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# Ananda Varta

A quarterly journal dealing mainly with the divine life and teachings  
of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee and other  
religio-philosophical topics.



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

## MATRI VANI

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

134.

In all matters without fail depend wholly upon God. To Him you should submit your heart's yearnings and petitions. Your whole life will have to revolve round Him, you have no other resource, on your own you are utterly helpless, for are you not His creature? Whatever He does is all for the highest good. You certainly are not in a position to choose what seems best to you. Why should He permit you, who are the offspring of the Immortal, to stray towards that which is death?

You may deem yourself fortunate, for God has rescued you from the jaws of death and preserved you to this day. Place your reliance on Him alone. The troubles and obstacles bred of desire which you encounter, even these should be welcomed as in very truth the doing of His merciful hands. To become agitated is of no avail. If you must be impatient, be impatient for God: cry: "To this day I have not received any response from Thee and invaluable time has been spent in vain." Do not let your mind and body be tormented with restlessness induced by worldly longings.

135.

To the enquiry whether *diksha* (initiation by *mantra*) is necessary, Mataji replied:

"When *diksha* is necessary it comes about at the appointed moment. One should try to keep one's mind on the thought of God and have firm faith that at the right time He will do all that is needful."

## 136.

Why make yourself so miserable by excessive worry over the fleeting things of this world? Be brave and calm in the performance of your duty bearing in mind that it is God who causes everything to happen; whatever He allows to take place is exactly the right thing. You must cease from worrying so much!

## 137.

Such is the law of worldly existence. You should dwell in fortitude. Surely, you have realized by now what is the true nature of the world? Only by directing one's mind towards God can peace be found. The more time you devote to *japa* and meditation—whether so disposed or not—the greater is the likelihood of your obtaining deliverance from your grief.

## 138.

Placing your trust in your Guru, practise the *seed mantra* you received from him and contemplate the Beloved (*Ishta*). It is imperative to have unshakable faith in one's particular *Ishta*. What is the use of seeking initiation again and again? Rather is it not of the utmost importance to strive strenuously after the full revelation of the form\* under which He has manifested Himself to you?

Whenever practicable seek *Satsang*—the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth.

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

It is of great value to read sacred texts and books of wisdom. Speak the truth. Bear in mind that God's Name is He Himself in one form—let it be your

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\* The *mantra* and the *Ishta* are one, the *mantra* being the sound aspect and the *Ishta* the form aspect of one and the same thing.

inseparable companion. Try your utmost never to remain without Him. The more intense and continuous your efforts to dwell in His Presence, the greater is the likelihood of your growing joyful and serene. When your mind becomes quite vacant, at least try to fill it with the awareness of God or His contemplation.

140

A person who does not for the love of God and with a cheerful heart discharge himself of whatever responsibility that may fall to his lot at any time, will find life excessively burdensome and never be able to accomplish anything. Man should joyfully serve the world with the conviction that all service is His service. Work done in such a spirit helps to purify the mind and heart.

141.

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

142.

He who has given you a mouth will also provide you with food. Observe strict truthfulness and be ever mindful of Him alone.

143.

To feel drawn towards anything closely connected with religion means to be attracted towards God—provided the attraction be of a genuinely religious nature. It is important to try and concentrate on the One. Such an effort promises future development of firm faith and single-mindedness.

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# THE GOAL AND THE PATH

THE MYSTICISM OF DEVOTION

*Madan Mohan Varma*

To most of us, habituated to *activity*, a *goal* postulates also a *path* to the same. It seems so logical. It is true, too, for the man of action. Yet, paradoxical as it may appear, for the devotee the goal and the path are one. The goal itself is, in essence, the path.

Once a glimpse of the goal is had, the gaze of the devotee is thenceforth fixed on the goal and surely even if slowly, the world of phenomena fades away before him till he is united with the goal. Thenceforth, whatever transpires just happens—and while the aspirant path of devotion might go through all the travail and trial like any other, in fact he has hardly to *do* anything. His heart and mind abide more and more in the goal—his *Ishta*—till he becomes one with the same. Even like a magnet, the goal draws him to itself. Any outer *sadhana* necessary for him comes his way by itself. He has not to *do* anything to earn his wages. He is drawn by a spirit of kinship to his *Ishta*. His “path” is inherent in the *Kriya shakti* of his Guru, or The Mother, not his

own *Kriya shakti*. It requires a good deal of patience and perseverance on the part of the devotee, which are provided by his “*shraddha*” (deep and unswerving faith) in God, Guru or The Mother: which are one and the same—his sole and unfailing refuge always and ever.

Ancient lore is full of examples where HE who remains impenetrable by all the learning of the Vedas and the Shrutis, inaccessible even to *Munis* and *Yatis* with their age-long *tapasya*, is moved by His Compassion and Grace to own as His very own the lowliest of His devotees who have just *yearned* for him, have set their hearts on ‘simple union’.

Thus, for the devotee the *Ishta* is both the End and the Means. The End and the Means being one—what does it mean? It is a mystic experience which comes to the devotee; it cannot be explained in words. The very life of the God-intoxicated devotee offers a commentary on the riddle; it would be presumptuous for

me—a mere gatherer of the dust of the feet of devotees—to enlarge upon it.

The Lord Himself, after flood-lighting the paths of *karma*, *yoga*, and *jnana* concluded His *upadesha* to Arjun, with His own masterly ring, in the finale of the Bhagawad Gita thus :—

सर्वं धर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं त्वां सर्वं पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥६६॥

Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins ; grieve not.

No further case remains to be made out for the unity of the Goal and the Path, the End and the Means, for the devotee.

Jai Ma !

“To indulge in what seems pleasurable means to choose that which appears lovely on the surface and therefore attractive. To live up to the highest ideals seems irksome at first, but ultimately brings real well-being and peace.”

“Ma”



# SHREE SHREE MATA ANANDAMOYEE

*Dr. M. H. Syed, Ph. D., D.Litt.*

Those who have come in contact with our Mother Divine and had occasion to observe her day to day life and unostentatious activities, are amazed at the manner she silently works for uplifting, elevating and awakening her devotees' moral and spiritual nature. Mother rarely desires to meet people of her own accord. Those who have inner aspiration for self-improvement and guidance in spiritual life bear undeniable testimony to the manner in which she quietly helps and transforms people and kindles Divine love in their hearts.

Her magnetic personality draws round her feet deserving people of various types, temperament and inclinations. She is ever ready to help those people who stand in need of her guidance. She has all the qualities of a Divine Mother. Her Divine qualities keep her absolutely detached from external affairs and what is happening to the outside world. And yet, it may sound strange, but it is a fact that she takes motherly interest in those who look up to her for timely help. It is said that "the more a person is spiritual the more he is human." In all appearance she has no concern with anything

or anybody, and yet she takes such interest in human affairs. She has equal regard, as a Divine Mother should have, for rich or poor, great or small, learned or unlettered, sinner or saint. It is very difficult to keep pace with her known and unknown activities on the mundane and spiritual planes.

It may be borne in mind that as a great spiritual force in this demented world she has a definite mission of her own. She is out here in our midst to ameliorate the moral and spiritual conditions of people round about her. She does not keep herself confined in one place, or to one Ashram. She goes to any place from where she has an inner call in response to peoples' recurring spiritual need. Wherever she goes she carries with her peace, poise, patience and her manifest Divinity. Her all-pervasive influence and inspiration are felt and cherished by people of various denominations. She is the true messenger of Divine Love and Harmony.

Even sceptical-minded people "who came to scoff remained to pray", because she is the highest proof of the reality of spiritual life. She has

completely conquered the four besetting temptations of humanity,—*Kama*, *Krodha*, *Moha* and *Lobha*—human weaknesses which people take years, nay, many births to subdue and eradicate. Another proof of her immense spiritual power and potency is the fact that although she is an unlettered person and never turned the pages of any sacred book and scriptures such as the Upanishad or the Gita, Brahma Sutras and Vedanta Sutras, she freely, confidently and convincingly answers any question that is put to her in regard to any deep and abstract question

relating to the moral and spiritual problems.

She commands *Para* and *Apara Vidya* with all their profundities and intricacies. She is *Jnani*, *Bhakta* and *Karma Yogin* rolled into one. It is a rare piece of good fortune to come in close contact with her. She has dispelled darkness from the hearts of men in this dark and materialistic age. Those who have implicit faith in her Divinity, must rest assured that sooner or later they would be lifted up from the mire of illusion.

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

“Ma”

# MOTHER IN SOUTH INDIA

( OCTOBER '52—JANUARY '53 ).

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

( *Continued from previous issue* )

## Tanjore 9th Nov. '52

We set out for Srirangam via Tanjore—visited the Samadhi of the famous saint Sri Tyaga Raja. At Tanjore we went to several temples including that of Shiva, with its huge images.

## Srirangam 9th & 10th Nov., '52.

We then reached Srirangam where a disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi and a trusted worker of the Ashram joined us and with great efficiency looked after Mother and the rest of the party. In the afternoon we went to see the temples. Information about Mother's visit had as usual reached the temple authorities and so we were shown round with great care. We crossed gate after gate till we reached the inner temples of Ganesh, Kartika, Parvati and other deities. We then came to the temple of Srirangam. Those who have not actually seen the temples of South India can have no idea of the huge

size of the images, nor of the profusion of gold, silver and valuable jewellery used for their decoration, particularly of 'Bhoga Murtis' which are the moveable images taken out in processions and worshipped on other ceremonial occasions. It was decided to have the daily Satsang from 7 to 9 p. m. in the spacious compound of the temple. About a thousand persons had assembled. At the request of the people present Mother sang "He Bhagawan" for some time. The audience seemed to appreciate the gathering very much although they could not understand the language.

The next day we went to see the image of Ganesh on the top of a hill accessible by 300 steps. A *dandi* was brought for Mother, but She preferred to walk all the way up and down though it was a fairly arduous climb. In the afternoon we went to the temple of Jambukeshwar Shiva. As soon as Mother approached the temple, music

as usual began to play. An elephant slowly advanced to place a garland round Mother's neck, but as Mother stretched out Her hands, it put the garland into them instead. It also garlanded Sri Hari Babaji and Sri Avadhutaji in a similar manner. The elephant followed Mother as She moved about in the temple. We then saw the temples of Vishnu and Parvati. The four pillars in the temple were things of beauty with fine workmanship. They were said to have been built at a cost of lakhs of rupees and it took ten years to complete them.

As we were returning the elephant stopped forward rhythmically and saluted Mother lowering its head. Then it rolled its trunk upward and trumpeted loudly twice or thrice as if in joy. The manager of the temple, we learnt, had taken measures to have the temple and its surroundings cleaned and decorated in preparation for Mother's visit. We left for Rameshwaram the same night at 11-30 P. M. and reached there at about 7-30 A. M. on November 11th.

#### **Rameshwaram 11th to 14th Nov., '52.**

Arrangements for Mother's stay had been made in the fine Dharamshala built by the Raja of Ramnad, near the famous temple of Rameshwar (Shiva). At noon we all went to the temple and saw the Shiva Linga which is said to have been brought by Hanumana and

also another one made by Sita. None but the priest of the temple was permitted to enter the sanctuary, so we had our Darshan from a distance. We had brought Ganges water sent by a Sadhu from Gomukhi to be offered to the deity. We handed it over to the priest who bathed the deity with it. The priest brought a gold plated Shiva Linga explaining that it was the original Linga of sand that had been made by Sita. Mother held it affectionately for a moment and we also touched it with our heads. The story runs that Sri Ram Chandra wanted to build a Shiva temple after his victory over Ravana. Hanumana was asked to bring a Shiva Linga to be installed in it but as he was late in returning Sita improvised a Linga out of sand which Sri Rama Chandra worshipped. Later when Hanumana brought the Shiva Linga, this was also installed and worshipped, lest Hanumana should feel hurt.

In the afternoon Mother went for a stroll by the sea-side. The next day, i. e. on the 12th, Sri Hari Babaji and Sri Avadhutaji went to Dhanuskodi to see the temple of Rama two miles away. According to the legend Rama bade farewell to his followers at that spot after his victory at Lanka and distributed gifts in order to purify Himself from the sin of killing Ravana who was a Brahmin. We were to have gone to see the evening ceremonies at

the temple which are reputed to be very impressive but owing to the indisposition of one of the mahatmas our visit was cancelled. At Dhanuskodi mahatmas and some others of our party went to the sea-side where the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are said to meet. They returned at noon after a bath there. The sea is very calm and smooth there. The railway line runs some distance into the sea, with the water on either side. It is said that Sri Rama Chandra built His bridge across the sea at that spot and this is why the sea is so tranquil.

The 13th of November was Ekadashi. We made arrangements for offering a lakh of *Bilwa* (Bael) leaves and special Bhoga at the Shiva temple that day. Brahmins were also fed. We left for Madura on the 14th noon.

#### The Siddha-Baba episode.

During Mother's stay at Rameshwaram She happened to refer to a peculiar incident, but asked us not to disclose it at the time. Later She added a few more details when talking about it from time to time. Shortly after our arrival at Rameshwaram, Sri Hari Babaji had suggested that we should visit the famous temple there at noon, later he however decided to go there in the afternoon. But Mother said that She

would keep to the original plan and visit the temple at 12 O' clock as She had already given word to somebody to be there at that time and it was not possible to revoke that. It may be mentioned that ordinarily Mother is very particular in adhering to the programmes and changes suggested by the mahatmas. Sri Hari Babaji accompanied Mother to the temple. On Her returning Mother explained to Sri Hari Babaji why She could not fall in with his suggestion to change the hour of their visit. This is the substance of what we have been able to gather from Mother about this particular incident.

Shortly after Her arrival at Rameshwaram, Mother suddenly of her own accord climbed up the steps leading to the roof of the rest-house (*Dharamshala*) where we were staying. She said She would rest a while under a temporary structure there and asked us to leave her alone. Mother said that at that time someone appeared before Her and spoke to Her. While narrating this Mother observed "This body often makes enquiries, although aware of everything ; in this case also it put certain questions to the person." He then disclosed that he was one of the priests of Chidambaram who had been practising Sadhana at Rameshwaram for the last ten years, waiting for Mother's visit. He further said that

he would visit the temple in Mother's company, for then alone his 'darshan' would be complete and fruitful ; he also said that he would accompany Mother to Dwarka.

It had been for his sake that Mother went to the temple at noon as originally decided. We also recalled seeing, on our way to the temple, a strange figure like that of a mad person, bare save for a piece of loin-cloth and besmeared with ashes, moving along-side and sometimes before us in an unconcerned manner and standing before the temple with folded hands. We had paid no particular attention to him at the time. Mother however observed the figure for a moment and then said to Herself, "A woman". On hearing this as I turned to look more closely, the person had vanished. We gathered from Mother that this was the priest but She did not care to state explicitly whether he had assumed this form or chosen the body of some actual person for his manifestation. Mother added a few more details subsequently. The priest had at first been engaged in the Sadhana of "Sakti", then of the "Beeja", (mystic formula) of "Sakti", and after that of the Word as "Brahman", till he had attained Truth and "Siddhi" i. e. the goal of his Sadhana. First it was 'Vishwa-Milan' or unification with the universe i. e. realisation that He was the uni-

verse, then 'Maha-Milan' or Supreme Unification, realisation of Oneness, complete identification and manifestation of the Self, the Absolute, till finally there was no question of the Absolute or the relative. This is the goal, the final consummation.

The priest, or as Mother called him now 'Siddha Baba', had declared his intention of accompanying Mother from Rameshwaram to Dwarka in the form of air. Once in the night, I heard Mother utter a word which sounded like one of the languages of that country. On my enquiry Mother said that She was having a few words with 'Siddha Baba' who sometimes chose to indicate in this way that he was following Mother.

*(Our readers, we hope, will forgive us if we anticipate the course of our story and relate a few more facts about Siddha Baba in order to round off the account about him—Ed.)*

Mother said that when he had expressed his intention to accompany Mother to Dwarka, he had also happened to mention "Full moon, Thursday." Mother had not paid much attention to these words, nor enquired when it would be full moon nor even suggested to reach Dwarka by that time, since, as She put it, "So far as this body is concerned, it

is always the same happen what may." In due course, after visiting many places, we reached Porbandar and from there were to leave for Dwarka in the afternoon of the 31st of December. Suddenly Hari Babaji changed his mind and decided to leave for Dwarka early next morning instead. On enquiry by Mother, we found it was full moon which would last till 10 A. M. the next day i. e. 31st December. We left Porbandar at 5 A. M. and reached Dwarka about 9 A. M. Unfortunately there our car missed the way but after some delay we managed to reach the temple of Sri Dwarkadhish at 9-30 A. M. We had our *darshan* while it was still full moon. When telling the story Mother commented on the strange coincidences and the manner in which everything happened spontaneously as required by the occasion.

The next day was a Thursday. A member of our party who had recently arrived from Calcutta desired to offer special '*Puja*' and '*Bhoga*' at the temple. We assembled early in the morning at the temple where *Gita Path* by the Brahmacharis and Kirtan had been organised. The deity was dressed in a set of new clothes and after the *Puja*, Brahmins, some Sadhus and the Brahmacharis were given a feast. In this way, again without anybody deliberately planning or realising it, everything came about as required to

celebrate the '*Maha-Milan*' of *Siddha Baba*.

A day or two after, Mother suddenly sent for one of us late at night and began to enquire about a piece of land which had been recently acquired in Vrindaban by our Ashram. She also mentioned about '*Shiva-Linga*'—which had been brought for installation at Hardwar at the temple founded by Raja Durga Singh of Solan. They had not been used and were now lying at the Banaras Ashram. Mother enquired if it would be possible to instal at an early date this '*Shiva-Linga*' in a temple on the strip of land at Vrindaban. When we were at Dwarka, we visited some Shiva temples; its '*Linga*', we were told, had appeared spontaneously, immediately after the passing away of Sri Krishna and Balaram. Mother declared that sometimes things that had not yet happened on the material plane took place on a subtle non-material plane. I understood from this that the installation of the *Shiva-Linga* on the occasion of the '*Maha-Milan*' of *Siddha Baba* had already taken place on the subtler, non-material plane immediately after the event; the physical ceremony would follow in due course. The '*Linga*' thus installed would be known, Mother said, as *Siddheswar Shiva* after the *Siddha Baba* of Chidambaram.

*Madura 14th & 15th Nov., '52.*

We reached Madura at 6 P. M. on the 14th. Our arrival had been widely advertised, so a large number of people including prominent citizens were present at the Station. Excellent arrangements had been made at the Marwari Dharamshala for Mother's and the Mahatmas' stay. After a short rest, Mother went to the Minakshi temples where the usual Satsang took place from 7 to 9 P. M. As Mother reached the temple, music began to play as at other places and Brahmins came forward to receive Mother with garlands and sandal paste. Many prostrated themselves. A number of people with badges lined up linking their hands to allow a passage for Mother through the crowd. Brahmins walked in front with silver staff. Mother and the Sadhu Babas were escorted to a raised platform fitted with mikes. About 3 to 4 thousand people had assembled there. After Kirtan Mother sang "He Bhagawan" for a short while at the request of the people. After 15 minutes' *Mauna* (silence) Mother was escorted out in the same manner as She had been brought in by the temple officers and other prominent persons. In this manner Mother was taken to the temples of Shiva, Ganesh, etc.

Next morning i. e. on November

15th we went to see several other temples. In fact Madura is famous for its temples, and we visited a number of them during our stay. The temple authorities had arranged for the evening Satsang in a more spacious place within the temple premises to accommodate a larger crowd. When Mother arrived we found the temple authorities and their men waiting at the gate. Mother was escorted inside the same way as the preceding day. Although about 10 thousand people were present this time, it was very quiet and there was no confusion.

After a few songs and the usual Kirtan by Sri Hari Babaji and his followers, the gathering pressed Mother again & again to speak. But as Mother does not deliver speeches, She sang for sometime "Sita Ram, Sita Ram" which the crowd repeated after Her in chorus. The entire audience became absorbed in the Kirtan, but it could not continue for long as it was time for the usual 15 minutes' silence. Afterwards, Mother was again requested to speak a few words. Someone asked: "Mother, what is your message to your children all these men and women assembled here?" Mother replied as so often: "He alone should be talked about; all other talk is vanity and fruitless. Where Rama is, there is bliss; where Rama is not, there is misery." Someone else asked "Mother, we are suffering



because of drought, the crops have been destroyed. So many important persons have visited this place. We are all praying for rain. What will happen to us?" Mother—"Leave it to Him who has created this world and who protects it. You are parents in charge of small families. Do your children have to tell you what you should do for them? Do they even understand their needs? In the same way the Father of all knows and does whatever is necessary for His children. Try to leave everything to Him. His will be done." Everyone seemed pleased with this reply.

Then Mrs. Taleyar Khan spoke a few words, "Mother has blessed South India by Her gracious visit. She has of course no need to see places or to go on pilgrimages. She has come only to bless us all and to sanctify the holy places. She has come to see Herself only. Everyone should try to observe the 15 minutes' silence in whatever manner and where ever he or she may be. If we do this and remember Mother, She will certainly be with us. We shall then be under Her guidance."

On November 16th we went to Trichur, the birth place of Sri Ramana Maharshi. In this small village there is a very old temple of Shiva. The legends about its sanctity are numerous.

We were shown the house in which the Maharshi was born; pictures of his own and his parents are kept there and daily 'Puja' is offered before them.

At the evening Satsang there was a vast gathering of about 10 to 12 thousand people. At the request of many Mother sang "He Bhagawan" for some time. Several people sang songs about Mother, among others also a young lady, who is a relation and devotee of a well known Sadhu of Rishikesh. The crowd started to clamour for a better view of Mother, so She was requested to stand on the platform for a while.

After the Satsang many people came to see Mother in the *Dharam-Shala*. One of them, a disciple of Sri Maharshi, said "I feel a peculiar yearning for Mother's Darshan, so I come to see Her again and again." Mother replied "It is but natural that parents should long to see their little daughter." The gentleman said, "Though I have a great veneration for Mother as for my Guru, yet when I think of Mother's simple ways and frank laughter, I feel as if She were but a girl of 6 or 7." Everybody burst into laughter at this.

Next morning, i. e. on the 17th, Mother went to Palan, about 66 miles away, where a temple of Kartikeya is towering on the top of a hill. We

found a large crowd there. In the afternoon we again went to the big temple where daily Satsang was being held. No intimation of our visit had been sent and so there was no crowd. Since we had come unexpectedly we were told that we could not enter as special permission is necessary for this. Mother said that we all should have our 'Darshan' from outside. At that very moment the Executive Officer of the temple hastened to us and invited Mother to go inside the temple. He said that he had once told Mother that his wife could not come to see Her as his son was suffering from typhoid. Soon after, however, his son got well. He had now come with his wife and his son bringing flowers and offerings for Mother. He was very sad to hear that Mother was leaving shortly. However, his providential arrival at that moment enabled us to enter the temple and see the deity, Minakshi Devi, which some of us, particularly Sri Avadhutji, had not been able to do earlier, owing to the crowd.

We then went to the nearby temple of Shankara. During 'Arati' the crown of flowers adorning the head of the deity slipped to the ground. After the 'Arati', Mother said, "Shiva has Himself taken down the crown, let us ask for it." The priest placed it in Mother's hands. She offered it for

salutation to Sri Avadhutji and others as a gift of Shiva. Later, I was told to hold and carry it carefully.

We then went to the temple of Sri Ramana Maharshi situated within the same compound. His portraits are kept there in a room in which he stayed as a youth and practised Sadhana and where he first saw a vision of light. The evening Satsang passed off in the same manner as on other days, the gathering being equally large. Mother sang "Hari Bol, Hari Bol." This time *Mauna* was observed in an excellent manner. It is really a wonder, that such a vast assembly of strangers should be able to observe 15 minutes' silence in this manner. As Mother was leaving the Satsang, the crowd could hardly be stemmed, so great was the rush of people eager to come near Mother and do obeisance just for once on the last day of Her stay. Many people, including the chairman of the temple, and others came down to the Dharamshala and stayed till late talking to Mother. The Chairman placed his car at our disposal to take Mother to Kanya Kumari.

**Kanya Kumari 18th & 19th Nov., '52.**

We left Madura on the 18th morning and halted at Tiruchendu, 30 miles off, to see the temple of Kartikeya. It was situated at a very beautiful spot

with the sea surrounding it on three sides. The Manager of the temple had read about Mother in the papers and, therefore, took great interest to show us round. At 1-30 P. M. we reached Kanya Kumari, 150 miles from Madura. We put up at the Dharamshala attached to the temple of Kanya Kumari Devi, by the sea-side. The same evening we went to the temple at 7 P. M. and had our *Darshan*.

Next morning Mother again went to the temple. The deity was being bathed with milk, curd, honey, etc., (*Panchamrita*) followed by *Arati* and *Bhoga* each time. Then the deity was dressed and decorated with sandal-paste and flowers. Some of us felt something very special in the atmosphere of the place. The spot where Swami Akhandanandaji (my father) had a vision of Mother as he sat in meditation on the occasion of Mother's first visit to Kanya Kumari was pointed out to Sri Hari Babaji at his request.

In the evening as we went to the temple to see Arati, Mother walked along the road, saying, "Didi, let us go to that house", pointing to a cluster of houses before us. Mother walked very fast and halted before one of them. A middle-aged woman was standing at the door. Seeing her, Mother exclaimed, as if in great delight: "Didi, this is

the woman. We went to this house. The Kumaris were fed here." The woman who did not know Hindi could not understand Mother's words. A local inhabitant who was accompanying us interpreted and she soon recalled all the facts. I also recollected that the Kumaris were fed here when Mother visited the South about 25 years ago. Mother said: "Mataji, we have come here to see you." We were told that the woman was the wife of the chief priest of the temple. She beseeched Mother to step inside the house but since Mother does not go inside the residences of Grihasthas, She asked the rest of us to go in instead.

#### Trivandrum 20th & 21st Nov., '25.

On the 20th morning we left Kanya Kumari for Trivandrum, 56 miles off. On the way we stopped to see the Suchidram temple and the old palace of the Maharaja of Travancore. We reached Trivandrum at 11 A. M. A thatched cottage tastefully decorated with flowers had been put up for Mother. At the Maharaja's urgent request Mother was taken to his palace in the afternoon. She was led into the garden and seated there. The Maharaja and the members of his family including the Maharani, his mother, brothers and others came to pay their respects to Mother. They offered thick

garlands skilfully made, home grown plantains and cocoanuts and also a beautiful *Asana* made of the bark of trees with silk lining and border. The Secretary came bare-bodied clad in a silk

Dhoti and saluted Mother according to the custom of his country when visiting temples.

[ To be continued. ]

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“You will most certainly have to undertake this pilgrimage to Immortality, trampling under foot hundreds and hundreds of obstacles and impediments. This is the kind of manliness that has to be awakened. Why should you remain helpless as if paralysed? Why? Why? Why?”

“Ma”

# ONE ASPECT OF MATAJI'S TEACHING

*Vijaiānanda (Dr. A. Weintrob)*

The way of imparting spiritual knowledge (*Paravidya*) is fundamentally different from that of teaching secular knowledge (*Apara vidya*). The latter does not go beyond the realm of words and forms and remains within the boundaries of discursive thinking. Talking, reading, hearing, reflecting, committing it to memory and assimilating it intellectually are the means to master it. But where spiritual knowledge is concerned things are quite different.

"*Yatō nivartantē aprāpya manusa saha*" ("From where all speech turns back and also the mind, having been unable to reach it" ...), says the Taittiriya Upanishad. The purpose of spiritual instruction is to reverse the outgoing current of the mind and turn it inwards its source. On the path to self-knowledge the aspirant has to advance stage by stage, penetrating deeper and deeper, starting from the most superficial level until he reaches the firm ground of the Great Silence. The deeper levels are the bases and contain potentially the more superficial ones—just as for example several leaves grow on a twig of a tree,

several twigs on a branch, and so forth. Consequently the deeper one penetrates the more concentrated and efficient will the mind become. Instructions received by mere verbal explanation will carry much less conviction than that which is transmitted on a deeper level. At the deeper levels things bear the evidence of direct perception and appear much clearer than the arguments of discursive thinking.

This is why almost all religions make extensive use of various kinds of symbols—idols with human or animal features, (*Murtis*), geometrical designs (*yantras*), sounds (*Bija Mraṅtra*) etc. in order to appeal to ever deeper layers of the mind. The greater the depths which the disciple reaches the simpler will be the symbols he needs.

Probably all great teachers have made use of that way of conveying Truth without the help of discursive thinking, or using it only in its elementary aspect. Mataji in Her daily contact with Her devotees, quite frequently seems to impart some of the precious teaching in a similar way.

But alas! often we fail to take full advantage of this divine dew: at times because of our lack of awareness, but also because it appears so simple to us that we do not make an effort to grasp its real meaning. Mataji's infinite kindness sometimes makes us forget who She really is: that Her sayings are like the teachings of the Holy Scriptures; the words uttered by Her lips like *mantras*; Her gestures *mudras* and Her facial expressions the images of the Divine with form.

Like most of us I have been able to catch only a few isolated drops of this divine dew. It is from my own limited angle of vision that I take the liberty to write about this very profound teaching of Mataji. The few examples that follow will give only a faint idea of it.

## 1

Let me begin with something that appears most insignificant. Mataji frequently asks people: "How are you?" "Are you well?" etc. When returning to Varanasi after a journey She usually would ask me and others this question. In the beginning, although I was glad to receive Mataji's attention, I did not attach much importance to this. Later, however, I came to observe that She put this question in many different ways and on definite occasions. Once I was in a state of despondency, feeling

that I was not progressing at all with my *sadhana*, may be that I was even moving in a wrong direction, while as a matter of fact, as I understood later, exactly the reverse was true. During that period Mataji asked me on two occasions: "*Tum bahut achhe ho?*" meaning "You are very well?" She used a slightly questioning intonation and spoke with a loud voice as if She wanted to impress something on my mind.

At some other time I was thinking that I was progressing fast and—quit unconsciously—was getting a little puffed up with pride. But this attitude on the spiritual path is indeed the surest way to downfall. When Ma came to Varanasi, She asked me: "*Tum achhe ho, na?*" meaning: "You are all right, aren't you?" but word by word: "You are all right, no?" This question drew my attention to the weak point and I corrected my attitude of mind.

## 2

The following example—although not concerned with any teaching—is an interesting illustration of how an apparent defect in Mataji's voice can have a very good reason.

Once after the rainy season I got a pain in my tonsils which lasted for one and a half months without my being

able to get rid of it. Mataji had just arrived from Hardwar, I believe. She sat down on the veranda in front of the Annapurna Temple; we were about twenty people sitting around Her. She looked in my direction and said: "*Tum Kaise ho ?*" ("How are you?") I was not sure whether Her question had been addressed to me and kept quiet, wondering. Mataji repeated the question looking straight at me. This time Her voice seemed hoarse, as if She had a sore throat, although actually Mataji's health was quite all right that day. At that moment I had forgotten all about my aching tonsils and answered: "I am all right." The next day my throat was completely cured.

## 3

## An Apparent Mistake.

Once I went to see Mataji at Vindhyachal and it was decided that I should remain there for some time after Her departure. Mataji said: "You may stay in the cave at the "*Bhajanalay*",\* you are *Bhajannanda*."† When pronouncing the last word Her voice choked as if She had wanted to utter my real name, which is 'Vijainanda', but a wrong word had come out by mistake. My first reaction was a slight displeasure to hear Mataji

call me by a wrong name; but immediately after and much more so later I grasped the deep meaning of Her apparent mistake and the blessing it contained.

## 4.

## Changes in Mataji's countenance,

Our facial expressions are of great importance in our relationship with one another. Everybody can to a varying degree interpret the meaning expressed through the mimicry of the face, although with most people it is half unconscious and obscured by a great deal of discursive thinking. Our facial muscles are almost constantly moving and expressing various ideas. But this movement revolves round a central image which will be prominent for some hours, or sometimes even days, and which represents the temporary personality with whom we are identified at the moment. This central image has its origin in the movement of the vital force. Most of the time, however, we are fully identified with this central image and therefore completely unaware of it. If we could watch it as a spectator a great deal would be achieved as regards the control of our mind. Mataji has many ways of helping us to this awareness.

\* The *Bhajanalaya* is a house adjoining the Ashram grounds at Vindhyachal and mostly at the disposal of the Ashram. "*Bhajanalaya*" means place for doing *sadhana*.

† *Bhajan* means religious music, but also daily spiritual practices.

Sometimes She acts as a mirror, reflecting for a short while through Her countenance our state of mind, or its opposite or its complement. If we could keenly observe the changes in Mataji's countenance with an attitude of love and reverence, we should greatly benefit spiritually. All the modifications in the facial expressions happen with full consciousness and have a definite meaning. The pure *Sattwa* that shines through Mataji's body is in itself a potent *Upadesha* (spiritual teaching).

## 5.

Sometimes Mataji brings about circumstances that strike our mind just at the psychological moment and impress it much more than a long discourse could possibly do. One evening at Varanasi Mataji was walking on the terrace facing the Ganges. I was leaning against the small shrine of Shiva situated at the back of the terrace. That day I felt greatly depressed thinking that I was not progressing enough. I looked sadly at Mataji and told Her mentally "Ma! Vijayananda has not yet got '*Vijaya*' (victory)!" While thinking these words I had quite mechanically picked one of the flowers of the *Akand* tree that grows in the courtyard of the Ashram near the Shiva shrine. It was only a bud and still completely closed. I took it

in my left hand and touched its top slightly with one finger of the right hand. As soon as I touched it the bud opened slowly and spread its petals up to full blossoming. I had not exercised any pressure, but just touched it lightly. Neither was this due to any *pranic* force flowing through my body; I afterwards tried several times to reproduce this feat again, but never succeeded. It was no doubt Mataji's response to my complaint and in this original way it was impressed on my mind at that very instant. The answer was clear enough what Mataji usually replies to a complaint or query of that sort. "It may happen even now—at this very moment!"—namely self-realization.

## 6

Once in Dehradun Mataji was sitting in the Kirtan hall of the Kishenpur Ashram after the silence that is observed daily from 8-45 p. m.—9 p. m. Some devotees had brought a few mangoes, but there were not enough for a general distribution and so Mataji gave them only to the children present. Those mangoes were slightly yellowish. Among the lot there was one green-one, apparently unripe. Mataji threw it to me saying: "Kachha hai, bahut kachha" ("Unripe—very unripe!") Mataji's *Prasad* given with Her own hands is a rare and precious thing, whatever it



