

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 on various subjects from different people at different times.*)

42.

Accepting all conditions of life—whatever they be—as His gift, abide in fortitude and do service.

43.

Endeavour to keep your thought centred at all times on the divine Name or Form that appeals to you most. Let your mind be turned exclusively towards God — then, and then only, may you hope for peace.

44.

How can a man who is harbouring thoughts of suicide expect to become a Sannyasi ? The idea of suicide does not even enter the mind of those who consider themselves candidates for Sannyasa. A spirit of extreme self-denial and renunciation is the attitude that affords the greatest aid towards this exalted state. Vow to be truthful in speech and refrain from letter-writing. Do not talk to women nor allow your gaze to rest on them.

45.

To live in the joy that springs from the mind's constant occupation with things divine is man's duty. Thinking of anything other than God is what creates sorrow. Be it *Mantra Japa*, be it meditation, worship, the perusal of Sacred Texts, the simple awareness of God or a like device, be it Kirtan or religious music — all these are different modes of the Divine Presence. One should always remain engaged in one of them, in fact make it a point never to be without Him. Bear this in mind ! This is what this little child requests from Her friends and also from Her fathers and mothers.*

* Mataji often speaks of Herself as a little child and calls all children Her 'friends' and adults 'father' or 'mother'.

46.

It is by seeking to know oneself that the Great Mother of all may be found.

47.

God's holy Name is in itself the rite for exorcising undesirable influences. In the presence of God's Name ghosts and evil spirits cannot exist.

48.

Life's journey is bound to proceed inevitably in the manner you describe. Search in every home and see how many people can be found who have never known bereavement. This is why the one and only way out of the misery is the path toward Self-realization.

49.

A person who does not for the love of God and with a cheerful heart discharge himself of whatever responsibility that may fall to his lot at any time, will find life excessively burdensome and never be able to accomplish anything. Man's duty—more especially for those who have made the Supreme Quest their one and only aim — is to work joyfully for the uplift of the world, with the conviction that all service is His service. Work done in such a spirit helps to purify the mind and heart.

50.

Write to him that his condition very often indeed occupies this body's *Kheyal*.* He himself, by his own effort of will must become strong-minded and drop his negative attitude, which makes him imagine that he cannot and will never be able to succeed. On the contrary he must be determined that it will be possible, that achievement will most certainly be his. He should say to himself: "In whatever condition it pleases God to keep me, to that I resign myself, surrendering to Him whose creature I am, whose body this is." That is all. With perfect calm and tranquillity he should pass most of his time lying straight on his back in what is called the "dead pose" (*Shavasana*) and silently repeat his Mantra in rhythm with his breathing. *There is only*

* Ordinarily this phrase would be translated by "occupies my mind." However it would be incorrect to use the word 'mind' when referring to Mataji. *Kheyal*=Free Will (divine) expressing Itself spontaneously.

one Brahman without a second'—this is what he has to realize. Write to him in plain language that for him there is no need of an intermediary.

51.

Mataji said : Write to him, to tell the truth, some people undoubtedly do approach this body in quest of Reality ; but very many come to get their desires and longings fulfilled.

Although he has had such unmistakable proof of what is the true nature of the world, his heart is still in it ? At this juncture he should try his utmost to engage himself solely in doing service, regarding whatever he does as service to the Lord. Ask him, at all costs to make a resolute effort against letting his mind become entangled in anything pertaining to this ocean of sorrow. It is his attachment to the world which has brought such deep distress to the unfortunate man. Nothing but ignorance is at the root of it all. He should continue to give news of himself to this body in any way he is able, for he has no one to whom he can confide his troubles and afflictions, which—one and all—are but the fruits of his past actions.

By sorrow does the Lord dispel sorrow and by adversity does He destroy adversity. When this is done He sends no more suffering — this must be borne in mind at all times.

In very truth the Eternal's offspring must focus their thoughts on Him. Divorced from God there cannot be even a prospect of peace—never, never, never. By abiding in God man will find peace, the veil be rent, and the Dispeller of Sorrow stand revealed. He alone is the conqueror of evil. He is yours, the sole treasure of the human heart.

52.

They imagine this body to be far away, but actually it is always very, very near. How could it possibly leave anyone ? The question of distance arises solely from *their* point of view. Whenever they can get a holiday let them come and meet this body.

No matter what work one undertakes it should be done well. If one cultivates the habit of doing everything well, there is fair promise of one's doing likewise also on the spiritual path. The action is He and the doer of the action is He and no other. At all events one should make an attempt to develop this attitude of mind. Truth — in the presence of which illusion is recognized as illusion—Truth, THAT which IS, has to be made one's own.

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(11)

From Mataji one can never get a definite decision on any problem. That is why I wondered whether it was any use, writing down all Her utterances? I asked Mataji about it. She replied :

Mataji : At least you have understood that there is a state where problems are no longer settled in any particular way. In the course of your life have you not after careful consideration come to a decision on many questions? But now you will have to realize that no solution can solve any problem finally ; in other words, you will have to go beyond certainty and uncertainty. The resolution of a problem arrived at by the mind must of necessity be from a particular side ; consequently there will be room for contradiction, since your solution represents but one aspect. What then have you actually solved? A complete synthesis of all the conflicting views can be attained through a number of distinctly separate avenues of approach. Again you will see that there is a place where lies the ultimate solution of the problems of all shades of opinion without the possibility of contradiction. What happens then? Whether a question be raised regarding a solved or unsolved problem, whether one may say "yes" or "no"—everything is THAT.

(12)

One evening during Mataji's stay at Solan in 1948, Srimati Rameshwari Nehru, the wife of one of Pandit Jawaharlal's cousins came for Mataji's Darshan. She asked the following questions :

Does the capacity to meditate come by practice in this life or is it an aptitude acquired in former births?

Mataji : It may be the result of either of the two or of both combined. Meditation should be practised every day of one's life. Look, what is there in this world? Absolutely nothing that is lasting ; therefore direct your longing towards the Eternal. Pray that the work done through you, His

instrument, may be pure. In every action remember Him. The purer your thinking the finer will be your work. In this world you get a thing and by to-morrow it may be gone. This is why your life should be spent in a spirit of service : feel that the Lord is accepting service from you through whatever you do. If you desire peace you must cherish the thought of Him.

Question : When will there be peace on earth ?

Mataji : Well, the present state of affairs is quite the other way ; things happen as they are destined to be.

Question : When will this state of unrest come to an end ?

Mataji : The fact that many of you feel concerned about it and ask : "When will it end ?" is also one of the ways of His Self-manifestation.

The world — *Jagat** — means ceaseless movement and obviously there can be no rest in movement. How could there be peace in perpetual coming and going ? Peace reigns where no coming exists and no going, no melting and no burning. Reverse your course and advance towards Him — then there will be hope of peace.

By your *japa* and meditation those who are in contact with you will also benefit through the helpful influence of your presence. In order to develop a taste for meditation you have to make a deliberate and sustained effort, just as children have to be made to sit and study, be it by persuasion or coercion. By taking medicine or having injections a patient gets well ; even if you do not feel inclined to meditate conquer your reluctance and make an attempt. The habit of countless lives is pulling you in the opposite direction and making it difficult for you : persevere in spite of it. By your tenacity you will gain strength and be moulded, that is to say you will develop the capability for doing *sadhana*. Make up your mind that however arduous the task, it will have to be accomplished. Recognition and fame last for a short time only, they do not accompany you when you leave this world. If your thought does not naturally turn towards the Eternal, fix it there by an effort of will. Some severe blow of fate will drive you towards God. This will be but an expression of His Mercy ; however painful, it is by such blows that one learns one's lesson.

* The word "*jagat*" is derived from the root *gam* = to go.

the lady's devotees came to this body and inquired : "Ma, you never put anyone to shame and certainly not in public. Why then did you do so in this case ?" I replied : "Yes, as you know this body does not as a rule interfere with anyone's natural ways. Yet whether it concerns the most ordinary or the most extraordinary event — style it as you please —, what holds good for this body to this day and has until now always been so, is simply this : Whatever is meant to come about just happens spontaneously. When that lady arrived this body welcomed her with great respect, offering her its own *asana* and putting a garland round her neck. How very pleased everyone felt ! Every form, every expression is He and He alone. That day this body did not disclose anything. But the lady of her own free will declared : "I shall come again to-morrow !" You all heard it, did you not ? What occurred then was His way of revealing Himself. Tell me, what is there to do ? By whatever method He may choose to teach anyone at any time — this body has no desire of its own — only whatever comes to pass.

When (in the early days) this body used to do *Pranam* to every creature, whether an insect, a spider, a dog or a cat, it did so with the full consciousness of the presence of the Supreme Being in everything.

'Whatever comes to pass' — there is something else to be said in this connexion. To base one's life on deception can never be for one's good. He who deceives will himself be deceived. On the other hand falsehood may also be converted into truth. Someone may deliberately play false, yet through his disciple's sincerity the truth may actually be brought to light. As a result the disciple excels the Guru. The resolve to find the truth will inevitably lead to its revelation. I told that lady's devotee, "how many times did I ask you all : 'Shall I disclose it ?' And without exception you kept on begging me to do so. Therefore — what more can be said ?"

What a great variety of similar incidents occur ! Listen to the story of a young woman who under the slightest provocation would enter into 'Samadhi'—so people believed. She appeared to become lifeless, her hands and feet turning cold. When she came to this body she also went into this strange state which people mistook for *Samadhi*. The girl's mother was called 'grandmother' by this body, both were of the same village. She said to me : "Grand-daughter, please try and help this girl !" I quite understood what was the matter with the young woman, so I whispered into her ear ; "You

will very soon receive a letter from your husband," whereupon the girl recovered in no time. The news of the cure spread far and wide, people felt greatly mystified, wondering what powerful *Mantra* Mataji had whispered into the girl's ear! Indeed, under the circumstances it *was* the appropriate *Mantra* for her. Her condition was solely due to worrying about her husband's prolonged silence.

Then again there was a young man, into what supernormal states he used to go, how many kinds of visions he had! He would for example do *Pranam* and remain in that posture for hours together without raising his head, tears streaming down his cheeks. He said he saw and heard Sri Krishna teaching Arjuna, as described in the *Gita*, and that he had many other visions and auditory experiences of the kind. This body told him that if a *Sadhaka* could not maintain firm control over his mind, he would be liable to see and hear many things, both illusory and genuine all mixed up. He might even fall a victim to the influence of some 'spirit' or power. Such occurrences, far from intensifying pure Divine aspiration, would rather hinder than otherwise. Moreover to see someone in a vision or to hear him address you, may well become a source of self-satisfaction or egotistic enjoyment. To lose control over oneself is not desirable. In the search after Truth one must not allow oneself to be overpowered by anything, but watch carefully whatever phenomena may supervene, keeping fully conscious, wide awake, in fact retaining complete mastery over oneself. Loss of consciousness is never right.

The Lord Buddha is Himself the essence of Enlightenment. All partial manifestations of wisdom that come in the course of *Sadhana* culminate in Supreme Enlightenment (*Bodha Swarupa*). In a similar way Supreme Knowledge (*Gyana Swarupa*) or Supreme Love (*Bhava Swarupa*) may be attained. As there is a state of Supreme Self-Knowledge, likewise is there a state of perfection at the zenith of the path of love. There one finds the nectar of perfect Love identical with Supreme Knowledge. In this state there is no room for emotional excitement, indeed it would make it impossible for Supreme Love (*Mahabhava*) to shine forth. Be mindful of one thing: if when following a particular line of approach one does not attain to that which is the consummation of all *Sadhana*, namely the final Goal, it means that one has not entered the Stream. At the supreme summit of Love, which is *Mahabhava*, exuberance, excessive emotion and the like cannot

possibly occur. Emotional excitement and Supreme Love are not to be compared at all, they are totally different from one another.

While absorbed in meditation, whether one is conscious of the body or not, whether there be a sense of identification with the physical or not — in any case it is imperative to remain wide awake; unconsciousness must be strictly avoided. Some genuine perceptivity must be retained, whether one contemplates the Self as such or any particular form. What is the purpose of this type of meditation? It opens up one's being to the Light, to that which is Eternal. Suppose the body had been suffering from some pain or stiffness, — lo and behold after meditation it feels perfectly hale and hearty, with not a trace of fatigue or debility. It is as if a long period of time had elapsed in between, as if there had never been a question of any discomfort. This would be a good sign. But if tempted at the first touch of Bliss, to allow oneself to be drowned in it and later to declare: "Where I was I could not say, I do not know", — this is not desirable. As one becomes capable of real meditation and to the extent that one contacts Reality one discovers the ineffable joy that lies hidden even in all outer objects.

On the other hand when in the course of meditation one loses oneself as it were, lapsing into a kind of stupor and afterwards claims to have been steeped in intense bliss, this sort of bliss is a hindrance. If the life-force seems to have been in abeyance — just as one has a sense of great happiness after sound sleep — it indicates stagnation. It is a sign of attachment and this attachment stands in the way of true meditation, since one will be apt to revert to that state again and again; although from the standpoint of the world which is altogether different, it would seem a source of profound inward joy and therefore certainly an indication of spiritual progress. To be held up at any stage is obstructive, it simply means one has stopped advancing.

When engaging in meditation one should think of oneself as a purely spiritual being (*Chinmayi*) (without any touch of materiality), as Self-luminous, poised in the Bliss of the Self (*Atmaram*), and according to the Guru's instructions, try to concentrate on one's *Ishta* (the Beloved). The young man previously mentioned, (the one who used to have visions), was intelligent and therefore able to understand this sort of reasoning. As a result the spectacular experiences ceased and he attends now to his meditation and other spiritual exercises in a very quiet and unobtrusive manner.

The same evening when the conversation again reverted to *dhyana* (meditation) and *asana* (posture), Mataji said :

Mataji :—Look, if you spend hour after hour sitting in a certain posture, if you become wedded to that pose and are unable to meditate in any other, it shows that you are deriving enjoyment from the posture; this also constitutes an obstacle. When one first starts practising *japa* and meditation it is of course right to try and continue in the same position for as long as possible. But as one approaches perfection in these practices, the question as to how long one has remained in one posture does not arise; at any time and in any position lying, sitting, standing or leaning over to one side, as the case may be — one can no longer be deterred by anything from the contemplation of one's Ideal or the Beloved.

The first sign of progress comes when one feels ill at ease in any but a meditative pose. Nothing external interests one; the only thing that seems attractive is to be seated in one's favourite posture as long as may be and contemplate the Supreme Object of one's worship, plunged in a deep inner joy. This marks the beginning of single-mindedness and hence is a step in the right direction. Yet here great prominence is given to posture. If one stays in that position as long as the inclination lasts — confident that the Beloved can never do one harm, — and if one is able to remain fixed in it, then the posture becomes of overwhelming importance. This only shows that one is nearing perfection in the practice of *asana*. Rising, sitting down, walking, in fact any gesture taken up by the body is called an *asana*. It corresponds to the rhythm and the vibration of body and mind at any particular moment. Some aspirants can meditate only if seated in the pose indicated by the Guru or formulated in the *Shastras* and not otherwise. This is the way to proficiency in meditation. On the other hand someone may begin his practice while sitting in any ordinary position; nevertheless as soon as the state of *japa* or *dhyana* has been reached the body will spontaneously take up the most appropriate position, after the manner that belching happens involuntarily. As one's meditation grows more and more intense the postures correspondingly of themselves gain in perfection. When a little air is pumped into a tyre the tyre will be flabby; but when it is filled to capacity it remains completely stable in its own natural shape. Likewise when real meditation has been attained, the body feels light and free, and on

rising after meditation there is no fatigue of any kind, no pain, numbness or stiffness in one's limbs.

In true meditation Reality is contacted and just as the touch of fire leaves an impression, this contact also leaves its mark. In what way? Impediments fall away — they are either consumed by detachment from sense objects or molten by devotion to the Divine. Worldly things seem tedious, quite foreign to oneself; worldly talk loses all its appeal, becomes devoid of interest and at a further stage even painful. When a person's earthly possessions are lost or damaged the victim feels disturbed which gives evidence of the stranglehold that sense objects exercise over man's mind. This is what is called *granthi* — the knots constituting the I-ness. By meditation, *japa* and other spiritual practices, which vary according to each one's individual line of approach, these knots become loosened, discrimination is developed and one comes to discern the true nature of the world of sense perception. In the beginning one was enmeshed in it, struggling helplessly in its grip. As one becomes disentangled from it and gradually passes through various stages of opening oneself more and more to the Light, one comes to see that everything is contained in everything, that there is only One Self, the Lord of all, or that all are but the servants of the One Master. The form this realization takes depends on one's orientation. One knows by direct perception that as one exists so everyone else exists, then again that there is the One and nothing but the One, that nothing comes and nothing goes—yet also does come and go — there is no way of expressing all this in words. To the extent that one becomes estranged from the world of the senses one draws nearer to God.

When attaining to true meditation one's chosen posture no longer represents either an obstacle or a source of enjoyment; in other words it is quite impossible for one to feel able to meditate only in one particular pose and in no other. Whether one happens to sit straight or crooked, the right posture will form of itself pulling the body into the proper position. Again there are occasions when one becomes entirely independent of the physical pose: in whatever attitude the body may happen to be, meditation just comes about effortlessly. Albeit without a doubt there is also a state in which, if one takes up a special pose, such as for instance, *Padmasana* (the 'lotuspose') or *Siddhasana* (the 'perfect pose'), no interruption of one's union with the Supreme Being can ever occur.

Mother as Revealed to me from a Distance by Looking at Her Picture.

By

Miriam Orr (Paris.)

When I saw Mother's picture for the first time in the book "Ma Anan-amayi" by Devotees, something strange happened to me. The picture caused an experience I had never had before. I was struck by Mother's beauty, sweetness and harmony; I felt inwardly shaken; Her sweet smile and Her loving eyes touched something in me, quite unknown till the moment I beheld Her picture. Her silence Her sweet smile and Her loving eyes penetrated my whole being and seemed to tell me without words: "Why all this worrying, struggling and clinging to the forms of this world? Is it worth while, is it essential? The whirlpool of chasing, tangled pictures, forms and names— is it not a dream you are dreaming, a dream you are weaving like a spider's web? Should you not wake up? Are you not already awake, even while dreaming? Weaving your own dream and yet awake all at once, but not knowing that you are awake, being caught in the cobweb of your dreams?"

These words were not heard by me. I am using them in order to communicate something of the very first impression Mother's picture made on me, of the experience it evoked, an experience of a new order. It is difficult, if not impossible to describe. It was a little bit like when a small child who is fast asleep with the heavy sleep of childhood, is shaken by a grown-up because it is time to rise—and yet it was not like this. A child must leave his dream-world to get adjusted to the waking state, which is another world, the world of forms and actions. The way Mother woke me was different and the world into which Her sweet smile and Her radiant eyes shook me seemed a world without forms, without actions and without end. Forms and actions seemed to fall away as dry leaves drop from a tree.

This strange experience was much swifter than words, it might be compared to a sudden light in a dark chamber, to a soft, smiling light that made the world of forms and actions

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fade away and appealed to something within and beyond it, to some inner region, quite new and yet very old, within me and beyond me.

Mother's picture, especially Her smile and Her loving look, were like a soft wind that shakes all the plants, makes the withered leaves fall off and stirs up men to realize something unknown. Mother's smile, sweet and silent, was felt as a soft, ringing sound, passing through my inner being and re-shuffling it into a new pattern. And yet it was not like this. It was different, much simpler. I was aware of an inner touch and an inner disentanglement. Mother's smile seemed silent and resonant at the same time. It gave me the feeling of a ringing sound, delicate like the ripples on a quiet lake moved by a gentle breeze. This silent, ringing sound filled the universe and passed through all it contains.

When I wish to recall this extraordinary inner experience I have only to look at Mother's picture with its sweet smile and its soft, loving gaze. It melts my whole being and gives me a faint glimpse of a state beyond time.

To look at Mother's picture induces something like the great spring cleaning in the houses: old, useless furniture is thrown out, accumulated

dust and cobwebs are removed and everything is re-arranged.

I look at Mother's picture whenever I am alone or have not got to talk: in the underground or the bus, before falling asleep and on waking in the morning. This is very little, far too little.....and it is after all only a photo I am looking at. What must it be like to see Mother Herself, to be in Her loving Presence?

Although a mere picture on a poor piece of paper, worn by being kept in my handbag and having been taken out and put back so often, it has revealed to me what I have never read in any book or heard anyone say.

The first thing it revealed to me is that the only true Love is the Love that wears away the veil that separates man from the Divine Light. Every other manifestation of love is more or less possessive, ego-centric. Mother's smile and Her eyes tell me that Her Love is egoless. Hers is the divine Love of Salvation. Salvation re-establishes the link, the oneness with God which had been forgotten and could not be remembered because it was covered with the dust of separation, brought about by the ego. Mother's love, radiating from Her eyes and Her smile is saving Love, Divine Love. It is not on the ego-

level of give and take, of exchange. It is egoless Love beyond separation.

Another fact Mother's picture revealed to me is that Mother has no memory. Men divorced from their own inner Light, with a very limited consciousness and field of vision need memory. When in one room we cannot see what is in other rooms; when leaving a town and travelling to another we can no longer perceive the first-one. Therefore we require memory, memory in space and memory in time. Mother has full vision, She sees everything at the same time. She may not "see" just the concrete forms, but the forces working through them. Having full vision in space as well as beyond it, seeing time as well as the timeless, there is no place for memory, memory being a consequence of separateness, of limitation. What we experience as distance in time and space is no distance to Her.

Further Her picture made me understand what I had already read in the Bible, but what had hitherto been nothing but meaningless words to me, filling the storehouse of memory. I am referring to the story of the mana-bread in the desert of Sinai and to the multiplication of loaves and fishes by Jesus. When I read in the book "Ma Anandamayi" on p. 72 that food had been prepared for 400

people but many more came to partake of the meal and Mother said: "..... no one should go unfed. Leave this body alone. Report only if there is any shortage....." and I looked at Her photo, the following dawned on me: In the created world everything is food. Minerals are food for plants, plants are food for other plants, for animals and men, animals are food for other animals and some men, and after having decayed and become part of the earth, they are again food for plants. Minerals, plants, animals, men pass through one another's bodies in the form of food and build up one another's physical frames through digestion. Air is food for all breathing creatures. The created world is an enormous, seething womb, where everything is food for everything else in a continuous communion, interpenetration and transformation. Created matter passes continually through all creatures in a mutual exchange and in ceaseless transformation. What we eat, what builds up our bodies had to undergo mutual penetration and transformation in the gigantic womb of the created world.

Mother is able to create food directly from the uncreated Source of Creation. Mother provided food that had not undergone transformation by

being eaten and digested by many forms of life. Mother produced food for all who came to be fed. This is immediate creation. Reading Her words as related by Arun Prakash Banerjee I intuitively felt that this is possible and the above mentioned Bible stories are now a living truth to me, not just legend, myth, accepted in blind faith.

Moreover on p. 62 of the same book Nalini Kanta Brahma says "Mother Anandamayi is practically an unlettered woman.....But when She is engaged in any philosophical or religious discussion, it is difficult to believe that She has had virtually no education or training in Her life". These lines and Her sweetly smiling picture made me realize that reading and writing are techniques typical of our epoch, of a span of perhaps 10,000 years or so. As long as mankind had more or less complete vision of the Divine Forces playing in and through the created world, reading and writing were not invented, because unnecessary. Writing helps to preserve the memory of what can no longer be perceived. As soon as there is full vision, reading and writing drop away, they are not needed. Mother hardly writes at all. She is Herself the Heavenly Bread of Life and so, naturally, writing is not for Her. It

is for Her bhaktas to write the glad tidings that She has taken shape in a human body to help mankind to realize Union, Divine Love.

Divine Incarnations hardly ever write. They radiate Peace, they are that Peace. Writing is for those who are in the world of *becoming*, of eating and digesting, of transformation. Mother belongs to the world of *Being*, even though She has taken shape in the world of becoming.

Furthermore Mother's sweet smile and Her loving eyes seemed to put life into the words of a friend of mine in the Middle East who once said to me : "Do not seek help from men, seek the help of God !" Although that friend of mine is a God-intoxicated woman her words were then mere words to me, dry and meaningless. Mother's picture in its eloquent silence conveyed to me that everything happening in this world of forms, names and actions is prompted by forces within and beyond it. We may call them God's Will—there is really no difference between God's Will and all that happens. Events may appear to be against His Will, may seem cruel and senseless, yet in the end, in spite of many deviations, it is always His Will that works through the created world and if we ask for His help, it is the shortest way. Water drawn from its source is invariably purer than

water transmitted by pipes and aqueducts. God is the Spring and to obtain His water directly is more healing than getting it indirectly through his waterpipes, men. "Seek God's help, not the help of men" is now a living truth to me. God's waters will flow through the right channels and cure all ills. Mother's picture made me see this.

Finally I heard from a friend in India that Mother neither takes on *Chelas* nor gives *Mantra Diksha*. My whole life I have been waiting for a Guru and initiation. Mother's smile tells me that She is not and cannot be a Guru in the sense we attribute to the word, a Guru being a man who by various methods and techniques has succeeded in catching a glimpse of the Light Divine and is therefore competent to indicate to others the way to Realization. Mother is not a human being like all the others. She is Divine Light clad in a human form. Therefore She did not require any methods or techniques, just as She does not need to read and write.

Those who are in the valley have to use a stick, an indicator of the

path, in order to reach the mountain-peak. But one who has descended from the top knows and sees all ways. The very Presence of such an one is enlightening, to a certain extent even from a great distance.

If one of a group of men who imagine to be blind, succeeds by diligent and painful exercises to regain his eyesight partly, he will take much trouble to teach his fellow-beings how to get rid of their illusion of being blind. But one who has always had full sight, will not teach methods. He will smile and laugh away and dispel the error, the weird spider's web.

Mother, being Divine Light clothed in a human form, has no need of human methods and techniques, which are the consequences of separation. For Mother separation does not exist. Were She just a human being She could not through a poor worn photo have revealed a glimpse—however tiny—of Her Light to a far-away bhakta, who is waiting to be in Her physical Presence as a prisoner pining for freedom, as a sick man craving for health, as a dweller in the dark longing for the sun.

THE ALL-PERVADING PRESENCE OF THE MOTHER

By

Kenneth Grant (London)

It is, perhaps, not a matter for remark that extraordinary things sometimes occur in circumstances involving Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma, but I would like to place the following event on record as showing Mother's omniscience and omnipresence concerning one who has not contacted Her in the physical at all, not even through correspondence.

The following event may seem trivial to those to whom long association with Mother has revealed many such events of a truly miraculous and marvellous nature. It must be remembered, however, that to one living in England where these events are conspicuous by their absence, and which is as remote from Mother's physical presence as may be, such an event stands out as a singular and inspiring witness to an occult order of things which no amount of materiality may afford even to deaden, much less then to destroy.

Having spent an evening perusing and contemplating certain numbers of this Magazine, Ananda Vārtā, I had retired for the night, my mind

quite naturally attuned to thoughts of Mother and Her infinite Grace.

Having a particular and distressing problem at the back of my mind which welled forth into the forecourts of consciousness in the lucidity preceding sleep, I decided that I would submit my perplexity to Mother and seek Her advice.

It is to be noted that there was no conscious formulation of prayer designed with the purpose of creating a link or channel between Mother and myself, through which She might pour the healing streams of Her Grace; on the contrary, there was a distinct feeling, or decision, of postponing the matter till the morrow when I would either compose a letter describing the problem, or, more subtly, ask directly of Mother, and within myself, that She give me the strength to dispel my perplexity, enshrining my plea in some sort of prayer or formula or incantation, I had not even made up my mind which it was to be.

Imagine my amazement, then, on waking next morning to receive a

letter from one of Her devotees in India, one whom She has Herself named Shuddha Priya, wherein was contained an answer to my unformulated plea – an answer, note well, that must have been given long before I had thought even of approaching Mother concerning my problem, an answer somehow implanted in the mind of another devotee with the express purpose of having that devotee convey same to me in the manner in which it happened. Needless to say, my correspondent had not been informed in any way either by Mother or by myself as to the state of my mind *which was known to none other* during the time the letter was conceived, written down and despatched. Mother's ways are truly mysteri-

ous. Such an event, quite apart from the problem or the answer thereto, has had the effect of conferring that most valuable of all boons, the *certainty* of the unity of existence, i. e. the absolute conviction that Guru and Chela are one, and that if we could only and at all times enter and abide in the deep recesses of Being, where alone is the true Undifferentiated Consciousness, we could always know That which being known everything is known. And whether a problem is trivial or great, such distinctions of degree altogether vanish in that union of the individual soul with the Infinite Life which, for the sake of convenience and of our limited and finite understanding, we lovingly refer to simply as.....Mother!

The Message of the Bhāgavata

By

Dr. S. K. MAITRA, Banaras Hindu University

(Continued from last issue.)

What is Bhakti ?

In Sandilya Sutra 2 *para bhakti* or primary devotion is defined as attachment to the Lord ("सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे"). In order to meet the objection raised by Patanjali's Yogasutras, namely, that any attachment is a *klesa*, Sandilya Sutra 21 asserts that the objection of Patanjali applies only to worldly objects and not to attachment to God.

The Nārada Sutras define Bhakti as "love for the Lord" ("सा तस्मिन् परम-प्रेसरूपा"). This is practically the same as the definition of the Sandilya Sutras, but Rūpa Gosvami in his *Bhaktirasamrtasindhu* makes a distinction between attachment and love, giving the latter a higher place than the former. He has, in fact, given an ascending series of sentiments in which love occupies the highest place, and has identified *para bhakti* with it.

In the Bhāgavata, after a description of inferior types of bhakti, namely, *sattviki rajasiki*, and *tamasiki bhakti*, the highest type of bhakti, called *nirguna bhakti* is described as follows :

“अद्गुणश्रुतिमात्रेण मयि सर्वगुहाशये
मनोगतिरविच्छिन्ना यथा गंगात्मसोऽम्बुधौ ॥
लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्य ह्युदाहृतम् ।
अहेतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमे ॥

Bh. iii 29. 11-12

“The sum and substance of which is that *nirgunabhakti* is *bhakti* in *Purusottama* which is not tainted by any worldly purpose (*ahaituki*) and is not obstructed by anything (*avyavahita*). It is that which arises spontaneously in the heart on hearing legends about the Lord and which flows freely like the waters of the Ganga into the sea. The Bhāgavata's definition of bhakti is practically the same as that of the Sandilya and Nārada Sutras, but it stresses two important characteristics, namely, that it should be untainted by any worldly motive (*ahaituki*) and that it should be unimpeded (*avyavahita*).

But although the Bhāgavata gives practically the same definition of bhakti as the Bhaktisūtras, yet its attitude towards *jnana* and *karma* is, as we have seen, far more liberal than that of the latter. For instance, it

does not hold the view of the Bhakti-sutras either that knowledge is not the cause of devotion but can at best be regarded as auxiliary or accessory to it, or that devotion can never produce knowledge.

The Bhagavata's conception of the Society of Bhaktas

One of the most beautiful things which we find in the Bhāgavata is its conception of the Society of Bhaktas with God as their head. It occurs in the speech of Lord Kṛṣṇa in answer to Durvāsa's earnest appeal to Him to save him from the attack of Sudarśana Chakra. The Lord tells him that He is powerless, being Himself in a state of bondage to His bhaktas. And then follows a description of His relationship with His bhaktas, which we give below in the original :

“अहं भक्तपराधीनो ह्यस्वतन्त्र इव द्विज ।

साधुभिर्मस्तहृदयो भक्तैर्भक्तजनप्रियः ॥

नाहमात्मानमाशासे मद्भक्तैःसाधुभिर्विना ।

प्रियमात्यन्तिकी ब्रह्मन् येषां गतिरह परा ॥

ये दारागारपुत्राप्तप्राणान् वित्तमिदं परम् ।

हित्वा मां शरणं याताः कथं तास्त्यसुमुत्सहे ॥

Bh. 9. 4. 63-65

(“I am dependent upon my bhaktas and have no independence, O Dvija. My heart is in the possession of my faithful devotees, and I am the beloved of my bhaktas. I have no

desire for anything, not even for salvation, apart from My devotees, O Brahmana. How can I think of abandoning those who have given up their wives, sons, their dear lives and even their wealth to take refuge in Me ?”

It is a wonderful conception, in which there is perfect comradeship between God and man and perfect equality between man and man. Can any communist society come anywhere near this conception of perfect equality and universal brotherhood under the fatherhood of God? In fact, it is a sort of Divine communism, based upon the principle of love. Man is brought into intimate relationship with God, and at the same time he does not lose his individuality. Man's love for God is fully reciprocated by God's love for man. A faint echo of this we find in Spinoza's conception of the intellectual love of God, wherein Spinoza has said that man's love for God must mean also God's love for man.

The absolute monism of the Bhagavata

The beauty of the whole thing is that the Bhāgavata is in a position to maintain this relationship between God and man without deviating an inch from the standpoint of absolute monism. It does not believe in any

of qualified monism. In the first book it has stated very clearly that its standpoint is that of absolute monism :

एकं तत् तत्त्वविदस्तत्त्वं यज्ज्ञानमद्वयम् ।
परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्द्यते ॥
Bha. I. 2-11
who know the ultimate

non-dual knowledge, called Brahman, Pāramātmā or Bhagavān”).

The principle of absolute monism is also stated very clearly, in the following verse which occurs in connection with Lord Kṛṣṇa's advice to Devahūti.

‘आत्मनश्च परस्यापि यः करोत्यन्तरोदरम् ।
तस्य भिन्नदृशो मृत्युर्विदधे भयमुल्बणम् ॥

Bha. III 29-26

(“He who makes a distinction between Ātman and the world—for such a man who sees difference, I as Death create a terrible fear”).

The same principle of absolutely unqualified monism appears also clearly in the words addressed to Lord Kṛṣṇa by Mahādeva, when requesting Him to show His *mohinirupa* :

त्वं ब्रह्म पूर्णममृतं विगुणं विशोकमानन्दमात्रम-
विकारमनन्यदन्यत् ।

विश्वस्य हेतुरुदयस्थितिसंयमानाम्
आत्मेश्वरश्च तदपेक्षयानपेक्षः ॥
Bh. VIII 12-7

(“You are Brahman, the Perfect, the Immortal, the Attributeless, Pure Bliss, the Unchanging, the Identical as well as the Different, the Cause of the origin, preservation and dissolution of the universe, the Indwelling Spirit which controls, while remaining Itself quite detached.”

monism appears clearly in the famous hymn addressed by Brahmā to Lord Kṛṣṇa :

‘एकस्त्वमात्मा पुरुषः पुराणः
सत्यः स्वयं ज्योतिरनंत आद्यः ।
नित्योऽक्षरोऽनन्तसुखो निरञ्जनः
पूर्णान्वयोमुक्त उपाधितोऽमृतः ॥

Bh. X 14-23

(“You are the One, the Ātmā, the Eternal Puruṣa, the Truth, the Self-luminous, the Infinite, the Origin, the Indestructible, the Repository of Infinite Happiness, the Attributeless, the perfectly Non-dual, free from all attributes, immortal”).

Innumerable other verses can be quoted in support of the view that the standpoint of the Bhāgavata is that of absolute monism. The Bhāgavata has thus shown very clearly that a Bhakti Dharma can very well be constructed on a foundation of absolute monism. It is a very wrong idea that it must necessarily rest upon a dualistic basis.

**Voluntary relinquishment on the part
of the Bhaktas of the right of complete
union with God**

It may be objected, however, that if Bhakti Dharma is based upon absolute monism, how is it that the bhakta maintains his separate individuality and is not absorbed in the Absolute. The answer of the Bhāgavata is very striking. It says that although it is open to the bhaktas to claim complete absorption in God, yet they willingly abrogate this right for the sake of enjoying the privilege of serving God. This is repeated in several verses in the Bhāgavata. For instance, in verse 13 of the 3rd Skandha, it is clearly stated that even if a bhakta is given *salokya*, (the privilege of living in the same loka with God), *sarsti* (the power of possessing the same *aśvarya* as God), *samipya* (the privilege of living in the vicinity of God), *sarupya* (the privilege of possessing the same form as God) and *aikya* (union with God), he does not accept them but prefers to remain a servant of God. It is therefore not due to any weakness of his or of any fundamental difference between him and God, that the bhakta does not get complete union with God, but it is solely due to his own preference for a state where he can serve God. This is in contrast to the position assigned to him in Rāmā-

nūja's system where, on account of a difference which cannot be annulled, it is not open to man to claim complete union with God.

The same idea of the voluntary relinquishment of his right to enjoy union with God by the bhakta in order to be able to serve Him, is stated clearly in Bhāgavata, xi. 20.34, which runs as follows :

“न किञ्चित् साधवो धीरा भक्ता ह्येकान्तिनो मम ।
वाञ्छन्त्यपि मया दत्तं कैवल्यमपुनर्भवम् ॥

(“The devotees of Mine who take refuge in Me alone never express any desire for obtaining *kaivalya* (complete mergence in God) or freedom from the cycle of birth and death, even if these things are offered to them.

Exactly the same thing is also stated in ix.4. 67, which runs as follows :

“मत्सेवया प्रतीतं च सालोक्यादि चतुष्टयम् ।
नेच्छन्ति सेवया पूर्णाः कुतोऽन्यत् कालविद्रुतम् ॥

(“By virtue of their serving Me, it is known to them that they can have *salokya*, etc., for the mere asking, but they who are full of service do not want them, not to speak of other things which are temporal”).

This is a grand conception—this idea of a voluntary relinquishment by man of his right to complete union with God which at one stroke removes

the difficulties which stand in the way of restoring to man his individuality without deviating an inch from the standpoint of absolute monism. The Bhāgavata does not deny man the privilege of being completely united with God, losing his name and form, as a verse of the Mundakopaniṣad says. But it says that those who are believers in the path of bhakti are not attracted by the prospect of being absorbed in God and prefer to enjoy His company and the privilege of serving Him. Thus, by a voluntary relinquishment of his inherent right to be one with God, man can enjoy the bhakta's paradise, which is to serve God and live in perpetual comradeship with Him.

The Bhagavata's conception of God's relationship with man

Looking at the matter from the other side, it appears that God's relationship with His bhaktas is different from His relationship with other men. This does not mean any special favour shown to them; it means only giving men what they are fit for. In the Gita also the Lord says :

“ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।” (IV.11)

(“However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them” - Annie Besant's translation).

It cannot be said that giving the bhaktas the privilege of enjoying His company denotes conferring upon them a higher privilege than is enjoyed by others. From the strictly metaphysical point of view, the privilege of being completely united with God, which is what the followers of the path of knowledge aspire to, is higher than that of enjoying His company. God, therefore, cannot be charged with partiality if He gives His bhaktas the right to enjoy His company and serve Him. He only gives them what they aspire to and what they deserve. It does not mean giving them a more favourable treatment than is meted out to others.

Of course, it means that God is looked upon as *Purusottama* and not as *Aksara Brahman*. This is a legacy which the Bhāgavata has got from the Gita. The Bhāgavata's conception of God as *Purusottama* or as *Bhagavan* follows the lines of the Gita's conception of Him, as depicted in its fifteenth chapter. It has only dotted the i's and cut the t's of that conception. God as *Purusottama* sheds His awful aloofness and comes into direct relationship with the world. The further delineation of the different types of relationship with different kinds of being, according to their needs, is only a matter of detail.

A picture of an ideal Bhakta

I shall end up by the description of an ideal bhakta as given in the Bhagavata. The ideal Bhakta is no other than Ambariṣa, son of Nābhāga. In the description of him in the ninth book, we have a very good picture of what a bhakta should be, the qualities which go to his making, his outlook upon life, his hopes and aspirations. He was no ordinary mortal but a great king of an extensive kingdom. In spite of his enormous wealth and a huge kingdom, he looked upon his vast possessions as mere straw as a result of his devotion to Vāsudeva and His devotees. Then follows a description showing how every minute action of his was guided by his great devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, which I must give in the original, for no translation can convey the wonderful beauty of it :

“स वै मनः कृष्णपदारविन्दयोः
वचांसि वैकुण्ठगुणानुवर्णने ।
करौ हरेर्मन्दिरमार्जनादिषु
श्रुति चकारान्युतसत्कथोदये ॥
मुकुन्दलिङ्गालयदर्शने दृशौ
तद्भृत्यगात्रस्पर्शोऽगन्गमम् ।
घ्राणं च तत्पादसरोजसौरभे
श्रीमत्तुलस्या रसनां तदर्पिते ॥
पादौ हरेः क्षेत्रगुणानुसर्पणे
शिरो हृषीकेशपदाभिवन्दने ।

कामंच दास्ये न तु कामकाम्यया
यथोत्तमः श्लोकजनाश्रया रतिः ॥”

Bh. ix. 4.18-20

(“He dedicated his mind to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his speech to the recital of His praise, his hands to the cleaning of the temples of Hari, his ears to the hearing of the legends of the Acyuta. His eyes he employed for seeing the images of Mukunda in the temples, the contact of his body he dedicated to the touch of the bodies of the devotees, his nose to smelling the tulsī emanating from the Lord’s lotus feet and his tongue to tasting the oblations that were offered there. His feet he dedicated to travelling to places of pilgrimage sacred to Him, his head to bowing to the feet of Hṛṣīkeśa, his desires to the prospect of serving Him and not to worldly objects; in brief, his devotion was of the type which only the greatest of devotees of the Lord could have”).

I conclude by offering my prayer to Him who is the Source of the inspiration of the Bhāgavata :

“विना यस्य ध्यानं ब्रजति पशुतां सूकरमुखाम्
विना यस्य ज्ञानं जनिमृतिभयं याति जनता ।
विना यस्य स्मृत्या कृमिशतजनिं याति स विभुः
शरण्यो लोकेशो मम भवतु कृष्णोऽक्षिविषयः ॥

IDEALS OF SUFISM

By

Dr. M. Hafiz Syed, M. A., Ph. D. Litt.

There is no religion, ancient or modern, which is devoid of moral principles and spiritual elements. Islam has clearly and unmistakably recognised the fact that God has been merciful enough to send teachers and prophets to every nation and country from the earliest days of Adam up to the last prophet Muhammad through whom Islam was given to the world. Therefore every devout Muslim who has faith in the revealed religion has to respect religions other than his own. The Holy Quran says that no distinction is to be made among the prophets.

Islam like most of the religions of the Aryan and the Semitic stock believes that God is the Supreme Source of all creation, and as the Father and Originator of all human beings is equally interested in the spiritual welfare of all mankind. As the source of our being is One we have a common destiny, namely spiritual evolution and perfection in due course of time.

As all religious teachers were ordained by the Higher Power to

serve human beings without any distinction, the essential teachings of almost all the great religions of the world not only bear striking similarities, but in certain cases, one is agreeably surprised to find identity in some of the ways of God-realisation and the final destiny of man. It is right to presume that the essential unity of various schools of mystical thought is based upon rational grounds. As human beings differ in tastes, talents and tendencies, so they are divided into various races, religions and tribes. This division however is neither vital nor essential.

Sadi the great mystic poet of Persia says that all men are limbs of one body. In view of these basic facts it will be very interesting and instructive to learn that there is a common ground on which the Muslims of the world can meet their brethren of Hindustan and of other countries on a common platform of goodwill and mutual fellowship.

The Sufis are divided into innumerable orders. The two original orders are : (1) HULULIYA, which means

