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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 time. )*

129.

Nobody can possibly be superior to God. Whatever is done, is done by Him Himself. No one else has the power to do anything, bear this in mind. Depend upon God. So long as you feel that someone may do something that may harm you, practise the repetition of the Name of your Beloved (*Ishta*) a little more often than you would do otherwise. To place your reliance on your *Ishta* is the one thing to be done under all circumstances.

130.

Such is the nature of this world. Generally speaking people are born in order to enjoy and suffer the fruits of their past actions. When desires linger one has to come into the world, to have them fulfilled. The world, its happiness and enjoyments are fleeting ; consequently all kinds of sorrows and troubles come in their wake and confuse the mind. This is why great saints, sages and saviours ever point out the path that leads through desirelessness to Eternal Bliss. The quest for THAT which is Eternal is indeed man's duty. He should

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\* The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in *Ananda Varta*, Vol. VI, No. 2, p. 81.

direct his yearning towards the realization of the state in which he cannot be bewildered anymore by worldly suffering. In the traveller's inn (which this world is) everyone has to stay only for the short time that has been assigned to him. It is the One who appears in the guise of the world. He is making you serve Him in this manner. Keep wide awake ;—in every living being there is Shiva and in every woman Gauri. Remembering that everyone is but an expression of THAT be ever engaged in service. It is only natural that one's mind should wander to the needs of one's loved-ones, but one must forcibly pull one's thoughts away and contemplate the Lord's Lotus feet. By so doing your loved-ones will find peace and so will you yourself, bear this in mind.

131.

Since you are living the lives of *sadhus*, you should try to ignore the cold as much as possible. If one moves about and takes exercise one feels it rather less. By leading a strictly regulated life one becomes firmly anchored on the spiritual path and then one does not have to suffer so much. You might exert yourselves a little more in this direction. If the cold is extreme, do not bathe early morning, but later in the day; on rising from sleep change your clothes, sprinkle some Ganges water on your body and then proceed with your morning worship (*sandhya* and other spiritual exercises). Brahmacharis must completely shun sarcasm and frivolous jokes. It is therefore important to observe silence as much as possible. Brahmacharis are forbidden to sleep during the day. Rising early, they should take great pains not to fall asleep during the day. If for a prolonged period of time one makes a special effort in this direction, the habit will be established. Do not lose courage and be persevering in your *sadhana*.

132.

Write to the father some of this little girl's unconventional talk: "This small child (Mataji) is ever near her father. The mind's agony, listening to people's talk and speaking oneself—all happens within oneself. Near and far are also but within oneself. You should not only be a *sadhaka* at the time of your

spiritual exercises—although everything is contained in everything. The capacity for uninterrupted *sadhana* is also potentially in oneself: it will be discovered by wise discrimination. One should continuously be immersed in the particular *sadhana* which will enable one to become possessed of the Supreme Treasure which is by its very nature one's own. At all times it is the Self that plays within Itself as ego and as intelligence. Use the present with great skill. The One who manifests in the (impure) actions of the I-ness, He Himself also appears in Pure Action. In order that this may be revealed, intelligence becomes aware of stability in motion, where in the movement of Self-action wise discrimination should realize its own true Nature. When this happens then, in stupidity as well as wisdom, He is recognized, the One who becomes reavealed, who IS. He is infinite and also with end. Towards Him one should try to advance steadily without ever halting, having become free from obstacles and obstructions. When one has entered the *stream* any form that is perceived by the purified mind and intelligence may be accepted as an experience on the way to Self-awareness.

When one has become still, that is to say when one has become established in a state of tranquillity, then the activity of nature which continues at every moment in sleep and in waking and is part of the movement of the pilgrimage from birth to death, this and the thinking mind become caught in that Stream and eternally remain floating in it. Ever to keep the mind poised in the Self, wide awake in the current of Reality, where the Unfathomable, the One without end is ever revealed in His Infinity—this must, with the intensity of a possession, be your one and constant endeavour.

133.

Trading\* (giving something in exchange for something else) means that deliverance has not yet come. This world is the place of trading. Try to cross to the other shore. Your one and only work is the contemplation of the Lord, where all affliction is conquered and sorrow finds its end.

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\* Here Mataji uses a play upon words which cannot be rendered into English. *Bepar*=trading, business; *be*-without and *par hona*=to be delivered.

## MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(27)\*

*Mataji* : Someone received a *mantra* in a dream : he had a vision of some great Being who gave him a *mantra* or rather he had a vision of the *mantra*. On waking the experience of the *mantra* remained with him pure and simple—in fact in the waking state also he continued to be under the influence of his vision. With what consequence ? A dilemma of many day's standing was dissolved ; he became free from conflict and began to live in this transformed state of mind. He had no more wish to take initiation. Is it necessary even for a person in this condition to accept initiation again in the physical ?

*A sadhaka* : Depending on the capacity and the spiritual state (*adhikara*) of the aspirant it may or may not be necessary.

*Mataji* : That is to say not everything is the same for everybody. Let me relate someone's story. I shall not disclose his name. He had taken *Sannyasa* according to the proper rites (*viraja homa*), as prescribed by the Shastras, and had adopted the staff of the homeless wanderer. But no realization or spiritual experience of any kind was vouchsafed to him. In his intense despair he finally gave up his pilgrim's staff and turned into a kind of sceptic. He was so profoundly depressed, he had no desire even to move his limbs. Then suddenly one day he had an experience—he realized : "All is contained within myself." His despondency vanished together with his suffering.

When after having abandoned the order of *Sannyasa* and all his spiritual practices he had a realization of such a high order, should it still have been necessary for him to take initiation again ? It does of course also happen that someone even after receiving a *mantra* in a dream, takes initiation again in the waking-state.

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\* The Bengali original and its Hindi translation appeared in *Ananda Varta* Vol. VI/No. 2, page 84.

Many come to this body (Mataji) saying : "Whether I take *Diksha* depends on what you advise. If you tell me to take initiation I am willing to do so ; but if you say not to, I shall also obey." This is how they put it, is it not ? Not all can be given the same reply ; some may perhaps have been told : "So long as you do not feel the urge from within, do not take initiation. Just continue to practise the *mantra* received in your dream." To others it may, on the contrary, have been suggested that they should take initiation once more in the physical from someone else in whom they had faith.

*A sadhaka* : Initiation takes place on subtler levels, it is not merely achieved by the sound of pronouncing a *mantra*. Similarly initiation received in the dream-state occurs on subtler planes beyond the senses. Therefore in such a case should the necessity to take *Diksha* in the physical still exist ?

*Mataji* : The action of the initiation is instantaneous, outwardly as well as inwardly. Everything is already contained within you. Solely in order that this fact may be revealed, in order that the outer and the inner may merge into one, someone has in the physical perhaps given his Blessing. After initiation some may by practising *sadhana* attain to perfection, while others may not reach anywhere and die.

From the standpoint of the world, of the waking-state, it may be said just as a sense of fulfilment is experienced when receiving initiation in the physical, it may be quite similar if it happens in a dream, and if this feeling of satisfaction is there, you will say. "There is no need for me to take initiation again." Thus initiation may have the same result if it has occurred in the dream-state as it would have if received in the physical. Why then, in such a case should the necessity for taking initiation in the physical still exist ?

*A sadhaka* : In other words, one's own feeling of satisfaction signifies that the initiation has really taken place ?

*Mataji* : No, it is not merely a matter of satisfaction. Deep within a 'touch' is felt that makes one understand that there is no further need for initiation. At this stage if there be any special person whom one wishes to consult, one may be made to understand by that person. Needless to say that this person must be quite impartial and able to explain the real import of one's

experience. It is of course difficult to judge whether a person has the capacity to do so. Generally speaking, one may find that in some cases people only outwardly occupy an elevated spiritual position. However if the aspirant is completely sincere and has become as pure as gold, he will himself come to understand in time (whether his experience has been genuine.)

The transmission of power that constitutes the initiation, it is this imparting of power which is the important factor whether the Guru's power is revealed in a dream or in the waking state. If the manifestation of power has actually taken place then the need for an external giving does not exist anymore.

*A sadhaka* : What is the sign of this ?

*Mataji* : Having been blessed with this power inwardly, even if to begin with a sense of its lack is still felt, this will disappear as one progresses. It depends on various factors working together. In some cases for instance the power may not have been felt inwardly, but later one becomes aware of it. Or else the realization of it may grow only little by little gradually—this also is a possibility. Then again the result of the initiation may not be felt either at once nor even at the close of a long life. On the other hand one may find someone transformed immediately by virtue of the initiation : its action has in this case borne fruit instantly. If this be so, there will of course be no problem. But even where no effect of the initiation is noticeable for a very long time, even then the power is undoubtedly acting within.

Concerning the dedication\* of one's japa ( to one's *Ishta* ) Mataji said : "After doing japa one should dedicate it to the Object of one's worship. If this is not done and it is stored up by oneself, there is fear of its being lost since one is not aware of the great value of what is in one's keeping. Just

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\* The Shastras insist that japa, like every other similar act of merit, should be performed in a spirit of dedication and that its fruits, however imperceptible which under the law of causality would inevitably follow, should be immediately offered to the *Ishta* (Beloved). The idea is that these fruits when accumulated from day to-day will be integrated in due course and reveal Siddhi or Perfection. This is possible only when the fruits are dedicated to the *Ishta* for safe custody as it were and not stored up within oneself in a selfish mood. In the latter case the evil acts and thoughts of the *Sadhaka* are likely to act adversely on them and neutralise their beneficial effect.



as when a priceless jewel is left in a small child's custody ; not understanding how precious it is, he may throw the treasure away. Even by keeping the japa stored up oneself one will also gain something, but the full benefit of its accumulation cannot be reaped in this way. The whole and entire fruit of the *japa* that is obtained by dedicating it to the Supreme Object of one's devotion cannot be had if one keeps it stored up within oneself. For this reason *japa* should be offered (to one's *Ishta*).

When a child receives something, he brings it to his mother, for he does not know the value of what he has received. No sooner does the mother see it, than she understands how invaluable it is. She therefore takes it at once from the child's hand and puts it safely away. But when the boy has grown up and learnt to understand, then his mother returns the precious object to him, saying : "I have preserved your treasure for you, now take it back."

When one has acquired the capacity (*adhikara*) necessary for it, that which could not be understood formerly is fully grasped. With age and wisdom understanding comes in its fulness. By regularly offering one's *japa* to one's *Ishta*, slowly and gradually light comes : what is the Name and He whose name it is ? Who am I ? What does Self-realization signify ? When all this is revealed then the purpose of one's japa has been wholly fulfilled. Nobody can foretell at what particular instant this may occur, therefore ever continue with your *sadhana*.

Infinite are the *sadhanas*, infinite the spiritual experiences, infinite is manifestation—and yet He is unmanifest. By practising *japa* one proceeds along one's own line of approach. Why did I use the term "infinite" ? The leaves of a tree are infinite in number and although they are all of the same general pattern, yet there are countless changes within that pattern. Viewed from this angle also variety is infinite. Finally, when enlightenment occurs, this will be the end and at that very instant He will be revealed in the midst of endless variety. Just as the seed is all right and the boughs and branches are all right, there is still infinity in everything. Similarly in the field of *sadhana* also everything is infinite. As one goes on and on practising a prescribed number of repetitions of *japa*, at some moment or other no one knows when the fire will be set ablaze. Fire exists everywhere at all times, only one

cannot tell at what instant the friction will kindle a flame. Therefore be ever prepared ! Of course some Yogis may be able to state after how many repetitions of a Name or Mantra Realization will come.

For this reason engage in *japa*. It will be fully preserved for you as if kept safely with your mother. The moment may come any time when you will realize the many in the One and the One in the many. When will the number of repetitions be completed and what will then be found ? That the Name and the One whose name it is are indivisible ; thus what you have offered will come back to you (as the Realization of Him whose Name you repeated.),

*A sadhaka* : Suppose the *japa* is not offered to the Guru but kept by oneself, will its fruit be lost ?

*Mataji* : If it is the Guru's instruction not to offer the *japa*, it will be in his hands even so—for did one not act according to this order ? He may bring it to fulfilment either by storing it up himself or by leaving it to the disciple. He alone knows how it will be brought to completion. Moreover nothing whatsoever is altogether lost. If *japa* has been practised continuously it is bound to bear fruit some day. But on the other hand it may also be fruitless—if for instance the *mantra* is incorrect or when the *japa* is not done according to its inherent rules—no possibility can be entirely excluded.

It may be found that some one practises *japa* and austerities with faith and regularity and yet there is no response. In deep despair he drops all his practices. The agony of his suffering will not let him either sleep or eat. Here his eagerness is so great although he has abandoned all effort ; if he is completely singleminded in his thirst for Enlightenment—it must come then and there.

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# WORDS OF INSPIRATION

*Swami Ramdas*

God's name is a wonderful charm that did away my darkness and pain and brought me the full blaze of light and joy. In other words, the Name granted me the awareness of eternal Truth and joy. Now for me there is no death.

×                    ×                    ×

Freed from desire, I live with the spontaneity of a child, playfully active, which is the sign of one who has God-vision or liberation.

×                    ×                    ×

Spiritual perfection is to realize God, world and I are one. This is the aim of life by attaining which I got immortal bliss and peace.

×                    ×                    ×

Freedom means to know that I am not the body but that I have a body. Body passes away but I live for ever.

×                    ×                    ×

I searched and searched and I found myself and my quest ended.

×                    ×                    ×

Even though I am He, I posed I am not He. I gave up the pretention and lo! where am I? There is only He.

×                    ×                    ×

When I beheld the world other than me I was caught in the meshes of desire. Now the world is I, I am free and happy.

×                    ×                    ×

True devotion took me from the relative life to God the absolute and then I realised that the relative is not different from the Absolute. To see the world apart from God is ignorance. To see world as God is knowledge. So for me God is at once within and without and whatever exists is God.

×                    ×                    ×

Grace is nothing but God within me willing to reveal Himself.

# JAPA YOGA

Swami Sivananda

Japa Yoga is an exact science. Japa is the repetition of any Mantra or Name of the Lord. In this Kali Yuga or iron age when the physique of the vast majority of persons is not fit for rigid Hatha Yogic practices and their gross intellect not fit to grasp the subtle Vedantic truths, Japa is the easiest, surest and safest way for attaining God-realisation. Tukaram, Dhruva, Prahlada, Valmiki, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and many others have attained salvation by uttering the Name of the Lord. In Gita you will find 'Yajnanam Japa Yajnaosmi' 'Among Yajnas (sacrifices) I am Japa Yajna'. In this Kali Yuga by practising Japa alone one can attain eternal peace and communion with the Lord.

A Mantra is a holy formula, by the constant recollection or repetition of which one is protected or released from the round of birth and death *Mananat trayate iti Mantrah*. Mantra is Divine Power manifesting in a 'sound' body. Mantra itself is regarded as the Deity invoked by it. Such is the glory of a Mantra. The constant repetition of a Mantra brings the Deity to the consciousness of the

Sadhaka. By Japa of a Mantra, the Sadhaka awakens the Shakti latent in the Mantra, and then the Mantra Shakti strengthens the Sadhaka's individual shakti, takes him up the spiritual ladder and reveals to him the Deity embodied in the Mantra.

A Mantra accelerates and generates creative force. It produces harmony. Spiritual life needs harmony in all parts of our being. The whole being must be in perfect ease and in tune with the Divine, then only the spiritual truths can be realised. Mantra has the power of bestowing cosmic and super-cosmic consciousness. The repetition of a Mantra or Divine Name removes the dirt of the mind such as lust, anger, greed, etc., purifies it and makes it fit for reflecting the higher truths, even as a mirror which is cleansed of its impurities acquires the capacity to reflect clearly the things placed before it. Mantra or Divine Name is, as it were, a spiritual soap to cleanse the mind. Just as fire cleanses gold of its impurities, even so a Mantra cleanses the mind of all vasanas and desires. All sins too are destroyed by the repetition of a Mantra or Divine Name.

Japa should be practised regularly, every day. Mental Japa should become habitual and should go on even during work. Japa should be attended with Sattvic or Divine Bhava, Purity, Prem and Sraddha. While you are doing Japa, think that you are really praying to your Ishta Devata, that your Ishta Devata is really listening to you, that He is looking at you with merciful eyes, that His grace is flowing to you, that you are becoming purer and purer, and that God with open hands is giving you full protection (Abhaya-dana) with a view to giving you your desired object. Do Japa with a spirit of self-surrend to the Lord. Offer your very being to the Lord when you repeat the Mantra or His Name. Know the meaning of the Mantra and do Japa with feeling. Draw closer and nearer to Him when you repeat the Mantra or Name; think that He is shining in the chambers of your heart, He is witnessing your Japa, He is witnessing your mind. When you do Japa, you must have the same flow of love and devotion in your heart as you will naturally have at the time of His actual Darshan. You should have full faith in the purifying, divinising, God-vision giving power of the Name or Mantra.

Japa is a great help to meditation. Japa leads to meditation. You should combine Japa with meditation. Japa

accompanied by meditation on the form of the Lord is much more efficacious than Japa done without meditation. As you advance, Japa will drop off by itself and meditation alone will remain. This is advanced stage. You can then practise meditation separately. If, however, you find it inconvenient to combine Japa and meditation, you may practise them separately. Unless the mind is purified by the practice of Japa, it will be very difficult to practise successfully meditation or concentration. Even a little recitation of a Mantra or Divine Name with faith, Bhava, one-pointedness of mind and an understanding of its meaning will destroy all impurities of the mind.

One should have at least two sittings daily for Japa, one in the early morning, preferably in Brahma-muhoorta, and the other at sun-set or night. If one can do two hundred Mālās of hundred and eight beads (i.e. twentyone thousand six hundred repetitions daily) it is all the better; the mind will be purified quickly. Otherwise, one should practise as much as possible, fixing a minimum limit for daily practice and sticking to it. On holidays one should do more Japa than on other days.

Sattvic food, observance of the principles of Ahimsa (non-injury),

Satyam (truthfulness) and Brahma-charya (celibacy), freedom from malice, cunningness, crookedness, backbiting, vilification, greed and laziness, and Tapas or austerity are aids to the quick fruitioning of Japa Yoga.

O man, scorched in the fire of Samsara, take refuge in God's Name,

repeat the Divine Name incessantly and attain everlasting bliss and Divine communion. Let Name be your boat to cross this formidable ocean of Samsara, lodging in its bosom innumerable crocodiles and whales of worldly desires. May you all attain eternal bliss, freedom and immortality by the practice of Japa Yoga.

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# MOTHER IN SOUTH INDIA

(OCTOBER '52—JANUARY '53).

(From the Diary of Sja. Guru Priya Devi).

For a considerable time a proposal had been under consideration at the instance of some Mahātmās, particularly Sri Sri Hari Baba and Sri Avadhutji, that they should visit the sacred places and temples of South India in the company of Mother. During the Dushera celebrations at Allahabad in the last week of September, 1952, it became generally known that Mother would accordingly leave for the South shortly after.

**Banaras, Calcutta & Puri, 30th Sept. to 20th Oct., 1952.**

Immediately after the Dushera celebrations at Allahabad which were carried out with great éclat and which evoked general admiration for the excellent manner in which the whole affair had been managed, Mother left for Banaras on 30th September. Next day She proceeded to Calcutta where She stayed till the 6th October, paying a flying visit to Nabadwip for a day on the 4th. From Calcutta Mother went to Puri (7th Oct.) where She remained till 20th October, during which She

visited Bhuvaneshwar and Cuttack in the company of the Mahātmās.

**Waltair, 21st to 23rd Oct.**

From Puri, Mother set out on 20th October for Waltair. Our party included besides Mother, Sri Sri Hari Baba and his four followers, Sri Krishnanand Avadhutji, Swami Paramananda, Brahmacharis Kamala Kanta, Kusum Kumar and Bibhu, Kumari Juthika Guba ('Buni'), Misraji (cook) and myself.

We reached Waltair in the morning of 21st. A professor of the Cuttack University who belonged to Madras and some other local gentlemen had made excellent arrangements for Mother's stay at the Dharamshala. Shortly after reaching Waltair, Mother suddenly went out in a Rickshaw without informing others, with only one gentleman who had joined us for a short while in course of his official duty or business. After visiting several places, She finally went to Shanti Ashram where originally arrangements

had been made for Mother's stay. Mother had cautioned the gentleman who accompanied Her not to disclose Her identity; but it was not long before the inmates of the Ashram discovered the fact and their joy knew no bounds. After a short stay there Mother walked along the road in the neighbourhood where fishermen lived, singing 'Jai Ganesh and also 'Hey Bhagawan'. The people there flocked round Her and followed Her, repeating the names. She then returned to the Dharamshala, having been out for nearly 2½ hours.

In the afternoon, a number of the fishermen came to the Dharamshala where Mother was staying and 'prasad' (sweets etc.) were distributed among them. Later in the day (21st Oct.) many persons including some professors and students of the Cuttack University gathered at the Dharamshala to see Mother. After some Kirtan, etc., Mother went out for a stroll along the beach.

Next morning i. e. on 22nd Oct. Mother went to the temple of Narasingha on the top of a hill. It is said that this was the site of the capital of Hiranyakashipu and Prahlad was hurled down from the top of this hill at the command of his father. We learnt that once a year only on Akshay Tritiya day in Baishakh, the deity is exposed to view in this temple. We,

however, were allowed to go in and have our 'darshan'. What struck us was the neatness of the place and absence of clamouring greed on the part of the priests or Pāndās, which is such an ugly feature in most famous places of pilgrimage. There were some 1120 steps, we were told, to reach the temple on the hill but we did not feel any strain or fatigue either on our way up or down. We returned from the temple at 9.30 A. M. We left Waltair next day at 11 A. M.

#### Bezwada, 23rd Oct.

We reached Bezwada at 8.30 P. M. A number of people including some members of the family of late Kanti-bhai Munshaw were at the station to receive Mother. After passing the night there we set out next day in the afternoon for Guntur, which we reached in about an hour.

#### Ramakshetra (Guntur) 24th to 27th Oct. '52.

Mother was taken to a place known as Ramakshetra, which appeared to be an attractive spot. The usual 'Satsang' (Kirtan and discourse by Sādhus) took place from 7 to 9 P. M. Although the people there could not understand our language, they were keen on serving Mother devotedly and repeatedly expressed their joy and gratitude for this.



visit. We visited several temples there. At one place we were shown a tank with many huts and structures round about for Sādhus to stay in. When a member of our party expressed surprise that there were no signs here of the drought we had heard so much about, we were told that for some time past the tank and the adjoining well had been dried up owing to drought.

When the people heard about the probable visit of Mother, they began to pray saying "What shall we do, O Mother,? Have pity on us". Then shortly after it rained abundantly for three days and we found that the tank and the wells were all full.

On 25th October we proceeded to Amaravati on the bank of the Krishna, 20 miles off. Here also we visited several fine temples. Next morning we went to Mangalgiri, about 18 miles away. There Mother was taken to the temple of Narasinghaji, situated at a height and reached by 400 steps. It is said that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had been to this place and his foot-prints were still preserved. The deity is offered gur-water. We were told in Satya Yuga it was Amrita or nectar that used to be offered, in Treta honey, in Dwapar milk and now in Kali it is gur-water. The silver image of Sri Narasinghaji was dimly visible in the

dark interior. This is one peculiarity we noticed generally in the temples of south India. The image of the deity is usually kept in semi-darkness and only dimly perceived when arati is performed with burning camphor etc. The gur-water, when offered to the deity, was poured down the mouth of the image from a conch by the priest. When the 'prasad' of gur-water was offered to Mother, She opened her mouth and asked the priest to pour it down, which was done amidst general laughter. In the afternoon we visited the temple of Rama and the Math of Sri Shankaracharya. We returned to Ramakshetra where many people had assembled to have 'darshan' of Mother. The same evening we left for Madras.

#### **Madras, 27th Oct. to 3rd Nov.**

We reached Madras at 7-30 A. M. Mrs. Taleyar Khan and a few other prominent persons had formed a committee to make necessary arrangements for Mother's visit to the city. She is a pious Parsee lady from Gujrat who had been with Sri Ramana Maharshi for a considerable length of time. We had met her before in the company of H.H. Rani Saheba of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh). Sri Kanti Bhai Munshaw of Ahmedabad had also sent some persons to look after the convenience of the party (in fact he did so throughout Mother's present tour in South India).

Arrangements for Mother's stay had been made in the residence of Sri Tarapore at Mount Road, where She was received with elaborate ceremony including music, recital of the Vedas by ten Brahmins, etc. etc. All arrangements had been made with great care and everything went off very smoothly. Several Bengalee families residing there offered their assistance particularly regarding cooking and the meals. Mother stayed in Madras for eight days and made excursions to different places to see the temples, etc.

We visited many temples far and near during our stay in Madras. The committee had sent word about our visit to the temples and so everywhere we went we were received with great courtesy and ceremony by the priests and the temple authorities, and offered every facility and attention in our Darshan. In this way we visited the temple of Kapaleshwar at Madras and also Venkateshwar. At Conjeovaram (50 miles) we saw the Shivakanchi temple (with its finely carved huge gates) and also the Vishnukanchi. We also went to Mahavalipuram (55 miles), and saw near the sea side the fine images of Vishnu and Siva etc. Next we proceeded to Pakshtirtha (45 miles) where two Rishis are said to be engaged in Sadhana in the form of birds. Daily at 11-30 A. M. sweet rice is offered there and as the priest stands

with folded hands, two birds swoop down and after making a meal of the rice and a drink fly away.

During our stay we also visited the local Ramakrishna Mission centre, the Theosophical Society at Adyair (with its spacious compound, fine library and statues of Olcott, Madame Blavatski, Annie Besant) and the Gaudiya Math.

At their pressing request, Mother was also taken for a short time to the residence of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Ex-Dewan of Travancore who, we were told, had flown to Madras to see Mother. We also went to the place of Sri Rama Rao, a disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi, where once a month the saint's picture is worshipped and the Vedas recited as in a temple.

All these days and throughout our tour the daily Satsang was observed whenever possible, at the usual time i. e. 7 to 9 p. m. (including 15 minutes' silence or 'Mauna'). The gathering at last firmly but respectfully protested that whether in Satsang and Kirtan or during Mother's excursions to temples, they had very little opportunity to hear Mother speak for which everybody was very keen and eager. It was pointed out that Mother did not speak formally before gatherings by way of lectures and discourses. However, it was arranged that Mother would sit for

sometime after Satsang in the gathering.

One day someone put the question "How shall we realise God?"

Mother—Weep for Him and you will find Him.

Q. —I cannot weep at all, tears simply won't come. What shall I do?

Mother (laughing)—Seek the company of those who weep. Keep the company of pure and God-minded persons.

Q. —In order to realise God, how much should one put forth one's own efforts and how much should one rely on God?

Mother—Even in relying upon God, you will be able to do it only when He wills it and makes you do it. What is 'Purushakar' or individual will-power and effort? What He wills and causes to be done is 'Purushakar'.

Q. —Why should there be such tremendous attachment for impermanent and perishable things and not for what is real and eternal?

Mother—All this is but His Leela (playful activity). It is only

He playing with Himself. Is it not said in Chandi (Saptashati) that She also exists in the form of Delusion? But what happens when one is attached to worldly things is that one is dragged down; but if drawn towards Him, there is joy and emancipation. If one gets entangled in worldly things, one gets the return ticket—to come and go.

At this there was laughter in which Mother also joined.

Mother continued—Everything is Infinite, there is no finality, no end. That is why one is counselled, do not leave off taking His name. Do it on the quiet, it need not be seen by anybody. Being blessed with this rare human birth, do not waste it. As you breathe so should you keep repeating His name. The body is constantly undergoing changes. Once you were young, now you are grown up. Turn this process to your benefit and welfare. Otherwise it is a case of suicide.

The people present expressed their delight at Mother's words and repeatedly requested Her that She should speak to them. Mother replied "Your

little daughter can neither lecture nor preach. As you beat the drum so do you hear. This is the fond request of this little daughter of yours that you should constantly try to keep the company of His name and bow to Him with folded hands."

In the afternoon Mother was taken to an assembly of Gujratis numbering about 7 to 8 hundred people. They sang songs composed for the occasion.

We left Madras on the 3rd Nov.

### Pondicherry ( Sri Aurobindo Ashram ) 3rd Nov. '52.

At the request of some of the inmates of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, who were known to us, it had been decided that Mataji\* and the mahatmas with the rest of the party would pay a visit there on 3rd Nov., 1952. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, the well known writer, singer and disciple of Sri Aurobindo had sent us a Bengali poem written for the occasion (a free rendering of which is given below ).

"Ma Anandamayee ! You have come to this remote part, O pure and holy one, so that we may see you. You will speak with accents of love, charged with joy and sweetness. We will touch the dust of your hallowed feet and sing

our songs before them. We offer our devout salutations, O Mother, with fervent gratitude."

We reached Pondicherry at 9 A. M. on 3rd November. Some of the inmates of the Ashram who were known to us, had helped to make arrangements for our stay. Our party was accommodated at the guest house near the sea. At 11 A. M., Mataji and the rest were taken round the Ashram. We went first to the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and seated ourselves by its side. It was a very beautiful spot. The Samadhi had been finely decorated with flowers. A branch of a nearby tree overhangs the Samadhi as if forming a canopy over it. A number of people had gathered there to see Mataji. Shortly after, some one came along to take us to *Mother*. We were first led to Sri Aurobindo's room and seated there. Then we were escorted to another room where Sri Aurobindo used to sit. As we entered moving aside the curtain, we saw *Mother* standing there. As Mataji approached her, *Mother* stood gazing at Her fixedly, occasionally smiling a little. Mataji too stood there looking at her steadily. After a while, *Mother* placed in Mataji's hands a rose and a 'beli' flower with two pieces of chocolate. Mataji gave her back the

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\*In this account of our visit to Pondicherry Ashram, Mother ( Ma Anandamayee ) will be referred to as "Mataji" to avoid confusion with the *Mother* of the Pondicherry Ashram.

rose and one piece of chocolate. *Mother* kept the chocolate but again offered the rose to Mataji who now returned both the flowers. In this way when the two flowers had passed from hand to hand two more times, *Mother* tore off a bit of the 'beli' flower and gave the rest to Mataji which She handed over to me as She usually does. *Mother* then left the room and we all returned to the guest house.

At 4 P. M. we were taken to the spacious play-ground near the sea to see the games etc. *Mother* was playing with the younger boys and children. At 5 P. M. we went to the gymnasium where *Mother* was awarding marks to the children taking part. We were then shown the workshop where the inmates make articles for their own use. One thing which struck us was the equality of the sexes in matters of dress, games and other activities. At 4 O' clock the ladies had come out dressed in half-pants, shirts and white shoes with a piece of cloth round their heads and went about freely taking part in games and other activities.

At 7 P. M. Mataji was taken to see the inmates at their exercise—marching in step and moving the limbs all in unison. A little way off a man was telling them what to do from a room fitted with a mike. Owing to this habit of regular exercise, we learnt

that there were but few cases of illness among the inmates. At this time the lights went out and everybody there became silent and motionless just as they were, sitting or standing. We learnt that this was the time for meditation. After a short while the lights came out and the exercise continued.

When this was over, Mataji was taken to the place where *Mother* was, who also had been present there all the time. A man was standing by her side with some fried groundnuts in a wooden vessel. *Mother* gave a spoonful of these to Mataji with a wooden spoon. Mataji looked at these and smiled a little. Later *Mother* began to distribute these groundnuts to the many children present there. Mataji asked the inmate who was accompanying us to tell *Mother*, "This little child (pointing to Herself) was the youngest of the lot." When this was translated to *Mother*, she smiled a little and said in English to this effect, "Ever a little child." We then came away. We were shown the dining rooms or halls where the inmates take their meals. We were told that there are about 800 inmates in the Ashram.

At 8 P.M. Mataji was taken to the apartment of Sri Dilip Roy at the latter's request. He had expressed his desire that he would sing before Mataji

for an hour. A number of people were also present. Dilip Kumar introduced a Punjabi lady named Indira Devi as a disciple of his. We were told that she would go into a trance-like state and in that condition see in vision Mira Bai from whom come songs which she takes down. A collection of songs composed thus was presented to Mataji.

Early next morning i.e. on 4th November, we left Pondicherry for Arunachal, the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

A week or so afterwards when we were at Srirangam, we happened to meet a gentleman who had been to the Pondicherry Ashram shortly after we had left. From him we learnt that some of the inmates of the Ashram were disappointed at the shortness of Mataji's stay there. It was then explained that this could not be helped as the Mahatmas were anxious to continue their tour. Our programme was fixed almost entirely according to their wishes and convenience. As regards Mataji Herself, there was no question of preference of any kind whatsoever. When Mataji heard about it, She said with a laugh, "Whatever comes to pass is right. This was to be on this occasion."

#### **Chidambaram, 4th Nov.**

Leaving Pondicherry in the morning we halted at Chidambaram to see the famous temples there on our way to Arunachala. We went to the ancient temple of Kartika and later to that of Shiva, where there was an image of Shiva in 'Tandava' dance, with the left leg raised well over the head in His famous dance pose. It was known as the space-image of Shiva because He dissolved into space (Vyoma) while engaged in the dance. In other places of South India there were images of Shiva corresponding to the rest of the elements viz. earth at Shivakanchee (Ekamreshwar Shiva), water at Jambukeshwar, fire at Arunachal and air at Kalhesti. Adjoining the temple was a huge image of Vishnu lying stretched in Ananta Sayya. The images in many of the temples of South India were artistic and beautiful beyond description. We also went to the 'Nritya Sabha' where there were, besides other images, 108 female figures in various dance poses according to the Bharat school of dance.

#### **Arunachal, 5th and 6th Nov.**

We then proceeded to Arunachal which we reached at 11 A.M. The Ashram was situated at the foot of the hill. It was a very quiet and peaceful

spot.\* Mother stayed in the guest house built by the Raja Sahab of Morvi while the Mahatmas and the rest of the party were accommodated in the guest house within the Ashram itself. Shortly after our arrival, Mother went to the Ashram. Mrs. Taleyar Khan took Her to the Samadhi of the Maharshi and also to the room where he stayed for nearly 22 years continuously and where later he received 'Nirvana'. Mother then returned to the guest house.

At 5-30 P.M. Mrs. Taleyar Khan brought Mother to the Ashram. Five Brahmins were seen engaged in reciting the Vedas near the Samadhi of the Maharshi as they do daily at this time. The daily Satsang was held on the spacious grounds near the Samadhi.

Mother spent the day looking over the Ashram. In the afternoon we went to the Ishan Math founded by Sri Ishan Swami. We also went to the house of Sri Arabinda Bose, who was not at home at the time, as we had sent no intimation of our visit. He hastened to see Mother shortly after. Mother said to him "Your house has been stolen", and began to laugh.

Sri Bose—"Why steal the house only, Mother, steal me also."

Mother—"Well, when one's house is stolen and one has no place to go to, consider where he will stay."

Mother then was shown the cowshed, kitchen, dining rooms, store rooms, etc. in the Ashram. Everything was neat and well-appointed. On Mother's return to the guest house, Mrs. Taleyar Khan introduced a middle-aged Sadhu saying that he had been the personal attendant of Maharshi since his boyhood. Maharshi rarely or never slept in the usual manner but passed the nights sitting or half-reclined. This Sadhu used to sit up with the Maharshi and accompanied him when the latter moved about the place with a torch when others had retired to sleep. The Sadhu said in Tamil, which was translated into Hindi by Mrs. Taleyar Khan, that he had a few words to say to Mother. "The Bhagwan (meaning Maharshi Raman) is no longer here. But I notice many similarities in Mother with the Bhagwan in talk and manner." Several other inmates of the Ashram were also heard to remark to the same effect about

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\* Maharshi Raman used to stay at different places on or near the hill on his first arrival here. Later he lived in the Ashram when it was built. He used to say that the Arunachal hill was his father and mother both. He saw Shiva and Parvati here and used to say that they were always present here.

the similarity between the Maharshi and Mother. In fact, the wonderful spirit of regard and affection with which Mother was received among them left an indelible impression on all of us.

Mrs. Taleyar Khan was looking after Mother with whole-hearted devotion as if she had no other care or thought. We learnt that the Maharshi looked on her with particular favour and kindness. We also met the brother of the Maharshi, Sri Sarvadhikari.

The foundation laying ceremony of a temple of the Maharshi was performed in our presence. After Puja and other ceremonies were gone through, Mother was asked to lay the foundation stone. She touched the piece of stone which was then placed in position. The members of the Ashram committee were present. Someone read out an address to Mother in which they expressed their joy and gratitude at the visit of Mother on this occasion. Mother was garlanded and presented with fruits, etc.

In the evening a lady, the wife of a Madras barrister, sang before Mother to the accompaniment of Sitar. Mother too began to sing with her as if she was learning the song. Mother asked me to take down the words of the song which I did. Mother sang the song over and over again with relish. The correct tune too was captured and reproduced.

In the morning we visited the temple of Trivikram and several others. In the afternoon we went to a temple which was the second biggest in South India, the biggest being the temple of Madura. Intimation of our visit had been sent earlier by Mrs. Taleyar Khan. As we reached the temple, music began to play. An elephant, gaily decorated, saluted Mother with raised trunk. A large number of people had assembled with flags and big umbrellas to receive Mother and the Mahatmas. We were taken to the temples of Ganesh and Shiva. The latter temple had a courtyard with a thousand pillars. The upper part of the temple had been redecorated by Sri Tarapore of Madras at a cost of about Rs. 20,000/-. The image of Shiva known as Jyotirlinga was seen in a dark cave-like spot. Near it, the devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi pointed out a corner where the Maharshi used to sit. Large pictures of the Maharshi and of the places where he stayed had been placed near the spot. Adjoining the temple was a well and a wooded street where under a tree the Maharshi used to practise austerities till his body came to have a thick coating of earth and dirt. It is said that when the Maharshi came to this part, he went straight to the temple and spoke thus before the image of Shiva, "Father, I have come



to You. You have brought me here. Do now as You will."

We next went to the Devi temple, also a very big one with beautiful figures of goddesses with different poses.

#### **Kumbhakonam, 7th & 8th Nov.**

We set out for Kumbhakonam on 7th in the morning via Srirangam (Trichinopoli) and Tanjore, a distance of 175 miles from Arunachal. At Kumbhakonam Mother stayed in the Hari Om Ashram on the bank of the Kaveri. It was a very quiet spot with plenty of cocconut trees and banana plants. In these parts one often comes across places where these plants stretch as far as the eyes can reach.

In the afternoon we visited the temple of Saranga Pani. There was a big gathering at the daily Satsang.

Next morning we went to the famous temple of Kumbheshwar, where the image of Shiva was of a peculiar shape like that of an earthen vessel

placed upside down. We also went to the temple of Sri Rama where we found large images of Rama, His brothers and Hanuman in black stone. In the front were gold images which are taken out in procession during festivities. In the afternoon we went to the temples of Vishnu and Shiva at Mayavaram 20 miles off.

In the evening Satsang, a girl put the question to Mother, "Mother, the body grows old; but why does not the mind remain young and childlike?" Mother—"Do not wish to be like the ordinary child of the world. Be a child who never grows up. The only reason why the childlike state does not last is desire".

Q—"How to acquire the childlike state?"

Mother—"Seek the company of the pure and the godlike and obey the Guru and the elders. This will lead to the spontaneous unfolding of the true childlike state."

# FAITH AND DOUBT

*Vijaianda ( Dr. A. Weintrob )*

*Shraddha*, faith—faith in the *Guru*, faith in the scriptures, faith in the efficacy of spiritual practices—is a qualification which every aspirant on the spiritual path must have. For the great majority of *sadhakas* this faith is centred in the *Jnana murti*, the physical aspect of the *Guru*.

But this confidence must not be mistaken for what is called “blind faith”, that is a belief based on the convictions of other people—parents, teachers, friends, etc.—with the resolve not to abandon it even if it does not tally with actual facts or is against sound *reasoning*. Nor can faith be founded only on reasoning, on the processes of the intellect; *Buddhi*, intelligence is the creator of our whole mental world and its creations are based on delusion and are liable to break down like a house built without a strong foundation. The faith which comes through direct perception is no doubt the real one, but of course far beyond the reach of the *sadhaka*.

The faith we have in the *Guru*, in *Mataji*, has for most of us begun with some intuitional experience revealing

to us the supernatural in Her. This experience is usually the starting-point, the seed of the ‘tree of faith’. In some cases this first experience is so overwhelming that it immediately gives a firm intuitive conviction, against which the doubting processes of the mind are quite powerless. For others, this experience, although having given a strong impulse to the mind, has not silenced the doubting processes nor the critical attitude. For a third category of aspirants, the first contact with *Mataji* has nothing spectacular, but simply awakens the interest in further inquiry. For such persons it takes a very long time, sometimes years, until their faith matures; nevertheless it penetrates and permeates the mind slowly but steadily.

In fact, whatever the approach, there are three elements that must combine so that the average *sadhaka* may be established in *Shraddha*. The first and most important one is the intuitional experience. No matter what be its nature and intensity, it is based on the recognition of our real nature, reflected through *Mataji*'s

physical aspect. Generally it is 'Kshanik' (momentary) "as a twinkling of an eye" and cannot be expressed on the discursive level of the mind. Sometimes it may even be forgotten. But as its source lies in the Eternal, it can never be wiped out and remains very powerful in the subconscious depths. The second element is supplied by our emotional nature which tries to translate the inexpressible and unique experience into terms of our experiences of the past. This is why the intuition of the Real gives rise to the attachment we have for Mataji, as a mother, a Guru etc. Thirdly, the discursive mind furnishes the cementing element in this building up of our faith, for we can finally accept only what is reasonable, has been thoroughly thought out and is not contrary to what we have heard and learnt from elders and by personal experience.

Everything in the manifested universe moves under the sway of the "dwandwas", the pairs of opposites and the three *gunas* (the three qualities of nature). In other words the growth of faith is subject to fluctuation, depending on one of the three *gunas* predominant at a particular time. That is why doubt—the opposite of faith—will arise automatically and test whether our faith is built on

unshakable foundations. If it is not, it must break down; but if it is genuine it will stand storms and trials and emerge ever stronger.

When our mind delights in *Sattwa* (harmony) doubt has no access, for everything is then clear and self-evident; doubt comes only while we are under the influence of some emotional (*rajasik*) impulse or our understanding is clouded by the stupor of *tamas*.

An old diary written in 1951-52 (*I had my first darshan of Mataji in February 1951*) gave me the idea to write this article. That diary was written with the spontaneity with which one converses with one's own self, when one can be certain that nobody else will read one's effusions. I have now translated some quotations from it from French, trying to remain as true as possible to the original. I feel it may serve as an illustration—among thousands—of how our faith in Mataji awakens, has to pass through severe storms and cross-fires of doubt and finally emerges victorious.

**"Pondicherry, 22nd Jan. 51.**

"I have decided to start from the Ashram on Thursday morning and travel via Calcutta, Banaras, Almora, Rishikesh, Agra, Delhi, Bombay, Kanhangad, Madras to Colombo."

*(There was no preconceived idea as regards Sri Anandamayi Ma).*

**“Patna, 10th Feb. 51.**

“This diary has been interrupted for over a fortnight. I take it up again at Patna... .. What happened to me on February 2nd is far more interesting than anything I may have written about before.

“I was coming from Calcutta intending to pass through Banaras hurriedly, to stay for a few days at Sarnath and then if I had time to visit Rishikesh or else leave straight via Bombay, Kanhangad for Colombo, from where I had to sail back to Europe on February 21st..... My guide took me to the Sri Anandamayi Ashram. It is a wonderful site right on the banks of the Ganges.....”

Ten minutes later Sri Anandamayi Ma appeared at the door of Her room. She speaks only Bengali and Hindi. I could understand Her only with the help of an interpreter.....She was standing at the entrance of Her room. I can still see Her focussing Her eyes on me with that gaze I have come to know so well now. That gaze seemed to embrace my whole destiny..... At about 9-30 p. m. the Kirtan was over. Mataji said that She could give me private interview immediately.

“B. S. acted as an interpreter. I

was supposed to ask some questions, but as a matter of fact I had nothing to ask, I only wished to make a spiritual contact. It appeared as if Mataji had divined my thoughts. She Herself asked the questions. They were clear-cut and precise.....and it seemed as if She had guessed what I wanted to know. The interview took about 20 minutes. I went back to Clark's Hotel in a strange state. I began to understand what this wonderful being had infused into me: it was divine love, a love which from now on would bind me by indestructible ties—the love one has for the *Guru*.....

“.....But I was afraid that this feeling would not last ..... Mataji had to leave for Vindhyachal, then Patna. I asked Her permission to accompany Her.”

*(In this case the intuitional experience was very powerful and the intellectual doubting process was therefore silenced. But doubt is bound to raise its head sooner or later.)*

**“Banaras, July 25th, 1951.**

“.....Sometimes a terrible doubt gets the better of me .....

“This immense love, is it really so different from the love one feels for a woman? Of course there is no room for any unclear ideas. It is an absolutely pure love—and yet it is still personal and limited. Nevertheless,

sometimes as a perfume emanating from its phial, it seems to pervade on all beings and merges into the quest for the Absolute..... How far have I deviated from the firm resolutions of my earlier life, which had until now been the main principles of my behaviour : absolute freedom in oneself, to be one's own refuge, one's own law..... \*

"This freedom I have lost. I have become the disciple of the most wonderful of all *Gurus*, but a disciple all the same.....

"Sometimes a longing for the mountains gets hold of me again and I feel like going to a solitary place in the Himalayas and concentrate my mind on the pure Absolute to the exclusion of everything else.....

"But at other moments the certainty of being on the right path is so conclusive that no question can arise. All the same there are all states of mind and I have decided to write them down so as to become clear about myself."

*(Here is a good example of faith and doubt alternating according to the fluctuations of the*

*gunas. When Sattwa prevails there is evidence of being on the right path and questioning seems an absurdity. When rajas gets the upper hand, the ego raises its hood and laments at its lost freedom. When tamas dominates one doubts the degree of purity of one's love for the Guru.)*

"Bhagalpur, July 29th, 51.

".....My love and veneration for Mataji are so great that I should like Her to be like a perfect diamond, that may be examined through a magnifying glass from every angle, without one's being able to detect the minutest flaw. But who am I that I dare to judge this giant of spirituality? Only a *jivan mukta* is able to judge a *jivan mukta*; and alas! I am very far from that.....

".....One day when I was under a spell of doubt, Mataji said in reply to someone else's question (*I myself had not expressed my doubt nor asked any question*) that it was impossible for the *shishya* to judge his Guru, just as a student is not able to judge the learning of his professor. I feel sure that She is right."

"Hazaribagh, Aug. 1st 1951.

*(Sometimes the Guru, to test how far we have progressed brings about circumstances that shake the mind violently right down to its foundations.*

\* When I came to India I was following

the Buddhist *Theravadin* path, which lays admit the necessity of a Guru.

*These lines had been written at the end of the storm.)*

"I am beginning to think that the whole of this inner tempest has been willed and created by Her, like the great magician that She certainly is. The ego has such subtle devices for winning back the command that has been snatched from it. Only the *Guru* can release one from the clutches of the ferocious tiger which the sense of I—ness is.

**"Banaras, 13th Aug. 51.**

*(Again the clouds of tamas have darkened the horizon).*

"I have witten to S. My resolve to go away beomes more and more firm....."

"In fact I am like a pilgrim in the mountains suddenly enveloped by heavy mist. I do not know anymore whether I am on the right path and whether I may not be pushed down into a precipice. This path is indeed as perilous as a razor's edge."

**"Banaras, 14th Aug. 51.**

"Doubt is a terrible thing. It has raged in me or about three weeks—a very long time. If I cannot regain confidence, it will be better for me to go away....."

**"Banaras, 17th Aug. 51.**

"The crisis is not completely over.

In fact what exactly is the matter? Some incidents frequently repeated make me doubt whether Mataji really is what I believed Her to be—namely my *Guru*, someone nearer than one's own heart.

"Alas! where have fled the complete surrender, the absolute faith which possessed me only just one month ago?"

**"Banaras, 25th Aug. 51.**

"The crisis of doubt has entirely disappeared as if by magic, without any special event happening.

"For, in reality there is something, which when it occurs—and it occurs quite frequently—does not leave any room for doubt or argument. It has the unquestionable evidence of things experienced by direct perception. What I speak about here is difficult to describe, in fact, undefinable."

*(The guna has changed : Sattwa has chased away Tamas and with it all its mists and obscurations)*

**"Vindhyachal, 22nd Oct. 51.**

"Again doubt assails me....."

"This rope in which I had full confidence, with the help of which I was going to try to cross over the abyss, I shall test its strength; I shall

pull and pull and see whether it breaks—and if it does break I shall have escaped from a great danger.

“If the tie that binds me to Mataji is the one which links *Guru & Shishya*, then it is indestructible and will resist all attacks, storms and cyclones.....

“For one cannot be separated from one’s own Self.”

“**Banaras, 30th Oct. 51.**

“When doubt appears it signifies a downfall, a descent to the plane of discursive thinking. If I ever keep my consciousness in the present, doubt will not be able to arise.”

“**Rajgir, 18th Dec. 51.**”

(*Again Tamās.*)

“I just read what I wrote on Oct. 22nd—I could have written it to-day, for it exactly pictures the state of mind at this moment.

“All this is very difficult to understand. I am moving like a blind man stumbling in the dark, ever in danger to fall down.”

“**Rajgir, Dec. 25th, 51.**

“Whenever it seems to me that the tension is so great that I shall have to leave Mataji, it somehow is put right again, as if by magic.”

( *The change of the guna which rules the mind for a certain period of time modifies the mind completely : quite different aspects of the personality come to the surface at every change. )*

“**Rajgir, Dec. 27th, 51.**

“Mataji’s love, is it not pure Divine Grace and nothing but that ? This Grace is a rare thing to obtain, one cannot gather it like a fruit from a tree, one has to become worthy of it. Once it has been received one has to learn how to hold it, to sustain it and watch over it like a precious jewel: for it can be easily lost and may be stolen by the demon of doubt in an unguarded moment. A mere glance back towards worldliness makes it fly away like a frightened bird.”

“**Puri, 26th Jan. 1952.**

“When I read my diary I realise that it gives the impression that I am doubting Mataji most of the time and am ever on the point of leaving Her. But actually doubt comes fairly rarely, as an exception, so to say,—the rule being periods of intense faith and love. But during those spells of deep happiness I do not feel the need of writing ; usually I write only when I am depressed, doubting or despondent.”

“**Anandakashi, April 20th, 52.**

“When I read these notes I ask myself: how was it possible that I should have been so greatly deluded by blindness and stupidity ?

“Her influence cannot be explained in any other way: She is Divine Grace, the Lord Himself.....

“But when one sees the sun shine constantly, one is apt to forget that it is he who gives us light and warmth; that it is he who makes the plants grow and grants us life; that every creature on earth depends on him. Sometimes one even gets annoyed with the sun for sending its burning rays and making us feel hot and perspire, or worse than that, through one’s own carelessness one may even get a sun-stroke. But when the ice-cold nights of winter come, then one

understands how stupid it has been to blame even for a short while the giver of life and well-being.

“What I owe to Mataji cannot possibly be expressed in words. She gives everything out of pure generosity, without ever a motive. To give boundlessly, without ever expecting anything in return—this is Her nature.

“If blindness and foolishness should ever again succeed in veiling my understanding, may I read these lines and remember. Then I shall wait calmly until the black clouds blow over and the sun shines again.”

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# From the Life of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

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

( CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE )

## *Shahbagh and Siddheshwari.*

From the year 1926 visitors began to take up much of Mataji's time. Impressed by the sincerity of the people, Bholanath would repeatedly request Mataji and prevail upon Her to come out of Her retirement and talk and mix with them. As already written above, Mataji, always tried to obey Bholanath to the best of Her ability. Even so, She once warned him lightly of the consequences of this sort of behaviour. She told him that once She came out of Her retirement it would no longer be possible for him to deny access to anyone who came, irrespective of caste, creed and position. That is, he would have to make up his mind to welcome the whole world as it were, that their lives would become public and they would have to put up with all the disadvantages which this entails.

Bholanath however did not worry about this aspect of the matter. Who could know better than he that Mataji's personality was not meant to be hidden within the four walls of a private house.

Among the host of regular visitors at Shahbagh we may mention the names of the following persons, who later became Mataji's almost constant companions in Her ceaseless travels throughout the length and breadth of India. Firstly, Sri Shashanka Mohan Mukherji, retired Civil Surgeon of Dacca. He was an old gentleman of a fiery temperament, held in great awe by the Dacca Medical School. Yet in Mataji's presence, he was like a tongue-tied child. His is an untarnished record of selfless devotion to Mataji from the moment of his first '*darshan*' to the moment in which he breathed his last. Although he was an old man when he first met Mataji, yet the rigorous *sadhana* that he performed may not be equalled by many a younger man. People have watched him sitting in *sadhana* for 86 hours at a stretch, his whole body black with mosquitoes.

Later, in accordance with Mataji's wishes he was initiated into the life of a '*Sanyasi*' by Sri Mangal Giri Maharaj of Hardwar and thence forth his name became Swami Akhandananda Giri.

Didi Gurupriya Devi is Swamiji's

second daughter. When she first saw Mataji in 1926 she was in her late twenties. From her early childhood she had been very reserved in her behaviour. She divided her time between helping her mother to look after the big household and reading books. Mataji's first words to her were: "Where have you been all this time?" Since then Didi has been Mataji's most constant companion to this very day.

Then of course there was Bhaiji or Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy, who has also been mentioned in previous accounts. About two years after meeting Mataji, he had a severe attack of tuberculosis in the beginning of the year 1927. His condition deteriorated fast and the doctors gave up all hope of curing him. One day in the heat of May Mataji went to see him. Bhaiji complained that he was suffering great inconvenience because he was not allowed to bathe. Mataji came again the next day at midday. She said, "Why don't you go and take a bath in the pond?"

Now the pond was a little distance away and Bhaiji was not supposed to leave his bed at all. Besides he had a relay of attendants watching over him day and night. But strangely the attendant (his little daughter) was fast asleep and Bhaiji with Bholanath's help walked the short distance to the

pond; after his bath he felt refreshed and more cheerful. People would have found this incident hard to believe, that is, that Bhaiji could survive a strain like that, but for the burrs that were found stuck on his clothes and which he could only have acquired on his way to the pond.

His illness soon took a turn for the better and he gradually regained his health.

Thus, a large number of men and women were beginning to gather round the little family at Shahbagh. Although, conceding to Bholanath's requests Mataji now mixed more freely with people, She always seemed to be living in a world of Her own. If not spoken to, or made to answer questions, Her body would settle down in a statue-like stillness and She would seem oblivious of Her surroundings. Even in the middle of conversations sometimes, She would acquire a far away look and would have to be recalled to the present. But Mataji's own particular winsome smile was never absent for very long and so She was never unapproachable. Didi used to wonder at first that the deep concentration of mind which is the aim of all sadhana as it were, seemed to be a natural state with Mataji.

At this time manifestations of

miraculous powers also became quite natural to Her. Of course Mataji's whole personality was anything but ordinary. The perfection of human virtues in itself is a miracle. Therefore the obviously miraculous never became a striking feature of Mataji's life. That She would answer unspoken thoughts, heal an illness by a touch, or impart solace to a weary soul by a compassionate look, was just as it should be. People did not wonder at such phenomena but took them for granted. In fact Mataji's appearance itself was miraculously attractive. While Mataji was in Ashtagram, somebody once gave Her a red sari.\* Attired in this She was going to a neighbour's house when a gentleman (Harakumar's acquaintance Kshetra Babu) struck by Her Devi-like appearance prostrated himself on the ground before Her. Then again in Bajitpur, Bhudeb Babu's wife always maintained that the very appearance of '*Khushir Ma*'† lighted up the whole of the bathing ghats that is, a place where women foregathered for a little light hearted gossip and relaxation from their household duties. Many of Mataji's young friends called Her '*Rangadidi*' which means 'Beautiful Sister'.

Thus it will be apparent that people were impressed by Her very Personality rather than by anything special that She said or did.

Many people at that time (as they do even now) approached Her in order to get their sick healed. Incidents are too numerous to be recorded of how illnesses were cured by Her touch, a little *prasad*, a word of advice or even a lock. When people appealed to Mataji She generally answered, "Pray to God. He will do what is most beneficent." Sometimes She would say or do something of Her own accord, at other times She would remain entirely unresponsive. With regard to this question Mataji's attitude becomes clear from the following incidents.

One day a lady who was a frequent visitor (Atul Babu's wife) came to Shahbagh and asked Mataji to visit her home to see her son who was seriously ill. Mataji went about Her work seemingly not paying any attention to what was being said to Her. The lady then appealed to Bholanath knowing that Mataji would do, if he asked Her to. When Bholanath came to Mataji to speak about it, She at once said

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\* In the Scriptures Durga Devi or the Personification of Divine Power is always described as wearing red garments.

† Bhudeb Babu's wife's name for Mataji, meaning a 'radiant appearance.'

“What is the use? The boy won't recover.” On hearing this, Bhaiji who was present, said, “In that case Mataji need not go. The family should be told what Mataji has said about it.” This however was easier said than done because naturally parents could not be told such things. Bhaiji was actuated by the thought that people would later say that Mataji had gone to see a patient, yet he did not recover. However to fulfil Bholanath's promise, he and Mataji went to see the boy. After a few days the mother came again and beseeched Mataji to do something for her child. Mataji replied, “Even if I tell you what to do, you will not be able to carry it out.” The mother however promised to follow the instructions faithfully. The simple instructions were not to allow the boy to get up from bed for a certain number of days (probably 18). Immediately after this the boy started to recover slowly, but all of a sudden he took a turn for the worse. The mother came hurrying to Shahbagh. On seeing her, Mataji said, “What can I do? He was allowed to get up on Monday.” The mother would not believe this, insisting that he had not got up at all. Moreover, she lost faith in Mataji when the boy died after a few days. Quite a while later she came to know that on the specific day the boy had actually got up from bed. He had walked to the verandah and talked

to the people there. Full of remorse she then came to apologize to Mataji, who had to comfort her in her double sorrow.

This and similar incidents however, taught Bholanath not to insist on Her going to see sick people. He found that recovery or death were equal in Her eyes. She very rarely refused to go, saying, “Everything happens as it must. Perhaps the dying need this (that is, Mataji's presence) just as much as those who will live.” Then again She would say, “Recovery is not always desirable. Every person has to work out his own destiny. If obstructions are placed in his path the results may be anything but beneficial.”

Mataji sometimes used a more effective method to put a stop to requests for cures. She would take upon Herself the suffering of others. In this connection an incident may be related which took place many years later at Vindhyachal. The family of Swami Akhandanandaji's brother had come to spend a few days with Mataji. One day She went for a walk accompanied by two small boys, their mother, Bholanath and a few others. Coming to a narrow path Mataji forged ahead and outdistanced Her companions. She stopped all of a sudden and signalled to those behind Her not to advance. Bholanath however ran

forward and found a cobra with raised hood near Mataji's feet. Mataji said that She had stepped on it. Without answering the question whether it had bitten Her She again started walking ahead. The younger of the two boys at this time suddenly said to his mother, "Ma, isn't it written in my elder brother's horoscope that he will die by snake-bite? Mataji has made the snake bite Her to day instead of my brother."

Although it was true about the horoscope, everyone was surprised that the child, who was about six years old, should remember it at the time.

When Bhaiji heard that Mataji had stepped on a cobra, he hurriedly procured all sorts of medicines and rubbed them on Her foot. Late at night two bluish fang marks became visible on Her left foot. Everyone was highly amused and made fun of Bhaiji who had applied the medicines on Mataji's right foot.

During Her stay in Shahbagh, Mataji very often visited a holy place nearby, named Siddheshwari. While She was in Bajitpur, Mataji had 'seen'\* a tree, and it had come to Her mind that this was the Siddheshwari tree.

In Bajitpur also She had 'seen' two holy men in long white robes, one of them a '*guru*' and the other his '*shishya*'. It had also come to Her mind that these people belonged to a country called Arabia. Needless to say that Mataji had never heard the name of Arabia before.

When She came to Dacca, She saw two tombs in the premises of the Shahbagh Gardens. She was told that the tombs were those of a *guru* and his *shishya*, and that they had been Arab fakirs.

Mataji in this manner sometimes 'saw' places She would visit later or even people She would meet in future.

After a few months in Shahbagh, Mataji once asked Bholanath if he knew anything about the Siddheshwari tree. But Bholanath could not give Her any information about it. After some time, one of Mataji's earliest bhaktas, Baul Babu one day came and said that there was an ancient Kali Temple in a nearby place called Siddheshwari and offered to take them there.

On arriving there, Mataji saw a huge fallen tree and recognized it as the tree She had 'seen' while in Bajitpur. As it had become dark they saw

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\* Mataji sometimes saw images of places and people. These images were as clear and realistic as any ordinary visual perception.

the Temple by the light of a lantern and then returned to Shahbagh.

After a few days, Mataji again expressed a desire to visit the temple. But on arrival they were disappointed to find that the temple had been locked up for the night. Mataji however went to the front door and pulled at the lock. The lock came off in Her hand and the doors opened.

They perforce had to stay there overnight because they could not leave the temple unlocked and unguarded.

Next time Mataji took a little rice, some pulses, a few potatoes and a cocoanut with Her to the temple. She cooked this food at night and offered 'bhoga'\* Herself. Then She told Bholanath that She wanted to remain there for a few days. Bholanath stayed for the night but he had to return to work in the morning. As he did not like the idea of Mataji staying all alone, it was arranged that *Dadamashait*†

would be there during daytime. Bholanath joined them after his day's work and Baul Babu took it upon himself to bring them sweets and fruits in the evening.

Mataji chose to occupy an inner room of the temple. Early in the morning She would bathe and change and enter that room. Throughout the day She never came out. There was no question of cooking or partaking of food. She would come out late at night and all of them would partake of the fruits brought by Baul Babu. Bholanath stayed in the main temple sometimes doing his *sadhana* and sometimes just resting. Baul Babu posted himself at the main entrance of the temple. He had a belief that something miraculous was going to take place and in order not to miss anything he used to keep awake the whole night. In this manner they spent a week at Siddheshwari.

( to be continued )

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\* The food that is offered to the Deity.

† Mataji's father.

# MATAJI LILA

(15TH AUGUST—15TH OCTOBER 1958.)

Mataji left Dehradun on August 15th after a sojourn of nine days and reached New Delhi on the 16th morning. Didi (Sri Gurupriya Devi) had come to the Delhi Ashram from Bombay already on August 2nd.

A few days before Gurupurnima during Her stay at Solan, Mataji had suddenly asked Didi to leave for Bombay for a medical check-up. For the last four or five years Didi has not been keeping good health. But nobody could understand why she should leave in such a hurry a cool and lovely hill station in the middle of summer. However, Didi obeyed without a murmur as she always does. Soon enough the reasons why Didi had to go to Bombay just then became only too clear. A few days after her arrival there she developed a temperature and became more and more indisposed until on July 11th she fell unconscious. The best doctors were immediately summoned to her aid—and diagnosed meningitis. There is a very effective new method which nips the illness in the bud, but only in a big city like Bombay are the first-class physicians as well as the necessary remedies avail-

able. When the news reached Solan everyone present knew that had Didi fallen ill at Solan the right treatment could simply not have been given. By Mataji's grace Didi's life was thus saved and she became free from fever within a couple of days. She has however been advised complete rest in a quiet and dry place for several months. As soon as she was fit to travel, she therefore proceeded to the New Delhi Ashram, which is ideally solitary and at the same time within comparatively easy reach of the city by car.

Didi has been Mataji's closest companion for about 32 years now. Ever since meeting Mataji in 1926, she has devoted her life to Her with a whole-heartedness that will be difficult to equal. Ignoring even the most elementary comforts, unrelaxing she has given herself, body, mind and soul in selfless service. Mataji was known only to a few when she first met Her. In those days *samadhis* and *bhavas* were the rule of the day with Mataji and Didi would undertake any task, menial or otherwise that was required to be done. In the measure as Mataji

attracted ever growing numbers of admirers and devotees Didi's work increased geometrically. Ashrams began to spring up one by one, some of them due to her untiring efforts and it was Didi who started the '*Kanyapeeth*' where young girls are brought up and taught according to the ancient ideals of the Brahmacharya Ashram, while at the same time learning all modern subjects as well. Until the Association *Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha* was founded, Didi was carrying on almost single-handed the administration of several of the Ashrams, besides being responsible for Mataji's correspondance. Her personal work and innumerable other tasks. When her day's work was completed at about 1 or 2 a. m., she would not lie down for her well-deserved rest, oh no, far from it—for this was very often the only time she could snatch to write Mataji's diary! Nine volumes of it have so far been published in Bengali\* and another volume by Didi about the *Savitri Mahayajna* that was performed at the Varanasi Ashram from 1947—50. How Didi could find the time and energy for all her manifold activities is quite incomprehensible to the ordinary intelligence. Such feats can only be accomplished by forgetting oneself entirely and becoming an instrument of the Divine.

Even during the last few years of ill-health, although unable to do physical work, Didi has continued to direct her numerous helpers and assistants who have done their best to fill the gap. Those who come in contact with Mataji owe a debt of deep gratitude to Didi. We hope and pray that by Mataji's grace she may reco completely and be preserved to us for many, many years to come!

\* \* \*

The devotees of Delhi had urgently requested Mataji to be present in their midst this year during the *Jhulan* celebrations which continue from *Ekadasi* to *Purnima*. The anniversary of Bhaiji's Tirodhān (Passing away) falls into that time. It was observed on August 25th and 26th. The programme started on the 25th noon by silent meditation in Mataji's presence at the exact hour of Bhaiji's passing into *Mahasamadhi*. In the early morning of the 26th Bhaiji's favourite song "*Usha Arune*" sung by Brahmachari Bibhu went straight to the hearts of all present. The Kirtan continued from sunrise to sunset. Simultaneously, from 10 a. m. *Puja*, *Homa*, *Arati* and *Bhoga* were performed by Brahmachari Kamalakanta, one of the greatest admirers of Bhaiji. As

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\*In Hindi translation only three volumes have appeared so far, as well as, "*Akhanda Mahayajna*." A fourth volume is in preparation.



customary on that day a number of *sadhus* and a great many other guests were entertained to a feast at the Ashram. In the evening a symposium was arranged on the life and teachings of Bhaiji. Some of those who had been close to him spoke with feeling about this ideal human being and *sadhaka*.

Bhaiji was the person who, as many believe, understood Mataji better and knew more about Her than anyone else we know of. His name was Jyotish Chandra Roy, but he was lovingly called 'Bhaiji' by all Mataji's devotees. He met Mataji first in 1924 in Dacca where he was posted as a high Government official of the Agricultural Department. Religiously inclined since his childhood, he found in Mataji his true guide, who gradually drew him away into the realm of the purest spirituality.

About one and a half years after contacting Mataji his health deteriorated until he developed tuberculosis. Given up as a hopeless case by the best physicians, Mataji literally snatched him from the jaws of death. To everyone's amazement he recovered and Mataji even asked him to return to his duties as an official in 1929 and he worked again for three years. When

Mataji left Bengal for the first time in 1932 he however finally relinquished both home and office and accompanied Her and Bholanath first of all to Raipur near Dehradun, where they remained in seclusion in a ramshackle hut near an old Shiva Temple. The Raipur Ashram was later built at that very spot. Bhaiji with the help of other devotees was responsible for starting Mataji's first Ashram at Ramna-Dacca in 1929.\* In 1937 Bhaiji went with Mataji, Bholanath and Sri Akhandananda Swamiji to Mount Kailash. Just before arriving at their destination the Swami felt somewhat indisposed due to the extreme height; therefore he and Mataji, who offered him the use of Her "dandy," lagged behind, while Bholanath and Bhaiji paced ahead. On reaching Lake Mansarovar Bhaiji was seized by a spirit of profound renunciation with such vigour that he gave up his clothes and with folded hands begged Bholanath to give him leave for ever. But Bholanath would not hear any of this; he prevailed on him to put on another set of clothes and wait for Mataji. No sooner did Mataji arrive than *Sannyasa Mantras* spontaneously flowed from Her lips. This is how Bhaiji became *Swami Mounananda Parvat*.

Mataji can often be heard to explain

\* See "Mother as Revealed to me", chapter "Ashram."

that there are two kinds of *Sannyasa*: one is 'taking' *Sannyasa*, which implies an effort on the part of the candidate, a Guru and certain prescribed rites, etc. It is however only a preparation for the real *Sannyasa* which comes about effortlessly, spontaneously with the realization of the futility of worldly pursuits. This is what evidently happened to Bhaiji.

As soon as the party reached Almora on their return journey he left his body. A *Samadhi* was erected in his memory in the grounds of the Almora Ashram. Bhaiji put down some of his experiences in connection with Mataji in the wonderful book "*Matri Darshan*"\* and a small collection of Mataji's teaching in "*Sad Vani*." Both were published long long before and ever since have been greatly treasured as sources of inspiration by countless bhaktas and admirers; in fact, both in India and abroad they have attracted many earnest seekers to Mataji's feet.

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On the night of August 28th. the *Jhulan* festival was observed with due solemnity. The swing on which *vigrahas* (small idols) of Sri Krishna were placed together with Mataji's photos, was decorated most artistically and tastefully by a young artist who is a new

comer to the Ashram. Mataji Herself seemed very delighted while minutely noticing his artistic skill when he decorated the floor with a number of exquisitely beautiful designs (*Alpanas*).

A very high official of the Government of India, who has quite recently become Mataji's devotee together with most of his family, brought valuable cushions and covers of red velvet with gold embroideries and decorated Mataji's seat. It looked like a royal throne. Only with great difficulty Mataji was persuaded to sit on it, thus giving way to the entreaties of the devotee and his wife.

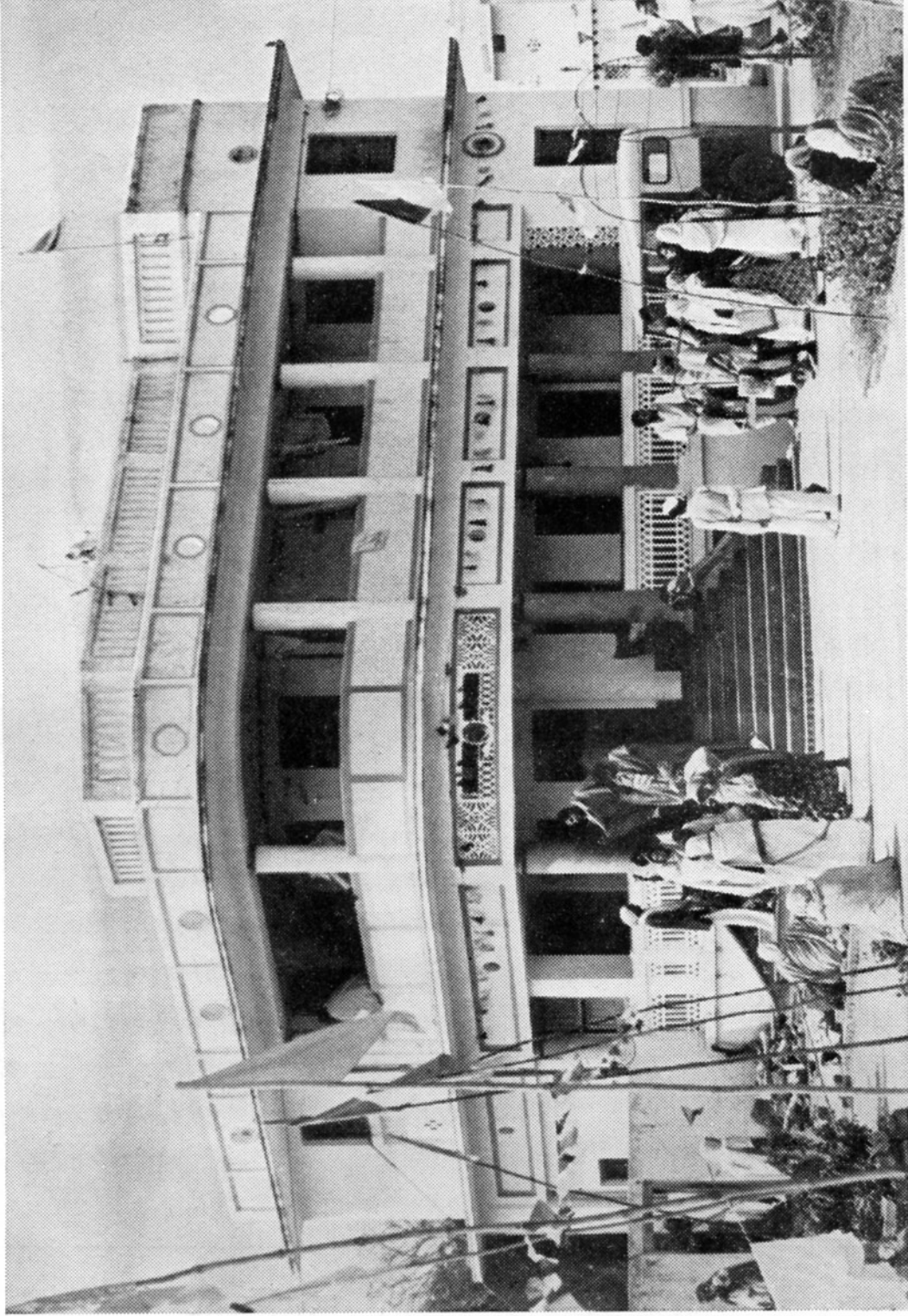
*Jhulan Purnima* (the August full moon) is a very special day in the Ashram, apart from being a Sri Krishna festival: When Mataji acted the role of a *sadhika* from May 1922, a spiritual initiation (*Diksha*) came about spontaneously on that night, at midnight. Mataji went through this process all by Herself. There were no external accessories, She Herself was the *Guru*, the *Mantra*, the *Ishta* and the neophyte all in one. In the few years that followed She went through every kind of *sadhana* in incredibly quick succession, not only those described in Hindu Scriptures, but those of all other faiths as well. It must however

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\* "Mother as Revealed to Me" in English translation.



The Ashram on the hill-top at Vindhyachal is famous for its serene and calm atmosphere.



The Ashram at Vrindaban wears a festive look with the arrival of Mother.

be borne in mind (as we have already pointed out on other occasions) that the question of *sadhana* did not arise for Mataji, as there was nothing to be attained for Her. Nevertheless She played the role of a *sadhika* as truly and sincerely as She had acted the role of a child in Her parent's house and that of a house-wife in Her husband's. Yet through all apparent changes She ever remains the same.

The anniversary of the memorable hour of this '*Diksha*' was, as every year, observed by silent meditation in Mataji's presence from 11-30 p.m. to 12-30 a.m.

On August 29th, which was *Jhulan* according to the Vaishnavites, the festival was celebrated again with Kirtan etc. Mataji delighted the audience by consenting to occupy once more the specially decorated seat.

\* \* \*

While Mataji stayed in Delhi from August 16th to September 3rd, many distinguished visitors came for Her darshan and had private interviews with Her. The elder sister of Dr. Rajendra Prasad visited Mataji a number of times. The old lady who is over ninety met Mataji for the first time only last November when Mataji had come to Delhi for the *Samyam Vrata*. In spite of her advanced age, the old lady developed a great attrac-

tion for Mataji. She also invited Her to the Rashtrapati Bhavan a couple of times. Dr. Rajendra Prasad as well as other members of the family paid their respects to Mataji on those occasions.

Dr. Panna Lall, I.C.S., (retired Adviser to the Governor of U. P.) had joined Mataji in Delhi and as he always does, put many interesting questions to Her during Satsang hours. Mataji responded with generosity and humour.

On September 3rd Mataji left for Varanasi. The students and teachers of the '*Kanyapeeth*' (the Girl's School in Varanasi Ashram) had implored Her to spend *Janmastami* with them. Not until almost the last moment was it disclosed where Mataji would remain during this festival.

For several years it has been the privilege of devotees at Varanasi to welcome Mataji in their midst during *Janmastami* (Sri Krishna's birthday) with only two exceptions: in 1955, when Mataji was at Vrindaban and last year when She remained at Kishenpur for two months.

One of the items of this festival is to build up a miniature Vrindaban and Mathura and depict with tiny plastic models some of the main scenes of Sri Krishna's life. Every year the girls of the '*Kanyapeeth*', helped and guided by



their teachers, had been ambitious to surpass the decorations of former years. No wonder that this time the whole Ashram looked like a fairy place !

During the night of September 5th. the large black Vighraha of Gopalji at the Ashram, which is quite famous by now, was worshipped with due solemnity. A number of photos were taken on that occasion. Especially the picture of Mataji with Gopalji placed on Her lap is much coveted and ordered by scores of people. (We hope to include it in the next issue of Ananda Varta).

On previous occasions\* we have already reported at some length about the strange *lila* of our Gopalji. Our readers may be interested to learn of another incident connected with Gopalji that happened recently.

It is the practice of the inmates of the *Kanyapeeth* to do obeisance every morning at the Annapurna-Shiva temple of the Ashram and at the adjoining shrine of Gopalji. One of their wardens, an old bhakta of Mataji, hailing from Dacca, while bowing to Gopalji one morning, heard a voice saying quite distinctly: "Who can wear a silver crown day after day!" Believing that she must have had a hallucination, she dismissed what she

had heard without further thought until She heard exactly the same words again the next morning. Did Gopalji want her to present him with a golden crown? She asked herself. But how could she afford it? She did not tell any one about her experience, but kept on pondering over it. Within a fortnight her son, who had been without a job, secured some well-paid employment. She at once felt that she should now try for the gold crown and went to a goldsmith to enquire about the cost. But she had not definitely made up her mind about the matter. One afternoon she discovered two tiny foot prints on her bed cover, just over the pillow. The strange thing was that they were of dust, while the weather was extremely wet. She at first suspected with indignation that one of the children of the Kanyapeeth had stepped on her bed, but then none of them had such very small feet. At last the foot prints were measured and identified as those of Gopalji! This moved her. She went to town to order the gold crown and wrote to Mataji, humbly requesting Her to come to Varanasi for *Janmast-mi* and place the new crown on Gopalji's head. What strange things happen in Mataji's surroundings! Shall we one day be able to grasp their significance?

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\*See Ananda Varta Vol. III No 3, p. 283-4 and Vol. IV No 3, p. 267-8.

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The morning after *Janmastami*, the *Nandotsava* (the joy of the cowherds at Sri Krishna's birth) was celebrated. There was dancing and singing, the girls enacted a little play and Mataji with Her own hand fed everyone present with curds. On those occasions Mataji is full of fun and frolics.

On the 7th September afternoon Mataji motored to Vindhyachal. On the 10th She was back at Varanasi, only to leave again for Vindhyachal on the 12th. The same night Kali Puja was performed in *Taru Kutir*, a cottage in the Ashram grounds, in which Shanti Devi, Didi's younger sister has been staying. There is a special history behind this Puja too.

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj accompanied Mataji to Vindhyachal and remained there for five days. H. H. The Rajmata and Maharaja of Tehri-Garhwal, and the Raja Sahebs of Mandi and Solan, who had come to Varanasi for a meeting of the *Anandamayee Karuna* (a registered body to serve the sick and needy), all motored to Vindhyachal on the evening of the 12th and were present during the Kali Puja, which must have been a unique experience.

Vindhyachal is altogether an extraordinary place with a charm of its own. People long to spend even a single day

there with Mataji. We have in previous issues of *Ananda Varta* described the great natural beauty of the site. The Ashram is situated on Ashtabhuj Hill, which commands a lovely view over the plains with the broad silver band of the majestically flowing Ganges. It is a solitary spot, about a mile from Vindhyachal proper and has a special atmosphere, both physically and spiritually: it is well known as a health resort because of its mild air and curative water and a place of pilgrimage because of the temples and shrines scattered picturesquely amongst the woods of Ashtabhuj Hill.

Mataji returned to Varanasi on 17th September morning. She was expected to leave for Calcutta on the 22nd or 23rd to fulfil the prayers of a devotee for Her presence at the opening ceremony of his newly purchased house. Devotees in Calcutta were eagerly awaiting this opportunity of having Mataji in their midst once again. But to their disappointment Mataji's programme was suddenly changed.

Accompanied by Sri B. K. Shah, Managing Director, New India Assurance Co. who had come to Varanasi on a flying visit to meet Her, and by only two or three other persons, Mataji boarded the Delhi Mail on the 21st morning, reaching the Chandraloka Ashram the same night.

On September 30th Mataji left by the morning train for Dehradun with only three or four companions. Great was the delight of the Ashramites at Kishenpur when she arrived there the same evening quite unexpectedly. It had not been given out where she would go from Delhi. In Dehradun Mataji had a comparatively quiet time, although within two days, everyone had received the news of Her arrival and the crowd gathering for Her darshan every evening became larger day by day.

Mataji left for Hoshiarpur on the 6th October halting again in Delhi on the 12th for one day and then proceeded to Allahabad, via Varanasi, where Durga Puja was celebrated from 18th—22nd October. She is expected to spend Diwali at Varanasi and leave immediately after for Kanpur where *Samyam Mahavrata*—will be observed at Swadeshi House from 13th—19th November\*.

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\*Detailed accounts of the Durga Puja celebration at Allahabad and *Samyam Mahavrata* will be included in the next issue.



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

We have the pleasure to announce that at the cordial invitation of Sri Sitaram Jaipuriaji of Kanpur the eighth Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata organised by Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha will be observed from 13th to 19th November, 1958 at Swadeshi House, Civil Lines, Kanpur.

The ultimate aim of the Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata is the realization of one's own self and the attainment of the Supreme Object of one's love. By observing during the period, the vows of *Satya* (truth), *Brahmacharya* (continence) and *Ahimsa* (non-violence), one should try to further one's spiritual development.

Ma is expected to be present at Kanpur during the Samyam Saptaha.

Persons wishing to participate in the function should send intimation to the following address at least seven days before the commencement of the function :—

SWAMI PARAMANANDA  
SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE ASHRAM  
Bhadaini, Varanasi (U. P.)

The diet of the participants in the Samyam Mahavrata will be as follows :—

1st day	...	...	Ganges water.
2nd day	...	...	Anandamayee Khichuri (i.e., rice boiled with vegetables and ghee).
3rd day	...	...	Vegetables and milk with fruits.
4th day	...	...	Khichuri (i.e., rice boiled with pulses, ghee and vegetables),
5th day	...	...	Vegetables and milk with fruits.
6th day	...	...	Anandamayee Khichuri.
7th day	...	...	Ganges water.

NOTE :—Those who will take milk at night on the second, third, fourth fifth and sixth days of the Mahavrata may take *roti* and vegetables on the last day, if desired.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our subscribers are requested to note that only a limited number of nicely bound volumes of the back issues of Ananda Varta are available now. The price of each volume (excluding postage) is quoted below :—

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