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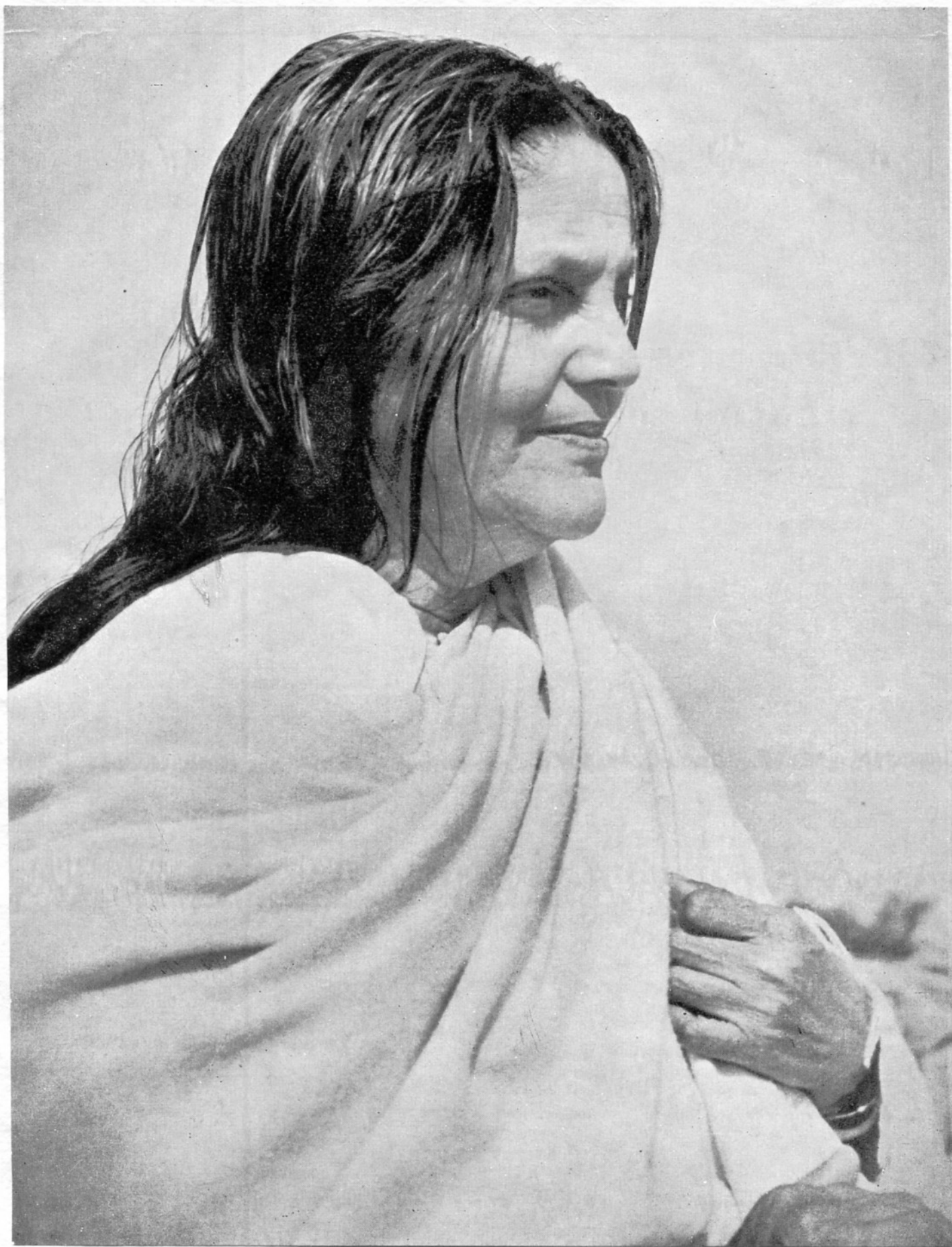
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The One who is the Eternal, the Atman,
He Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,
He is all in all, He alone is.

MATRI VANI

(Replies to letters from different people at different times)

92.

The word *manush** (man) itself gives the clue to what man should really be : a being who is self-aware. Even if he has slipped and fallen, is it not his bounden duty to use as lever the very earth to which he has tumbled and raise himself up again ? Besides one does not fall so often. As a man constant effort is his duty. If he does not awaken to the consciousness of his own self, what has he achieved ? He has but wasted his life. How many lives are frittered away, age after age in endless coming and going. Find out who you are ! Discover the significance of the round of births and deaths, its cause and to where it leads ! When man becomes a traveller on the path to his inner Being the distance that separates him from his Goal gradually vanishes. You will most certainly have to undertake this pilgrimage to Immortality, trampling under foot hundreds and hundreds of obstacles and impediments. This is the kind of manliness that has to be awakened. Why should you remain helpless as if paralyzed ? You only repeat over and over again that you cannot, cannot do *sadhana*. Why ? Why ? Why ?

93.

In all forms and conditions, in everything that comes to pass is He alone, He the self of all. Although you are mourning the loss of your father's physical form you should nevertheless invoke God's presence for the sake of

* *Man* mind, *hush*—conscious.

of him who has passed away. Whatever God does is for the very best. Your father's span of life was over. Tell your mother that this is the nature of the world. She will have to be courageous. According to God's will he carried out whatever service had been apportioned for him to do and now, by the Almighty's dispensation, he has been called unto Him. It is natural to be upset by bereavement. Sometimes it seems to us that He who is the Supreme Beloved of all is our enemy. Nevertheless what he sends will have to be endured. Dear mother*, listen to the request of this little daughter of yours : in these days of affliction and distress call out to God and cry for Him. It is but He who comes to man in the guise of a brother or a husband. Only by invoking Him can peace be found.

94.

My friend's† letter is filled with the expression of a beautiful spirit of love and devotion. This friend‡ is ever near her friends. Always remember that man has been born to do *sadhana* to perform actions that help him to realize God. Therefore dedicate yourself to Him, body mind and heart and endeavour to abide in His Presence at every moment of your life.

95.

It is the will of the Almighty that prevails. By living in harmony with this will and becoming an instrument in His Hands you should try to realize Him.

96.

To attempt to summon the spirit of the departed is not good. Very often some other being responds and the ordinary individual is not in a position to distinguish between a genuine manifestation and a fake. Therefore it is harmful. Some one who took part in spiritualistic seances became insane. Against his mother's wishes he continued to do so. To actually get into touch with the spirit of the dead one is difficult for the average person.

* Mataji addresses all married people as her fathers and mothers.

† Mataji addresses all children and unmarried people as her friends.

‡ Mataji refers to Herself in this way.

Do not let your mind be occupied with any such matter. On the level of the Self (*Atma*) you are one with Uma § In this world happiness invariably alternates with sorrow. Bear in mind that as the Self (*Atma*) she is with you—within you. This is the truth, not fanciful thinking. Birth and death happen in fulfilment of the Divine will. In all shapes and conditions there is but He alone.

97.

Inward *Sannyasa* is real *Sannyasa*. To become a *Sannyasi* is very fortunate, is in fact a matter of supreme rejoicing. But do you feel that the right moment to take such a step has come for you? *Sannyasa* signifies complete renunciation, the annihilation of everything; even the idea of annihilation has to become extinct.

98.

If one does not arrive at a state of stillness the agitation of one's whole system will manifest through every nerve and fibre of the body and render one inefficient. If one's energy is not retained the harmonious functioning of this energy in perfect tranquillity is not possible. Interest in the Supreme Quest and practices performed in search of Truth naturally have a calming effect. The preservation of energy is essential.

If he finds kirtan helpful, he should, at the time when Kirtan is sung, try to sit absolutely still in a fixed posture and concentrate. A disturbed state of mind and body is not favourable.

99.

The realization of Divine Power may be induced by any means that suits a particular person. If one feels inclined that way it may be brought about by initiation (*Diksha*); or else it may be effected by the Guru's touch. It is immaterial by which method one chooses to develop the capacity to live a life dedicated to God. The important thing is to remain ever immersed in the contemplation of Him and to derive bliss from it. Indeed this is a cause for great rejoicing.

§ The name of his deceased daughter.

100.

What is perceived in this world is in the nature of a dream, similar to that which one sees in dreams. The only difference is that the former takes place in the waking state and the latter during sleep. Albeit I am always with you, mother.

101.

In dreams all kinds of things may be seen : what the mind has been busy with ; also what has not been thought about, but has occurred in the past or will come about in the future. In any case everything that happens belongs to the realms of dream.

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(20)*

Questions : In the book 'Vichar Sagar† we read that a certain Raja's minister named Bharju who inspite of having gained direct knowledge of Truth, was still not free of illusion. Similarly that even though some one has through the Mahavakyas‡ attained to immediate Realization of the *Brahman*, should uncertainty and erroneous notions still persist in him this Realization would not bring about his liberation. I do not understand how when something has become revealed the question of obscuration can still arise ; further in such a case where does the need of instruction come in ?

Mataji : One thing is the full and final Realization of Unveiled Light; but quite another a realization due to some cause in which the possibility of its being obscured once more still exists. At the time when the play of *sadhana* was being manifested through this body it could clearly perceive those various possibilities.

You should understand that if the veil of ignorance has been burnt or dissolved as it were, you will for a certain period of time, have unobstructed vision. Afterwards it becomes blurred again. All the same—what will be the result of such a glimpse ? Ignorance will have become less dense and true knowledge gained greater prominence, in other words, by the momentary lifting of the veil the bondage of the individual will have been loosened. In this condition there is a semblance of the attainment of real knowledge, in fact it is also a state of achievement, although quite different from the state of final Self-Realization. By the power of the Guru the veil has here been suddenly pierced or consumed—just as in the story of the ten men when the Mahatma said : “You are yourself the tenth !”§ But there is a realization

* The Bengali original appeared in Ananda Varta, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 271.

† 'Vichar Sagar' is a work on Vedanta written in Hindi.

‡ A *Mahavakya* is a profound utterance by the Guru expressing the oneness of the individual with the Universal Self.

§ Mataji refers here to the following well-known Vedantic parable : “Ten men had to ford a river by swimming. To make certain that they had all safely reached the opposite bank, one of them counted the lot and to his consternation counted only nine. To make sure that he had not been mistaken another one of them counted the men with a similar result.

after which the possibility of its being obscured again by a reappearance of the veil of ignorance simply cannot be, this is the true and final Self-Realization. Lightning comes in a flash, but the light of day continues steadily.

Question : How can anything occur that is not mentioned in the Shastras ?

Mataji : To expound reincarnation, Karma and similar doctrines is mainly the work of the Shastras. Whether anything may occur that is not mentioned in them, remember that He is infinite. Out of your union with this infinity—no matter what form He may be pleased to assume—spring your actions, feelings, and thoughts, at the present time or in the future. This you may not be able to learn from the Shastras ; nevertheless the Shastras are also infinite. Oh, how beautiful is the law of God's creation ! Do you not know the feeling of delight, of deep bliss, when in a new way you discern a glimpse of Him—the eternally new.

Just consider : For one who has entered the *Great Stream* the Infinite is contained in the finite and the finite in the Infinite, the whole in the part and the part in the whole. Indeed what can one enter but one's own Self ! It is not merely a matter of imagination ; through ever fresh channels He is perceived in ever new forms. When that unbroken 'Stream' has been entered it is only natural the *Yoga*, the hidden union of the individual with the All should become *Mahayoga* : the full awareness of this Union.

Look, everything is contained in the Shastras and yet not everything. Imagine that you are travelling by train to Dehradun. On your journey you will pass through large stations, through towns and villages. Everyone of these has been indicated in the guide-book. But what is seen between the different stations, can it all be described in full detail ? The trees and plants the animals and Birds, the tiny little ants that are met with on the way, could all these be delineated ? Looked at from this point of view not everything has been written down in the Shastras. Infinite is the diversity of Creation, infinite are its modes of being, its changing movements and its static

Each one of them counted in turn, confirming that there were only nine men left, although they could not make out which of them was missing. A Mahatma passed by and they told him what had happened. He made them stand in a line, hit each one with his staff and asked them to count as he hit. To their joy and amazement they at once realized that none of them had been drowned "Each one of you forgot to include himself." explained the Mahatma.

states that are revealed at every single instant. Besides it is impossible to put into writing all that a seeker after Truth experiences. Furthermore it is quite certain that Reality is beyond speech and thought. Only that which can be expressed in word is being noted down. But what cannot be put into language is That Itself.

When at certain stages you have realizations along your own line of approach, these will of course be within the confines of that particular line. In the event of complete Realization, in all its bearings, can such a thought as "It has not been mentioned in the Shastras" have any meaning? The main stages on the path that you think can be elaborated exhaustively are of course discussed in the Shastras, but the numerous things that you imagine are not set forth there are also included in the Shastras. In accord with the progress of the sadhaka spiritual experiences will occur of themselves. However, where Enlightenment is complete there is no more question of important or less important stages. On reaching the end of one's journey full Enlightenment is bound to take place. If someone has doubt about something because it is not contained in the Shastras, can he have attained to the goal of his pilgrimage? Affirmation and negation are of significance only while one is yet on the way, for there are paths without number, and they cannot be limited to what has been laid down in the Shastras. Where the Infinite is in question the diversity of approaches is equally infinite and like-wise are the revelations along these paths of endless variety. Is it not said: 'There are as many doctrines as there are sages'? Unless one has a view-point of one's own one will not be classed among the sages.

Very well, this is one aspect of the matter. Now to another: On the level from which it can be said that everything is possible it would be quite senseless to declare that because something is not to be found in the Shastras or in any of the scriptures, it therefore does not and never will occur. Surely all this eager searching has for its aim but the revelation of That which is—of Reality. Could there be such ardent yearning and pining for something that has no existence, that never was or will be?

Some one said: Repetition of the names of Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Durga or any other name is quite useless, with the one exception of the name "Ma" (Mother) and that only while thinking of not any 'Ma', but solely the special 'Ma' that a particular group of people is worshipping. Someone else

again said : Self-realization cannot be attained by the repetition of any name whatsoever, but only by understanding the processes of the mind. Every problem that arises in the mind has to be thought out in this connection and understood in all its implications and in this way dissolved. If a person be incapable of doing this for himself, he may seek the help of someone else, no matter whom. However by this the relationship that is considered continuous between Guru and disciple will not be established. Who essentially is the Guru, since all are one ?

In this connection Mataji asked : “*Pitaji*, (Father), when you give this teaching, do not those who are trying to put it into practice automatically accept you as their Guru ?”

The person addressed replied . “No, for when their problems have been solved, we are all again on an equal footing”.

Mataji : Quite so, thus we are also told that after the Guru has given *Sannyasa*, he prostrates himself at full length before the disciple in order to demonstrate that there is no difference between Guru and disciple, for both are indeed one.

There is a stage where one cannot possibly regard oneself as a Guru, nor accept anyone else as a Guru. Another stage exists at which there is no way of thinking of the Guru and the disciple as separate from one another. There is yet another stage where it appears as follows : Everyone who gives teaching or instruction in this world is regarded in the light of a Guru ; there are innumerable methods and forms, devised for the purpose of helping man towards Self-realization ; by using any one of them man may advance towards this Goal.

By concentrating on the problems that arise in the mind it may be possible to undo the knots that constitute the ego. For this reason the above method is not in contradiction to any other method. What has been said about being on an equal footing is also right, for in this world people have to assist and teach one another in many walks of life ; therefore it can be truly said that everybody is a Guru. From one point of view one may call one's Guru every person from whom one has learnt something, no matter how little. But the real Guru is he whose teaching helps one towards Self-Realization.

Suppose a person is walking in the dark and dog starts suddenly barking furiously quite close to him. What can be the matter? The man switches on his torch and finds himself confronted with a big poisonous snake. By taking great care the man is now able to escape the fangs of the venomous reptile. Will the dog in this case have to be called the man's Guru or not? One may certainly object to it, for the dog did not bark for the purpose of making the man aware of the snake. But He who bestows awareness may appear in the guise of a dog.

From the Life of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi.

By

Dr. Bithika Mukerji, M. A., Ph. D.

(Continued)

(2)*

There were other obstacles also in the way of Mataji's education. The school was at a short distance away from Her home. Mataji was not allowed to go out anywhere alone; so on the days that Didima could not find an escort for Her, She could not attend school. She did not even possess a whole slate, but had to be content with a broken piece of one ! In spite of all these difficulties Mataji always stood first in Her class. There was no mystery about it. When She sat down to prepare Her lessons, the meaning of strange words would spontaneously occur to Her. Mataji relates : "Supposing I came across the word '*hasti*.' I would ponder about for a short while and it would occur to me that it meant 'elephant'. Her guardians hardly ever found time to help Her with Her lessons. So Mataji never really advanced beyond the elementary stage of education.

As far as religious practices were concerned the instructions She received were equally elementary. Her father taught Her to sing devotional songs and Kirtan and Her mother allowed Her to help with the preparations for the daily worship of the '*Narayana - Shila*.' Dadamashai's† teachings were simple enough. The first time She was asked to sing *bhajans* the following conversation took place : "Come and sing with me. We shall sing the praises of Hari."

"Who is Hari ?"

"The Lord of the Universe. He is very big and great. We are all His children."

"How big ? As big as this meadow ?"

"Much bigger. We all must worship Him and call down His mercy upon us. He is kind and takes care of us all. He has very many names ; Hari is one of them."

* See Ananda Varta Vol IV/4 p. 318.

† Her father.

This sufficed for Mataji and She became Her father's regular and faithful companion, whenever he sat down for his devotional singing.

It has already been said that Mataji as a child never seemed to express a desire for anything, neither was She ever unhappy or unruly. But there were occasions when She would cry too. The three small brothers who were born after Her, all died very young. While they were alive Mataji looked after them devotedly, missing school and play in order to take care of them. But when they passed away She not only accepted their loss without complaint, more than that She never let Didima have the chance to indulge in her grief either. Whenever She saw Her much enduring mother mourn the death of her children She broke out into such a torrent of heart-rending sobs that Didima perforce had to forget her own tears in order to quieten the little girl. Didima says that these were the only occasions on which Mataji cried during Her childhood.

Mataji had a happy knack of identifying Her own wishes with those of others ; or rather, since She did not seem to have any desires Herself the incentives to Her behaviour sometimes arose out of the wishes of Her close companions.

There is an auspicious day during the summer season on which people abstaining from cooked food eat only parched rice mixed with thickened milk and seasoned with ripe mangoes. Once Didima, unable to afford mangoes, was preparing the dish for her children with milk only and while busy with this task thinking how all the other children of the village would be able to enjoy the much loved summer fruit. Suddenly Mataji ran in from outside and gave her a large ripe mango. Didima asked Her sternly : "Did you steal this ? If so you must go and return it at once !" Mataji however replied that She had found it lying in the field near the cottage as if someone had just put it there for the purpose. Although it appeared rather inexplicable how the one mango could arrive there of its own accord, Didima felt obliged to accept and use it, because she knew that Mataji was an exceptionally truthful child.

Mataji at times relates the following story from Her childhood : "One night my father saw a snake curled round the rafters of our hut. It was raining outside and in the uncertain light of the oil-wick lamp, he did not like the idea of disturbing the snake. Still less did he feel inclined to go to sleep in view of the tantalizing possi-

bility of the snake dropping down on us during the night. So he gathered us children and put us under the bed. Then, having made sure that his family was safe, he himself took refuge behind some other shelter. The thought occurred to me at that moment that man is helpless indeed. He who would protect us could not protect himself, but needs had to seek the protection of something else."

Apart from the lesson Mataji derived from this Her way of reflecting as she did it also revealed the fact that she was something more than just only the simple, docile and lovable little girl Her parents took Her to be.

Another incident recounted by Her shows that Mataji Herself perhaps rather enjoyed the role of a simple little girl. Returning from the pond one day with a pitcher full of water balanced on her hip, She came and stood in front of Didima and said ! "You all call me straight and simple ; look am I not crooked now ?"

Mataji always maintains that there has been no question of development for Her. She always was as She is. The difference observed in Her are due to the understanding of the onlookers. It appears to people that she has passed through the stages of childhood and adolescence to maturity ; but these must not be

regarded as stages in the process of a gradual development. Development implies inadequacy and imperfection ; the least that can be said about Her conduct as a child and a young girl is that it was certainly adequate. The phenomenon of a perfect child is strange enough, but it appears even more strange that nobody remarked upon it. Mataji says that some of the characteristics of '*bhava*' and *samadhi* (which became such a prominent feature of Her life at a later period) were present even during Her early childhood. Most of the time these states passed unnoticed because the people round Her had no comprehension of such things. But sometimes when a state of that kind came upon Her during meal time, Her mother would feel perturbed thinking it could only be the symptoms of a weak mind. She would scold and shake the child and endeavour to draw Her attention back to the food in front of Her.

At a certain stage during Mataji's *Lila* of *sadhana* all places of worship exercised a magnetic spell on Her. She would enter temples and touch the Deities. She would even go into *samadhi* if passing near a temple, church or mosque or any other sacred place. Sometimes the people travelling with Mataji would suddenly see

Her withdrawing into such a state without any apparent cause (of course external causes were not always necessary to bring on Mataji's states of *samadhi*, but generally the strains of devotional music or the proximity of sacred places or objects of worship were influential in calling forth changes in Mataji's behaviour.) Later on Her companions would find out that they had been passing a temple which was not visible from the road.

During Her child-hood also this attraction sometimes influenced Her conduct. When She was cleaning the place of worship, somehow or other it would invariably happen that She accidentally touched the '*Narayan-Shila*.'

When Mataji was quite small She was once taken to a neighbour's house to listen to the performance of a Kirtan party. The atmosphere created by the religious music brought on a state of '*bhava*' in Her. Her aunt mistaking the inert condition for sleep, shook Her saying "Why do you sleep? Listen to the *kirtan*!" Didima recollected the incident perfectly when reminded of it by Mataji years later.

So it would seem that no definite line of demarcation can be drawn in Mataji's life anywhere denoting a change from one stage to another. Had there been anyone of capable understanding these supernatural manifestations, events might have taken a different turn, but this was not to be.

Thus mataji grew up in peaceful surroundings as a blithe and winsome little girl. Her sunny disposition earned Her many nicknames such as '*Hashi*' (smiles) or '*Khushir Ma*' (Happy Mother). When She returned to Kheora years later She was at once surrounded by the village folk who started talking and exchanging views most familiarly. They were not at all awe-inspired or embarrassed. Mataji also, in a moment seemed to become one of them. They welcomed Her back as they would a well-beloved daughter returning home after a long absence. In fact the earnest devotees who had accompanied Mataji did not know whether She was more dear to the hearts of the village folk or to their own.

(To be continued)

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHISM

Akshay Kumar Datta Gupta, Kaviratna, M. A.

Not trying to be scrupulously accurate in the matter of terminology it may in a general way be said that the fundamental principles of Buddhism are three. These are : (in Pali) (1) *Dukkha* (Sanskrit *dukkha*) meaning sorrow, suffering, affliction and, in a minor key, worry, despair, "the heart-ache and all the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" as the poet has put it ; (2) *Anichcha* (Sanskrit *anitya*) which implies the absence of permanence or an enduring character in anything ; and (3) *Anatta* (Sanskrit *anatma*) meaning the non-existence of a self. Of these the first, *dukkha* goes naturally with Religion, while the other two *anichcha* and *anatta* belong more properly under the rubric of Philosophy. All three are interrelated making, as some Westerners superiorly think, a dismal whole.

Affliction is a fact of universal experience. No life is without it, though in the discrimination of common people sufferings do not altogether crowd out pleasure. But the thinking few know that what the rabble call pleasure is but gilded sorrow.

Sankhara parama dukkha : life is unmitigated sorrow, says the *Dhammapada* XV.7, following the *Gita* V.22 : *ye hi samsparasaja bhoga dukkhayonaya eva te* : all experience born of contact of the senses with objects are sources of sorrow.

Buddha made suffering the cardinal principle of his religion. "One thing I teach : *dukkha* and its ending," said he, "Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, separation from that which pleases is suffering, contact with that which displeases is suffering, not getting that on which one has one's heart is suffering." And further "which do you think is the more voluminous: the tears that have flowed from the eyes of men in their long pilgrimage or the waters that are in the four great seas?" From an acute consciousness of the overabundance of sorrow in life comes the impulse to religion. It has been well said that religion does not prosper in prosperity. It is suffering that make people fumble for the remedy and material specifics do not often meet

the case. This is where religion comes in.

The omnipresence of *dukkha* is not a doctrine first propounded by Buddha. It is an inheritance from the age-old teachers of the race who had garnered a rich stock of philosophical lore. Two other such inheritances are the law of *Kamma* (Sanskrit. *karma*): deeds and the inescapability of births and rebirths (metempsychosis in philosophical phraseology). One must taste the fruits of one's deeds, however bitter or sweet, in this, and if not, in repeated births. The apparently unmerited afflictions (as well as fortunes) are to be attributed to deeds done in a past incarnation or incarnations and unrequited virtue as well as unpunished misdeeds are to be supposed to bear fruit in future existences. Buddha (and no doubt most of his audience also) took these views for granted and never argued about them. But the enlightened one always tried to make all people conscious of the preponderance of affliction in their and their neighbours' lives.

Many writers of the West at one time (due no doubt to a superiority complex) used to dub not only Bud-

dhism but all Hindu philosophy as absurdly and unhealthily pessimistic and the belief in a long succession of births and deaths as quite ridiculous. But saner writers and thinkers have not failed to notice that Buddha (I am immediately concerned only with Buddhism) not only emphasized the overabundance of sorrow in life, but pointed out its cause which is *tanha* (Skt. *trishna*), morbid craving for pleasures and possessions from which no man is normally free. He also firmly held and taught that it was possible to put an end to both the sufferings and their cause, and pointed out how. It was in fact the mission of his life to teach all people how the consummation so devoutly to be wished could be attained. Is this pessimism? Surely that is made of much blacker stuff.

The above doctrines viz suffering, its cause, the practicability of its ending, and lastly the means to that end, have been called *chatvari ariya sachchani* (Skt. *Chatvari arya satyani*) the four noble truths. The fourth consisting of eight parts has been separately called *ariyo chatthangiko maggo* (Skt. *aryah ashtangah margah*) the noble eightfold way. *

* The eightfold way which I do not propose to elaborate here is composed of the following: *Samma ditthi* (right views), *Samma sankappo* (right resolution), *Samma vacha* (right speech), *Samma Kammanto* (right deeds), *Samma ajivo* (right means of livelihood), *Samma Vayamo* (right effort), *Samma Sati* (right meditation) and *Samma Samadhi* (right concentration

Kamma (Skt. *Karma*) is the law of cause and effect in the spiritual world. A quite recent American author* writing on Hindu civilization describes *Karma* as "the most terrible law of all". "This law of *Karma*", says he, "like the Greek *Moirā* or Fate, is above both gods and men; even the gods do not change its absolute operation; or as the theologians put it, *Karma* and the will or action of gods are one. But *Karma* is not Fate; Fate implies the helplessness of man to determine his own lot, *Karma* makes him (taking all his lives as a whole) the creator of his own destiny. Nor do heaven and hell end the work of *Karma*" for after a short or long sojourn in either place according to its deserts "every soul must sooner or later return to earth and live out its *Karma* in new incarnations."

But did not also Christianity teach, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"? Hindu teachers extended the law backwards holding whatever harvest a man reaps in this world he sowed it in a previous life or lives. How, it may be asked,

can one, without accusing God of cruelty and partiality, justify the all too glaring inequalities of possessions and opportunities which are the lot of men in society? "Believing in the operation of natural justice", says an ardent English admirer and follower of Buddhism;§ "Buddhism would say in reply to the Biblical enquiry: who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind? That it was this man who had 'sinned', that is, had so behaved in a previous life as to cause in the life in question the effect of blindness". He says further, "In the West we say that the child of a musical father is musical (if it be so) because of heredity. In Buddhist lands it would be explained that the child was born into a musical family because it (the child) had developed musical propensities in previous lives and was attracted to an environment suitable for the expression of those 'gifts', a reversal of the western view".

The insistence on *dukkha* together with its adjunct, the inexorable law of *karma*, had such a strong and universal appeal that the religion

They have also been called "the middle way" the golden mean between extreme austerity and down right epicureanism.

* Will Durant in "Our Oriental Heritage."

§ Christmas Humphreys, the founder president of the Buddhist Society in London, in *Buddhism*, a Pelicon book.

founded on them by the Enlightened One spread rapidly so as to cover nearly the whole of India in his life time. The fourth "noble truth", "the noble eight fold way" taught how to live a perfectly moral life as also how to train the mind to attain perfect peace. Practical morality was in fact raised to the high altar of religion. Unlike most religions there was not much stress laid on emotion in early Buddhism as represented by the Hinayana School now current in southern Asia. The element of emotion (*bhakti*) developed later under Mahayana which now prevails in northern Asia. Mind training (*yoga*) also became a more pronounced factor of the religion under the same auspices. In the earlier phase though gods were believed in as a superior race of beings, there was no belief in a Divinity as such. Buddha was yet no more than a *guru* or guide who had himself trodden the path and reached perfection. He claimed no inspiration from any higher source, but only enlightenment (*bodhi*) which he had attained by personal exertion.

So much about the first fundamental principle. As regards the second and the third we may at once say that Buddha did not borrow or adopt them from the orthodox speculations of his age, though changeable-

ness (*parinama* in Hindu philosophy) and therefore impermanence of the phenomenal world had been recognised but with a hard core of reality underlying it. Neither *anichcha* in the sense he taught nor *anatta* were, however, his "inventions". There were many non-conformists and free-thinkers in the Hindu fold in Buddha's time and before him, who swore by a probably mythical teacher, Brihaspati by name and a worthy disciple of his realistically called "Sweet-spoken" (Chārvāk = *charu* fair and *vak* speech) as a thorough-going advocate of epicureanism. They were the modernists of ancient India presumably as proud of their cult as some of the shining lights of the present day secular Indian State. Buddha had his differences with them. He fought and discomfited them in the person of Māra, the Tempter.

The absence of a permanent character in the phenomenal world is evident to every eye. All is changing constantly whether growing or decaying. Throw a handful of paddy on moist ground. It will change in one way in a few days. Keep it aside in a dry place for some years it will be found to have changed in another way. In the former case it will germinate, in the latter it will crumble if pressed between the fingers. In both

cases the change (*parinama*) has occurred imperceptibly, but surely moment by moment. Does not the modern science of physiology tell us also that a man's body is completely renewed in every particle in seven or eight years? Nothing endures except the law of change. The principle of *anichcha* as applied to the spirit is *anatta*. The earlier teachers taught the existence of an individual soul (*atma* or *jivatma*) in every living being. Buddha stoutly denied it.

In his view a man's personality is composed of five parts (Pali *khanda*, Skt. *skandha*) : (1) *rupa*, form, body, (2) *vedana* sensations, feelings, (3) *sanna* (Skt. *sanjuna*) perceptions and conceptions, (4) *sankhara* (Skt. *sanskara*) impressions, tendencies including will, and (5) *vinnana* (Skt. *vijnana*) consciousness. Beyond or behind them no self is recognised.

But if a man has no abiding self, what is it that undergoes rebirths? The question is undoubtedly an inconvenient one, and it is open to doubt whether all Buddhists were quite satisfied with the answer offered which was that of the five *kandhas*, although the first three might and in fact did perish at death, the last two would fling themselves into a body suitable to the fruition of the dead man's *karma*. The difficulty is that Buddha

sometimes spoke of a self; as e. g. to a young man whose female companion had run away when they were picnicking with some friends, and who asked Buddha coming that way whether he had seen the girl; "What do you think, young man, which were better for you; to seek for the woman or to seek for the Self?" and to Ananda, his dearest disciple, "Take the Self as a lamp, O Ananda, take the Self as a refuge"; also to his own son, Rahula, "Every form must be regarded thus, as it really is by perfect insight: "This is not mine; not this am I; this is not the Self of me."

However that may be, *vinnana*, the last of the five *kandas*, should not be confused with *vijnana* or simply *jnana* as taught by the Upanishads. It is really self consciousness, the *ahankara* of Hindu philosophy, the separatist belief; I am I. The delusion of a self called *sakkayaditthi* (Skt. *sakayadrishi*: the view that the body is a real thing) persists till by devoted religious practice the first stage in the upward progress called *sotapanna* (Skt. *srotah apanna*; one who has entered the stream) is reached. It is the first taste of *nibhana* (Skt. *nirvana*). The delusion of self is one of ten fetters which have to be gradually broken before an aspirant reaches the state of an *arhat*

or adept (answering to *jivanmukta* of Hindu philosophy) which is followed by *nibbana* at death.

The Upanishads taught the existence of two selves, individual and universal, called respectively *atma*, *jiva*, or *jivatma* and *paramatma*. The first has been variously held by philosophers as a part of or an emanation from or a reflection of the second and even as quite an independent identity. Buddha as we have seen denied the existence of an *atma* or *jiva* i. e. personal self. The Hinayanaists carrying the point perhaps too far held that according to Buddha there was and could be no *Paramatma* also. The fact, however, was that with regard to this last point, the Enlightened One maintained a "noble" imperturbable silence, neither expressly affirming nor denying it. The reason undoubtedly was that if there was such a soul it must (as also taught by the Upanishads) be inexpressible in words and inconceivable by the mind. What use then was it spending time and energy in speculating about it? Both would be better employed in following the noble eight-fold way and other useful precepts.

But in a country where philosophical speculation or discussion was almost a passion with the flower of the community, the lacuna could not

long have failed to provoke much adverse criticism, and so the giants of the Mahayana school hastened to fill up the gap. But in such a case a satisfactory authority must first be found or fabricated. There was good authority for a story that on one occasion the Enlightened One gathered some leaves lying under forest trees and said that just as those leaves were much fewer than those which were in the trees, so also the lessons he taught were a small fraction of the truths that he had not yet revealed. The Stalwarts of Mahayana said that the Hinayana scriptures which then held the field, represented only the teachings of the Master suitable for the masses that crowded about him wherever he went or stopped. To the elect and the tried he communicated some more doctrines which were of a metaphysical or esoteric nature and therefore beyond the intellectual reach of common folks. The idea at any rate was certainly not fantastic, for in Upanishadic times also great care was taken to choose pupils for instruction in the profounder truths.

Buddha was thus supposed to have taught his more deserving disciples that *vijnana* (Mahayanists wrote in Sanskrit) or individual consciousness was but a partial manifestation of a cosmic entity named *alayavijnana* repository cons-

sciousness which was no psychological concept like the fifth of the *skandhas* but a metaphysical Reality universal and infinite in nature. It also represented the true character (*tath at*) of all things. It thus in a way answered to the Paramatma of the Upanishads.

Transferred from metaphysics to religion it was called *dharmadhatu* and *dharmakaya* (substance and body of Dharma). In mythology it became Adi Buddha. Dharmakaya was supposed to be the final goal of all spiritual aspirants as it was also the

subtlest and fullest of the three bodies of Buddha. (It is not proposed here to elaborate this last point). It thus in a manner dethroned *nirvana*, stress being now laid on the freed soul to be attained than on the not-self to be extinguished. But *nirvana* was not and indeed could not be discarded altogether. It became *sunyata* present with potential Buddhahood in every person. These topics are too abstruse to be casually dealt with and are not also relevant to the scope of this article.

Srijut Ramdas' Letter to Dr. Wenitrob (Vijayananda)

Beloved Ram,

Ramdas received your loving letter of the 26th March.

* * * * *

Ramdas' heart is full when he remembers her. It is difficult to express his love for her in words. She is Ramdas' divine Mother and he is her little child. By saying this Ramdas has put into words as best as he can the overflowing love and reverence he has for this Great Mother. Ramdas' humble pranams at her holy feet.

You may print in the May issue of Ananda Varta what Ramdas has said about Ma Ananda Mayi in the above lines. This is his humble tribute to her greatness and glory. Please convey to her Ramdas' love and pranams.

Love and blessings to you and all others there.

P. O. ANANDASHRAM

Via Kanhangad. S. I. Ry.

5th April, 1957.

Every your Self.

Ramdas

MOTHER COMES, EVER COMES

By Sri Upendra Chandra Dutta,

Day before Shiva Ratri, 1956: A tonga was moving fast along the main road of Brindaban. Attention of the passers-by was drawn by a tumultuous crowd and some cars inside the precincts of a new temple. The tonga stopped at the entrance of the temple and one person went in to make enquiries. All of a sudden a car rushed through the gate and quite unexpectedly halted a few steps ahead. Lo! Mother was there. While passing she caught sight of me sitting in the tonga, stopped the car and called me. I ran to Her and bowed down. Ma enquired what had brought me there. I told Her that I was on an official visit to Mathura and Brindaban. I did not know that she was there, but the scene in the Ashram suggested something unusual and we were waiting for a pleasant surprise. Ma told me that Lord Shiva was going to be installed in the Ashram the next day (Shiva Ratri) and asked me to attend the function. Mother's presence and the prospect of passing some time round about Her struck all the chords of my heart simultaneously. Thus came Mother to Her son.

Again on the eve of Holi some of my relations went to Brindaban and paid their homage to Mother who was then staying there to observe the festival of Love. Centuries ago the Blue Boy played on His flute and danced in tune with the heart-beats of His playmates and milk maids there. Perhaps these associations took visible shapes and Mother decided to pass the occasion on the bank of the Jamuna to put a new life into the old Leela. She observed Holi at Brindaban in 1956 and 1957, and may continue to do so in future as well.

Learning that the visitors were my relatives Mother said to one of them, "Write to Upen that daughter wants to live with her father." I got the message in time and should have run to Brindaban to receive Her blessing, but I could not for various worldly reasons. I wrote to Mother instead, requesting Her to let me know if the Daughter would come to Her father or the son would go to his Mother.

The letter did not reach her for a long time, so the reply was not

received. Then I did not know that Mother would actually come to Her son. I had the privilege of Her darshan at Banaras in May, 1956, during Her 60th birthday celebrations. On that festive occasion of unusual type Mother was extremely busy, but she was all sweetness and love. Like a pillar of light she was moving from place to place and bringing joy to all about her. In my presence whenever she met a group of devotees, she would refer to an old incident in a jocular mood and tell them, "I went with this Baba to Dchradun side, but Baba went away leaving me behind." About 28 years ago I accompanied Mother to Sahasradhara. On our way back, as already arranged, I took leave of Her and the party at Rajpur and prepared to go to Mussoorie. I retorted most humbly saying, "A son may leave a mother but a mother can not afford to leave her son. All present including the Mother enjoyed the fun. Like a true mother she had fed me sumptuously before I left Varanasi. I cast my last lingering look at her lotus feet. The whole atmosphere seemed to have been surcharged with Her spirit—everything seemed to have been softened with Her overflowing love.

In 1957 before the Holi R. B. Seth G. M. Modi, Chairman, Modi Industries and the Modi Textile and founder of

Modinagar, told me that Mother would pass a week at Modinagar just after the Holi and more than 100 Sadhus and devotees would accompany Her from Brindāban. My joy knew no bounds. I was waiting impatiently for 17th March when Mother would come. An elaborate arrangement was made to receive Her in a garden house outside the town. The Summer House in the garden was given a finishing touch. A big pandal was erected on an extensive lawn for Rasa Leela, lectures, Bhajan, etc. and at some distance a Shamiana was ready for Akhand Kirtan. Good many tents were pitched to accommodate some 400 persons. Hundreds of mango trees smiling through blossoms and multi-coloured flower-beds dancing in breeze called visitors to a place of rest. My feeling of joy was not unmixed with that of sorrow, for Board's examinations would begin from 20th March and I would be almost a prisoner in one of the biggest examination centres. Mother with the party arrived on 17th evening. At Her bidding the procession was abandoned. A big crowd headed by Modi Sahab accorded Her a most respectful welcome with garlands and Arti. I saw Her from a distance and kept behind. A stream of people got into Her room for darshan and came out one by one. Modi Sahab saw me stand outside and called

me in. Mother gave a broad smile to see me and said, "I knew you are here, someone told me. Did you write to me?" I replied that I wrote long ago, not now. I was thinking of going to Brindaban this time during the Holi festival, but could not. Mother said, "Why did you not go? There was Maha Rasa". I kept quiet and requested Her to visit our Colleges (Boys' and Girls'). She agreed to do so during the week of her stay. I felt happy to think that the colleges would be sanctified by Her hallowed presence, they would be Tirthas.

Programme for the week was quite attractive :

Hari Baba's Kirtan-4 A.M.

Rasa Lila-8-30 A.M.-11-30 A.M.

Lectures & Bhajan-2 P.M.-5-30 P.M.

Mother received visitors anytime when free, after 10 A. M. till late hours at night. After lectures in the pandal at about 5-15 P. M. She led a Kirtan chanting in melodious tone divine names for about 15 minutes. Everyone present responded to it in a state of self-forgetfulness, so to speak. The name was in their lips and the Form was before their eyes. A crowd of several thousands behaved like one man. They seemed to have lost their identity in a living presence of the Divine. Hari Baba's life was a lesson to all. He would follow his programme like the hand of a clock and would

remain all absorbed in what he said. He remained oblivious of the world outside. He lived and moved in a world of his own. He fanned the actors considered as Krishna and his companions at the Leela, rang a big bell at Kirtan and talked about the glories of devotees in his discourses. His single-pointed devotion, self-forgetfulness and tenacity of purpose marked him out as a saint of outstanding nature and ability. In fact, he was the master of ceremony there.

On 19th afternoon some of us were sitting in Mother's room. Ma hinted at self-knowledge as the supreme knowledge. It is essential. Bhajan is the means, but it becomes spontaneous. No-one can do it. Does she mean that Bhajan goes on automatically once the spiritual energy is roused by the grace of Guru? Then Ma said, "What about death? Death has to die. It has got to be killed". At this stage Modi Sahab ushered two gentlemen into Mother's presence. One was Raj Pandit of Patiala Darbar and another was Seth Narain Das Bajoria, a man of culture and learning. They were introduced and Mother began to talk of Supreme Knowledge. What exists is One. It has become many. It appears in so many forms. You have come to yourself.

Pandit—Are you Maitreyi?

Mother—I am your little daughter.

Pandit—You are Gargi who had discussion with Yajnyavalkya.

Mother—I am what you like to call your little girl. I know nothing and often talk nonsense.

Pandit—No. You are Gayatri.

Pandit recited some slokas in great joy and took leave. Sri Bajoria, who as a rule, avoids the company of women sat there quietly in all humility. Afterwards he told me that when he saw Mother for the first time at Hardwar sometime back, he saw his own mother, who died long ago, in Mother and he could not restrain his tears. He wept bitterly for about half an hour. He feels the presence of Divine Mother in her.

From 20th March I was detained in the college for conducting examinations and felt very sorry to think that when Ma had come too close to me, I could hardly have Her darshan. But, to my great joy, I got a message that Ma would visit the college on 22nd at 10 A.M. and I should arrange for Her reception. Mother arrived in time, rather a few minutes earlier. She was accompanied by some San-yasis and Brahmacharis and Mrs. G. M. Modi. I conducted the party to Geeta Bhawan, a hall with life size wall-paintings of saints and patriots, besides some gods and goddesses. She and her companions were seated on a raised platform and

adored with Arti, stotras, sandal paste and garlands. Then began Ramdhun in accompaniment with music. Ma took the lead and all of us—teachers, students and examinees—followed Her. In a short speech I informed the audience how about 28 years ago I had the privilege of watching Her in a state of deep trance (Samadhi) that continued for hours at Hardwar and how she was brought down to a normal condition with great difficulty by uttering the Divine Name into Her ear, and how spiritual symptoms (Sattvik lakshans) manifested themselves in the process of her descent to normalcy. Further, I told, on Her own statement, that Ma had no previous birth nor would she have any in future. ‘Then what was she?’ Most humbly I requested Ma to tell us who she was. As usual she avoided the answer and said softly, ‘What shall I say?’ At our request she addressed the students on their duties and advised thus: ‘Get up early in the morning and take the Divine Name that appeals to you, touch the feet of parents, attend your studies, obey your elders, speak the truth and play as much as you like’. Like a simple child she looked at me and told me that she had nothing more to say. Out of Her infinite grace Mother came to our college and turned the temple of learning into a Tirth (pilgrimage) with the touch of Her lotus feet.

I became free on Sunday, the 24th March. I reached the Summer House in the morning and spent the whole day there, attending the Rasa Leela, taking part in the Bhandara, listening to lectures and Kirtan. I could see Mother from a distance. She was sitting like a statue at the Rasa and then chanting the Divine Name moving in a circle with a party of singers that had come from Delhi. In the afternoon I came to learn from a reliable source that a respectable lady pressed Mother to show her some supernatural form. Ma told her that in that case she would lose all touch with the world. The lady persisted. As a result she is reported to have seen a dazzling light (Jyoti) and screamed loudly. On enquiry the lady said that it was all Mother's grace.

After the sunset I met a brahmachari who conducted me to Mother. His Holiness Swami Sadananda Tirtha of Shankar Math, Uttar Kashi, was there. I told Ma that I would retire in July next and reminded Her that more than six years back when I was coming here, she advised me that I should serve only One. "Yes, you should serve One only after taking pension", was Her prompt reply. We had the following conversation.

"Where will you settle?" "I have

got a small house at Kashi and may stay there." "Oh yes, Kashi is an excellent place. Gopi Babu is there. When I go there, we shall meet in the evening" "Then I shall go to Kashi."

"Yes, you do. You have seen all about this life."

According to the Yogis Kashi is the centre of illumination-Ajnachakra, the seat of Shiva and Shakti, above the earthly existence. The word evening is significant. Does it mean the evening of life? A child plays the whole day and longs for the mother when darkness gathers with the approach of night. 'Sunset and evening star, one clear call for me'. Mother's call is clearly heard when the bustle and din of life subside. She call us day and night. Who cares to hear? She comes without fail. Who cares to see? She knocks at the door again and again. Who cares to open? She goes back with tears in Her eyes. Who cares to know? The child plays with toys in a doll house, awfully busy, no time to spare for Her. Wife and children, gold and fame absorb our attention. We ignore the presence of Mother. She comes, ever comes as sights and sounds, as thoughts and feelings, as pleasure and pain.

Wise people say that Ma is a temporal expression of the eternal spirit, a special creation of the Divine, an emanation of the ultimate Reality,

whose manifestation is the universe. She is in and beyond everything. Her vast immensity overwhelms me and creates a gap between a tiny creature like me and a mighty one who transcends all limits. These ideas are indispensable to those who move in and build up a system of ideas with reference to a Universe of discourse. They dive deep into the mystery of life and present the world with bright gems of pure wisdom. I am a fool with very little understanding and dare not measure the immeasurable. I want a mother mostly human, a mother who can move on my level and respond to my feelings. It is enough that I have got One. I am not at all anxious to

know if she had any Guru human or divine, if She is ever established in Brahman as a part of Her nature. I do not bother about Her actual position in the hierarchy of gods, angels or exalted souls. She is a mother who lives for children and fills up gaps in their lives. If we feel thirsty, let us take a glass of water. What is the use knowing the amount of water in a river? If we cannot do without Mother, Mother too cannot do without us. If we leave the toys and cling to Her, she appears everywhere—in the blue above and in the green below. Her smiling face is seen through every visible form and every mental state. She comes, comes, ever comes.

Christmas poem for Dear Ma

(Elwood Decker)

O my mind, meditate on Thy MOTHER!
 Like a doll pressed against the heart of a
 little girl
 Be still! Be not a wiggly paper doll, or
 a rag doll to be thrown around; but a
 solid doll firmly made, and painted with
 the glorious colours of love.
 Smile! And stay where you're put!
 Be still! Or be a waxen doll which will melt
 in the sun of knowledge.
 Be still, and wait for the Sun to Shine.
 The Sun of knowledge will Shine in the Heart
 For the Sun of Knowledge Shines with the
 Presence of My MOTHER, WHO Is made of
 Love alone!
 The heart is the drawing room, where

MOTHER entertains visitors.
 O SHE Loves company
 SHE will Show you Unimaginable
 Treasures of Beauty.
 And SHE will Tell you Stories no one else
 can tell you.
 Be still! And wait for HER...and Be silent
 While SHE is Talking.
 Now this is a strange thing..
 In the Land of our MOTHER, if we two
 wish to
 Really see each other, we sit quite still
 and wait.
 But if we try to see each other, nothing
 comes of it.
 Be Still. Do nothing. And have a visit.....
 a doll's Visits with our MOTHER.

ĀNANDA - VĀRTĀ

Dr. Roma Chaudhuri.

One of the most fundamental and difficult problems of Philosophy is that of Creation. The ordinary monotheistic view, as ably propounded by monotheist Vedantins, Ramanuja, Nimbarka and others, is that *Brahman* or *Isvara*, is both the *Upadana-Karana* and *Nimitta-Karana* of the universe. That is, He, as both the material and the efficient cause of the universe of souls and matter, Himself transforms Himself in the form of the world. Hence, our Upanisads assert beautifully :—

“He desired to be many.”

(Chandogya Up. 6-2-3)

“He Himself created Himself.

Hence, He is called a Self-Creator.”

(Tattiriya Up. 2-7-1)

This is the famous Doctrine of Transformation or *Parinama-Vada* of the Monotheistic Schools of the Vedanta.

But an objection against this *Parinama-Vada* may be raised here. For a question may legitimately be asked as to why *Brahman* should create the world. It is well-known that every voluntary action of a rational being is due to a motive, i. e. to a feeling of want, an idea of an object capable of removing that want, and a desire for

that object. In other words, our voluntary actions are nothing but our strivings for attaining unattained ends, gratifying ungratified desires and none but an insane person who has lost his reason, or a child whose reasoning faculty is still immature, acts without a motive. Hence, the activities of God, too, who is *Jnana-svarupa* or knowledge in essence, cannot be motiveless. For this reason, the fundamental question naturally arises as to the motive behind His great cosmic act of Creation, Sustenance and Destruction. He is, by common consent,

Nitya-Shuddha,

Nitya-Buddha

Nitya-Mukta,

Nitya-Tripta—

Eternally Pure, Eternally Knowing, Eternally Free, Eternally Satisfied. Accordingly, there cannot be any unattained end or ungratified desire in His case. If that be so, what can at all be the motive behind His Act of Creation ?

In reply, the Monotheistic Vedantists have propounded the celebrated Vedanta doctrine of ‘Lila’. According to this view, the creation of the world is nothing but ‘Lila’ or a play, a sport

on His part. 'Lila' or sport springs not from *Abhava*, but from *Svabhava*, that is not from any want or imperfection, but, on the contrary, from fulness and perfection. Hence, while dealing with the problem of creation, the *Brahma-Sutras* say :—

“Lokavat-tu Lila-Kaivalyam”

(Br. Su. 2-1-32)

This means that the world-creation is only a play on the part of God, as also found in the world in other cases. This is beautifully explained as follows :—

It is often found in the world that an all-powerful, supreme, sovereign owner of all lands, engages himself in various kinds of sports and pastimes. Such sports are, evidently, not undertaken by him for attaining an unattained end or for fulfilling an unfulfilled desire. On the contrary after all his ends have been attained, after all his heart's desires have been fulfilled, after all his duties have been done, after all his responsibilities have been discharged, then alone can he, with full ease and joy, indulge in all those pastimes, mirth-making, frolicking, sports and games. Thus, sport etc. do not indicate any want or defect on the part of one who engages himself in those sports ; on the contrary these are but signs that there is nothing wrong with him, that he has no wants

or defects to work or grieve for. In the very same manner, this universe is nothing but the outer manifestation of the ever-flowing, ever-full, Bliss of Brahman. Bliss has a natural tendency to overflow, to express itself to permeate all things around. When we are fully happy, that happiness can be seen from our every expression, every gait, every gesture, every act. Similarly, Brahman, in the, ever-perfectness of His Nature, in the ever-fulness of His Bliss, in the ever-satisfaction of His Being, naturally, i.e. by force of inner nature and not by that of outer necessity, manifests His ever-perfectness, ever-fulness, in one word, His infinite, supreme and sublime Bliss in the form of the universe. Hence it is that Tattiriya Upanisad, explaining the cause of creation, says :—

“From *Ananda* or Bliss, verily, all these beings arise; having so arisen, they are sustained by Bliss, then they re-enter into and return to Bliss again” (Tait. Up. 3, 6).

This is the most exhilarating, fundamental Indian conception of *Brahman* as *Ananda* or Bliss. It is in this conception that we find the greatest and the sweetest *Ananda Varta* of the world. What is this sublime, yet simple 'Ananda Varta' or Message of Joy and Hope to all and sundry ? It is noth-

ing but the infinitely solacing message that although the universe is apparently so full of pains and sufferings, impurities and imperfections, yet, being the effect, the transformation, the manifestation of the All-Blissful, All-Pure, and All-Perfect *Brahman* it is really Bliss, Purity and Perfection in essence. The world is nothing apart from God, nothing different from Him. On the contrary, as God Himself as cause, has transformed Himself into the world, as effect, it is He who animates and permeates its each and every part, it is He who in fact, is the world. That is why, the universe is divine through and through, whatever its mere outer appearances may be.

Of course, we ordinary individuals, with our vision dimmed by ignorance or *Avidya*, and our hearts deadened by desire or *Kamana*, fail to realise the real nature, the inner essence of our own existence, as well as of that of the world. And so, we are misled into thinking, on the one hand, that we are the most sinful and most sorrowful beings on earth, and on the other, that this world, with its apparently glittering and gladdening array of things, affords us the only escape from this endless series of frustrations and miseries that seem to be our only lot on earth. But those who, through *Sadhana and Tapasya*,

spiritual strivings and sublime penances, have captured the *Ananda* or Bliss of *Brahman* in their heart of hearts, stretch a helpful hand to us and give us the inspiring calls to a life Eternal, Life Beautiful, Life Blissful, thus :—

“Hear, ye all, the children of the Immortal, residing in the Divine Abode” (*Svet. Up. 2-5.*)

Thus when the Divine Light restores the light our eyes and illumines the innermost core of our hearts, we with the real Seers, the *Satyadristas*, see the Divine Being everywhere, feel the Divine Bliss everywhere catch the Divine Image in our innermost beings. Then only, with the Seers of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, do we realise that *Brahman* and his essence, the world, is “*Rasa*” (Juice), “*Madhu*” (Honey), “*Amrita*” (Nectar), “*Ananda*” (Bliss) and “*Aloka*” (Light), thus :—

“Verily, He is the *Juice*. He who tastes this *Juice*, alone is blissful”
(*Tait. Up. 2-7-3*)

“This world is the *Honey* of all beings, all beings are the *Honey* of this world” (*Brh. Up. 2, 5, 1.*)

“The Winds blow *Honey*, the rivers pour *Honey*” (*Brh. Up. 6, 3, 5.*)

“Through deep knowledge the wise Perceive Him who shines forth as *Bliss* and *Nectar*, as the Immortal.”

(*Mund. 2, 2, 7.*)

“He is *White*, the *Light* of lights, whom the knowers of self know.”

(Mund. 2, 2, 9).

In fact, the aim of all our ‘*Sadhanas*’, all our spiritual hankerings and strivings, is to realise this eternal ‘*Ananda Varta*’ this eternal Message of Bliss, Peace and Salvation that is being sent to us incessantly from all sides by the Divine Being Himself, as well as, by the Universe, His image and soul. The earth and the water, the fire and the air, the ether, no less, all the elements, all the objects, great or small, are constantly calling us to open our hearts, uncover our eyes, stretch our ears, so that we may receive, realize and hear this lofty and magnificent, yet simple and sweet, ‘*Ananda-Varta*’ viz that God, Soul and Matter are one and the same, are in fact, nothing but three sides of the same universal Mass of Peace and Bliss, Purity and Perfection.

Let us, then, have an optimistic outlook on life ; and instead of wasting away our time and energy in vain, narrow, worldly pursuits, let us be constantly up and doing, and fulfil our eternal destiny, viz. *Atmopalabधि*, *Atma-Vikasa*, *Atmonnati*, i. e. Self realisation, Self manifestation, Self-advancement. It is the *Atman* or the Self that alone counts in life ; or, it is we ourselves who are the only makers of our

destiny, the only architects of our Fate. Hence declares the *Bhagavad-Gita*—

“Work out the Salvation of the Self by the Self alone. For, the Self verily is the best Friend of the Self ; again, the Self, verily, is the worst Enemy of the Self”. (*Gita 6-5*).

Let us all undertake a new this *Mata-Vrata* or Great vow of Self-faith, Self-dependence, Self-striving. It is not only in *knowing*, not even in *feeling*, but in constant *doing*, that our salvation lies. Let us take to heart the eternal message of our Holy *Rsis*, and keep to it eternally :—

“One who moves about, gets the honey ; one who moves about, tastes the sweet fruit. Look at the eternal glory of the sun, who, while moving about, never dozes for a moment.

So, only move on ; keep only moving on.

“When one lies down that is the *Kaliyuga* ; when one wakes up, that is the *Dvapara-Yuga* ; when one stands up, that is the *Treta-Yuga* ; and when one begins to move, that is the *Satya-Yuga*.

So, only move on ; keep only moving on !”

(*Aitereya Brahmana*)

May this Holy *Satya-Yuga*, the Age of *Satyam*, *Sivam*, *Sundaram* ; the Age of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, dawn upon us all through our own efforts !

MOTHER ANANDAMAYEE

(By M. M. V.)

I confess I felt somewhat tantalized by the kind and persistent invitation of the Editor of the *Anand Varta* to contribute an article on Mother Anandmayee. Readers may naturally expect a writer to tell who is this unique woman saint, about whom various beliefs are held by devotees and other spiritual savants who have come into contact with her; about her mission; her modes of living and work, and about her teaching.

But I do not find myself competent to write about any of these things. As regards teachings, my mind happens to be cast in a different mould, having received instruction in the rational ways of the mind from other sources. To the abundant rituals and religious ceremonials filling her surroundings I am unfortunately not particularly adapted. Of her mission in the world I do not know. Who she is, I dare not speculate.

What, then, can I write ?

I can only write of what Mother is to me.

The Divine has all the qualities which men attribute to Him according

to their natures and wants; but He has not only those attributes and qualities but has an infinity of attributes and qualities. Every seed derives what it needs from the earth, the sun and the air; but it does not mean that it has known all that there is in the earth, in the sun and in the air.

So, what is it in Mother that calls forth my devotion and draws me so close to her ?

The Divine fulfils Himself in many ways. In a state when the mind was stunned in the process of being knocked inwards from outside, while yet refusing to retreat within, Mother Anandmayee seems to have appeared on the scene to comfort by her compassion and to impart a glimpse of what the poor mind has been after throughout the cycle of time and space.

Indeed, she gives a vision of that "fourth dimension" of Reality, for which the mind would seem to have been throbbing in its long-drawn agony.

One reads and hears of the transcendence of the Divine; but that does not carry one very far. The taste of the sugar-cane consists in the eating thereof.

Mother Anandmayee comes to me as a veritable *Vibhuti* of the Divine Mother, of *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. She comes as a gleam of light in the dark cavern of the mind.

In the game of hide and seek she appears as the heroine.

She gives no teaching to me. The arduous *sadhanas* that her praise-worthy devotees carry out all the time evoke my admiration and even envy, but little practical response from me, if only because perhaps I am *tired* and have little strength to undergo such *sadhanas*.

I do not know her mission.

I do not know who she is.

And yet, she comes to me as a Magnet of Love, drawing even the rustiest steel of my being to Her.

I cannot look forward to any 'wages' of *sadhana*, for I have no assets of *sadhana* to my credit. Yet Mother's Grace bestows upon me a feeling of *kinship* with her, which seems to me to be of a much richer stuff than any fruit that *sadhana* could yield.

To Her 'littlest' infant She beckons—Love, Beauty, Joy.

On such unearned Grace (*अहैतु को कृपा*) and Motherly Love I stake my all. I can be no loser, for that all is the nothing that I am.

I surrender myself—my nothingness to Her, and even She can no longer make me believe that I could be unacceptable to Her because I am in filthy rags. She may remain hidden from me for a while, but not Her quality of Mercy !

What more shall I say ? Let me conclude with the classical prayer which a great one seems to have composed for me ; as it were :

न मंत्रं नो यत्र तदपि च न जाने स्तुतिमहो
न चाह्वानं ध्यानं तदपि च न जाने स्तुतिकथाः ।
न जाने मुद्रास्ते तदपि च न जाने विलपनं
परं जाने मातस्त्वदनुसरणं क्लेशहरणम् ॥

(Alas, I do not know either Thy Mantra or Yantra nor songs of praise to Thee, nor how to welcome Thee or meditate upon Thee ; neither do I know words of praise to Thee, nor Thy Mudra, nor how to inform Thee of my distress ; but this much I know, O Mother, that to take refuge in Thee is to destroy all my miseries.)

मत्समः पातकी नास्ति
पापघ्नी त्वत्समा नहि ।
एवं ज्ञात्वा महादेवि
यथायोग्यं तथा कुरु ॥

(There is not such a sinner like me, neither such a destroyer of sins as Thou. O Mahadevi, having known all this do as Thou thinkest fit.)

DIARY LEAVES

By

ATMANANDA

(12)

During Mataji's stay at Kishenpur and Hardwar in April 1957, an American lady asked a number of questions of general interest. These questions and the gist of Mataji's answers were taken down afterwards from memory.

Question : When waking in the morning I feel near God ; but by the time I have got up and sat down for meditation this mood has evaporated to a certain extent. Is it all right to meditate lying down ?

Mataji : When you learn something by heart it is irrelevant in what position you do so. Some people learn better while sitting, some while lying down and others while walking up and down. If you find it easy to keep your mind on God while lying, you may do so, lying straight. But the best position for meditation is to sit straight and absolutely still in the posture which is most comfortable for any particular person.

Question : Is it good to sleep in the day ?

Mataji : Ordinarily life is in any case a kind of sleep from which one has to wake up ; it is therefore good to keep awake as much as possible. Brahmacharis and Sadhus are not

allowed ever to sleep during the day. As one progresses in one's meditation one needs less and less sleep. The ordinary person contacts his Self in deep sleep only, while at all other times he is separated from it. This contact is unconscious, yes, it is there and this makes life bearable. Therefore sleep is absolutely necessary for the average individual. The aim of all *sadhana* is to become fully conscious of one's Self, when this has been accomplished a state has been attained which transcends both sleep and what is commonly called waking.

In sleep the body rests and recuperates, this is why people are given sleeping draughts when they are ill. When you are very interested in something you do not feel sleepy, you are able to stay up till late at night, but afterwards you get a reaction and have to make up for lost sleep. When you become really interested in the Quest of God or Truth you will find ever greater joy in meditation and need less and less sleep. The time of sleeping should be reduced gradually, but not forcibly.

The necessity of sleep has to decrease spontaneously, otherwise one will feel tired and be unable to do one's work well. However by taking say 10 minutes off one's 6 hours of sleep there will be no adverse effect. The need of sleep depends to a certain degree on one's state of health and on the quality and quantity of one's food.

Question : Many people beg out of habit even when they are not really in need. Should one give to such beggars ?

Mataji : If one happens to know that they are not in need one should definitely not give. For if they misuse the gift part of the evil results will have to be borne by the donor. Sometimes one feels intuitively whether a beggar is in need or not, but by no means always. Often there is no way of finding out. In such cases one should give with the thought that it is God in that guise who is asking for alms. When giving with this attitude no evil consequences for oneself will follow one's gift.

Question : If a person lives alone and therefore feels that he or she should keep a pet dog or cat, will it be a help, since every creature is essentially God in one shape, or will on the contrary one's affection be directed outwards instead of turning towards God ?

Mataji : If someone has to live alone and wishes to keep a watch dog there is no harm, for he is not likely

to get attached to the animal. But if he keeps it as a pet and is all the time busy looking after it, it will disturb his meditation. What one thinks about, that one becomes. Already you are bound to attend to your own physical needs, by taking on a pet you will only multiply your material duties.

This reminds me of a story, although it is not quite to the point : "A sadhaka complained to his Guru that he was quite incapable of concentrating on his meditation. The Guru tried in vain all sorts of devices. Finally he asked the disciple : 'Whom do you love most ?' 'My buffalo,' was the reply. 'Very well', said, the Guru, 'sit down and concentrate on the buffalo.' The disciple arranged for the animal's food and drink and then locked himself into his room. To engage himself in the contemplation of his beloved buffalo was easy enough for him and he continued to do so until he forgot everything else and become absorbed in *Dhyan*. The next day the Guru came to see how the disciple was faring, but could not find him anywhere. He called his name several times but the disciple did not hear. After much calling and knocking he was at last roused from his meditation. 'Open the door and come outside,' shouted the Guru. 'How am I to get out'

replied the disciple, 'my horns won't go through door!' 'You see, What you think about that you become. This is why it is said that one should meditate on the Self (*Atma*) rather than on any particular form. Nevertheless if there is no other means of concentrating, this also may be a way. The disciple having learnt one-pointed concentration, later was able to go beyond the form of the buffalo and attained to real Union.

Another incident was reported to me some years ago. A European lady had been deserted by her husband whom she loved dearly. She found it impossible to get over the loss of him and in a state of acute mental distress approached a saint with the request to teach her how to forget her sorrow. The saint advised her to sit before her husband's photo and contemplate it with the idea that it was an image of God. The lady did as had been suggested to her and got much solace from her meditation, as she felt closer and closer united with her husband's soul while the physical separation seemed to matter less and less. After a few years her husband repented of his behaviour and returned to her. But the woman refused to live with him and asked him to leave her again. She had contacted something real that remained with her always and consequently lost her attachment to

the physical form which comes and goes.

Question : I still don't know whether to take on a pet animal or not ?

Mataji : Practise meditation for some time and see how you feel. Rather than caring for a dog or cat turn your thoughts to the Divine.

Question : Is it necessary for grown-ups to drink milk ?

Mataji : Milk and ghi are necessary not only for children but also for grown-ups; old people become like children again when their teeth fall out, so they need milk as a matter of course,

Question . Is it good to take buffalo's milk ?

Mataji : You worship Gopal, don't you ? Gopal was a cowherd not a buffaloherd. Cow's milk and milk products are best.

Question : A buffalo is a lazy heavy animal. Are these qualities, absorbed into man when he drinks its milk ?

Mataji : Certainly, these qualities will be communicated to those who drink the milk.

Question : In India the custom is for parents to arrange for their children's marriages; in the west young people choose their own partners. Which is the better method ?

Someone from the audience : For India, arranged marriage is more suitable and for the West to choose for oneself.

Mataji : Parents love their children and are eager to see them happy ;

besides they have the advantage of many years of experience of the *Grihashashrama*. Young people are likely to be deluded by mere physical attraction which is temporary. Love marriages are therefore often a failure. Marriage that is arranged by wise parents is best.

Question : Sometimes young people are being married who mix like oil and water. How can the parents know beforehand whether this will not be the case especially when the bride and bride-groom have never even met before the wedding ?

Mataji : Parents have a very good chance of knowing intuitively what is right for their children and they will think very carefully before deciding on their child's husband or wife, and children (in India at least) have great faith that whatever their parents do is for their best. Moreover the *mantra* which is pronounced at the wedding to unite them and the ceremony itself establish a bond between the couple. Their union is consecrated to god and the wife is called the husband's *sahadharmini*. Their life together is meant to help them towards the goal of human life which is Self-realization. If they see each other for the first time during the ceremony after their union has been consecrated, this will be an aid to their living the *Grihashashrama* in the right spirit. If on the other hand they have seen each other beforehand, they

have as it were had a foretaste of mutual enjoyment, before their union has been sanctified before God. The ideal marriage which in our days can hardly be found at all is when after one or two sons and daughters have been born, husband and wife adopt the *Vanaprashashrama* and live together like brother and sister or father and daughter. The Rishis of ancient times were married and had children. They lived as what is called 'married Brahmacharies'. In our times there are quite a number of unmarried Brahmacharies, but married Brahmacharies' are very exceptional indeed.

Question : If one has surrendered to God completely, is it right to take legal action in case of a misappropriation of one's possessions ?

Mataji : The fact that you ask whether you should go to law court shows that you should do so. At the moment you probably feel that it would be nicer not to take any action, but later when you may be in need of what has been taken away you will regret that you kept quiet and it will worry you. But when seeking your right you should do it in a strictly lawful way, always speaking the truth etc. If you had really surrendered to God completely you would never ask such a question.

Question : Some people say that a thief steals only from a thief. Surely, I am not a thief.

Mataji: When some one secretly removes what belongs to you, you call him a thief. But there is a stage of spiritual achievement where God is perceived in all forms and actions. What then will be the significance of "I" and "mine"? Find out who you are and what belongs to you! Then when someone removes anything without your knowledge you will not feel that it has been stolen. If there

is only ONE ATMA, how can there be a thief.

There is another state where one may say such and such a person is a thief, without judgment and without resentment, for at the same time one will also see that it is the ONE who expresses in countless ways, that God's hand is in everything that happens.

SRI MATA

(Miss Monika Schlatholter)

O Mother, surely Thou art greatest,
Of all that's living Thou art best—
Thou art Divine, O give Thy blessing!
Render us Peace in times of warring.

O Ma, I'll never know Thy real greatness
Infinite Depth!—Yet I kneel in weakness
At Thy Holy feet: I seek Thy Grace—
And cry again: give Peace to our race!
Once, O only once I long to be
Within Thy healing presence, Mataji!
One thought of thee alone brings happiness,
Feeling Thy LOVE is soothing in distress.
O may this bleeding world for long be blest
With Mother's sacred Feet on it to rest.
Through Ma we may reach our final goal

at last

Sustained by motherly Love poured out on us.

MATRI-LILA

(February—April, 1957)

On January 31st Mataji left Varanasi, reaching Bombay on February 1st. There She stayed quietly at Vile Parle till February 12th. Only once She went out to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Sadhubela Ashram, which was held at the Vallabbai Stadium. On February 13th She arrived in Ahmedabad leaving again on the 15th morning and alighting at Jaipur late that night. Two days later She proceeded to Kuchaman where the Raja Sahib of Kuchaman, an old devotee of Ma had invited Her. She was given a royal reception here and even guns were fired in Her honour. At Jaipur Shree Ma and Party were the guests of Shri Madan Mohan Varma, who had made arrangements for their stay at the *ashrama* of the late Swami Lachhi Ram Ji—a renowned Vaidya of Jaipur and a *yogi*. The *ashrama* is dedicated to the DADU line of saints, and is used only for select religious purposes. It is situated in a large garden, amidst peaceful surroundings. Mother's stay in Jaipur, though all too short, enabled many a devotee to have her *darshan* and enjoy Her holy *satsang*. There used to be devotional songs and *kirtan* in the evening, followed by a gathering of spiritual aspirants in Mother's room, at which Mother was pleased to favour those present with her utterances full of love and wisdom. She was also pleased to grant interviews to individual aspirants and enquirers.

At the same time, Pujya Hari Baba and his *Ras* and *kirtan* parties had also come to Jaipur from Vrindaban, a couple of days earlier, to join Shri Ma. *Kirtan*, *satsang* and *Ras* used to be held at Shri Varma's residence (where Shri Hari Baba and his party were staying) both in the morning and the afternoon, which Mother graced by her presence both the times. One morning *Ras* was also celebrated at Poddar Park (residence of Seth Ram Nath Poddar), which too Mother graced by her presence.

Jaipur indeed felt blessed by Mother's visit. Many persons still feel having been simply *charmed* by the benediction of Mother's *darshan* and *satsang*. And many who could not get news of Mother's visit in time have since expressed a feeling of tantalization | Jaipur people hope that Mother will be blessing Jaipur again with her visit at no distant time. Then She visited Jodhpur and after another few hours at Kuchaman travelled to Vrindaban reaching there on the morning of the 24th February. Several people from Jaipur and Kuchman followed Her to Vrindaban. Bhaktas arrived in ever increasing number from Varanasi, Calcutta, Allahabad, Kanpur, Delhi, Bombay, Ahmedabad and other places to attend the Shiva Ratri and Holi festivals and the Bhagavata Saptaha that was held in between.

The Vrindaban Ashram has recently

been enlarged by two beautifully designed and well-planned buildings. The one is a hall called *Bhagavata Bhavan*, measuring 76 square feet, adjoining the two temples that are dedicated to Shiva and to Nitai-Gouranga respectively. The cost of the hall has been donated by a Rani In memory of her deceased husband. It is open practically on all sides supported by pillars with a large room on one side which serves as a dressing-room when the *Rasa Lila* or other dramatic performances are staged and otherwise as a store-room. Just outside of it there is a large glass cupboard in which the *Srimad Bhagavata* is being permanently kept. Every day throughout the year portions of the *Bhagavata* will be read out in the hall and on every fullmoon night '*Rasa Lila*' will be performed there. Beneath the hall a number of rooms that are partly below ground level have been constructed, which can accommodate many guests and will be especially useful in the heat of summer.

The second new building is a guest house called '*Gita Bhavan*', donated by another royal widow. It is situated between the main Ashram and the entrance of the compound. So far it consists of one storey as well as underground rooms; a second storey is to be added as soon as funds permit. One room of *Gita Bhavan* has been set apart for the daily reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *satsang* in general. The ceremonial opening of both buildings took place on the 27th February, *Shiva-Ratri* day early morning in Mataji's presence.

Shiva Ratri was celebrated in the beautiful new hall in the usual way

by four *Fujas* throughout the night and *Kirtan* in between. *Siva-Ratri* is always a very special occasion of an extraordinarily grave dignity and a concentrated pervading peace that makes an indelible impression on all present. Mataji remained in the hall from about 6 p. m. to 4 a. m. Some beautiful, soft and delicate songs sung by a few South Indian ladies that had come from Delhi especially to spend that holy night in Mataji's blissful presence, gave their added charm to the festival.

From March 3rd to 10th a *Bhagavata Saptaha* on a most unusual scale was held, followed by *Havan* on the 11th. In fact two *Bhagavata Saptahas* were going on simultaneously: one in the large hall where 108 pandits clad in bright orange silk shawls chanted the *Bhagavata* in Sanskrit every morning for 3-4 hours, followed by explanatory discourses in Hindi in the afternoon and another reading in the *Gita-Bhavan* followed by Bengali discourses. In both places *Kirtan* was sung right through the interval at midday and again after the *Arati* in the evening. Apart from the large number of guests who had come from outside, visitors from Vrindavan and Mathura assembled daily during the whole of the week. But in that enormous hall there was ample space for all. Only on the evenings when the *Rasa Lila* or similar dramatic performances were staged even the hall proved inadequate.

Sri Hari Babaji Maharaj's birthday falls on Holi; but it was celebrated in our Ashram a day earlier in great style in the packed hall. The whole Ashram compound had been decorated with flags and garlands and sweets were distributed to all present.

On *Holi* morning, March 15th, there was once more a ceremony to install the holy scriptures in their respective permanent places. This time the *Gita* was recited 108 times, not by Pandits but by about 55 ashramites and guests, a few of them taking two or even three turns. Mataji was in and out of *Gita-Bhavan* distributing garlands, fruits and sweets and encouraging the readers who had spread out all over the veranda as well as the room. Before midday the joyous task of chanting the *Gita* 108 times had been accomplished and Mataji was begged to start the *Holi* play. Since Her health was not very good at the time She just sat in the hall in front of a large bucket with coloured water squirting a few shots on each one of the dense crowd that surrounded Her and wished to receive Her blessing in this way. Throughout the day very lively and enthusiastic *Kirtan* was being kept up.

During the whole of Mataji's sojourn of three weeks perpetual meditation was sustained day and night, people taking turns of one or two hours each.

On March 17th Mataji left for Modinagar and every-body dispersed. By the evening the Ashram seemed deserted with only the few permanent residents remaining behind. Modinagar is an industrial town about 20 miles from Delhi on the way to Meerut. Mr. Modi, the industrialist after whom the town has been named, had arranged for a *Nama Yajna*, that is perpetual *Kirtan* without a break for a whole week. Mataji, Sri Haribabaji Maharaj and Sri Krishnananda Avadhutaji had accepted his invitation to be present throughout the week. Ela-

borate arrangements had been made to ensure the comforts of all guests. But untimely rain and heavy thunderstorms played havoc with pandals and tents. In spite of the bad weather very many visitors kept on coming from Delhi and other places and the atmosphere of abounding joy could not be damped by the inclemency of the elements. The *Nama Yajna* was brought to a successful completion.

On March 25th Mataji proceeded to Hapur and from there to Vindhya-chal where She arrived on the 26th late at night.

On April 1st She motored to Varanasi where Vasanti Puja was celebrated from the 6th to the 9th. Mataji however left on the 8th (*Ashtami* day) for Barabanki where She attended a function on the 9th, reaching Dehradun on the 10th morning.

At Dehradun there are four Sri Anandamayi Ashrams, two at Raipur near the Shiva temple where Mataji stayed for several months with Bhola-nathji and Bhaiji when She left Bengal for the first time in 1932, and two at Kishenpur on the road to Mussoorie. This time Mataji during the first few days of Her visit chose to reside at 'Kalyanvan' which is about three furlongs further up than the older Kishenpur Ashram. 'Kalyanvan' was originally intended to become the site of the 'Vidyapith', the Boy's School for Brahmacharis run by the Sri Sri Anandamayi Sangha at Almora. Instead of this it has developed into a beautiful fruit and flower garden. It is a quiet, secluded spot with a charming view of the Mussoorie Hills. Usually when Mataji comes to Kishenpur the two cottages at Kalyanvan are occupied by Sannyasis and a few Brahmacharies.

Last year a large platform was built in front of the upper cottage. There Mataji would sit or walk about in the cool of evening, people coming from all over Dehradun and surroundings for Her Darshan amongst roses and jasmynes. Sometimes She was in a communicative mood and would reply to questions or tell stories, one after another till it got dark and everyone had to hurry back either homes or to the main Ashram for the evening Kirtan.

* * * *

On April 13th 1939, *chaitre Sankranti*, which is the New Year's Eve of the Bengali year, Srimati Mokshada Sundary Bhattacharya, Mataji's mother lovingly called 'Didima' by all the thousands of Mataji's children was initiated into Saunyasa by Mahamandaleswar Sri Mangalananda Giri Maharaj at Hardwar and thence became Swami Muktananda Giri. Last year for the first time this happy and auspicious event was celebrated solemnly at the Varanasi Ashram by a full programme of Kirtan, Arati, the reading of Scriptures etc. This year the celebration was to be held once more at Varanasi, when towards the end of Mataji's stay at Vrindaban it was decided to observe it at Kishenpur for the convenience of Giriji's devoted disciples at Dehradun. Gurupriya Devi with a few others had already gone to Kishenpur from Vrindaban on March 17th and when Mataji left Modinagar 8 days later a number of Sannyasis & Brahmacharis joined Gurupriya Devi at Kishenpur and readily undertook to help with the preparations, for the festivities were to be on a much larger scale than in the previous year. In fact a pre-

liminary function was already held at Varanasi on the 5th of April. Invitations were printed and an elaborate provisional programme drawn up starting from 4-30 a.m. on the 13th and continuing without a break till 6 a. m. on the 14th. Until almost the last moment it was quite uncertain whether it would be possible to attract enough experienced singers to keep up the long hours of Kirtan and whether the co-operation of some learned Mahatmas could be secured who would deliver talks worthy of the occasion. Moreover some Sannyasis were to be entertained with choice food and presents and a feast given to all who cared to be present. Only during the very last days before the function, funds began to pour in abundantly, justifying to the full the faith of the disciples. Encouraged by Mataji who often stresses the importance of devotion and complete surrender to the Guru as God, they felt that a celebration in honour of their Guru must needs be crowned with success. Didima herself, who by nature is extremely shy and reserved and dislikes nothing in the world as much as she does to be the centre of attention, seemed to feel visibly uneasy at the thought of a big celebration in her honour. But Mataji said : " The festival has nothing to do with Didima. Giriji's becoming a Sannyasi will be commemorated by her disciples, that is all". It was to be taken completely impersonally.

Actually the whole day and night passed in such harmony and deep joy, one item of the programme spontaneously following another one could not help feeling interested and inspired. Some visitors who had come only out

of politeness and intended to stay just for a short while could not tear themselves away and remained for hours together and many sat up all night for Kirtan.

The whole Ashram including the garden and the gate had been gaily and tastefully decorated and during the night there was a blare of coloured lights that could be seen from a considerable distance. On the 12th evening two Sannyasis belonging to the Ashram were sent to Hardwar and Rishikesh to invite several Mahatmas to grace the function with their presence and enlighten the audience with their discourses. Three of them responded, namely Mandaleswar Sri Sri 108 Maheshwarananda Maharaj from Bombay, Sri Sukhadevanandji of *Paramarthaniketan* at Rishikesh and Sri Krishnananda Avadhutaji. They each chose their own time and a car was therefore put at the disposal of each of the Mahatmas.

Punctually at 4-30 a.m. the Kirtan started with a circumambulation of the Ashram. At about 8 a.m. every one present went to 'Kalyanvan' and Didima. Mataji and Didi were taken in procession to the Ashram in a car decorated with gerna coloured cloth, a tigerskin and garlands. Even the police band had been called for the occasion. They marched in front followed by bhaktas and disciples who sang. "Satyam Jnanam Anan am Brahman" all the way, surrounding the car which was driven at walking speed by the Raja of Amb. The traditional reading of portions from Gita, Upanishad etc. was followed by a talk by Sree Sukhadevanandaji Maharaj. He as well as the Mandaleswar and the Avadhutji who spoke

in the afternoon, enlarged on the significance of Sannyasis, and gave instances from the Scriptures of enlightened women Sannyasis, such as Gargi and Bak mentioned in the *Durga Sapt Shati*. Opinions among learned men vary as to whether women are entitled to take Sannyasa. It was pointed out that Sannyas is a state in which the question of a person's sex cannot arise. Sannyasa means complete renunciation of everything that is fleeting; this is possible only for one who has had at least a glimpse of real Knowledge, a taste of Divine Joy, which automatically evokes *Vairagya*, indifference to worldly pleasures and enticements, for in the Light of Reality those things are felt to be savourless and unalluring. A true Sannyasi is desireless because the one thing in which he is interested is *Brahmvidya*, the Knowledge of the Supreme. Therefore the question whether he happens to be a man or a woman does not arise. Unaffected by pleasure and pain, heat and cold, praise and blame, intent only on the Realization of the One in every being and beyond all beings, he naturally becomes an example, a guide, a beacon light to those who are stumbling and groping in the dark. This was the significance of the function and its purpose to bring it home to us that we all are travellers on the Path of Immortality. By various ways and methods Mataji keeps on reminding us of our Divine calling. Indeed after a day and a night spent in this intense, concentrated atmosphere, suffused by a heavenly bliss, our petty worries, cares and quarrels seem out of proportion; we have been lifted into happier, clearer and lighter sphere.

To pay homage to Didima's outstanding kindness and concern for all who come within her orb, her disciples had decided that everyone who came to the Ashram on that day, without exception or distinction should be asked to partake of the very delicious meal served to all alike from about 12 p.m. to 8 or 9 p.m. The Swamis of the Sri Rama Krishna Mission at Kishenpur, many neighbours and all bhaktas of Dehradun had been invited for the feast.

The next day, as a sequel to the celebration, the inhabitants, men women and children, of two villages near the Ashram were entertained to two maunds of '*khichuri*' with an adequate quantity of vegetables and curds.

The all-night-Kirtan was brought to its happy close when, at about 7 a.m. on April 14th, all present went to *Kalyanvan* to offer flowers at Mataji's feet and receive Her Blessing for the New year. That night Sri Giriji's disciples (several of them are Sannyasi) assembled in Mataji's room

and She told them that they were an '*Ananda Vardhana Sabha*', that is association for the promotion of real Joy, the Joy that is eternal, that is Beyond the opposites of happiness and sorrow and comes with the realization of the *Brahman*, of THAT which IS. Unattached and without craving for anything of this world or the next the *Sannyasi* has to pursue the knowledge of the Absolute and do service wherever required, remembering that it is the Supreme who is served in every creature. Didima added that infinite patience was the virtue that is the most beautiful adornment of every Sannyasi.

Giriji's Sannyasa Utsava was celebrated also at the Ashrams in Varanasi, Vrindaban, Delhi and Rajgriha.

Mataji remained in Dehradun till April 25th when She motored to Haridwar. From there She went on to Vrindaban on the 27th leaving again on the 29th for Ahmedabad where Her 62nd birthday will be celebrated from May 2nd to 17th. A *Bhagwata Saptaha* will form part of the celebration.

NOTES & COMMENTS

On behalf of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi and the 62nd Birthday Celebration Committee, Ahmedabad, we have great pleasure in announcing that the 62nd Birthday Celebration of Shree Shree Anandamaye Ma will be observed from May 2-17, 1957 at Ahmedabad according to the programme given below :

At the premises of Sri Kanti Bhai Munshaw, Sarkhaj Road, Ahmedabad-7.

Phone - 7227.

2nd May 1957.
(3rd May according
to English Calendar
at about 3-30 A. M.)

Beginning of the celebration including Puja of
Mother, Akhanda Japa etc.

11th to 16th May '57
Daily morning 8 to
11-30 a. m. and after
noon 3 to 7-30 p.m.

Bhajan, Mother's Puja, Chandi Path Parayan and
Kirtan by Sri 108 Hari Babaji Maharaj and religious
discourses by eminent Mahatmas and learned scholars.

16th May 1957
(17th according to
English Calendar at
about 3-30 A.M.)

Tithi Puja of Mother.

At the premises of Sri Mukund Madhav Thakore, B.A., LL. B., Principal,
Law College, Ahmedabad, "Ananda Lahari," Ambavadi, Ellis Bridge,
Ahmedabad.

2nd May to 9th May
1957, Daily morning
8 to 11-30 a. m. and
after-noon 3 to 7-30
p. m.

Bhagawat Saptah Samuha Parayan and religious
discourses by eminent Mahatmas and learned scholars.

10th May 1957.

Bhagawat Saptah Havan and Purnabuti.