

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.* )

53.

After all these days this kind of question has occurred to him ? Of course it has happened because he is at a stage when questions arise, and there is nothing wrong about it—for is not everything God's creation ? Things are different for different people. It is well to remember that what looms as a formidable problem may at times be resolved in a very easy way and so the further question may arise : Was it after all but a trifling problem ? The Creator of all things alone knows how to appraise it, He alone knows what is great and what is small.

54.

In whatever condition God may keep man at any time, he must remain content. He should wholly rely upon God and let his mind be occupied with Japa and meditation. It is when one's desires remain unfulfilled that one feels disappointed or frustrated. The only desire to be cherished is that His will may be done. Let him say to himself : "I shall call out to the Almighty, for no matter what He does, He does it for the best." To live in this spirit is man's duty as a human being. One has to aspire at the realization of Truth.

## 55.

How can this little girl\* possibly leave her father\* ? Even if he pushes her far away this obstinate little girl will still be with him. The father will have to realize that such is the nature of his little daughter : in fact all her father's qualities are to be found in her, and he should make her use these very qualities in the service of her ailing† father.

If one feeds upon the things that aggravate the disease, is it not natural that the illness should grow worse ? Medicine will have to be taken and also a change of air will be beneficial.

## 56.

By doing service heart and mind are purified—be convinced of this ! To engage in service is a very powerful *Sadhana*, do not become impatient. Rather serve your people with the utmost calm and have a kind word for everyone. Whenever you do or say anything wrong, beg to be forgiven and try your best not to let a similar error occur in future. Even though others may be unjust to you, you yourself should neither do nor say anything unseemly.

## 57.

Worldly occupations and business are bound to cause worry, it cannot be otherwise. The only way to meet it is by endurance, endurance and more endurance. He who can endure wins in the end. One has to dive down among the waves of the sea and rise up again. The talents and the work God has entrusted to you are meant for His service and for nothing else—bear this in mind !

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\* Mataji addresses every man as 'father' and speaks of Herself as everyone's little daughter.

† The illness obviously here means '*bhava roga*', the disease of every man who looks upon himself as a separate individual. The medicine to cure this ailment is *Sadhana* : a change of air signifies a change from worldly surroundings to *Satsang*, the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth.

58.

Man must behave as a hero. During spells of misfortune he must abide in fortitude and patience. Time never stands still.

Suicide is a most heinous sin. To whom belongs the body that you speak of destroying? Is this the way a human being talks? For shame!

59.

To indulge in what seems pleasurable means to choose that which appears lovely on the surface and therefore attractive. Yet unlawful, ill-fated, degrading actions that give expression to one's animal nature lead to misery. The rules and regulations pertaining to the householder's period of life (*Grihastha Ashram*) have to be observed as fully as possible. To live up to the highest ideals seems irksome at first, but ultimately brings real well-being and peace. One must learn to find enjoyment in the Sublime—then only does one deserve to be called a human being. Having been blessed with a human body it is only right that one should behave in a fitting manner. Why give way to animal instincts?

If you cannot sustain *Japa* at all times, at any rate complete two rosaries twice daily, morning and evening. The search after Truth is man's real vocation.

60.

To a human being the most noble, irreproachable line of conduct is alone acceptable. If anyone strives to mould his life accordingly it is a matter of great rejoicing. In the case of a woman it means preserving her integrity and purity by being completely faithful to her husband. Not to let even her glance fall on any other man must be her endeavour. Only actions that kindle man's Divine nature are worthy of the name of action, all the rest is non-action, a waste of energy. Any pattern of behaviour that fails to quicken the Divine in man should be eschewed, however enticing it may be, but any that helps to awaken man's inherent Divinity must be resolutely adopted as one's own, even though seemingly uninviting. Man's calling is to

tread the excellent path that leads to Immortality. What appears pleasing to the senses later develops into a hot-bed of poison, generating inner turmoil and disaster, for it belongs to the realm of death.

## 61.

Force of character is man's great strength. If he uses it in his dealings with the world he will indeed be victorious along most lines.

## 62.

Everything comes to pass according to each one's destiny. You will have to accept this. The Creator has so regulated the universe that everyone has and ever will have to reap the fruits of his actions; there is no way out of it. If because of your physical unhappiness you feel disinclined to and consequently do not meditate on the name of Him who is the Supreme Father, Mother, Friend and Lord -- do you call this creating good Karma? That you may have to suffer the same kind of trouble over and over again? Your father and mother arranged what, after careful consideration, they believed to be for your welfare. *Karma*, the consequences of one's past actions are one's own liability.

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# MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

( 14 )

When the *Bhagavata Saptaha*\*, held in September 1948 at Solan, was over the Raja of Solan asked :

Has the person for whose sake the *Bhagavata* was read, really benefited by it ?

*Mataji* : Yes, certainly. You see, whatever anyone does, be it good or bad, is supposed to affect fourteen generations, namely back to the seventh generation of his ancestors and down to the seventh generation of his descendants. For there is a saying that fourteen generations of the relatives of an evildoer (seven of the past and seven of the future) will have to suffer in lower states of existence as a result of his misdeeds ; on the other hand if one person attains to perfection fourteen generations of his family will thereby be saved.

Although nowadays so much money is squandered on pleasures and amusements, yet should anyone spend any on a religious function such as we have just witnessed, people call it a sheer waste of money.

All the same a great number of refugees had to flee from the Punjab leaving millions of rupees behind—and why ? Because this was destined to happen. A combination of various factors brought it about. When circumstances co-operate there is no knowing who may come from where and in what manner to be present at a particular function. At this *Bhagavata Saptaha* those who were meant to come did attend and each derived whatever profit he was entitled to. It is a case of various causes intermingling. All that occurs, good or bad,—if it was predestined to happen—comes about through the mysterious working together of certain forces.

*Question* : How do those forces operate ? Do they cause the beginning of one's actions or their completion ?

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\* *Bhagavata Saptaha* denotes the ceremonial chanting in Sanskrit and the explanation in the vernacular of the whole of the *Srimad Bhagavata* in seven days. This is usually arranged by the relatives of someone who recently passed away, for the purpose of helping the deceased person on his or her upward path.

*Mataji* : For one thing there is eternal relationship among all that exists. Secondly when there is a want it may be satisfied to some extent by the uniting of certain factors. Then again by a specific concurrence of factors something new may be begun ; Creation, Preservation and Dissolution continue ever side by side. Some part may be brought to a finish and another part started anew. In the one case something that was due to be obtained was obtained ; in the other case what was destined to become has begun to take shape ; and furthermore what is, continues to be. Besides there are certain standpoints from which beginning is immediately followed by end—without any continuance. There are still other points of view where beginning and end coincide, where the beginning fulfils itself in a single moment.

So long as full enlightenment has not come there will be a sequence (actual or logical) of creation, preservation and dissolution. Actions are bound to be related. But why say : 'bound to be' ? The relation is simply there, is inherent in action. Nothing has ever been, is now or ever will be unrelated to anything else existing.

*From the audience* : All this sounds most interesting, but it does not give us the personal experience of what has been said.

*Mataji* : By listening repeatedly to discussions and discourses on topics of this kind the path to first-hand knowledge of what has been heard, gradually opens out. You know, it is as when water uninterruptedly dripping on a stone finally makes a hole in it, and then a flood may suddenly surge through, which will bring enlightenment.

Be it the perusal of Sacred Texts, listening to religious discourses, engaging in Kirtan—God must be the alpha and omega of whatever is done. When reading, read about Him, when talking, talk of Him and when singing sing His praises. These three practices are intrinsically the same—the same expressed in three different ways, because people respond differently, to suit each person's temperament and capacity for assimilation. But essentially there is only He and He alone, although everyone has his own individual path that leads to Him. What is the right path for each person depends on the degree of his maturity and on his predilection.

Take for instance the study of Vedanta. Some seekers become completely drowned in it. Just as others may so lose themselves in Kirtan

as to fall into a trance. A student of Vedanta may become wholly absorbed in his texts, even more so than the one who gets carried away by Kirtan. According to one's specific line of approach one will be able to achieve full concentration through the study of a particular Scripture or by some other means.

First comes listening, then reflection and last of all the translation into action of what has been heard and pondered over. This is why one has first of all to listen, so that later on each may be able to select Vedanta or Kirtan or whatever else be in his own line.

Have you never come across people making light of Kirtan, saying: "What is there to be gained by it?" Nevertheless after listening to it for some length of time they actually develop a liking for it.

This is why one must listen before one can reflect and then later what has been heard and reflected upon will take shape in action. To listen to discourses on God or Truth is certainly beneficial, provided God does not let the speaker disparage or condemn those who are of another sect. To find fault with others creates obstacles for everyone all round, for him who criticizes, for him who is blamed as well as for those who listen to the criticism. Whereas what is said in a spirit of equality is fruitful to everybody. For only where there is no question of regarding anything as inferior or blameworthy (*asat*) can one speak of *Satsang*. \*

Who is known as a *Vaishnava* \*\* ? One who sees Vishnu everywhere. And as a *Shakta* †? One who beholds the Great Mother and nothing save Her. In truth all the various creeds and philosophies spring from one source—who then is to be blamed, who to be reviled or suppressed? All are equal in essence.

Thou art Mother, Thou art Father,  
Thou art Friend and Thou art Master,  
Truly thou art all in all.  
Every name is Thy Name  
Every quality Thy Quality,  
Every form Thy Form indeed.

\* A play upon words: *Sat* means True Being, the Good; *Satsang*, the company of the Good and also a religious gathering. *Asat*, the opposite of *Sat*, means non-being, wrong, evil. Therefore to find fault (*asat*) in a religious meeting (*Satsang*) is a contradiction in terms.

\*\* Vaishnava—worshipper of Vishnu, the Preserver.

† Shakta—worshipper of Shakti, Divine Energy.

Yet He is also without form, pure unmanifested spirit—all depends on one's avenue of approach.

Is it not said that the great Shiva of the Shaivites\* is the Brahman Itself? And for those whose method is self-inquiry, everything is but the ONE SELF. In reality there is no contradiction; so long as the slightest difference is perceived — even by a hair's breadth — how can one speak of the state of Pure Being?

For this reason no matter what path anyone may choose, it is THAT. *Vedanta*\*\* actually means the end of difference and non-difference.

While engaging in Sadhana one must concentrate in a single direction, but after it has been completed, what comes then? The cessation of difference, distinction and disagreement. Differences do indeed exist on the path, but how can there be a difference of Goal?

( 15 )

One evening a Punjabi lady came for Mataji's Darshan. Mataji asked her :

*Mataji* : Are you attending to your Japa regularly every day ?

*Reply* : I do indeed, but I cannot concentrate.

*Mataji* : Do not relax your efforts !

*The Punjabi Lady* : My children are very noisy. Even if at other times they may be quite well behaved, no sooner have they noticed that their mother has sat down to do her puja, the hullabaloo starts.

*Mataji* : Listen, is not the sea made up of innumerable waves, small and big? Dive deep down in the midst of them.

*The Punjabi lady* : Ma, I get very angry.

*Mataji* : Anger is not a good thing.

*The Punjabi lady* : What am I to do? I cannot help it.

*Mataji* : You can do one thing. On the day that you have lost your temper like this, see which is the most tasty dish on your dinner table and do not eat of it. Because you did wrong. You will remember to do this, won't you?

*Reply* : Yes, Ma, I will.

\* Shaivite - worshipper of Shiva.

\*\* Vedanta—the end or culmination of Vedic wisdom. Mataji here plays upon words: *Veda* and *Bheda* — difference. In Bengali the letters B and V sound alike. 'Anta' means 'end'.



# On the Teaching of Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

By

Vijayananda (Dr. Adolphe Weintrob)

( Translated from the French )

What is Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma's teaching? This is a question one can often hear, for it is put by most newcomers. All who are close to Mataji must of course have been present at some of the meetings in public or in small groups when Mataji with profound wisdom replies to questions on religious and spiritual subjects, often displaying a keen sense of humour. Many of these discussions have been recorded, noted down and published by men far better fitted for the task than myself. It is not this teaching that I want to talk about in the following few lines, but rather another aspect of Mataji's teaching, much simpler and more direct, which has nothing or very little to do with big philosophical problems. In fact this side of Her teaching might well appear to be commonplace and as such often pass unnoticed; although in my opinion it appeals to a much deeper layer of our being and can therefore be extremely helpful in our spiritual search, if only we will listen to it and open ourselves to the Divine Blessing that pours down on us constantly in Mataji's presence.

To be in Mataji's company almost invariably brings us in touch with people of every psychological type. In western countries the saying that the face is the mirror of the soul is quite proverbial. Actually all our thoughts are reflected in our countenance, the slightest mental vibration produces a contraction of one or several facial muscles. I have watched a great many faces and never, not even for a fraction of a second, have I seen reflected in them the state "beyond desire and fear." Swiftly the thought waves follow one another just like the billows on an expanse of water agitated by the wind. But in Mataji's face the mouth expresses a state of completeness, of wholeness in which everything is included. Never can even the slightest trace of fear or irritation be detected in Her eyes. They ever radiate the same love, the same sweetness, regardless of the most trying circumstances. This is real beauty. What a great joy it is to contemplate such a countenance! To watch and lovingly remember it will unconsciously make us try to imitate its expressions and these will

in due course lead us to the attitude of mind to which they correspond.

A reader who has never had Mataji's Darshan might perhaps imagine that Her features are always set in a static expression of peace and serenity. But this is not so. An endless variety of emotions pass over Her face like ripples which a light breeze produces on the surface of a quiet lake, while the immutable calm of its depths remains ever undisturbed. Mataji plays with feelings, but never Herself becomes their plaything as most of us do. An intelligent observer will soon notice how She mirrors the emotional states of Her surroundings, without ever really being affected by them—like a crystal that assumes the colours of the objects entering its field of refraction.

Mataji's conversation about trivial everyday matters is never trivial. For those who know how to listen, it almost always contains some profound teaching. On several occasions, both in public meetings and in small gatherings, I have remarked how Mataji suddenly utters a sentence that appears incomprehensible to us and sometimes perhaps even beside the point. I have repeatedly been able to discover afterwards that this sentence was meant for someone in the audience in reply to a query that had been tormenting him, or that it

represented the solution of a problem that until then had seemed insoluble to him

Last summer at Solan after the celebrations of Mataji's birthday, She was one day as usual taking Her evening stroll just outside of the Ashram veranda. At that hour a dog used to come and beg for *prasad* from Mataji. The entrance of the Ashram veranda is guarded by two wooden tigers, realistically painted, with their jaws wide open, ready to bite. Jokingly Mataji placed the sweets that were meant for the dog into the tiger's mouth. Everyone was highly amused to see the poor dog standing in front of the tiger, torn between the desire to snatch the sweets and the fear of being bitten by the wooden beast. Mataji then made a remark of which I do not recall the exact words. Its meaning was that the fear which keeps man fettered to the world was just as illusory as the dog's fear of the wooden tiger. Apart from the general teaching this statement conveyed, it was meant for a particular person present. Like an infallible arrow it hit the centre of the target and did its work.

It happens frequently that people coming to Mataji with distressing questions, problems or difficulties find a clear and simple solution merely

by sitting in Her Presence—the solution presenting itself quite naturally, convincingly and with obviousness. For, what a great Sage, a real Guru brings about spontaneously is not only to clarify the mind and to transmit power, but above all to disperse the mists that hide our true Self, our Eternal Being, and to put us in communion with THAT. Once this contact has been established, it is THAT which advises and guides us with unfailling certainty.

Many of those who live near Mataji have probably like myself, experienced that when we approach Her with questions concerning our Sadhana, She most assuredly replies with wisdom and kindness, yet often only briefly, in a detached manner, as if it were a matter of secondary importance. When on the other hand we become the actors in some little incident of everyday life and display anger or quarrelsomeness, etc., She seems to take great interest: She summons those involved in it, inquires carefully into the details and sometimes spends hours over the solution of some apparently petty difficulty.

Spiritual practices such as meditation, japa and so forth are undoubtedly of great importance. Nevertheless, as I have heard Mataji point out on various occasions, their sole purpose is to assist us in removing

the veil that conceals Reality from us. That veil is made up of desires, anger, fear etc. and it is in one's daily life that one has the chance to study these obstructions as they arise, to bring them into the field of one's consciousness, so as to get rid of them.

One day, for some insignificant reason, I lost my temper in Mataji's presence. Impetuously I blurted out a few irreverent words, of which I repented immediately afterwards. She replied, as She always does, with great gentleness, although it appeared to me tinged with a shade of irony. I felt ashamed; the same evening I asked for a private interview in order to apologize. I was naturally anxious that the whole matter should be forgotten as quickly as possible and that nobody should mention it anymore. But Mataji on the contrary dwelt on it at length, minutely examining the details and questioning the persons involved, which made me the more deeply ashamed.

A competent surgeon does not feel satisfied by merely making an incision when treating an abscess, but cuts a wide opening so as to be able to drain the sore completely, straightening out the folds in the skin and carefully removing any hidden trace of pus. Similarly Mataji does not merely settle a particular difficulty, but penetrates to the root of the evil and deals

with it, so that it may be destroyed with all its ramifications and never sprout up again.

Later I came to understand the psychology of what had happened that day. The rage that had been smouldering within me was bound to explode against someone or other. Mataji Herself had deflected it towards Her own person, so as to direct its karmic results. This is how, again and again, She arranges things for our good. Many of Her devotees must have had similar experiences. I am told that She says: "If you must be angry, be angry with me, for you will not be able to keep it up for long." And also: "By *moha* (strong attachment) for this body (meaning Herself), all *moha* will be destroyed."

Wrath or affection felt for an ordinary person must inevitably produce a reaction in that person and set in motion a whole series of karmic consequences. Whereas if the object of one's anger or attachment is a perfect Being, the waves of the emotion will find no resistance and therefore exhaust themselves and die away like fire that has nothing to consume anymore.

Anyone who wishes to remain with Mataji for a lengthy period of time, will have to spend a good part of his life at railway stations and in trains, for Mataji rarely stays in one place

for long. The agitation of a railway station, the mental fever that usually accompanies the preparations for a journey are difficult to bear. Most people are unconsciously carried away completely by the current of excitement surrounding them. A few will now and again have bright moments in which they may be able to observe their own and other people's reactions; but those who in the midst of such mental whirlpools can stand aside and watch as disinterested spectators are surely exceptional.

As to Mataji Herself, She is ever calm, unperturbed and cheerful, like a rock that no storm can affect.

However when travelling with Mataji things automatically arrange themselves: the train that one was afraid to miss arrives an hour late; the carriages are packed and it seems impossible to find a place, but somehow, as if by miracle, everything is managed; one feels exhausted and longs to lie down and sleep—lo and behold, just then a berth becomes vacant. All the same, it is human nature to wish to direct everything by one's own strength, while it would be so much simpler to let oneself be guided by the invisible Hand of the Divine.

Yet sometimes Mataji calls us to order. Once for example we were waiting for a train that would in all probability

be overcrowded. We were to reach our destination only the next day, which meant passing the whole night in acute discomfort. I had purchased an Inter class ticket and was, as it were lying in wait for the train, ready to jump into the first compartment and occupy a berth if possible—an attitude of mind no doubt quite unworthy of a *Sadhaka* and even more so of one who had been travelling with Mataji for some time. At the very moment the train came into the station Mataji passed in front of me and, pointing to a large heap of luggage, requested me with a peculiar smile to see it safely into the train. Patiently I stood and waited until the last of the numerous baggages had been stored away in the compartment, imagining in advance the sleepless

night I would have to pass amidst the dense crowd. In the meanwhile everyone had boarded the train and I thought I might deem myself fortunate if I could secure sitting-accommodation of some sort. But exactly where I was standing and guarding the luggage there happened to be an Inter class carriage. Someone whom I hardly knew had reserved an upper berth for me and helped me to get in with my bags.

These few lines will give the reader but a vague and limited idea of that which I call Mataji's direct teaching. It is in Her presence that one has day after day to experience for oneself Her Divine radiation. All one has to do is to see with one's eyes, to hear with one's ears and to understand with one's heart.

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# मातृ-दर्शन

## Matri-Darshan

By a Devotee from Bombay.

भवानि त्वं दासे मयि वितर दृष्टिं सकरुणा-  
मिति स्तोतुं वाञ्छन् कथयति भवानि त्वमिति यः ।  
तदैव त्वं तस्मै दिशसि निज-सायुज्य-पदवीं  
मुकुन्द - ब्रह्मोन्द्र - स्फुट - मुकुट - नोराजित - पदाम् ॥

( आनंद लहरी )

“Oh Bhavani, do Thou cast a compassionate glance upon me, Thy servant”. To him who thus praying says “भवानि त्वं” i. e. “Oh, Bhavani do Thou ( or let me be Thee ),” then and there Thou dost give the state of Union with Thee, that state adorned by the brilliant crowns of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra.”

I had the good fortune of having Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma's Darshan on the 23rd of November 1954. That was the first time I saw Her. I do not recall having heard or read about Her prior to that date. Mataji was then staying at Juhu in Bombay. I went to Juhu for Mataji's Darshan almost every evening until Her departure from Bombay on December, 4th 1954.

During such a short contact with Mataji, She in Her infinite compassion

showered Her blessings and Her grace on me. What the nature of such an experience was, I have attempted in short to describe in the following. Being a mystic experience, its description is bound to suffer from the usual drawbacks characteristic of a narrative of experiences at a higher level of consciousness in terms of experiences at the usual level of human awareness.

I experienced the full force of the descent of this Grace on the 30th Nov. 1954 and onwards. In the morning I felt a tremendous outpouring of Divine Force rushing down into me like a waterfall from above the brain, I was conscious of a vast nothingness from the “Sahasrara”. This Force permeated every particle of my body. In Its descent It broke through obstacles, purified the mind and circled round the brain. At that moment the

mind was separated and indrawn, charged with the Divine Force and kept steadily pulled within. The mind was held out as a mere instrument of the Divine and remained fully consecrated to It. It was impossible for the mind to wander. It was quite obvious to me that the mind was not myself but merely an instrument serving a purpose, like the other senses.

As soon as the Force entered the heart, the obstacles in the heart burst asunder as if by an explosion. The passions and desires fled and the heart pounded vigorously. The soul was freed from its age old ignorance and its burdens and for the first time danced in its sublime purity and newly found freedom.

गुरु तो वही सराहिए, जो सिकली गर होय ।

जनम जनम का मोरचा, छन में डाले धोय ॥

Prayers to the Divine arose from the heart spontaneously, without any volition on my part. In fact to pray was the natural condition of the soul and I felt that the heart would burst unless I prayed. I realized that knowledge ( ज्ञान ) and devotion ( भक्ति ) were the same. I also knew that anything I touched would be purified.

I was immersed in a sea of pure existence and rapture ( आनंद ), the nature of which it would be futile to attempt to describe. I experienced waves upon waves of blissful delight or rapture. That existence and rapture was the true condition or

the very essence of my soul or self. My consciousness was drawn in and held between the eyebrows ( *Ajña Chakra* ), where I was aware of particles moving in a clockwise direction in a flame which extended from between the eyebrows to over the middle of the forehead. As I concentrated on a letter, I found a force emanating from within the middle of my forehead and literally grasping the paper. My consciousness had extended and I experienced the Divine Existence-Delight which was myself, as the substratum of everything around me. I experienced everything as Divine. As I looked at a stone in a wall I observed that my consciousness was extending and I felt in part identified with the inner substance of the stone and the very 'Raison d'etre' of its being. I knew that the Divine was the only Reality and all else an 'illusion', that the material things were really made up of nothing, but were forms grafted on the inner substance of Existence-Joy and had no independent validity. Everything was the Divine with illusory forms swimming as it were in the Divine Sea.

During Sri Haribabaji's Kirtan, I experienced a powerful force ( भक्ति-रस ) descending into me from above the head, from the 'Sahasrara'. The beauty and delight of this experience

is indescribable. The force flowed freely. It was cool in the eyes, warm in the sinuses and of a texture in the throat. I felt drunk, drunk with Divine ecstasy. The hair on my body stood erect and the heart danced and pounded, till I prayed for peace in the heart and before the prayer was over, there was a powerful downpour of force in the heart and with it came The Peace and The Joy.

Every particle of my body was charged and permeated with His Name and Power, with The Joy and The Presence and whenever I took His Name, The Force surged up within and the rapture increased manifold. I felt intoxicated and in continuous ecstasy. "यत् सात्त्वा मत्तो भवति, स्तब्धो भवति, आत्मारामो भवति ।" ( नारद भक्ति सुत्र ) । "Realizing that man becomes intoxicated and fascinated, as is were, because he is completely immersed in the enjoyment of the Bliss of the Atman, the truest and highest Self." While coming out of my office at lunch time on one occasion, a beggar chanted the name of God loudly and at that moment the force surged through my body unexpectedly and powerfully. The hair on my body stood on end and I was bathing in a sea of rapture, humbled in the presence and know-

ledge of God and prayed to Mataji in gratitude.

सुन्न मण्डल में घर किया, बाजे शब्द रसाल ।  
रोम रोम दीपक भया, प्रगटे दीन दयाल ॥

Mine was a commonplace life and Mataji in her infinite compassion has turned it into one of Bliss. I never knew that such blessedness could be possible for me.

I pray to Mataji that I may be worthy to be Her disciple and that in Her infinite mercy She may teach me to surrender ( समर्पण ) myself at Her Lotus Feet for ever.

“जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपि मुद्राविरचनं  
गतिः प्रादक्षिण्यं भ्रमणमदनाधाहुत विधिः ।  
प्रणामः संवेशः सुखमखिलमात्मार्पणदशा  
सपर्या पर्यायस्तव भवतु यन्मे विलसितम् ॥”  
( आनन्द लहरी )

“Oh Mother, may all my speech, howsoever idle, be recitation of Mantra ( Japa ); may all the movements of my hands be ritual gestures ( Mudra ); my walking be the pacing around Thy image in worship; may all my eating and other functions of the body be Homa rites; may the act of my lying down be prostration before Thee; may all my pleasures be an offering to the great Self ( Atma ). Whatsoever I do may it be counted as worship of Thee.”



# The Meaning of the Wheel Symbol (Cakra) According to Buddhist Tradition

By

Lama Anagarika Govinda, Acarya, Arya Maitreya Mandala

The *Cakra* is one of the oldest and most sacred symbols of India. It goes back to early Vedic times and it was consciously adopted by the Buddha as a symbol of the universality of his Dharma. His first sermon was called "*Dharma-cakra-pravartana-Sutra*": "The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Law".

The *Cakra* has various meanings. It denotes the universal law and its reflection in the moral law of man, the universal power and the focus of spiritual power in human consciousness, the universal sun and the inner light that leads us towards Illumination or Buddhahood. It denotes not only a law, power, or principle but also what is governed by it: the universe, the human world, or the empire of a world-ruler, a *Cakravartin*.

According to Buddhist tradition the Buddha was once a *Cakravartin*, and in the future another Bodhisattva will appear on this earth, to dispel the powers of darkness and disruption and unite the world under his wise and benevolent rule, inspired

by the Supreme Law, the universal Dharma. Therefore his most precious emblem is the *Dharmacakra*.

While a *Cakravartin* rules over the physical world, a fully enlightened Buddha is supreme in the world of the spirit. His *Dharmacakra* embraces the whole universe. Its laws are not imposed by force, but are the very essence of life. To know these laws means to be free, to be sovereign; not to know them means to be their slave. Thus the Buddha's sovereignty does not imply that he is ruling the world but that he knows it, and therefore is free from it, and can free others by his knowledge.

The symbolism of the wheel applies also to its component parts: the rim, the spokes, and the hub. The rim forms a circle, the symbol of infinity, of the world in its entirety. The rim, furthermore, is in motion, while the hub remains static. The rim, therefore, does not only represent infinity, but infinite movement, the infinite cycle of life and death, the unending *Samsara*. However, each point of

this *Samsara* is related to the resting centre, the hub, through the spokes.

The hub then symbolizes *Nirvana*, where all passions come to rest, while the spokes represent the ways, which lead from the restless movement of *Samsara* to the realization of the supreme peace of *Nirvana*.

It is significant that there is not only one way towards Realization, but many. In fact, from each point of the *Samsara* there is a possible way towards the centre, towards Realization. Though the aim is the same for all, the ways are many. This conception is the basis of Buddhist tolerance. Thus the wheel does not only represent Law and sovereignty, but also tolerance. It combines both aspects of reality : the universal and the individual, stability and movement, *Nirvāna* and *Samsāra*.

A wheel may have any number of spokes ; but in order to express the fundamental principles of the Buddha-Dharma, the Buddhist Dharma-cakra has generally been given either 8, 12, 16, 24 or 32 spokes. Eight spokes signify the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to liberation through Right Understanding, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Contemplation ( or Absorption ).

Twelve spokes correspond to the *Pratityasamutpada*, the twelvefold formula of Dependant Origination, which teaches the inter-dependance and dynamic nature of all phenomena of life, the understanding of which means Enlightenment.

Twenty-four spokes represent the Dependent Origination and its reversal, namely the elimination of this process, i.e. the liberation from the root-causes of suffering : from greed, hatred, and ignorance.

Sixteen spokes represent the Eightfold Path in its two aspects as endeavour and attainment, or as action and fruit of action (active and re-active aspect) ; while thirty-two spokes correspond to the thirty-two bodily perfections of an Enlightened One.

Finally the *Cakra* stands also for the spiritual faculties of man, and in this case the spokes are conceived as radiations of psychic and spiritual power, emanating from the various centres of consciousness (or subconsciousness) located in the human body. They ascend in a perpendicular line from the base of the spinal column to the crown of the head, with ever increasing radiations symbolized by an ever increasing number of spokes or petals (since the *Cakras* are also represented as lotus blossoms in this

case), until the *Sahasrara-Cakra*, the "Thousandfold Wheel" of the highest centre is reached. The latent faculties of these centres of psychic power cannot be reached by the ordinary, undeveloped consciousness, but have to be awakened and developed by meditation.

Thus, he who has reached the highest centre, controls all the *Cakras* and their spiritual and psychic power and has become a *Cakravartin* in the truest sense.

Then the "seven precious things" of a world-ruler take on a deeper meaning and a hidden connection with the seven psychic centres, and we begin to understand the profound truth of the Buddha's words, when he declared that the world is contained within the six cubits of this our body.

A man who has brought under his control the hidden forces of body and mind, in which all the powers of the universe are reflected, has it in his hand to become a ruler of men like the mythical King *Mahasudassana*, or a world-teacher, a Fully Enlightened One, like Buddha Sakyamuni.

The story of King *Mahasudassana*, which is told in the *Digha Nikāya*, reveals the real character of the *Cakra* and the *Cakravartin*. While the King was meditating on the roof of his palace, a flaming wheel with thousand

spokes (*sahasrara cakra*) appeared before him. He recognized it as the sacred Wheel of the Dharma and exclaimed: "May the precious wheel roll victoriously to the ends of the world!"

And the precious wheel rolled towards the east, and King *Mahasudassana* followed it with his fourfold army. And in whatever place the precious wheel stopped, there the King too stopped and camped with his retinue. All the former enemy kings of the east, however, approached King *Mahasudassana*, welcomed him, and put their countries at his feet.

And King *Mahasudassana* said: "No living being should be killed. Nothing, that has not been given, should be taken. Immoral life should be shunned. No untruth should be spoken. No intoxicating drinks should be drunk. But all that is good should be enjoyed (*Panca Sila*)."

Thus all the kings of the east became his followers, and in the same way also the kings of the west, of the south, and of the north.

After the precious wheel had thus conquered the earth, it returned to King *Mahasudassana's* capital and filled it with light and splendour, because he had gained world-sovereignty not through physical force, but through spiritual power and righteousness.

This spiritual power rested on the "seven precious things", the qualities of which have a more or less apparent relationship to the qualities of the psycho-physical centres or *Cakras* of the human body : 1. the Precious Wheel (corresponding to the *Sahasrara Cakra* 2. the Precious Gem, known as 'ratna', 'mani' or 'cintamani' (corresponding to the *Manipura-Cakra*); 3. the Ideal Wife, the embodiment of love and compassion (enshrined in the Heart-Centre, the *Anahata-Cakra*); 4. the Ideal Councillor (represented by the Centre of Speech, the *Visuddha-Cakra*); 5. the Ideal Warrior (or Citizen, according to another tradition), the embodiment of energy, courage, and loyalty (corresponding to the *Svadhithana Cakra* in the plexus hypogastricus); 6. the Ideal Elephant, the embodiment of stability and strength (the symbol of the Root Centre, the *Muladhara-Cakra*); 7. the Ideal Horse, the symbol of freedom and liberation from worldly life (*pravrajana* ; Pali : *pabbajja* ) represented by the centre of spiritual vision (*Ajna-Cakra*, the place of the "Third Eye" ).

These were the precious possessions or qualities of King Mahāsudassana, the king of "great and profound insight", as his name indicates. According to Buddhist ideas such qualities are not the products of chance. They can only be acquired

through a long and patient practice of virtues and meditation.

One day, in a contemplative mood, King Mahāsudassana pondered: "What is the reason that I have got into a position of such wealth and power?" And then he realized, it was due to the threefold practice of charity, self-restraint, and renunciation! Having come to this conclusion, he suddenly saw his future course clearly before him. No more worldly power for him, no more wealth and futile possessions, no more clinging to the pleasures and passions of life!

"The more we crave, the more miserable we shall be in death, while he who dies without clinging and craving leaves this world happily." With these thoughts the King quietly renounced all desire, and after a short time he passed away peacefully, to continue his path towards the final aim of Buddhahood.

To the Buddhist this story is not merely a tale of the past but a signpost to the future. According to the rhythmic flow of events, which we like to call universal laws of development (sometimes appearing as progress, sometimes as disintegration), the things which happened in a previous world-cycle are bound to repeat themselves in their essential nature in the present and in future world-cycles. It is therefore assumed, accord-

ing to Buddhist tradition, that before the next Buddha appears on earth, he will, as a *Bodhisattva* and *Cakravartin*, vanquish the evil forces, which keep humanity in constant terror, and establish a rule of peace and justice.

Now India stands again under the sign of the *Dharmacakra*, and the Precious Wheel is carried on her

banner into all parts of the world. If the message of this sacred symbol is understood and followed by those who uphold it, it will create a realm in which Law, Peace, and Tolerance will prevail, and in which one day a new *Cakravartin* may take birth.

Let it be the prayer of our heart :  
 "May the Precious Wheel roll victoriously to the ends of the world !"

# IDEALS OF SUFISM

By

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

( Continued from last issue. )

The question of the perfection of men, according to Sufi mystics, might be answered in different ways. In a word a perfect man may be defined as a man who has fully realized his essential oneness with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made. That this exalted position is enjoyed by prophets and saints and foreshadowed in symbols to others, is the foundation of the Sufi theosophy. Therefore the class of perfect men comprised not only the Prophets from Adam to Muhammad but also the superlatively elect amongst the Sufis. That is, the persons named collectively *Awaliya*. Since the *Wali* or saint is the popular type of perfect man it should be understood that the essence of Muslim saintship, as a prophecy, is nothing less than divine illumination, immediate vision and knowledge of things unseen and unknown, when the veil of sense is suddenly lifted and the individual self vanishes in the overwhelming glory of the one true light. It may be noted that an ecstatic feeling of oneness with God constitutes the *Wali*.

The Sufi mystics enjoined their followers to choose a teacher carefully and conscientiously. When one is convinced that a teacher possesses all the requisite qualities, all that one has to do is to surrender oneself completely to his will, and the teacher will, in his turn, take the aspirant into his hands and guide his spiritual evolution. The word *Bayat* means selling oneself to one's *Pir*. In the first stage of spiritual development one has to concentrate the mind upon one's teacher and this method is called *Tasawwur Shaikh*.

It has been the custom among the Hindus from time immemorial that a person desirous of leading a religious life must seek a guru. For instance the Hindu scriptures say, "The supreme mystery of the Vedanta should be given to one who has the highest devotion for God and for his spiritual teacher even as for God; for the sake of this knowledge (of BRAHMAN) let him go *Samit* in hand to a spiritual teacher who is learned in the scriptures and established in BRAHMAN.

It is very striking that some aspects of the Sufi and Hindu conceptions of God are similar. The Sufis believe in the monistic conception of God called *Wujudi* and *Shuhudi* which implies a moderate type of pantheism. These two conceptions correspond to the Hindu philosophical ideals of *Advaita* (non-dualism) and *Visista Advaita* (modified non-dualism).

In the *Insanu'l Kamil* the nature of the Supreme Reality, the One without a second, is expressed in the following words: His manifestation interpenetrates all existence and He manifests His perfection in each atom and particle of the universe. He does not become multiple by the multiplicity of the manifestations but He is one, the totality of all manifestations, solely by what His noble Essence necessitates in its very nature; and so on from the attributes of perfection to His manifestation in every atom of His existence (He is one in them all). The whole group is distinguished by the permeating (one) existence in the aggregate of all existences, and the mystery of this permeation is that He created the Universe out of Himself. And God said. "We have not created the Heaven and the Earth except by creative Truth, *Haqq*." The Universe is like ice, and God, the Magnified and Exalted, is the

water which is the origin of this ice. The name ice is lent to that frozen thing and the name water is the right name for it.

In one of the Upanishads (the Chandogya) similar ideas may be noted; just as by one piece of clay everything made of clay may be known, the modification being merely a verbal distinction, a name, the reality being just clay; so in this teaching.

The similarity between the two conceptions of the Hindu ideal of liberation and the Muslim ideal of *Fana* and annihilation and subsistence, is again most striking. The Sufis believe that the human personality is annihilated, but his individuality subsists in a way when the soul frees itself from all restrictions and limitations and enjoys divine bliss by contact of and final mergence in the Divine Spirit.

The Mundaka Upanishad says: "As the rivers flowing into the ocean disappear, quitting name and form, so the knower being liberated from name and form goes into the Heavenly Person higher than the High."

The Sufis believe that the souls of men differ infinitely in degree but not at all in kind from the Divine Spirit whereof they are particles, and where-

in they will ultimately be absorbed; that the Spirit of God pervades the universe, ever present in His work, and ever in substance; that He alone is perfect Benevolence, perfect Truth, perfect Beauty; that love for Him is true love (*Ishq-i-haqiqi*) while the love of other objects is illusory love (*Isaq-i-maiazi*); that all the beauties of nature are faint resemblances, like images in a mirror, of the divine charm, that, from eternity without beginning to eternity without end, the Supreme Benevolence is occupied in bestowing happiness; that men can attain it only by performing their part of the PRIMAL COVENANT between them and the Creator; that nothing has a pure absolute existence but Spirit; that material substances are no more than gay pictures; that we must beware of attachments to such phantoms and attach ourselves exclusively to God who truly exists in us as we solely exist in Him.

There are four stages in Sufism which must be passed before man's corporeal veil can be removed and his emancipated soul mixed with the glorious essence, whence it has been separated but not divided; (1) *Shariat*: the disciple observes the *Shara* and the rites of Islam; he ever bears his *Shaikh* in mind, he effaces himself through meditation, makes his teacher his shield against evil thoughts and

regards his spirit as his guardian; (2) *Tariquat*; the disciple attains power, enters the Path in right earnest and abandons outer formalities, solely devoting himself to inward worship and introspection. It may be noted that without great piety, virtue and fortitude he cannot attain this stage; (3) *Marifat*: The disciple has attained to supernatural knowledge and is regarded therein equal to the angels. (4) *Haqiqat* ( Truth ): the disciple has attained his union with the Divine Essence whom he sees in all things.

HAZRAT ALI, the originator of the mystical system, the foremost of them, when he was wounded by an assassin, said, "Lord of the land am I; yet with my body no concern have I. Me thou hast not struck; thou art only an instrument of God, One God, who shall avenge Himself."

*Ba Yazid-i-Bistami* and *Uthman-i-Khybari* were saying their prayers together. The latter concluded his prayer thus: "O God, grant all that I desire." The former concluded; O God, cut off all that I desire." *Uthman* said, "How is this?" *Abu Yazid* said, "What has a seeker after God to do with the desires of his *Nufs*? He relinquishes all *Ma-Siwalah* ( other than God ) and forgets his own existence."

It may be added that the knowledge of Divine Wisdom is available



to him alone whose eyes are fixed, like those of an archer on the arrow and the object at which he aims and that without purity of purpose and an unceasing effort, deliverance or salvation cannot be obtained.

Muslim mystics declare life to be a journey over an unknown Path which is as strait and narrow as a razor. There is no other light but that of faith to guide the seeker, no sustenance but devotion. The track cannot be seen, going is uncertain and pitfalls await the unwary. The

seeker must travel in the dark. He must not cry for a candle to grope in the gloom or seek the rush light of reason. He must steadily go forward in the hope of reaching the great illumination which awaits him at the journey's end. It would profit little to dwell merely on the system of Sufism. Volumes have been written in Persian and other languages on the subject. It is not a system really, it is a way of life. It is beyond the range of reason. It cannot be comprehended but it can be realized.

# DIARY LEAVES

By

ATMANANDA

( 7 )

The following are notes taken in June-July 1955 at Solan, continued from the last two issues.

## On Sleep

*Question.* How can one conquer sleep ?

*Mataji:* Sleep cannot be conquered, yet under certain conditions the need of sleep vanishes of itself. When you are keenly interested in something you do not feel sleepy, on the contrary, you remain wide awake without any effort; but afterwards you get a reaction and have to make up for your loss of sleep. When you have not slept enough you cannot do good work. On the other hand sound sleep refreshes you. At least a few out of the twenty-four hours of each day have to be spent in sleep, otherwise you feel tired and wretched. Why? During deep sleep the activities of the senses are at rest and moreover, although still covered with the veil of ignorance, you touch your SELF. Unless this happens at least once a day, you cannot endure life; it becomes an ordeal. This is so for

the average person. However, as one progresses in *Sadhana* the senses get more and more rest and one draws nearer to one's SELF. In proportion to the discovery of one's SELF, the necessity for sleep decreases. When the SELF has been realized, when one has become absorbed in the Bliss of the SELF, then there is no more question of work, of experience, or of sleep, because there is only the ONE. Then sleep will not exist for you anymore, you will have gone beyond it. This is why I began by saying sleep is not conquered, it ceases of itself. Nevertheless it is also true that a Yogi may conquer sleep by the Divine Energy that awakens in him through his Yoga. But for the one who has become *Atmasta*, established in the SELF, the question of sleep can no longer arise.

The amount of sleep a person requires depends on various factors.

When *Tamas*\* predominates one needs more sleep, and also when the body is weak or unhealthy. The kind of food one eats also has a bearing on the amount of sleep that is required.

*Question*: How is one to know whether one sleeps too much out of laziness or because the body needs it due to weakness?

*Mataji*: If you watch yourself carefully you will soon find out.

### On Prema and Moha

or Real Love and Attraction.

*Question*: Is it possible to attain to Self-realization by an intensification of emotion, such as love?

*Mataji*: Yes. *Prema*, the love of God is certainly a way. But what is ordinarily called 'love' is not *Prema*, true love, but *Moha*, attraction through delusion. *Prema*, real love, cannot exist between individuals. How can one get pure love from that, which by its very nature is impure, namely the individual? Again and again it happens that people come to this body, saying: "My love for such and such a person is true love, not worldly love". They are deceiving themselves. Love for that which is mortal is invariably *Moha*, attraction through delusion and it leads to death. Quite obviously

so. Have you not noticed how, when you find it impossible to get the object of your love you either wish to kill it or to die yourself? Whereas *Prema*, the love of God, takes you to the death of death, to Immortality.

Therefore it is said, to regard the Guru as an individual is a sin. The Guru has to be loved and revered as God. Some time ago a woman came to this body, who wanted to commit suicide because her Guru had passed away. I said to her: "Does a Guru die? Because he has left his body it does not mean that he is no more. The Guru is everywhere and never leaves his disciple. The fact that you want to take your life out of grief over your Guru's passing into *Maha-samadhi* shows that you love him as a person and not as a Guru." It was not at all easy to convince the woman of this, and she had to pass through much heartache and trouble until at last she got over her attachment.

It happens that people fall in love with their Guru. If he has attained to the state that a Guru should have reached, he will be able to canalize the disciple's love, turning it towards the Divine. But if he himself has not transcended personality, difficulties will naturally arise. This body

\* *Tamas*—The quality of darkness and inertia.

has come across a number of cases where inexperienced girls, child widows, or even married women have been led into a wrong path by false Gurus.

The injunction of the Shastras is that one has to surrender one's whole being — body, mind and heart to the Guru. To surrender one's body means to surrender one's desires so that they may be obliterated, but not to surrender one's body in the material sense. If it is misunderstood in this way, as it occurs sometimes, then this body says, although you may have received *diksha*\* from him, that person is not your Guru. You should then bathe in the Ganges and purify yourself and make a fresh start. Although the Mantra cannot be defiled, there are instances when it becomes imperative to relinquish even that, namely, if it is inextricably associated with the memory of the false Guru. In such cases it is advisable to change the Mantra to another.

People contract so-called love marriages, but in some cases both parties are disillusioned and after a time each separately come to this body lamenting and repenting.

### On the Right Attitude towards Our Dead

*Question* : Is it good to repeatedly call a dead person by his name, to keep his picture and remember him ?

*Mataji* : If one mourns for the person regretting the loss of the worldly enjoyment one has had together, it is bad both for the departed and for oneself. On the other hand if the remembrance be an act of worship, as for example, since it is a wife's duty to regard her husband as God, she thinks of the deceased and keeps his picture with this attitude of mind, it may well be beneficial both for her dead husband and herself.

I knew a couple who had lost their only daughter just a few days before she was to be married. They were broken-hearted. The girl's mother started wearing widow's dress and her husband also deeply grieved after his child and gave up many things he had been accustomed to enjoy. They had a life-size picture of their daughter made and lived only in their memory of her. Before eating they would place the food before the picture and so forth. This body told them : "Just as some flowers blossom and fall off without bearing fruit, so your child passed away young and pure, without having formed any attachment. Look upon her as the servant of the Lord, keep a picture of Him near hers, burn incense in the room and set it apart for worship and meditation." Neither the husband nor the wife were religiously inclined, but by taking their loss in this manner they

\* Initiation.

gradually developed in that direction. This body then said to them : "Your daughter has become your Guru, it is she who has made you turn towards God." This is a case where a whole family was benefited.

### On Renunciation

( 1 )

Someone wanted to know how detachment (*vairagya*) could be brought about. "If it comes naturally", he said, "there is no problem. But how can those who feel pulled in two directions, who are half-hearted, be helped to give up?"

*Mataji*: If you like eating sweets and you find it interferes with your *Sadhana*, give it up for a day or two and say to yourself: "I can get those sweets again later, but for these two days I shall do without them". This will break the habit. When a boy is intelligent and keen on his studies there is no difficulty. But even a student who is dull and lazy can be made to pass his examinations by the aid of an efficient teacher. All the same, so far as worldly knowledge is concerned, there are people who are quite incapable of learning anything. But in the spiritual field this cannot be so, for everyone without exception has in the end to reach the goal of human existence. Therefore if he

finds the right teacher, he can be pushed up by some means or other.

There are cases when through a combination of factors operating together people are led to drop bad habits or vices. The following is a striking instance of this.

In the Ashram grounds smoking is forbidden. Once when this body was staying in the Kishenpur Ashram, a bhakta from Delhi, who had come for a short visit, went out on the road to smoke a cigarette. As soon as he had lit it, this body had to tell him something and he was called. He put out his cigarette and came inside. When our talk was over he went back and relit his cigarette. But at that very moment someone shouted to him that Mataji wanted him at the Ashram. By some co-incidence, or whatever it may have been, exactly the same situation repeated itself several times over, until he felt thoroughly disgusted and instead of lighting his cigarette, flung the whole packet away and never smoked again. He had a close friend with whom he used to spend much time. On hearing the story, his experience was communicated to the friend who also left off smoking.

Another incident of a somewhat similar nature occurred several years ago when this body was living in a house-boat on the Ganges at Banaras.

This body then used to get a pain in the arm. One of the people who were staying with me then, said he personally knew an excellent physician and begged to be allowed to call him. The doctor came. When he examined the arm, this body observed that he was enveloped in a strong aroma of cigarettes. He was evidently a heavy smoker. However I neither remarked on it nor showed by any gesture what I had observed. The doctor offered to prescribe some medicine, but since this body does not take any medicine, nothing could be done and he left after a short while.

On his way home he lit a cigarette. To his surprise he found that he felt an aversion for it ; he did not want to smoke. The same dislike arose again in him when he lit another cigarette after returning home. He never smoked again. The craving had simply left him.

When things come about in such a manner, by Grace as it were, nothing need or can be done. But it is possible to accomplish a great deal by determination and sustained effort as well.

### On Renunciation

( 2 )

*Question :* Is it right for a man to leave his family and go forth in search of Truth ?

*Mataji :* At the stage in which a man's actions are prompted by his

sense of duty he cannot and will not leave his family. He should remain a householder and fulfil the duties incumbent on him, as prescribed in the Shastras. But just as nobody can remain in a burning house, so there is a state in which one feels as if one's house were on fire and one cannot possibly remain at home. The Lord Buddha's life is an example of this irresistible inner call and there are many other less famous cases. Can you say that the Lord Buddha did wrong ?

*Question :* There are many instances of people who felt that they must leave their families in order to take Sannyasa, only to realize after a time that they had been mistaken. Unable to bear the hardships of such a life, their spiritual progress comes to a standstill. Would it not be better for such men to return home and resume their professions ?

*Mataji :* Once a man has renounced the world and become a Sannyasi, even though he may not be able to advance in his *sadhana*, still he has taken to this life in search of the Ultimate. At least at the time of leaving his home he felt the urge to dedicate his life to the Supreme Quest. If he cannot proceed he will have to undergo a great deal of suffering. He may starve, be without shelter and perhaps die somewhere under a tree

without anyone to wait on him. But having suffered and died in order to find God, he will continue in another birth where he left off in this one and there is hope that then he may succeed. Are not people who live the ordinary worldly life also subjected to hardships, poverty and illness? Yet, unless they be intent on discovering themselves these trials are of no special benefit to them. However one cannot make a hard and fast rule concerning these matters. The same thing is not right for everyone. There are cases where people who left their families have had to return to them.

Many years ago for example a Sadhu came to this body. He was still young, not much over thirty. He looked worried and ill. He said: "I find myself on the horns of a dilemma. For a whole month I have neither slept nor been able to give my mind to any *sadhana*. I just wander about on the banks of the Ganges, brooding over my problem; sometimes I eat, at other times I forget to do even that." Then he related his story. When almost a child of fifteen or sixteen he had left his parents and lived as a Sadhu without however formally taking Sannyasa, he just adopted the ochre robe on his own responsibility. After some time he got tired of begging for his food.

He had learnt tailoring and decided to do a little work in his profession, just enough to earn his bare upkeep and for the rest to continue with his *Sadhana*. He did this for a while. Mind you, he intended merely to provide for himself and not to have anything to do with the world. But man cannot escape the influences of his surroundings. One day he met an elderly man who could read hands. "There is marriage in your fate", he predicted, "you won't be able to continue this kind of life much longer." On hearing this the young Sadhu thought that if it was his destiny he would not be able to avoid it. The old man described the type of bride that would be suitable for him and eventually suggested giving him his own daughter. The marriage took place, but the girl, a mere child of 12 or 13, motherless and deeply attached to her father, neither cared for her husband nor looked after him. This went on for about a year and a half. At last the young man grew weary of this state of affairs and regretted what he had let himself in for. So he left his home for the second time and resumed his life as a Sadhu. This had occurred five or six years before he met this body. "All went well at first", he said, "but for quite a time I have been haunted by the thought that if my wife, who

is a grown-up woman now, gets into the ways of sin, it will be my fault. This worries me so much that I am wondering whether I should remain a Sadhu or go back to her." Seeing the condition of the young man, this body felt, if he got ill and died, his last thought would not be of God, but of the worry over his wife, and this was certainly most undesirable. Moreover the man had not taken formal Sannyasa. So I advised him to put on ordinary clothes and return to his wife. He was a clever tailor. He went to Calcutta and took up work in his profession. "My son

shall be made into a *dandi*\* *swami*!" he exclaimed. But whether he ever had a son we have not heard.

*Question* : Suppose a full-fledged Sannyasi repents of having forsaken his home, what should he do ?

*Mataji* : This body has so far never advised a Sannyasi to return to the *Grihastha Ashrama*. For a Sannyasi who has been initiated into a Sannyasa Mantra and has a Guru there is a path. Even if he has not got the capacity to advance very far, he should never relax his efforts although he die in the attempt.

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\* A *dandi swami* is a Sannyasi belonging to an order with particularly austere and difficult rules.



# MATRI LILA

( November 1955—January 1956. )

When some four years ago the "Ananda Varta" was called into being and we in our enthusiasm declared that we would not rest till Mataji's message had reached the furthest corners of this globe, we could hardly foresee how soon our dream would come true. To our own surprise we receive letters not only from Europe and America, but also from such out of the way places as British West Indies, British Cameroons, the Gold Coast in Africa, the Isle of Bali, etc., enquiring about Mataji full of eagerness and burning interest. Although She has never travelled beyond Cape Comorin in the South and Mount Kailash in the North, there is now undeniable evidence that She lives in the hearts of Her devotees in Australia, China and Japan as well as in Europe, the two Americas and Africa. We feel that when reporting about Her Lila we must bear in mind that much happens in connection with Mataji in foreign countries, although only fragments of it are brought to our notice.

It is not thought-provoking when, as it happened some weeks ago, a

European lady comes for Mataji's Darshan and tells us : "It is exactly ten years to the day that I first heard about Mataji. She has been an inspiration to me ever since, in fact it was she who gave me my first spiritual impulse." Or when a gentleman, who is obviously a very serious seeker after Truth, says : "The moment I heard about Sri Anandamayi Ma when still in Europe, I felt that I must contact Her."

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After a sojourn of about a week in the comparative solitude of the Rajagriha Ashram, Mataji proceeded to Ranchi on the 8th of November 1955, to be present at the installation of a permanent *vigraha* of Kali, which was consecrated on November 13th, Divali night. The statue had been carved by Sri Nitai Pal, the same artist who had produced the twin statues of Nitai-Gauranga for the new temple of Mahaprabhu at the Vrindaban Ashram. (About the latter we have already reported at length).<sup>\*</sup> During the *Prana prathishta* a strange thing happened. *Prana Prathishta* is

\* See 'Ananda Varta', Vol. III/1, p. 37.

the prescribed ritual by which the image is linked to the aspect of the Divinity which it represents (in this case the aspect which we call "Kali"). Through this ritual the image becomes a *vigraha*, that is to say a living focus through which the particular Power of the Divine can function.

The statue was adorned with a golden necklace from which a locket was suspended. It could be clearly seen that the locket vibrated as if the statue was breathing. Mataji drew the attention of the *pujaris*\* to this extraordinary phenomenon. After the ceremony one of them who felt rather nonplussed, carefully examined the statue to make sure whether the vibration had not perhaps been due to some exterior cause. Far from this being so, he found on the contrary that the necklace had got stuck in the paint that was not yet quite dry.

On November 15th Mataji reached Banaras where Annakut was celebrated as usual in the Annapurna temple of the Ashram. On the 17th morning Mataji motored to Vindhychal returning to Banaras on the 18th afternoon, only to leave the next day for New Delhi, where the fifth *Samyam Vrata* was observed from November 22nd-28th at the Kali Bari near Birla Mandir.

A gathering of this kind is bound to be a success. When a fairly large number of people assemble in Mataji's presence and for seven days concentrate on various *Sadhanas*, avoiding all distractions and putting aside for the time being their worldly occupations their cherished habits and comforts, they cannot fail to gain new strength and to make a very definite step forward in their spiritual search. Some may have been enriched greatly and others to a lesser degree, but none could have left the gathering the same person as when he came. On one occasion, after the function was over, Mataji explained that by meditating in a group especially in the presence of Mahatmas, the less advanced are helped by those who reach greater depths in their meditation, since the *Prana*† is the same in all beings; it is like water seeking its own level.

This is one of the reasons why Satsang is of such incomparable value. Without personal effort all who participate become automatically attuned to the vibrations of those who are one-pointed seekers after Truth and the best and highest is thereby quickened in them. But if we can have the great good fortune of coming into the presence of one who has transcended the illusion of

\* Priests, † Life force.

separateness, the benefit is quite immeasurable. As on the occasions of the four previous *Samyam Vratas* that had been held since August 1952 in Banaras, Vindhyachal, Calcutta and Bombay respectively, this time also a number of Mahatmas took part in the function. Their daily discourses kept our thinking on a high level.

On November 29th Kirtan was performed all day long at the Birla Mandir and continued at the Kali Bari hall till late at night, as there happened to be a lunar eclipse. By November 30th the greater part of the *Vratists*\* had dispersed to their homes practically all over India and Mataji shifted to Her Ashram at Chandraloka near Kalkaji Colony on the outskirts of New Delhi. It is a charming place, far out in the wilds as yet. The last half mile of the road is extremely bad. In spite of this anyone approaching the Ashram during Mataji's stay could always easily spot it from a distance by the half a dozen cars that were usually parked just outside. The hall of the Ashram yet remains to be built. The *Satsang* had to be held in the open in the day and in Mataji's room in the evening. On most afternoons Mataji would drive to 48, Hanuman Rd.,

where Didi was housed, so as to be under a doctor's supervision.

On December 4th morning Mataji took a trip to Vrindaban returning to Delhi on the 5th evening. On December 9th She once again alighted in Banaras. December 11th to 13th afternoon were spent at Vindhyachal, but by 5 p. m. on December 13th Mataji was back at Banaras. On December 14th during the solar eclipse there was a long programme of silent meditation, *japa* and kirtan, Mataji remaining present throughout at the *Chnadi Mardap*.

It is customary to bathe in the Ganges both at the beginning and at the end of an eclipse. When the bathers went down to the *ghat* for the first time Mataji sat on the *ghat* steps watching them dip into the river and when they returned She playfully sprinkled a few drops of the sacred water on everyone present. But in the afternoon, when we descended to the Ganges for the second time, Mataji accompanied us all the way and Herself bathed, a thing which She does only on very rare occasions. Everyone at the Ashram had been observing a complete fast since the previous evening. After 4 p. m. we all sat down in a large circle with Mataji in the East and partook of the

\* Participants of the *Samyam Saptah*,

prasad that had been cooked and offered in the Annapurna temple in the early morning before the eclipse started and been preserved locked up in the temple ever since. At dusk a large boat carried us down the river to *Dashashwamedh Ghat\** from where Mataji returned by car via *Sankat Mcchana*. Sri Anandamayi Karuna have a herd of goats there and distribute free goat's milk to the children of the destitute.

On December 15th a wire arrived from Hoshiarpur to say that Sri Haribabaji Maharaj's health was not satisfactory. On the 16th afternoon Mataji motored to Vindhyachal where another wire from the devotees of Sri Haribabaji awaited Her. We had hoped that She would remain at Vindhyachal for a quiet stay of at least one or two weeks, but within an hour of Her arrival She was off to Delhi.

Only Swami Paramananda and one of the Ashramites who had never before attended to Mataji all by herself were allowed to accompany Her. People present felt rather puzzled at Mataji choosing this particular woman. Later we heard that soon after reaching Delhi she developed high fever and had to undergo a serious operation, from which she has since recovered. It is more than doubtful

whether she would have had the chance of getting the adequate medical treatment so necessary just at that time, had she not gone with Mataji. Such an incident is an example of what by a superficial and critical observer might be misunderstood as odd in Mataji's behaviour; although there are very sound and weighty reasons behind it, which sometimes She Herself explains afterwards. Having witnessed similar occurrences time after time one naturally becomes convinced that even when the reasons are beyond our power to grasp, they nevertheless certainly do exist.

From Delhi Mataji proceeded to Jullundur on December 17th night, stopping at the Savitri Devi Ashram on the 18th morning for an hour or so, and from there by car to Amritsar, where Sri Haribabaji was lying in hospital. On the 18th evening Mataji and Sri Haribabaji took the plane to Delhi where Mataji arrived quite unexpectedly, while people were waiting at Jullundur for Her return by car from Amritsar. She stayed at the Birla Mandir for one night and then moved to 48, Hanuman Road, where several years ago the late Dr. J. K. Sen had built a two-room house for Her in his garden. Sri Haribabaji was then admitted into the Nursing Home of Dr. S. K. Sen who operated

\* One of the main ghats of Banaras. 'Ghat' means bathing place.

on him. The operation was completely successful and we are happy to say that Sri Haribabaji has by God's Grace regained his health and been able to return to Hoshiarpur at the end of January.

When Dr. S. K. Sen's Nursing Home, which has been planned and fitted out according to the most modern scientific discoveries, was opened only last October, Dr. Sen, who is one of the leading surgeons of India, was desirous of having the opening ceremony performed in Mataji's presence. But somehow this was not possible. On this occasion however, Mataji visited the Nursing Home daily and was shown round the whole establishment.

During Mataji's visits to Delhi this winter a number of foreigners hailing from various countries such as England, Holland, Finland, France, U. S. A., Israel Mexico, and Chile came for Mataji's Darshan and to talk to Her.

On January 2nd Mataji moved to Her Ashram near Kalkaji and on the 4th She left for Vindhyachal, stopping in Allahabad for a few hours on

January 5th morning. At Vindhyachal a few people who had hoped in vain to spend some quiet days with Mataji there in December, assembled for three delightful days. On the 8th Mataji was again at Banaras from where She returned to Vindhyachal on the 10th, leaving for New Delhi via Banaras on the 12th. She remained in Her Ashram at Chandraloka till January 31st. Sri Haribabaji was discharged from hospital the day after Mataji's arrival in Delhi and joined Her at Chandraloka where he was convalescing till the end of the month. Mataji then paid a very short visit to Vrindaban and via Delhi returned to Banaras, reaching there on the 3rd of February, only to leave for Vindhyachal on the 5th.

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The building of the Shiva Temple in the grounds of the Vrindaban Ashram has been completed. The consecration is to take place at Shiva Ratri, on March 10th in Mataji's presence. It is expected that devotees from all over India will come to Vrindaban to attend the function.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

We are happy to announce that the long expected book in English called "Sri Sri Anandamayi as Seen by Her Devotees" has at last been printed and will be ready for sale at the beginning of the birthday celebrations in May, at the price of approximately Rs. 4/-

It is a symposium consisting of articles by Indian and European devotees, with a most interesting introduction and an article by Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Gopinath Kaviraj. (The Bengali and Hindi translations of the introduction will appear in the birthday number of the Ananda Vārtā). The book contains 17 illustrations showing Mataji from Her early days to the present in various bhavas, and photos of some of Her Ashramas.

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The third volume of Sri Gurupriya Devi's book *Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma* has been rendered into Hindi and has been printed. This also will be available by May at the price of Rs. 2/-/-.

Shailesh Brahmachari has written a book on Mataji's life in Bengali, suitable for school children, which is being printed.

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The third edition of Sri Gurupriya's first volume of *Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma* in Bengali is about to appear.

Price Rs. 2/-/-.

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Our readers will be interested to learn that an exquisitely beautiful album by Richard Lannoy, called "Incia", consisting of 188 large photogravure plates has been published by Thames and Hudson, London. It contains two very remarkable pictures of Mataji. Out of the 16 pages of the Introduction three quarters of a page are devoted to Mataji. The book has appeared in England and the U. S. A. simultaneously

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A gentleman from Bamenda in the British Cameroons has drawn our attention to an article about the

Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, which has appeared in the October 1955 issue of the Science of Thought Monthly Review". He asks for further details as he wishes to enlist himself as a member.

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We are glad to report that Shree Gurupriya Devi is main-

taining the improvement in her health.

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We have just heard from London that the gramophone record of Mataji singing "*He Bhagavan*" and "*Krishna Kaneya*" has arrived there. Mataji's English devotees are greatly delighted to be able to listen to Her voice.

## SHRI SHRI MA'S 60th JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

As already announced the celebrations of Shri Shri Ma's 60th Jayanti will take place at Banaras from May 2nd—27th, 1956. Preparations are in full swing and there is every hope that by Mataji's Grace the function will be unique in every respect. It is expected that a very large number of the devotees and admirers of Mataji will assemble at Banaras on this happy occasion. At the same time we invite devotees in India as well as abroad who are quite unable to be present at Banaras, to join in the celebrations in their own Ashramas or homes in whatever manner that may seem appropriate. If we cannot all be together physically, let us at all events be united in thought during those auspicious days.

Invitations with details of the programme will be sent as soon as possible to all subscribers of Ananda Varta and to all members of the Sangha.