they are prophets.

On page 5 of that most inspiring booklet "Maharshi's Gospel" we find the question: "What is the highest goal?" and Shri Maharshi's answer: "Self-realization." On page 37 of the same booklet, the question: "Who then is God?" is answered with, "The Self is God. 'I am' is God." This is not the typical Yoga point of view from before the days of Krishna, which one still so often finds in India, but it is turning towards Bhakti Yoga, of which—if universally looked at—Sufism is the latest exponent. The Yogi's ideal is to reach God-realization through Self-realization and Sufism, just as Bhakti-Yoga, has as its ideal to reach Self-realization through God-realization. This also forms part of the prophetic message of this age.

The central theme of Shri Ananda-

mayi Ma's teaching is to be found in Her words: "All names are His Names, all forms His Forms, all qualities His Qualities, the nameless and the formless are also He alone."

"Ascending and descending are one and the same thing, He who ascends is He who descends and the acts of ascending and descending are also He."

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

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

"Pray to Him that you may continue to remain at His feet all the twenty-four hours of the day."

Compare herewith the answer Murshid Inayat Khan gave to the question: "Will you explain that the traveller on the path, the source and the goal is the I, the soul itself?" and the answer was: "Not only the soul itself, but even God itself."

Murshid Inayat Khan's replies to three questions which were put to him, also illustrate this point:

Who is the Beloved of the Sufi?
Answer: God.

Who is the God of the Sufi?
Answer: His very Being.

What is the ideal of the Sufi?
Answer: Man.

Still more remarkable from the point of view of the identity of the

Messages of these three saints is, what we read on page 43 of the "Maharshi's Gospel" : "There is really no reincarnation at all, either now or before", while on page 28 it says : "But the individuality of the person with samskaras is not lost."

This is for a Hindu teacher a very extreme point of view to take, though it must be said that in the Bhagavad Gita the teaching about reincarnation is not as rigid as it is mostly believed to be. And does Chandogya Upanishad not say : "Truly one's fellowmen, departed once, do not get back to look at here (this world)."

Non-reincarnation has always been the belief of the Islamic and Christian religions. But what does the Sufi-teacher Murshid Inayat Khan say about it ? He says : non-reincarnation and re-incarnation are both theories, the one as good and as false as the other. This concerns only a difference of words. It is not possible to express the truth in words. Both theories, are true to a certain degree. Inayat Khan said : "The soul does not reincarnate, the soul going from here returns to God", but it is the personality which reincarnates with a new soul, coming from God" and later returning from her to God without touching the earth a second time again. "Every person is unique in his way", says Murshid, "in this

lies the secret of the oneness of God." Inayat Khan explained this very often and this is to be found among other things in his two books "The Soul Whence and Wither" and "The Mind-World". It seems to me that Inayat Khan's and the Maharshi's teachings on reincarnation are exactly the same.

"Soul is the life, and the light itself is God's own being." It is the personality which comes back. Every soul is God's eternal being, dressed when on earth in an old, a reincarnating personality. The more man realizes his soul, the more he will understand that he belongs to Eternity, and that his personality on earth is his garb, lent only for this life on earth. After him or before him that same personality may have been or will be another time the garb not of another soul — for in reality there is no such thing as a soul — but *the Only Soul*, Who sends His rays to live on earth. Man erroneously thinks that he is a soul, but in their deeper self all beings are one and the same soul, the Soul. All is God and God is all. "Reincarnation is a fact, but not a truth", are words we have often heard Murshid say.

"He who has been initiated by a Guru must under his direction, try to keep his mind every minute of his life engaged in worship, Japa, meditation

the perusal of sacred texts, in singing the praises of God, in Satsang (sitting in the presence of the Guru or of a saint)", are Anandamayi Ma's words. This description would perfectly well do for the Sufi training, too. Murshid Inayat Khan described the training under a Murshid as consisting of unlearning and of learning, of moral training, of meditation and prayer and of seeking the presence of the Teacher often and keeping silence with him.

Some saints give more teaching, others keep more silence. But all do both, each at its own time. It all depends on conditions. The deeper side, however, of the Message is not in words, but comes to life in the silence in the Saint's presence. Light and illumination pass in this way from Master to pupil, from the Saint to his devotee. As Murshid Inayat Khan says, "The Saint's, the Murshid's, the Guru's work is to make himself the globe through which the light is directed. And it is the pupil's work to respond, to keep his mind free from all other thoughts and feelings. The force is always working, but its effect depends upon the response."

There is not one atom of difference between the Message of God given in our age by these three saints, two coming from the Yogi-line and one

from the Sufi-line. And this is a very remarkable fact.

It is very remarkable indeed how Shri Maharishi, Hazrat Inayat Khan and Shri Anandamayi Ma all were or are giving a Message, and the same Message, bringing all the former Messages together as a unity. Because to realize God is one thing, but to bring a Message of God to the masses is a greater service to humanity.

The Message of God, as it comes, is always old and always new. To-day it becomes clearer than ever that God expects us in the whole world to understand His one and eternal Message in the same way, based on a deeper understanding of God, of love and harmony. What a blessing it would be for man to understand this and to forget all the fights and misunderstandings of the past. God is always willing to forgive, man would be blessed if he could live up to practising this ideal himself.

The question which people are so apt to ask, "Who is the greatest of these three saints?" is altogether a wrong question. The Message of God is His Message, and to know that is enough for us, is for us, all there is to it. Saints and prophets are one in the service of God. These three saints with a Universal Message, coming from different spiritual traditions, different aspects of the past, are one

and make one. Blessed is India where they were born and which so to say, has given them to the world. It is only in India where this seems possible these days.

Please, reader, forgive me if you think that I am going too far or saying too much. What I say is not only from inspiration, it is for a greater part based on deduction also, and

that, in my opinion, makes it all the stronger. However, be it imagination -- to me it is a striking and very attractive imagination. I believe in it and that makes me happy, makes me enjoy a perhaps more or less imaginary, but a deeper harmony than ordinarily is to be found in the world.

Thank you for your patience in reading this article.

The Message of the Bhagavata

By

Dr. S. K. MAITRA, Banaras Hindu University

I am deeply grateful to the inmates of Mata Anandamayi Asrama for the honour they have done me in asking me to contribute an article to their journal, as it gives me an opportunity of paying my humble tribute to Mata Anandamayi. In Her we feel that the lamp of our great spiritual culture is still burning as brightly as before. May it be our fortune to receive spiritual illumination from Her for years and years to come.

The subject which I have chosen for this article is in consonance with the spirit of Mata Anandamayi's teachings, for who can deny that Mataji represents in Her own person the purest form of the Bhakti Dharma taught in the Bhagavata. "The message of the Bhagavata", therefore, to my mind is the fittest subject that can be chosen for an article written for a magazine devoted to the lila and teaching of Mata Anandamayi.

The tremendous popularity of the Bhagavata

The first thing that strikes one in connection with the Bhagavata is its tremendous popularity. This is due mainly to the fact that it records the

lilas and teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and nothing captures the people's mind in our country so much as these. When to this are added the numerous parables and stories by which His teachings are illustrated, one can easily understand why this book makes such a tremendous appeal to the popular mind. But apart from these, the very nature of its teaching makes it extremely popular with the masses. It is essentially a human book, dealing with human problems, man's joys and sorrows, his hopes and aspirations, his trials and tribulations. Not that it has no philosophy and is only a popular story-book. On the contrary, it is a highly philosophical work, but its philosophy is stated in such a manner that the common man can understand it. It is a philosophy which gives hope to the afflicted, courage to the fallen, consolation to the sinner and peace to the tormented and to crown all, is its wonderful catholicity. It makes no distinction between man and man on the ground of caste, creed, sex or colour.

Comparison with the Gita

In this respect it can be compared

with the Gita. The Gita also is noted for its wonderful catholicity. Lord Kṛṣṇa's famous words (Gita, 9.32), "Those who take shelter in Me, even if they are born of the womb of sin, or are women, Vaisyas or Sudras, all tread the highest path" set its tone. It also knows no distinction of caste, colour, creed or sex. But it moves altogether on a higher plane. Its theme is a devastating dynastic war in which millions of men are ranged on both sides. Its instruction is meant for a prince of the bluest of blue blood, a scion of the famous lunar dynasty, and is couched in the sublimest language. The Bhagavata's themes are more homely, such as that of a woman, badly tossed on the shore of life, pouring out her grief-stricken heart to Lord Kṛṣṇa on the eve of His departure from this earth after finishing His task, or that of a haughty and irate Brahmana desperately seeking His help when a curse which he had unjustly uttered against a devout Vaiṣṇava returns upon him with a thousandfold intensity, or that of a sinner who escapes the jaws of death by accidentally uttering the name of Narayana. Its language, in consequence, is softer, more graceful, better fitted for the description of the joys and sorrows of the common man. But it rises also to sublime heights when the occasion demands it, as in the

final instruction given by Sukadeva to Parikṣit just before he meets with his doom or the parting advice of Lord Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava.

In spite of these differences, the Bhagavata is true to the spirit of the Gita. If I were to describe in one sentence its position *vis-a-vis* the latter, I would say that if the Gita represents the glory of our Arya Dharma, the Bhagavata represents its grandeur. The Gita represents the quintessence of the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. I cannot resist the temptation of quoting here the well-known couplet in which its relation to the Upaniṣads is very pithily described.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धां गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

("The Upaniṣads are the cows, the milkman is Kṛṣṇa, the calf is Parthā, the enjoyers are the wise men, and the milk is the great nectar, called the Gita").

We may similarly say that the Gita is the cow and the milk is the Bhagavata, with this difference that there is here not one calf but a number of calves, and the enjoyers are not merely the wise men, but also the common men. It contains the essence of the Gita's teaching, but presents it in a form in which it is more easily intelligible to the masses. Its theme

as we have already said, lacks the sublimity of that of the Gita, and although its Hero is the same as that of the Gita, He assumes here a different role. He does not tune His message to that high key which he is obliged to do in the Gita, for He has not to convince a Kṣatriya prince of the famous lunar line, too conscious of his high birth and too full of egoism, but has for His listeners men already bent low with humility and only too eager to follow all instruction given to them.

The Hero of the Bhagavata is fully conscious of what He has said in an earlier work, and makes repeated references to it. He is fully aware of what he has taught the great Paṇḍava prince in an earlier age, and has no desire to recant any of His teachings. And yet if there is a difference, it is due to the reason we have already mentioned, namely, to its attuning its message to the needs of the common people. The Bhagavata has particularly emphasized two points in the Gita's teaching. The first is its conception of *Purusottama* as the Lord to whom men can go with their offerings of love and service. Here the Bhagavata has further concretized it, as we shall see, and made it its own conception of God. The second is the Gita's affirmation of the reality of the world and the value of human life.

The principle of yoga, which is the central principle of the Gita, although it is retained in the Bhagavata, yet loses its original meaning of union with God, and signifies only a means by which *sreyas* can be obtained (Cf. Bh. xi. 20.6, where Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "I have created the three yogas for the sake of the welfare of men". (The word yoga is also used in the Bhagavata in the sense of a special discipline of the mind, almost in the sense in which Patanjali uses the term. In xi. 20. 32-33. where Lord Kṛṣṇa says "whatever can be obtained by *karma* by *tapas*, by *jnana* and *vijnana*, by charity, by yoga and other ways of attaining *sreyas*, can all be obtained with the help of Bhaktiyoga by My devotees, "the word yoga in the two places where it occurs means respectively, a special mental discipline and a means for obtaining *sreyas*. The Bhagavata accepts the Gita's principle of non-attachment, but makes it clear (as indeed the Gita also does) that it applies only to worldly objects, and that so far as God is concerned it is attachment and not non-attachment which is to be sought. But its most important departure from the attitude of the Gita concerns the three paths of *Jnana*, *Karma* and *Bhakti*. The Gita, as we have pointed out, looks upon all these as of equal value and as equally open to all. The Bhaga-

vata's attitude is somewhat different. It makes a fine psychological study of different types of men, to which we shall presently refer, and comes to the conclusion that the different paths are meant for people with different temperaments. It also has viewed these different paths from the standpoint of the needs of the different ages, and has stated that for the present age (Kaliyuga), the path of Bhakti is what is needed most. To this we shall come presently. But what we want to point out here is that it nowhere shows disrespect for any of these three paths and nowhere advocates adherence to any path, to the exclusion of the others.

From the Stratosphere to Mother Earth

The Upanisads, the Gita and the Bhagavata represent, in fact, three successive layers, in descending order, in the descent from the stratosphere of transcendental philosophy to the humanism of Mother Earth. The Gita is a descent from the lofty peaks of the speculations of the Upanisads to a level where the results of these speculations are brought close to the problems of our everyday life. But a further descent is needed before they can be made to touch the ground. This is done in the Bhagavata. The Bhagavata, therefore, can boast, like Socrates, of having brought philo-

sophy down from heaven to dwell on earth. Its standpoint is more humanistic, more democratic and more catholic than even that of the Gita. One sign of this is its greater sympathy for human beings and the world in which they live, and greater appreciation of their value.

The famous statement in the Kathopanishad, "atra Brahma samas-nute," ("here Brahman can be enjoyed") the Bhagavata has made its own. For it our present world and human life have great significance. In the whole realm of philosophical literature it is in fact hard to find greater stress laid upon the reality of earthly life and the value of the human body than is done in the Bhagavata. Take, for instance, the following verse (xi.20.17):

वृद्धेहमाद्यं सुलभं सुदुर्लभं

प्लवं सुकल्पं गुरुकर्णधारम ।

मयानुकूलेन नमस्वतेरितं

पुमान् भवाब्धिं न तरेत् स आत्महा ॥

("Having obtained the human body so easily, which is really difficult to obtain, a bark which is very serviceable, navigated by the Guru and driven by Myself as a favourable wind, if a man does not succeed in crossing the stream of Samsara, then he must be pronounced to be a slayer of himself."

Can there be a stronger affirmation than this of the value of the human body? So also it is emphatically declared that it is only in human life and in this world that we can realize the Supreme Reality :

“अस्मिन् लोके वर्तमानः स्वधर्मस्थोऽनघः शुचिः ।
ज्ञानं विशुद्धमाप्नोति मद्भक्तिं वा यदृच्छया ॥
स्वर्गिणोऽप्येतमिच्छन्ति लोकं निरयिणस्थथा ।
साधकं ज्ञानभक्तिभ्यामुभयं तदसाधकम् ॥”

Bh. xi. 20. 11-12

(“Remaining in this world, fixed in his own Dharma, free from sin and pure in heart, a man attains to pure knowledge, and if luck favours him, Bhakti in me. Even the dwellers in heaven wish for this world, as well as dwellers in hell, for it is favourable for the attainment of salvation with the help of *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, whereas the other two worlds are not.”)

The Bhagavata's attitude towards the three paths

We have already pointed out that the Bhagavata's attitude towards the three paths—*Jnana*, *Karma* and *Bhakti*—is somewhat different from that of the Gita. The Gita treats these as absolutely equal in value and as open to everybody. The Bhagavata's approach to them is somewhat different. Its approach, in the first place, is psychological. It shows that it is not true today that all these three paths are equally open

to all. There are differences in the temperaments of different people, due to the difference in their attitude towards action, which determine the choice of these paths. The Bhagavata, therefore, gives a classification of men based on this *fundamentum divisionis* and indicates what path is suitable for what type of man. It thus classifies men as Jung does, but its classification is more scientific and less open to challenge than that of Jung, who divided men into extroverts and introverts, according to whether their minds are directed outwards or inwards. Jung's classification has been challenged on the ground that no man's mind is purely directed outwards or purely directed inwards, in other words, that everyone is both an extrovert and introvert. The Bhagavata's classification, on the other hand, on the basis of men's diverse attitudes towards action, cannot be thus challenged. The Bhagavata's classification is as follows :

“निर्विण्णानां ज्ञानयोगो न्यासिनासिद्ध कर्मसु ।
तेष्वनिर्विण्णचित्तानां कर्मयोगस्तु कामिनाम् ॥
यदृच्छयामत्कथादौ जातश्रद्धस्तु यः पुमान् ।
न निर्विण्णोनातिसक्तो भक्तियोगस्यसिद्धिदः ॥”

(Bh. xi. 20. 7-8)

(“For those who have obtained *nirveda* (freedom from desire for the fruits of action) and who have renounced all action, *jnana-yoga* is the

path indicated, and for those who have not obtained *nirveda* and have still desire for the fruits of action, *karma-yoga* is the path to be followed, while those who fortunately have faith in My legends and are also not overfond of actions, *bhakti-yoga* will lead to success").

As these verses state, there are three types of men, according to the Bhagavata. *Jnana-yoga*, *Karma-yoga* and *Bhakti-yoga* are respectively prescribed for them. It cannot be said that these types overlap one another, for they clearly are distinct.

The Bhagavata has also viewed these different paths from the standpoint of the needs of the different epochs (yugas). It gives its views in the following verse :

“कृते यद्द्व्यायतो विष्णुं त्रेतायां यजतो मखैः ।
द्वारे परिचर्यायां कलौ तद्वरिकीर्तनात् ॥

(xii 3 52).

“What is obtained in the *satyayuga* by meditating on Visnu is obtained in the *tretayuga* by means of the performance of *yajna*, in the *dvaparayuga* by means of service, and in the *kali-yuga* by means of singing the praises of Hari.

Combining the psychological with the epochal view, we come to the conclusion that for the Bhagavata the path of *Bhakti* is the best for the *kaliyuga*. But even in this *yuga*,

there are people with different temperaments and for them other paths are indicated. Thus if a man is by nature one who is indifferent to the fruits of action, then for him the path of knowledge is indicated. Similarly, for the man who has a predilection for action, the path of *karma* is indicated. But even for those who are temperamentally fitted for the path of knowledge, it will be an advantage if after *Nirveda* is obtained through knowledge, the path of *bhakti* is followed. This is, for instance, what is indicated in the following verse.

“एवं विमृश्य गुणतो मनसस्त्रयवस्था
मन्मायया मयि कृता इति निश्चितार्थाः ।
संछिद्य हार्दमनुमानसदुक्तिदीर्घ—
ज्ञानासिना भजत माखिलसंशयाधिम् ॥”

(Bh. xi 13. 33.)

(“Judging in this way that the three states of consciousness, namely, waking, dreaming and deep sleep have been created by My maya, cut all doubts with the sharp sword of knowledge sharpened by inference and the evidence of *Sruti* and *Smriti*, and worship Me Who am seated in the heart”).

In a similar strain speaks also

xi. 19.5.

“तस्माज्ज्ञानेन सहितं ज्ञात्वा स्वात्मानमुद्भव ।
ज्ञानविज्ञानसम्पन्नो भज मां भक्तिभावितः ॥”

("Therefore, Uddhava, by knowing Me along with the other *tattvas*, with the help of *jnana* and *vijnana*, worship Me charged with *bhakti*").

But the Bhagavata's view is not rigid, as is that of the *Bhakti Sutras* which do not think it possible that devotion can give rise to knowledge **). The Bhagavata, like the Gita has no hesitation in admitting that devotion can also produce knowledge. This we see clearly in Bh.

1.2.12, which states : "वासुदेवे भगवति भक्तियोगः प्रयोजितः । जनयत्याशु वैराग्यं ज्ञानञ्च यदहैतुकम्" ॥ ("If Lord Vasudeva is approached through Bhaktiyoga, then renunciation arises quickly, and also knowledge which is not motivated by any desire for objects").

In a similar strain also speaks Bh. 4.29.37. The Bhagavata, therefore, is true to the Gita's view of the reciprocal relationship of *jnana*, *karma* and *bhakti*.

(To be continued)

** See Sandilya Sutra 13 ("दृष्टत्वाश्च") and 2 x 15 ("भक्त्या जानातीति चेन्न भिन्नस्था साहाय्यम्")

DIARY LEAVES

by

ATMANANDA

(5)

During Mataji's sojourn in Solan in May and June of this year a great variety of questions were discussed. The following are notes from Solan. They are expected to be continued in the next issue.

On the Importance of Right Education

Again and again one can hear Mataji point out that most of the difficulties people experience throughout their lives and much of the chaos in the world today are due to lack of right education. If the first of the four Ashramas, namely the *Brahmacharya Ashrama* is observed as it should be, man can face life without the fear of being crushed by adversity, for the sublime purpose of human existence will have been firmly fixed in his mind. If the growing child, the adolescent thoroughly understands that man's true vocation is to find himself, if he realizes that all knowledge is only a preparation for *Brahmavidya*, the Knowledge of Reality; if at the same time he is taught how to control body and mind by living the simple, frugal and disciplined life of a *Brahmachari*, so that all his energies may be avail-

able for the Quest that alone is worthy of man, he will have learnt the art of living. Whether he chooses the shortcut, and renouncing all worldly attachment straight away takes *Sannyasa* or whether he first passes through the stages of the householder (*Grihastha*) and of the anchorite (*Vanaprastha*),—the path to Self-realization and Immortality is open to him.

Just as we are bound to inhale the air about us, we constantly absorb the subtle influences from our surroundings. No man can remain entirely unaffected by the contacts he makes. A child is far more sensitive than an adult. It is therefore important that the young should be in the company of men and women who have dedicated their lives to the Supreme Quest, that their pliable minds should be moulded by books of wisdom rather than by cinemas and light novels. A boy or a girl who has once deeply felt the necessity of aspiring after Truth and Enlightenment, who has been made to feel how treacherous and comparatively unimportant are wealth, name, fame,

brilliant career, etc., will come back to the ideals that in youth have been engrained, even though he or she should deviate from them for a time.

* * *

On Truthfulness

During one of Mataji's Questions and Answers Meetings a young boy asked: "If one speaks the truth one cannot get on in the world; if one tells lies one cannot find God. So what is one to do?"

"Always try to speak the truth and see what happens," replied Mataji. "Will you listen to a story?"

"A notorious thief sought the company of a Sadhu. At first the holy man took no notice of him, but when the thief came day after day, begging to be given instruction as well as initiation, the sadhu finally responded. 'First of all,' he said, 'you must give up stealing and telling lies. When you have succeeded in this for some days, you may come again.' The thief fell at his feet and went home. After several days he returned looking thin and miserable. 'Well', asked the Sadhu, 'how have you been faring?' 'Maharaj,' said the thief, 'I have faithfully obeyed your orders, but I can't go on like this much longer. My whole family is starving. I am well known as a thief and no one will give me work. If I don't steal, how are we to keep alive?' 'Very well,'

said the Sadhu, 'you may steal again, but under no circumstances tell any lies, keep strictly to the truth!' The face of the thief lightened. He promised to abide by his Guru's instructions.

'After so much fasting,' he thought, 'we need a spell of feasting.' So he decided to break into the treasury at the royal palace. As fate would have it the King could not sleep that night. Hearing a strange noise, he put on the old clothes of a servant and went downstairs. When he found that a burglar was busy removing valuables, he pretended to be a thief himself and said: 'Look here, brother, I am of your trade, only I am a beginner. Couldn't I help you and in return you might let me have a small share of the booty.' 'Not a bad idea,' agreed the old thief, 'breaking these heavy locks has been a tough job and it will soon be dawn. If you see whether the night-watch is coming this side and give me a sign in good time, I will let you have one fourth of what I get.' 'That's settled', assented the King, 'but let me have your name and address.' Mindful of his Guru's bidding, the thief gave the correct information. With the help of the disguised King he succeeded in safely removing his loot, leaving one fourth for his accomplice. In the morning there was great commotion in the palace. The theft was reported to

the King. Investigations were carried on, but no trace could be found of the culprit. The King did not disclose his secret, but when the case was to be discussed in his darbar, he sent for the thief. 'Do you know anything about the theft?' the King asked straight out. 'I do,' replied the thief. 'Let us have all the details,' commanded the Monarch. The thief related with great precision what had happened. The King could hardly believe his ears. 'How can one who is so completely truthful become guilty of stealing?' he exclaimed. The thief explained that he was acting in obedience to his Guru's orders and that it was only to save himself and his family from dire poverty that he was obliged to continue to thieve. 'How much a month do you require for the upkeep of your family?' asked the King. The man stated a modest sum. 'You won't have to steal any longer,' said the King, 'I shall provide for all of you for the rest of your lives'.

"You see," commented Mataji, "by being strictly truthful the thief was enabled to lead an honest life. It is very important to speak the truth. God is Truth. By being truthful one draws nearer to Him. The other lesson this story illustrates is that carrying out the Guru's orders to the letter without using one's own judgement not only leads to the

Highest Good, but also brings about the solution of one's daily problems."

* * *

On Purity

A foreigner who was feeling rather bewildered at the very great difference between the Hindu conception of purity and that of the West, begged an explanation from Mataji.

The following is the gist of what Mataji said: "Purity is an attitude of mind. Some people think if everything is spotlessly clean, looks clean, it is also pure. But take for instance germs. A place may look perfectly clean and yet be full of germs. Germs although invisible to the naked eye, cause illnesses. Qualities cannot be seen, yet it is a man's qualities that make him pure or impure. I was told of a mother who had a violent quarrel with someone, which deeply upset her. The quarrel occurred just before her baby's feeding time. The child drank his mother's milk and died on the spot. The doctor who was consulted declared that by her excessive anger the woman's whole system had been affected, so that her milk became poisonous.

"Whatever a man touches takes on some of his characteristics. The ancient Rishis devised the caste system, in order that each of the four castes might develop certain special qualities and capacities. The mem-

bers of the different castes were therefore required to observe strict rules when mixing with anyone belonging to another. A thing is called pure when it is without mixture, without alloy, entirely true to itself; when mixed with another substance it is said to be impure. Suppose someone brings you water from the tap in a perfectly clean vessel. Although the water is itself clean, it carries something of the quality of the person who fetched it. *Brahmanas* were asked not to drink water touched by anyone belonging to another caste. A *Brahmana's* duty is to seek *Brahmavidya*, the Knowledge of the Absolute. For this reason he should not mix with those who are engaged in other pursuits. This is how the question of touchability arose.

“Now concerning service : If you serve human beings or animals as such, it is not pure service. But if you serve them with the thought that there is only the ONE, that by serving whomsoever, you are serving God in that particular guise, then and then only can it become real service. Since nothing exists really but the Supreme Being, one should serve THAT alone. Purity means Truth, that which Is. Essentially whatever aids towards the realization of Truth may be called pure and whatever is apt to retard it, impure.”

A very learned professor who had travelled widely in India and Europe, remarked : “The Ganges is said to be pure, but on visiting Banaras I find the drains emptying themselves into the river, and a few yards away someone drinking the water ; I am disgusted. I can't bathe in the Ganges, it makes me feel sick.”

Mataji : The very nature of the Ganges is to purify. Whatever is immersed in the Ganges becomes absorbed by its purity, just as fire purifies. No matter what you throw into it, it will be burnt to ashes. You think tap-water is cleaner than Ganges-water, but tap-water at Banaras also comes from the Ganges. It is a matter of point of view. From your angle of vision you are right. Yet fundamentally purity and impurity are of the mind. There is only one Atma. Filth and sandalpaste are both the ONE, there is neither purity nor impurity. The pure food you eat today will by to-morrow have turned into excrement, into filth. Nevertheless some creatures feed on it. A dead body which is putrid floats on the Ganges. Vultures swoop down and eat of its flesh. It is the vulture's natural food, the bird thrives on it. Life is one. What is dirt to one creature, may be sustenance to another. We must reach the state where we know the ONE alone and

everything as His forms. There is only One-Brahman-without-a-second.

* * *

On Suffering

A lady from a distant country came last summer to see Mataji in Almora. One of the questions she asked was, since illnesses are the results of our actions in this or in former lives, was it advisable to consult doctors and take medicines. Rather was it not more appropriate to bear whatever came to us without interfering with its natural course? Mataji replied that it was right to do everything in our power to keep our bodies fit and healthy, for an ailing person could hardly expect to engage in sadhana. All the same it was certainly necessary to learn how to endure pain, since suffering cannot always be avoided. In such cases we should accept it as one of the ways in which He manifests Himself.

Several months later the same lady hadly fractured her ankle. This happened in the mountains, miles away from a doctor. To make things worse, heavy rain set in and she had to wait for three days till she could be carried down in a dandy. The pain was acute. The lady kept awake all night, but remembering what Mataji had told her, she concentrated on Divine Love in the form

of the Christ and of Mataji. To her own amazement she forgot all about her pain and felt well and refreshed the next morning. She remained in a state of bliss throughout those three days. She later declared that she would not have missed this experience for anything in the world. Was this what Mataji meant, when She said we had to learn to endure suffering when it came?

Since then whenever she felt any pain the lady tried to concentrate in a similar manner, but she was never able to get again into that elevated state of mind. On meeting Mataji this year she wanted the cause of her failure explained. "Your pain was not severe enough," said Mataji with a smile.

* * *

On Prayer

Question : Can *Prarabdha** be annulled by prayer ?

Mataji : No. To annul *Prarabdha* is most difficult, some say impossible. According to one doctrine it cannot even be blotted out by liberation (*Jivanmukti*.) But since where liberation is there can be no individual, where does *Prarabdha* come in? This body says, if by the flame of liberation everything is consumed, why

* *Prarabda Karma* is that portion of one's past actions which is bound to fructify in this life and cannot be averted.

not *Prarabdha* as well? *Prarabdha* is like the revolutions of an electric fan after the switch has been turned off. When the connection is cut off the movement is bound to cease after a little while. But for one who is liberated not even this kind of movement exists, for who is to experience the *Prarabdha*? For the liberated there is no body—although you may see a body.

Question : Is prayer effective ?

Mataji : Yes. Prayer invariably has a result, not necessarily the result you pray for, but since prayer connects you with God, it is always beneficial. Suppose you pray for the recovery of your sick child and the child dies. Your prayer has not been granted, yet it will help your child in some way. You do not know what is for your real good. Suppose you pray for employment and secure it, but get ill; or for money, but a dacoit way-lays and kills you for the sake of it. God alone knows your real need. At times, just as a child is given a biscuit to make it stop crying, you may not get what you desire, but something else.

Question : Why should one pray to God at all? He in any case does all that is necessary.

Mataji : Yes, this also is true on one level. But prayer is good, for to pray means turning one's thoughts to God.

There are various kinds of prayer. At first man prays for material things like wealth, health, family, position etc. On that level, if he did not pray for these and similar boons, he would not remember God at all. To be reminded of Him, no matter from what motive, is beneficial.

Then there is a stage, especially in the line of *Bhakti* when prayer spontaneously flows from one's heart. One yearns and pines for God and cannot help praying : "I cannot bear to be without Thee Reveal Thyself! When wilt Thou bless me with Thy vision?" It is like a fever that cannot be allayed by anything but union with Him. The first type of prayer is of the ego; the second is still of the ego, but of an ego that is about to disintegrate: when its prayer has been fulfilled, there will be no other prayer.

There is another state when one prays : "Do what Thou wilt with me. I am a tool in Thy hand, only vouchsave me the strength to endure whatever Thou mayst require of me."

There is a further state when one does not pray at all. One feels : "God does all that is necessary, so for what am I to pray?" Then in the firm belief that He provides for all the needs of His creatures, one becomes free from worry and remains absorbed in deep meditation.

MATRI LILA

(May-July 1955.)

During the last 15 months it has happened three times that Mataji remained in one place for two or two and a half months : in Almora in summer 1954, in Vrindaban from February to April and in Solan from April 24th to July 11th, 1955. Does this mark the beginning of a new phase with less vigorous travelling ? We wonder...

Solan is a place which has played a comparatively prominent part in Mataji's Lila. Leaving Bengal in 1932 She first stayed in Raipur (Dehradun) with Bholanath and Bhaiji. The very next place outside of Bengal that She chose for Her abode in spring 1934 was a cave at Salogra, about 5 miles from Solan, just below the car-road to Simla. She Herself gave us an amusing description of how She sat in the one dry spot in a cave not big enough to lie down in, with rain-water streaming down all round Her, while Bhaiji was occupying the outer chamber, equally wet, if slightly more spacious, when suddenly the Raja of Solan with a companion turned up in a car. This was the Raja's first Darshan of Mataji. He was amazed to find Her perfectly

happy and unconcerned in such surroundings. The cave has since been repaired and made waterproof, a temple built near it and a proper path leading to it. Mataji says it has been changed out of recognition.

The Raja tried to persuade Mataji to move to Solan, but She smilingly declared She was all right wherever She was. Several days later however She did visit Solan. Quite a famous old Sadhu was then residing there, named Shogibaba, who was reputed for scolding, abusing and even threatening to beat people who ventured to approach him. Although if in spite of these provocations they persisted, he became friendly. When Mataji expressed a wish to call on the strange Mahatma, both Bhaiji and the Raja felt rather apprehensive. But Mataji will have Her way. However, to everyone's surprise the Sadhu welcomed Mataji with the utmost joy and reverence, in fact he seemed all courtesy and sweetness. Mataji greeted him, saying : "Pitaji, your child has come," upon which He at once offered Her a special carpet to sit on and began a most amiable

conversation with the words : "I hold you in great love and respect."

The Raja and the late Rani of Solan, profoundly impressed by Mataji, became Her sincere devotees. Mataji has visited Solan many times. In summer 1946 for instance She spent over a month and a half there, including Guru Purnima. The Durga Club was then put at Her disposal. During the morning Satsang Sri Haribabaji Maharaj used to read from the lives of saints. One day he announced that he would next take up Bhaji's "Matri Darshan". To read out and discuss the story of someone's life in his presence was quite unheard of: Mataji did not come. Sri Haribabaji waited for a long time, everyone sitting in silence and suspense. Finally he sent a messenger humbly soliciting Mataji's presence. She first declined, but suddenly rose with a start. "What is the difference whether the story of this body is read out or anyone else's? I am coming!" Sri Haribabaji would interrupt his reading by innumerable questions. Keeping reserved to begin with, Mataji gradually responded more and more freely. Spell-bound we listened to Her inspiring narrations of incidents from Her early life, especially to Her truly breathtaking descriptions of the various Sadhanas that manifested through Her body.

Those mornings will ever remain unforgettable.

Again in summer 1952 at Solan, when Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta put questions, Mataji favoured us with many fascinating reminiscences from Her life She had never disclosed before.

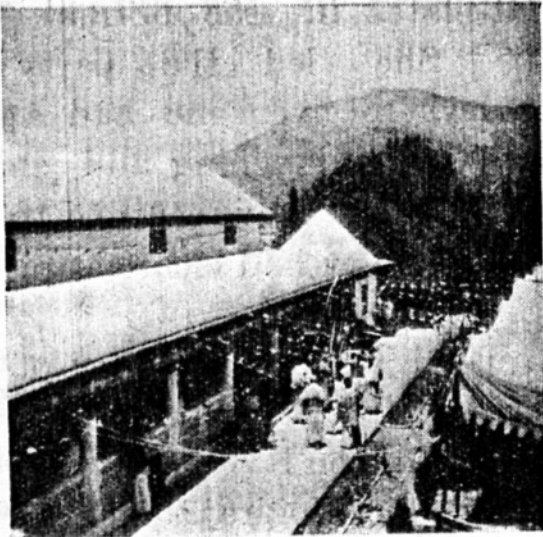


Mataji at Solan

But never even at Solan, it seems to us, has Mataji been so communicative as this summer. Not only did She delight all by frequently leading the Kirtan and by relating incidents from the past, but She also gave an extraordinary amount of teaching on a vast variety of subjects. Often She would reply to questions mornings, afternoons and evenings. People from all over India as well as Westerners from many walks of life voiced their problems, which gave rise to really enlightening and sometimes very detailed discourses by Mataji. *

* See p. 100 & p. 147.

During *Durga Puja* in October 1946, Mataji for the first time occupied the charming and comfortable Ashram which the Raja and the late



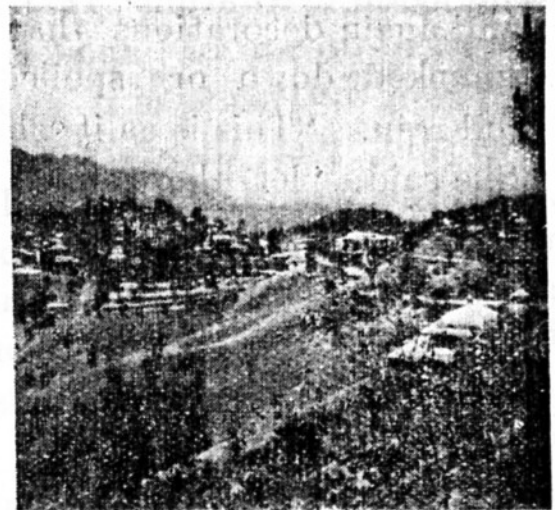
The Ashram

Rani had built for Her just below their palace, facing a large unused tennis-court. The broad verandas on two sides of the Ashram provide a very suitable site for Satsang.

The elevation at the Eastend of the tennis-court put up for the image of Durga in 1946, had been kept enclosed and protected ever since. Mataji's couch was placed on it during the recent birthday celebrations and a waterproof tinshed built round it which was beautifully draped and decorated. Between it and the paved path in front of the Ashram was a large pandal.

The length of the period of the

celebrations varies from year to year subject to astronomical calculations. This time it was barely one week, May 4th-11th. Untimely rains set in on May 3rd, continuing unabated and culminating in a violent thunderstorm on the night of the final puja. The pandal could not stay the torrential rain, the carpets got soaked and submerged in a muddy puddle. These outer disturbances only heightened the spirit of pervading joy and harmony. Perhaps we were to have an object lesson of the irrelevance



View of Solan from the Ashram

of the inclemencies of the weather. During the long night-watch in spite of the cold wind and rain many remained in the less flooded areas of the pandal, families huddled together with remarkable patience in the face of considerable discomfort, others watching from the Ashram veranda. After the Puja

Mataji was carried to Her room on a chair. Utterly still, She seemed transfigured with the shining radiance of a celestial being. People stood silent as if stunned with awe by such beauty.

A Punjabi lady who was sitting in the pandal suddenly had a clear vision of Mataji sitting on a lion as the Universal Mother (*Jagaddhatri*). She fell unconscious and had to be carried to the veranda of the Ashram.

Mataji afterwards praised the Raja's staff who were putting up again and again decorations that had been knocked down or spoiled by wind and rain. "This is as it should be," She said, "let the rain do its work, you do yours. After all no serious damage was done. Suppose the lights had gone out or the pandal had been blown away! The only trouble was that you had no place where you could sit comfortably."

Mataji related to us how, many years ago at Dacca, a severe rainstorm during Her birthday celebrations induced people to pray to Her to stop the bad weather, instead of which Mataji, followed by many, ran out into the rain, merrily singing Kirtan. She splashed rainwater with both hands on the few who preferred to remain under shelter to protect their clothes. So they had no

alternative but to join the others. Later She asked everyone to receive Prasad by holding out a piece of their dhoties, since the ground was flooded and food could not be served on leaf-plates in the normal way. Finally She led the party to a tank where everyone had a good swim and when laughing and shrieking with delight they returned to the Ashram, the sky had cleared up.

* * *

As usual a great number of visitors arrived from far and near. The hospitality of the Raja, (whom Mataji has named "Yogiraj" and "Yogibhai"), and of his people was outstanding and we wish to express our deep appreciation for the trouble they took to secure our comfort. Everyone felt at home at Solan.

Last year's birthday celebrations were described at length.* The observances during the week were more or less similar this time. Perpetual Japa was kept up beside Satsang and Kirtan. Over and above the *Ramayana* and the *Durga Saptashti* were being chanted for several hours daily in different parts of the Ashram. On the 6th of May there was *Nama Kirtan* for 24 hours. On the 9th of May 108 *Kumaris* (small girls aged between 6 and 10) were

* See *Ananda Varta*, Vol. II, 2, pp. 154 & 171.

given a feast. As they sat down in rows on the Ashram veranda Mataji appeared and took Her seat with them. Pink silk scarves were distri-

the poor) were invited for a meal, two hillmen turned up with a dog. Mataji remarked, referring to the dog.

"It is difficult for people to know which Mahatma has come in what guise to partake of the feast." Thereupon the two men with the dog feeding between them were entertained along with the others.

On June 30th *Samyam Vrata* was observed. Many decided to continue the practice in their own homes on the first Thursday of every month.

On July 5th *Guru Purnima* was celebrated in a most beautiful, quiet



Davidra Narayana Bhojan

buted among the children and Mataji also put on a similar one. She was served food along with the Kumaris on leaf-plates and fed a little of it. Later She got up and approached a tiny girl. Mataji opened Her mouth and the little kid, without any hesitation, with her left hand took a morsel from her own leaf-plate and put it into Mataji's mouth. All present took immense delight in Mataji's playful childlike mood.



"... which Mahatma has come in what guise....."

Another day when the *Davidra* and dignified manner. Right through the morning Puja Mataji sat straight

and still, with Her eyes shut, as if absorbed in deep Samadhi. In the afternoon She sang Kirtan for a whole hour. We all felt specially blessed that day.

The Governor of Himachal Pradesh and other officials as well as Rajas and Ranis from neighbouring states came to pay their respects to Mataji. In connection with the visit of Sri Upadhyaya, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's private secretary, who came from Simla, Mataji related how the late Kamala Nehru, wife of Pandit Jawaharlal had Mataji's Darshan at Dehradun and Mussoori. Mataji was then known only to a few in the U. P. No Ashram had been built for Her except the one at Dacca. When Mataji stayed at Ananda Chowk (Dehradun) in 1935 or so, Mrs. Nehru would arrive after night-fall and leave before dawn, so as to remain unrecognized. She had very deep meditation in Mataji's presence, her body becoming stiff. Sri Upadhyaya would sit and prevent the ants from crawling up on

her. She loved and admired Mataji so much that she once said, if Mataji permitted, she would some day give up her political work with Gandhiji and remain with Mataji.



Mataji and Moti

* * *

In the beginning of Mataji's stay at Solan Her foot that had been injured at Vrindaban still needed rest, but after a few weeks She resumed Her usual evening strolls up

and down the paved path in front of the Ashram.

During that hour She would as a rule distribute sweets or fruits received during the day. One day a dog came, insisting on getting into Her way in spite of all attempts to chase it away. Mataji said, "Give him some sweets." The next day 'Moti' came again. Mataji gave him a double share of *Rasagulas*. Since then Moti turned up regularly to the last day of Her stay. Mataji was quite evidently lavishing Her grace on the animal. Someone asked, "Ma, who is Moti really?" "Perhaps it is Toma who has returned. Toma was a dog Bholanath kept at Bajitpur when this body was engaged in the play of *Sadhana*." *

On July 11th, to everyone's sincere regret, the wonderful days at Solan came to an end. On the 12th morning Mataji arrived at the Kishenpur Ashram. Her stay there was interrupted by a trip to Hardwar from 18th—20th July. On the 25th evening She proceeded to Delhi en route to Vrindaban where She alighted on the 29th in time for *Jhulan Ekadashi*

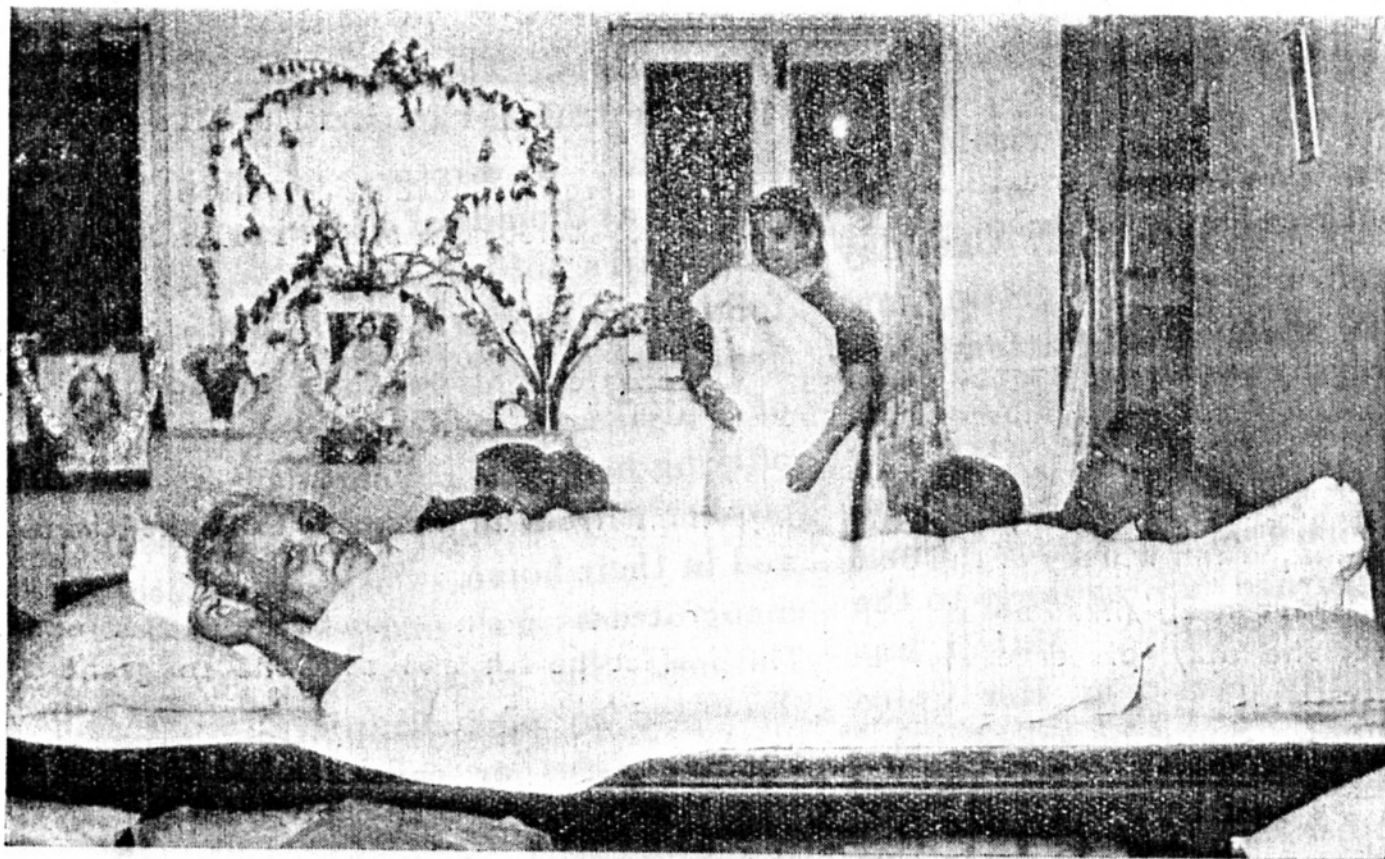
* * *

In Kishenpur there is a large orchard called '*Kalyanvan*' belonging to

the Ashram. There two mangoes of a peculiar oblong shape and peculiar colouring, a mixture of pink and yellow, as if made of clay were brought to Mataji's notice. She narrated the following : In Her childhood the villagers used to perform Puja on the 1st of Vaisakh (the Bengali New Year), offering mangoes. Mataji asked Her mother why no such Puja was observed in their home. "We have neither mango-trees nor mangoes," replied Didima. She also forbade her little daughter to pick fruits from other people's trees or cause them to fall down by throwing up stones. When Mataji went to bath in the village tank that morning She saw a lovely ripe mango high up on top of a tree. "If this mango fell down we could offer it at Puja." No sooner had this *Kheyali*† come to Her than the mango dropped down. Mataji picked it up and brought it to Her mother, who at once enquired how it had been procured. Being satisfied with Mataji's explanation, she offered the fruit at Puja. It was of the same peculiar variety as the two mangoes at *Kalyanvan* described above. Mataji remarked that in all Her life She had come across this type of mango only on one other occasion, also in Her childhood.

* We hope to publish 'Moti-Toma's story' in detail in the next issue of 'Ananda Varta'.

† FREE WILL (Divine) expressing Itself spontaneously.



"Didi"

reached us even from the newest little Ashram at Rajagriha, Bihar.

* * *

Our readers will be happy to learn that Didi's (Sri Gurupriya Devi's) health is much improved. Having been kept lying on her back in plaster for seven months, the plaster could be removed in the middle of July at Bombay. In fact what the doctors had presumed would take two years has been achieved

in seven months. On hearing this news Mataji remarked. "Was it not to be expected that all the *Anushthan* (prayers) offered by Sri Hari Bhabaji and others would have some effect?" Didi has however been advised to rest in bed for two months more. We hope and pray to Mataji that Didi may soon recover completely and be able to take part actively in the forthcoming *Durga Puja* celebrations.