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Ananda Vartā

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

* 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.

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.

“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.]

“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

Vijānanda (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 Mrastra*) 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

may be. *Satsang* being over, I thought, ripe or unripe I should partake of it immediately; no harm can come through Mataji's *Prasad*. The mango seemed quite soft to the touch and might not be so very unripe after all, I reflected. But when I tasted it I was amazed to find that it was most delicious and just exactly ripe. Why then had Mataji said that it was unripe? This thought puzzled me. As a part of Her all-knowingness Mataji has a very keen sense of observation—not the smallest detail escapes Her attention. Consequently She must have surely noticed that the mango was soft and of a type that remains green even after ripening. On the other hand Mataji never utters an untruth, not even the shadow of one.

But soon after I remembered what had happened that day. At about six O' clock in the evening Mataji was taking a stroll on the veranda of the Ashram. The same day I had succeeded in my meditation and was foolishly thinking that realization was now near at hand. I looked at Mataji and told Her mentally: "Ma, now the fruit is in my hand, the *Amalaka* is on my palm!" The green mango had been the medium of conveying Her answer. She had not said that the mango was unripe, obviously, She had meant the rare fruit of Self-realization of which I had been proudly thinking that I was to gather

it very soon: yet it was still very unripe.

7

It often occurs that Mataji transmits some teaching, advice or even a reprimand through the medium of another person. Mataji is all-pervading; She is the Antaryamin seated in the hearts of all. On several occasions I have noticed that when I entered the hall with a problem or query in my mind, the Mahatma engaged in a discourse on some spiritual topic in Mataji's presence was talking exactly about the subject that was occupying my mind. In this way I have received much valuable advice, some answers to my queries and even the solution to one or the other difficult problem. On those occasions I felt clearly that the teaching was coming from Mataji Herself—I mean Mataji as She appears to us. For if we consider Her in Her aspect of the omnipresent Guru, Her teaching may come through any person or object and under any condition or circumstance.

But to conclude: Mataji's mere presence is in itself the highest spiritual teaching. A living example is far more convincing and effective than any amount of talk, however brilliant and well put. Mataji shows us how supreme intelligence can be coupled

with infinite love and compassion; how one can at the same time be utterly simple and natural and yet display the manners of the highest culture; that it is possible to live constantly in *Sahaja Samadhi* and be

also aware of the minutest details of one's every day surroundings. All Her actions, Her words, Her ways of dealing with people show us that spiritual perfection goes hand in hand with human perfection.

“It is the pure, undefiled flower that finds a place at the feet of the Lord and nowhere else. Speak about Him, meditate on Him, try to see Him in everyone, Him who is the Self, the breath of life, the heart of hearts.”

“Ma”

IMPERMANENCE AND IMMORTALITY

Lama Anagarika Govinda

Āchārya, Ārya Maitreya Mandala

Why is there such a difference between the knowledge that has been acquired through life and the knowledge that has been transmitted to us through others? Why is it that those who have been educated in the thoughts of great thinkers, are very often still far from being wise?

It is because experience means participation of our whole being, and this is more than a merely objective and unconcerned observation. The contemplation of food does not still our hunger,—only the incorporation of food. Similarly, every real experience means an incorporation, an assimilation of something essential.

The indifferent one, the unfeeling, untouched one, who does not allow either things or living beings to enter his heart, is as little capable of real experience as he who allows everything to take possession of him and who is merely the slave of the outer world.

The first one excludes himself, the second one loses himself. The first one is comparable to a person who dies

of thirst at the bank of a river, because he refuses to drink from it; the second one is like a man who throws himself into the river and is drowned.

Life means giving and taking:—exchange, transformation. It is breathing in and breathing out. It is not the taking possession of anything, but a taking part in everything that comes in touch with us,—which is neither a state of possession nor of being possessed, neither a clinging to the objects of our experience nor a state of indifference, but the middle way between both, the way of transformation.

We are transformed by what we accept. We transform what we have accepted by assimilating it. We are transformed by the act of giving, and we contribute to the transformation of others by what we are giving.

He who opposes this process of transformation will die the slow death of rigidity; he will be expelled and rejected from all that lives, like dead matter from a living organism. Death



Mataji with Shree Gopalji in her lap



Mazaf with three copies in her lap

is a deficiency of the faculty of transformation.

This faculty is fundamentally different from decay or mere transiency, i.e., unqualified change. Decay is the dissolution of that which has ceased to be an organic unity, a system of harmonious relations within its own limits or with regard to a greater unit or the world as a whole.

Transformation, however, is not arbitrary change, or change governed by chance, but change governed by law, according to the inherent nature of the object in question. There are many categories of law: from the most universal to the most individual, from the general laws of inorganic matter to the particular (and more intricate) laws of organic life and individual self-expression; from the realm of necessity to the realm of liberty;—because liberty is not lawlessness, but the possibility of self-expression or self-realisation within the framework of universal laws. Self-realisation, however, can never consist in egocentricity, exclusivity or individual limitation, but only in a higher degree of responsiveness and creative activity, in a dynamic exchange of vital and spiritual forces.

“Our self to live must go through a continual change and growth of form, which may be termed a continual death

and a continual life going on at the same time. It is really courting death when we refuse to accept death; when we wish to give the form of the self some fixed changelessness; when the self feels no impulse which urges it to grow out of itself; when it treats its limits as final and acts accordingly.” (Rabindranath Tagore, “Sadhana”).

Thus, transformation contains both: change and stability, plurality and unity, movement and constancy. It has the characteristic of life, namely, to connect organically the polar opposites, the stumbling-blocks of logic, and to unite them in an all-embracing rhythm.

Rhythm and direction represent the stability of movement,—a movement which never follows a straight line (which exists only in mathematics, i.e., in abstract thought, but not in life). Therefore the logic of the brain is different from the logic of life.

If we want to have stability, we can only find it within ourselves, namely, as the stability of our inner direction (towards the centre, towards Enlightenment). This is not the stability of inertia, but the stability of a dynamic movement (therefore the Buddhist symbol of the “stream” which one enters as soon as one has found that inner direction, and the designation of “stream-winner” or “Sotapan” for one who has entered the path of

liberation). Whether this movement comes to a standstill when the centre is reached, or whether it is transformed into another, higher kind of movement, is of no importance, because the individual limitations, the cause of all our problems, would have ceased to exist. At any rate, the inner stability and integrity of one who has found his inner centre, is infinitely greater than that of a world experienced by unenlightened and mentally undirected individuals.

It is for this reason that Hinduism and Buddhism look upon this world as something which has to be overcome, or as certain schools put it, as illusion. This is not a negation of nature or of any thought of objective reality, but the negation of distortion and of wrong values derived from or applied to a distorted reality. Values can only be produced by the determination, or attitude of a conscious mind. There are no self-existent values, but only values in relationship to other things and to somebody who discerns or makes use of them. It is, therefore, impossible to ascribe values to nature or to the world 'as such'. The world as such is neither good nor bad; it produces criminals as well as saints, ignorance as well as wisdom, fools as well as Enlightened Ones. One may say that the number of the former is out of proportion with regard

to the latter ones, but this would mean that one mistakes quantity for quality. The human body is built up by millions and millions of living cells and is inhabited by further millions of minute living organisms; and yet, there is only *one* human mind to justify this immense organisation. Likewise the existence of one enlightened consciousness cannot be outweighed by millions of unenlightened individuals. One wise man means more than a thousand fools.

So it all depends what we make out of the material which we call the world or our surroundings. Out of the same clay beautiful and ugly, useful and useless things can be made. It depends on the potter and not on the clay. And similarly it is not because there is something wrong with the world that we suffer, but there is something with *us*. We do not suffer, for instance, because everything is impermanent, but because we cling to the things. If we would not cling to them, we would not mind their impermanence. We enjoy a waterfall or a cloud-formation inspite of their impermanence. On the contrary, their changing forms heighten our delight. We admire the fleeting and fragile beauty of a flower, and we appreciate it all the more because of its uniqueness, its momentariness, its unrepeatable individuality. It is

precious, because it is a unique expression of life, based on all that has been, and thus incorporating in its individual form the immensity of the universe. That is why the Buddha's last gesture in holding up a flower, when asked by Subhuti to reveal the quintessence of his teaching, was the most profound sermon he ever preached—without uttering one word.

It needs a high degree of culture and insight to experience the eternal in transient forms, to see the timeless harmony in the momentariness of phenomena, to feel the infinite rhythm that pervades even the most insignificant expression of life.

It is the deadly sameness of machine—made things and of a life governed by machines that perverts the mind and kills the spirit. Infinite variety is the hall-mark of the creative genius, sameness, the hall-mark of mediocrity and decadence. The symbol of the machine is the wheel. The machine-wheel is the symbol of Sansāra, of ever-recurring birth and death, of the inescapable law of existence. (No wheel was known in Tibet, and the people were happy, even in the face of hardships. Now the wheel has come to Tibet, and with it slavery for those who have fallen under its sway.)

But there is another wheel, an

invisible one, which does not revolve but radiates and pervades every form of life. It is the Dharma-Chakra, and he who realizes his universality and the infinite relationship of all things and forms of appearance, without denying their relative existence and value.

We live in a world of impermanence and instability, because we are blinded by tiny fragments, to which we cling under the influence of unreasonable desires; and thus blinded we lose the great connections and inner relations which give meaning and harmony to the flux of life. If we could see the whole picture, the totality and completeness of relations, we would be able to see things and beings in their proper perspective, and the change or movement, which until then could only be conceived as "impermanence" (under its negative aspect of destruction) would reveal a consistency of rhythm, a stability of direction, and a continuity of organic development, which could restore to our world and life a higher order of permanence or value than ever conceived by means of intellectual abstractions and speculations.

We accept the unity of a thing in space, though it extends in various dimensions with various aspects and properties. But we doubt a similar unity, if it is extended in time which

is merely another dimension), where it likewise shows various aspects and properties, developing according to its inherent nature. "Our intellect grasps this ultimate truth about things slowly, laboriously and piecemeal. It sees but one thing (and one aspect of it) at a time, and so always brings a feeling of incompleteness and limitation. But we have occasional moments of insight when something presented to our sense or imagination will from its own character or from some exalted mood of our own, seem like a perfect and perfectly comprehended universe in miniature." (Carrit)

This is what the great mystics of all times and the greatest of artists

have experienced. But while the latter could only achieve it in their most creative moments, the former ones, due to their complete inner detachment and their fundamentally changed spiritual outlook, were able to dwell more or less permanently in this state. For them the impermanent world of ordinary mortals has disappeared, though they may live with them and extend to them their loving kindness, because they have found the central harmony and never can lose the conception of totality in that of the individual. They are the Siddhas who have achieved the magic power that transforms *samsāra* into *nirvāna*, the saints and sages who attained Enlightenment.

"To live in the joy that springs from the mind's constant occupation with things divine is man's duty."

"Ma"

REMINISCENCES

Atmananda

It was in Almora, where I spent my summer holidays in May-June 1943, that I had my first *darshan* of Mataji. I had heard about Her from various people and all of them had spoken highly of Her, but for some reason or other I had not been to see Her until then. I was in fact searching for spiritual guidance; however the thought that She could be the one I was longing to find, did not enter my mind. I was therefore not in a hurry to meet Her.

One morning I went to Kalimat near Almora for a walk. The Danish Sadhu who lives there, said to me: "The holy Mother is at Patal Devi; why don't you go and see Her on your way back? Her surroundings are noisy, but She is real." I did not quite know what he meant by 'real,' but I did go to Patal Devi.

At that time the Ashram had not yet been built, or perhaps only a small portion of it, in any case it looked very different then from what it is now. Mataji was sitting on a string cot in the open, with a few people squatting round Her on the grass. She

seemed all joy and beauty, with Her long black hair falling loosely over Her shoulders and back, and Her radiant face smiling. She addressed a few words to me and I noticed that She did not treat me as a stranger, but as if I were well known to Her. "She does certainly look very lovely," I thought, "but that alone will not help me." I could not see any way of getting to know more about Her. I knew no Bengali and only some colloquial Hindi, not nearly enough for a serious conversation. There were no books in English about Sri Anandamayi Ma, except a small one "*Sad Vani*" and even that was not available. Moreover Mataji travelled about a good deal and did not remain anywhere for long. All my life I had been taught to look at things critically, not to accept anything on authority, to watch and weigh, to think and find out for myself. Besides I had heard much about false Gurus and fake Mahatmas and how difficult it was to distinguish between genuine holiness and first hand knowledge or a mere semblance of these.

There was another factor which

was against me : I was wearing a European dress, a solar topi, shoes and socks and carried a hand-bag in one hand and a mountaineering-stick in the other. My appearance seemed to clash painfully with Mataji's surroundings and I was sensitive to the curious glances of the people who were grouped around Her. Nevertheless I remember distinctly being struck by the inward beauty and purity that shone in the faces of two or three of those people. After about fifteen minutes I got up to go. Mataji remarked about my leaving so quickly, but I said it was getting late as I had to walk about 3 miles to the cantonment.

* * *

Only several months later I had Mataji's *darshan* again, at Varanasi, where I was a teacher at Rajghat School. On a Sunday I went to see some friends at Assi Ghat and intended to visit also *Sri Hariharbaba*, who had a tremendous reputation as a great Mahatma and lived in a houseboat on the Ganges near Assighat. The famous Veena player, Mr. Basu happened to be at the house of my friends. He said they would all go to see Sri Anandamayi Ma, who was somewhere quite near at the moment, would I care to accompany them. I readily agreed.

Mataji was sitting amongst a huge crowd of people under a pandal on the

banks of the Ganges. As I came to know later, this was the site of the Sri Anandamayi Ashram. The land had already been acquired, but the construction of the buildings had not begun as yet. There was Kirtan going on and some of the singers and players were moving round a central altar, dancing as they sang. I was then not used to this kind of spectacular worship and felt rather out of place. Mataji was sitting far away from the entrance and the whole of the available space being packed, it seemed well nigh impossible to approach Her. We stood at a distance for a few minutes, when suddenly the mother of one of my pupils, who was a devotee of Mataji, emerged out of the throng, took me firmly by the hand and without any further ado led me straight to Mataji, where she somehow managed to make space for me to sit down right next to Her. I felt the looks of several hundreds of men and women piercing through me like arrows and would have given anything, if by some magic I could have vanished from their sight. But there I was right near Mataji and She smiled at me encouragingly and even remembered my short visit to Her at Almora the summer before. In spite of the dense crowd and the loud singing and dancing which disturbed me, I distinctly felt that there was something very special about Mataji, which I could neither gauge nor define.

but which had a fascination and was undeniable and worth pursuing.

* * *

In winter 1944 an English *sadhaka*, L. Thompson, who had lived in South India for a number of years, came to stay at Rajghat School. Being the only other European, I was requested to receive him and see that he was comfortable. It did not take me long to find out that he was a quite unusually earnest seeker after Truth, in fact ruthlessly single-minded. He had come to Ceylon at the age of 23 and one year later proceeded to South India in quest of spiritual guidance which he had sought in vain in England and France. He had stayed in Sri Ramana Maharshi's Ashram for seven years with intervals and had received initiation from a well-known Guru, a *Jnani* of the South. He had made it a point to meet and study closely everyone who was believed to be highly advanced spiritually. He had been to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram twice for some length of time, had met Swami Ramdas and Mother Krishnabai, J. Krishnamurti, Sri Jogeswami of Ceylon and a number of others who are difficult to approach and known only to a very few. He had obviously developed an intuition as to what was real knowledge and attainment rather than book-learning or imperfect knowledge. To my question

why he had come to North-India when he had found so much in the South, he gave as one of his reasons that he had seen a photo of a holy mother who travelled in the North for whom he immediately had felt a strong attraction. He consulted his Guru who had said: "Yes, go and meet her." He showed me the picture. "Oh", I exclaimed, "this is Sri Anandamayi Ma, I have had Her *darshan*." He confirmed: "Yes, this was the name by which she was known." "I believe She is in Varanasi at present", I said, "one of the teachers of this school goes to see Her often." The next morning Thompson set out to meet Sri Sri Ma and was not seen again at Rajghat that day. It must be made clear that T. had a very sharp and critical intellect and was extremely difficult to please. Only the very best, the highest interested him and he coldly used to dismiss everything else.

To my amazement I found him all but in raptures when I asked him about his impression of Sri Anandamayi Ma. "As soon as I saw Her," he said "I knew that my intuition had been correct—except that I found far more than I had expected. I simply could not tear myself away. When She retired for Her meal and rest I spent the time somewhere near about and went back to see Her again in the evening and remained till late at night. I have

never seen anyone like Her. There is not the slightest trace of an ego to be detected in Her. Her eyes look right through you into the far unknown distance; Her voice is absolutely impersonal and so is Her walk." "How can you possibly judge, in a single day?" I questioned, "you have not even talked to Her." (Thompson did not know either Bengali or Hindi.) "I am quite certain," he declared with emphasis, "I have spent many years studying the great men of India and have developed some insight in this respect. There is no need to talk. I watched Her very carefully: I have never before come face to face with such perfection; there is no flaw in Her, none whatever."

It naturally made a deep impression on me to hear some one talk in this strain whom I had found utterly unemotional, detached and one-pointed. I could hardly help wanting to know Mataji for myself and at closer quarters. But opportunity did not offer so quickly.

That summer I arrived at Almora only in June. Mataji was just on the point of leaving for Dehradun with Her whole party. I found Her engaged in an animated conversation in Hindi with some visitors, but alas, I only understood fragments of it which I could hardly piece together. After a short while Mataji left. I deemed

myself lucky to have caught at least a glimpse of Her that day.

* * *

Mataji can sometimes be heard to say: "There is a time for everything. No one can come to me until the time is ripe." Almost two years after I had had my first *darshan* of Mataji my lucky stars allowed me at long last to make closer contact with Her.

In the second half of March 1945, Thompson received a letter from a Buddhist *Bikkhu*, an old Ceylonese friend of his who had come to Sarnath, asking him to see him there. By road Sarnath was then about 10 miles from Rajghat, but by footpaths across the fields only 4-5 miles. T. walked to Sarnath that evening, announcing that he intended returning the next morning. He did not take anything with him. But he stayed away the whole of the next two days. When he did not come back even in the afternoon of the third day, the Principal of the school and myself decided that he must have fallen ill. He had not even taken a change of clothes with him. There had been a case of cholera in the servant's quarter opposite to where he stayed at Rajghat. There was then no phone at Sarnath. The only thing was to go there and see what had happened. Equipped with some medicines from the school dispensary I went there by cycle rickshaw.

I found T. sitting very happily in the room of one of the *Bhikkhus*. To my astonished inquiries, he replied: "Sri Anandamayi Ma is here. My friend and I went for Her *darshan* the evening I arrived. I had no intention of talking to Her. But She Herself started by asking me about myself. There is an excellent translator here, such as I have rarely come across. He has known Mataji closely for 18 years and I can feel that he really understands what She says and is able to render it into good English." (It was Sri J.C. Mukerji, Sri Gurupriya Devi's cousin.) "At first I was hesitant, but once the ice was broken I had more and more questions to ask. It is amazing how subtle Her replies are. Though She is almost illiterate all our learning is put to shame by Her great wisdom. Every morning Mataji, J. C. Mukerji and myself have been discussing in private for two or three hours. She Herself offered me this unique opportunity. How could I possibly leave before I had put before Her every point that was puzzling my mind. However now there is not much left to be talked over and I shall probably return to Rajghat to-morrow."

I spent that evening in Mataji's presence on the roof of the Birla Dharmasala. At Sarnath no crowd thronged round Mataji—only a few

of Her companions, another dozen or so who managed to come from Varanasi and some of the *Bhikkhus*. It was an informal and quiet gathering, no loud singing or dancing. This time I did not feel out of place; everything seemed friendly and congenial. Sarnath had been my favourite place of pilgrimage and rest ever since I had come to Rajghat nearly ten years before. On many Sundays I used to walk there early morning and spend the day reading Buddhist scriptures, sitting either in the library or in the open near the stupa, enjoying the peace, solitude and the natural beauty of the setting, wondering how it was that even after millenia the presence of the Lord Buddha could still be felt so strongly. Ever since my adolescence I had felt drawn towards the Lord Buddha, in fact I had read his talks first in German translation when I was 15 or 16 years old. But little did I dream that Sarnath, where the Lord Buddha had delivered His first sermon after he attained Illumination, would be the setting for a most decisive and important turning-point in my life

Sri Mukerji asked me whether I wished to make use of his services as an interpreter, but I just wanted to sit quietly near Mataji and imbibe the atmosphere. I returned to Sarnath the next evening on foot, stayed for the night and walked back at early

dawn to be in time for school. This I repeated almost daily. Occasionally however I found that Mataji had gone to Varanasi and was not returning to Sarnath until the next day. Sri Mukerji threatened every day to leave for Allahabad, but I always found him still at Sarnath. The 24th of March was a Saturday and I came prepared to remain for the week-end. I asked a question during the evening gathering and late at night had a long private talk with Mataji. What She said was so simple and so completely convincing, there was no room for doubt. "How strange that I had not been able to find this out for myself," I thought. In fact it was not, another talking to me, but my Self conversing with myself. This cannot be explained, it must be felt. It was an experience beyond words, but all the more real

for that. What Mataji said was evidently only the outer expression of something that took place simultaneously on a much deeper level or perhaps on all levels. The next morning I had another talk with Mataji to clarify some details and then Sri Mukerji actually left for Allahabad.

During my conversation with Mataji She asked me whether I had to support anyone of my family. Several weeks later I received a letter to announce the death of my aged father, the only near relative I still possessed : he had died a refugee in America just three days after Mataji talked to me on the roof of the Birla Dharmasala at Sarnath. The time to make close contact with Mataji had come for me the moment all my worldly ties had been dissolved.

(To be continued)

"By sorrow does the Lord dispel sorrow and by adversity does He destroy adversity. When this is done He sends no more suffering."

"Ma"

The Uninterrupted Remembrance of God

(*Akhanda Bhagavat Smriti*)

If the current of our life is to be diverted from the surface of things and directed towards the depths within, we must keep the Goal ever before us and exert ourselves with our whole being, body, mind and heart, to advance steadily towards it. This effort constitutes everyone's individual *sadhana*.

Its main purpose is to awaken from self-forgetfulness, ignorance and confusion to full self-realization. The nature of each person's *sadhana* varies according to the instructions given by his Guru or spiritual guide, or he may proceed by the light of his own discrimination. Our approach may thus be along the paths of action, yoga, devotion or inquiry (knowledge). If our endeavour is to bear fruit, it will have to be continued with great patience and unswerving confidence over a prolonged period of time. Unless our practice is constant and uninterrupted we cannot hope to attain to perfection. It is of the utmost importance that everyone of us should individually endeavour to sustain the constant remembrance of God, throughout the day and night, by any means or device

within his reach. If the combined effort of a whole group of aspirants lends its additional power to each individual *sadhana*, then by the Grace of God, success ought to be assured.

We therefore feel that if each one of us sets apart 15 minutes out of every 24 hours to be dedicated to the contemplation of God or to meditation on the Supreme Self and if by this method the perpetual remembrance of God throughout the day and night can thus collectively be achieved, the hope does not seem unfounded that each participant may reap the benefit of this uninterrupted stream of Divine thought. Everyone of us will have to take special care to adhere regularly and punctually every single day of his life to the 15 minutes he has chosen for himself. To change the time at one's own discretion or to be irregular in one's practice and miss it off and on is not permissible, since the current of meditation would thereby be broken.

In order to keep up uninterrupted meditation by this method, at least 96 persons will have to co-operate ; however it does not seem wise to depend

on this number either, for due to some accident, misfortune or other serious reason people may occasionally be prevented from carrying out the duty they have undertaken and their particular time would then remain unprovided for. We therefore propose that each 15 minutes should be chosen by not less than 5 persons; consequently at least 480 individuals will have to co-operate in order to ensure perpetuity. When we put this proposal before Sri Sri Ma, She seemed to welcome it with great joy and enthusiasm, saying: "By your constant dedication, by your continual offering of oblations a perfect sacrifice (*yajna*) will be performed uninterruptedly." Everyone without exception may take part in this combined effort and Mataji encouraged us to get busy in this respect. She further said: "It is a matter of great joy that all of you have decided to set apart 15 minutes each at a particular hour every day for the concentration on God's Name. In order to overcome occasional obstacles and difficulties in abiding by this decision one has to be adamant and persevering. The particular 15 minutes of every day that have been fixed should be dedicated to the thought of God for the whole of one's life. Once the time has been chosen it must never be altered again, but remain for ever reserved for the remembrance (contemplation) of Him. When a seedling has taken root it

grows and spreads far and wide. By keeping regularly and punctually to a particular time one's *sadhana* will, as it were, take root and there is hope that it may gradually extend over the whole of one's days and nights. Each participant is free to meditate in his own way: it may be *japa* of a *mantra* or of any of the names of God with the help of a rosary or in rhythm with the breath; it may be the contemplation of his *Ishta* or of the Void; it may be Self-inquiry, and so on. One is not bound in any way except to meditate at a particular time.

As a rule one should sit still in a meditative pose during those 15 minutes, but if this be impossible on occasions, one must at all events strictly refrain from speaking and concentrate the mind on God's Name: whether at home or in the street; sitting, standing, lying or walking, riding in a train, bus or aeroplane; in sickness and bereavement, in anger and distress, while nursing a patient, cooking or serving food; whether one be clean or dirty—under all circumstances whatsoever—those particular 15 minutes must be used for the remembrance of God. Without firm determination nothing can be accomplished, much less can one become free from conditioning (*Samskaras*). One has to make an unshakable resolve and try one's utmost to abide by it tenaciously. It

is imperative to keep up the practice of those 15 minutes with regularity and devotion, so that it may ever continue without missing a single day—in the midst of extreme rejoicing as well as in times of severe perplexity and restlessness. Just as birds call regularly at fixed times throughout the year according to the laws of nature, prompted by some invisible power, so by virtue of prolonged practice the remembrance of God will come to you automatically during the chosen 15 minutes. By sustained effort anything may be achieved. Amidst the tumult, the hustle and bustle of fleeting things, those few minutes should be kept apart for the invocation of Him who is Eternal Joy. The more time one can give to Divine contemplation the better, the aim being the unbroken absorption in the thought of God. This body addresses you as father, mother, or friend, it may therefore well request from you those 15 minutes once daily—surely, everyone gladly fulfils the desire of a near and dear one! But from those who look upon this body as a stranger, it begs those 15 minutes as a gift given in charity.”

Fired by Mataji's enthusiasm we request all who wish to co-operate in our scheme and dedicate 15 fixed minutes out of every 24 hours to meditation or to *japa* of God's Name,

to communicate their name, address and the time they have chosen to the address given below. This will then be recorded in the register of the Ashram. Every man and woman without distinction of religion, sect, nationality, caste, profession, age, etc. etc. is invited to contribute his or her share in this attempt at an uninterrupted remembrance of God.

In order to ensure the continuity of this meditation we politely request every participant to kindly inform the Varanasi Ashram 4 times a year whether he or she is attending to the chosen time punctually and regularly. This will give us the chance to enrol new participants wherever necessary and thus to avoid breaks in the meditation.

Dates on which the information should be sent :

- (1) Mataji's birthday in the first week of May.
- (2) August fullmoon (*Jhulan Purnima.*)
- (3) November full moon (*Kartik Purnima.*)
- (4) January 14th (*Paush Sankranti*)

All letters should be addressed to :

Sri Panu Brahmachari,
c/o Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Ashram,
Bhadaini, *Varanasi*, U. P.

MATRI LILA

(15th October—15th January, 1959)

Mataji left Delhi on the morning of October 13th and reached Varanasi the same night. Dr. Gopal Das Gupta had made all preparations for the annual *Gopal Utsava* which took place on the 14th morning on the premises of the Ashram at Bhadaini. On this occasion warm clothes and sweets are distributed to the infants of the poor. Since early dawn mothers with their babies in their arms had begun to flock to the Ashram. Dr. Das Gupta had arranged for a small brass image of *Gopal* (the child *Krishna*) to be given to each one of the tiny children. It was a charming sight to watch Mataji hand to every baby one of the images along with a woollen sweater and some sweets.

The same afternoon Mataji left for Allahabad and went straight to the Ashram of the late Sri Gopal Thakur. Perhaps it is not out of place to say a few words about this great soul. Bengali by birth he had studied law and was earning his living as an employee of an Insurance company at Patna, when his Guru, Sri Satya Deva Thakur, founder of the Sadhan Samar Ashram, gave him the order to resign his post and devote his life to the dissemination

of the teachings of the Gita. Although he had his wife and several children to provide for, he obeyed instantly. This great faith and devotion helped him to face all difficulties and hardships. After some time he and his family moved to Allahabad at the request and with the assistance of one of his disciples. This sincerity and his brilliant discourses on the *Bhagavad Gita* attracted more and more admirers and disciples to him. He was deeply devoted to Mataji and brought all his followers to Her. Once a year he used to celebrate the *Gita Jayanti* in one of our Ashrams in Mataji's presence, even after his health had deteriorated towards the end of his life.

At his Ashram at Allahabad Durga Puja is observed every autumn and for the last few years Mataji has blessed the function by Her visit. Even after Sri Gopal Thakur passed away She has continued to do so. This time, in response to the earnest requests of the Ashramites, She spent 3 days there, after which She moved to the residence of Sri N. N. Mukerji, Retired District Judge, at George Town. In the midst of the beautiful garden a small bungalow had been newly constructed

for Mataji. The entire planning gave evidence of the artistic skill of the owners. A Swiss cottage had also been pitched up for Mataji near the bungalow and She used to spend the nights there.

Just as in October 1952, Durga Puja was celebrated at the residence of Sri Baleshwari Prasad, Advocate of the High Court. He and his whole family are deeply devoted to Mataji. For months a number of young girls, all bhaktas and admirers of Mataji worked at pieces of decoration for the pandal and its main entrance, with the result that the decorations, were said to be the most artistic ones that Allahabad has ever known. Altogether the Puja celebrations proved a great success. There was nothing left to be desired concerning the arrangements that had been made.

However since nothing can be claimed as perfect in this world, rains poured down in torrents on the evening of October 19th, *Ashtami* day and the pandal was almost flooded. Fortunately the images remained quite unaffected by the bad weather. *Puja* and *Aruti* could be continued smoothly as if nothing had happened.

Mataji's Swiss cottage was also very wet and Mataji gave way to the entreaties of others to shift to the

house of Sri Gopal Swarup Pathak. Mataji had stayed there on two or three previous occasions in a room reserved for Her use, with an independent entrance from the garden. The master of the house, Sri Pathak, was away at the U. S. A., but the rest of the family were ever-ready to serve Mataji as well as Her devotees and guests.

In the morning of the 23rd of October Mataji returned to Sri Mukerji's house, from where She motored to Varanasi the same evening. Quite a large number of bhaktas who had come for the Durga Puja followed Her to Varanasi in the hope that Mataji would soon return to Vindhyachal. However She remained in Varanasi for *Lakshmi* Puja at the special request of the teachers and students of the Kanya-peeth and proceeded to Vindhyachal only on the 28th of October afternoon. Not less than 32 persons, amongst them Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Gopinath Kaviraj, accompanied Mataji to this beautiful, quiet and secluded spot. Dr. Panna Lall joined later. Apart from the Ashram itself, accommodation had been reserved beforehand at the Bhajanalaya as well as at the P. W. D. bungalow in the close vicinity on Ashtabhuja Hill.

After about 9 days of rest Mataji returned to Varanasi on the 7th of November morning. Everyone was

eagerly looking forward to Kali Puja to be performed on the 9th night in Mataji's presence. But immediately after returning to Varanasi Mataji developed a very bad pain in the back which made it difficult for Her to move about. In spite of this She came downstairs and sat in the *Puja Mandap* for some time during the ceremony. Nobody could have guessed from Her ever radiant countenance that She was attacked by severe pain.

Two days after Kali Puja falls the *Annakut* festival. On this occasion thousands of people gather at Varanasi to witness the ceremony at the *Annapurna* temple, near the famous *Vishwanath* temple, which is known throughout the length and breadth of India. Special *bhoga* is offered to the goddess of plenty, *Annapurna*, on that day, consisting of not less than 108 different preparations, sometimes even more than that. The *Annapurna* temple at our Varanasi Ashram has also grown quite famous lately. *Annakut* is an attractive festival which is celebrated there yearly with due solemnity and grandeur. More often than not Mataji has Herself been present on that day at Varanasi. Hundreds of people come every year and partake of the *prasad*.

This year, according to astronomical calculations. *Annakut* was to be held

one day later, namely on November 12th. The *Samyam Mahavrata* had already long before been fixed for the week from the 13th—19th November and Mataji was therefore to leave for Kanpur on the 11th at midnight. Everyone was naturally disappointed that Mataji should be absent on that joyful festival, but the programme seemed unalterable. At the last moment however, Mataji's back-ache increased to such a degree that it was considered most inopportune for Her to travel at midnight. The Railway reservations were cancelled and Mataji left only on the 12th November at midday after the *Annakut* ceremony had been completed. Mataji was unable to move about all over the Ashram as She does as a rule on similar occasions, but, notwithstanding Her poor state of health, She sat in the *Annapurna* temple for sometime during the *Bhoga* and *Arati*.

Accompanied by about 38 devotees Mataji reached Kanpur the same evening and was received at the station by a large number of persons, headed by Sri Sitaram Jaipuria. At Kanpur Mataji's back-ache soon vanished. Altogether Her health was excellent throughout the *Samyam Mahavrata*, in spite of the tremendous crowd that clamoured for Her darshan in and out of time and in spite of the long hours of satsang. We have had occasion to

observe that Mataji's health seems at its best during a gathering of this sort, where people are concentrated continually on spiritual things so that there is very little chance for worldly thoughts and activities to creep in, notwithstanding the fact that Mataji then gets hardly any rest during the day and little enough during the night.

The eighth *Samyam Mahavrata* was held at Swadeshi House, Kanpur at the invitation of Sri Sitaram Jaipuria. All the arrangements were carried out with so much forethought, meticulous care and lavish generosity—they could not have been better in any respect. Everything was managed in a most exemplary manner, quietly and efficiently, in fact there was no occasion to ask for anything, as it was provided before one had the chance to utter a wish. This was largely due to the fact that the members of the Jaipuria family themselves, with Sri Sitaramji and Sri Kashi Prasadji as guiding stars, supervised and took part in every branch of the work, giving their personal service unstintingly day and night, assisted by a whole battalion of well-trained staff and servants.

Swadeshi House is situated in a quiet area of the city, a few minutes'

walk from the Ganges. The compound contains several houses and extensive well-kept gardens with huge lawns. A spacious pandal, decorated with extreme simplicity and dignity, seating about 2000 had been erected and fitted with lights and excellent loudspeakers; indeed it was a joy to listen to the various speeches and *bhajans*, whether one happened to be inside the pandal or anywhere else in the compound. A thatched straw-hut had been put up specially for Mataji's use at a fair distance from the pandal so as to ensure privacy. It looked pastoral from outside, but Mataji's set of rooms lacked no modern comfort. There was a veranda and a small pandal just below it, so that people could enjoy Mataji's company in smaller, more intimate groups in between the general functions. There was also a new trailer for Mataji's use placed just outside the main pandal. The *vratis* were accommodated in guest houses and also in comfortably furnished and electrified tents within the compound. Besides, a whole dharamsala in the close vicinity, just near the bathing ghats on the Ganges, had been reserved for our sole use.

We have on several former occasions given full details* about the

*See Ananda Varta, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 50-53; Vol. I, No. 5, pp. 251, 286, 307-314, Vol. II, No. 4, p. 389-391; Vol. III, No. 4, p. 318; Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 347-48; Vol. V, No. 4, p. 293-98; Vol. VI, No. 3 p. 255.

origin, purpose and programme of the Samyam Saptaha, which, to put it in a nutshell is a collective attempt at concentrated and uninterrupted *sadhana* and *satsang* for one week which may serve as a model and give taste of a dedicated life, to be continued to whatever degree possible by each one individually throughout the year. As usual a number of Mahatmas and other distinguished and learned men took part in the function and delivered enlightening and instructive discourses; amongst them Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta, Sri Krishnanandaji of Bombay, Sri Chakrapaniji of Vrindaban Sri Jogesh Brahmachariji of Calcutta, Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma, a well-known Philosopher and Acharya Divakar Datta Sharma, Principal of the Sanskrit College, Simla. The Chief Minister of the U. P., Dr. Sampurnanand, also came to pay his respects to Mataji and at Her request delighted the audience by a short talk on Yoga.

The visitors from Kanpur city were scarce for the first two or three days, but increased to such an extent, specially in the evenings when Mataji replied to questions or sang Kirtan after 9 p.m., that the walls of the pandal had to be moved far away. It was not just a crowd coming out of curiosity and for sensation, many were highly educated and serious persons eager to hear Mataji's words. The numbers that

attended could be compared only to those storming the pandal during Mataji's 60th Jubilee celebrations at Varanasi in 1956. But the standard of organization and order achieved at Kanpur was incomparable. It has been generally felt that the eighth Samyam vrata was the most successful function held under the auspices of the Sangha so far.

On November 20th morning *Homa* was performed followed by a feast given to all, including workers and servants. In the afternoon Mataji left by car for Lucknow, where She stayed for 2 days at the Forest Rest House, as the guest of Sri Rameshwar Sahai, Chief Conservator of Forests, U. P. He and his wife (Dr. Panna Lall's daughter) had requested Mataji repeatedly to spend a few days at their residence. Everyone was amazed at the excellent arrangements made for Mataji and Her party although the hosts had attended the Samyam Saptaha. Here also a beautiful small pandal had been put up and here also it failed to accommodate the large numbers of people who rushed for Mataji's *darshan*.

At Lucknow Mataji followed calls to the houses of several devotees. Mataji was also shown round the plot on the banks of the river Gomati that has been selected as the site for a new Ashram to be founded at Lucknow.

On November 23rd morning Mataji reached Delhi, leaving for Hardwar on the 24th night. The Raja Sahab of Baghat State (Solani) received Her at Hardwar station and took Her to Baghat House, Kharkhari, which contains a block with an upper story, consisting of several rooms and a central kirtan hall specially built for Mataji and Her party. There is a beautiful Shiva temple in the centre of the compound that was consecrated a few years ago in the presence of Mataji and many distinguished Mahatmas, including the late Sri Triveni Puriji of Khanna.

On Nov. 26th Mataji motored to Dehradun where She visited both the Ashrams at Raipur and Kishenpur, returning to Hardwar the same evening. At the Kishenpur Ashram two temples are being constructed which are to be consecrated in the beginning of March during the *Shiva ratri* festival. There is every hope that Mataji will be present there. A small Shiva shrine is also nearing completion at 'Kalyanvan', the large garden at Kishenpur, belonging to the Sangha.

Mataji left Hardwar for Ananda Kashi on November 27th. Last January Mataji had also spent a few quiet days at that beauty spot, situated on the banks of the Ganges surrounded by forests and mountains. H. H. The

Rajmata of Tehri-Garwal has laid on an oasis of gardens with flowers and fruit trees and fountains amidst the surrounding wilderness (14 miles off Rishikesh on the road to Deva Prayag) and called it *Ananda Kashi*. She has a house and a guest-house there and a cottage specially built for Mataji, not to forget the Shiva temple in the centre. Last January she had requested Mataji to remain there for 3 weeks, but due to Didima's ill-health Mataji had broken off Her visit prematurely and hurried to Varanasi. This time, we are happy to say, Didima's health is as good as it can be at Her age and She was able to join Mataji at Ananda Kashi for twenty-two undisturbed days of quiet, solitude and beauty. Throughout Mataji's sojourn, the *Ramayana* was sung for two hours daily and completed before She left for Dehradun on December 19th. She stayed at *Kalyanvan* for two nights and proceeded to Hardwar on the 21st morning. On the 23rd She motored to New Delhi, where She was expected to stay for a couple of days or so. But to the joy of the numerous bhaktas Mataji remained quietly at the Chandraloka Ashram for more than twelve days. Actually She did not leave until January 5th, 1959, when She started for Jhalawar in Rajasthan State.

Jhalawar was a Ruling State until the Government of India took it over.

Recently an ardent young devotee, Sri Mohanlal, I. A. S., has been posted there as the Collector and Magistrate. Ever since he has been trying to persuade Mataji to spend a few days at Jhalawar, promising to provide the most congenial surroundings for Mataji and Her companions. We hear that he has indeed made very fine arrangements. While Delhi is in the grips of a cold wave, Jhalawar is enjoying spring weather. A thatched cottage very much after the model of the one at Kanpur has been specially put up for Mataji in a large and beautiful compound. She was received at Kotah

Junction (52 miles from Jhalawar) by the state car and as soon as She reached Her destination guns were fired in Her honour and the state band began to play. The Rajmata and the Raja and Rani as well as other Government officials came for Mataji's darshan. But She is not harassed by crowds. Visitors are admitted only between 7 and 9 p. m. during the evening Satsang. There is no certainty as to her future movements. Although she is expected to spend sometime in Calcutta in February before going to Dehradun during the *Shiva ratri* celebration.

“Search in every home and see how many people can be found who have never known bereavement. That is why the one and only way out of the misery is the path towards Self-realization.”

“Ma”

NOTES AND COMMENTS

We offer our sincerest thanks to the Editors of the following journals for favouring us with complimentary copies in exchange of "Ananda Varta" :

Himādrī ; Devayān ; Sudarshan ; Mandir ; Srinnantu ; Pāthshālā ; The Self Realization Magazine ; The Vision ; The Peace ; The Divine Life.

Publishers of all other religious and philosophical magazines, both Indian and foreign, are requested to send us copies of their magazines on exchange basis.

* * * *

We regret to say that we are unable to supply the numerous orders for the bound volumes of back issues of "Ananda Varta", as most of the volumes have been exhausted immediately after our announcement. At present we can supply the bound volumes of English edition only, which will be sent by V. P. P. against orders received.

* * * *

So many enquiries pour in daily about Mataji's future programme. All who had the privilege of coming in close contact with Mataji know very well how difficult it is to give any previous information about Her programme. Still we venture to note that Mataji is likely to be present in Calcutta during the second and third weeks of February, at Dehradun during the Shiva-ratri celebration, at Vrindaban during the Holi, at Rishikesh during the next Samyam Saptaha in April and is expected to be at Jamnagar (Saurashtra) during the Birthday Celebration in May next.

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Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata

(Devotional Week)

We have the pleasure to announce that the ninth *Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata*, organised by the *Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha* will be observed at Atma Vignan Bhavan, Ramnagar, Rishikesh, from 15th to 22nd April, 1959.

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 this period, the vows of *Satya* (truthfulness), *Brahmacharya* (continence) and *Ahimsa* (non-violence) one should try to further one's spiritual development. Such observance, it is hoped, will help the spiritual advancement not only of the members of the Sangha, but of others as well.

Mataji is expected to be present at Rishikesh during the week.

Those who are unable to participate in the function at Rishikesh may according to their convenience follow its programme simultaneously in any of the Anandamayee Ashrams or in some sacred place or in their homes.

Those who will follow the course are requested to send, as soon as it is over, an account of the function to us, specifying the place and the mode of observance. This will help us to send them notices regarding similar functions in future.

We wish to emphasize that everybody is welcome to join the Programme subject to its rules of discipline, even if he cannot participate in the entire programme of the function.

SHREE SHREE
MA ANANDAMAYEE ASHRAM
BHADAINI, VARANASI.
15-1-59

Rajmata Anandapriya,
(TEHRI GARWAL)
President,
SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE SANGHA

DAILY PROGRAMME.

5.30 A. M. — 6.00 A. M.	Early morning prayers.
6.00 A. M. — 7.30 A. M.	Personal spiritual practices (Japa, Puja, dhyāna).
7.30 A. M. — 7.50 A. M.	Recitation of the Vedas.
7.50 A. M. — 7.55 A. M.	Devotional songs.
8.00 A. M. — 9.00 A. M.	Meditation and Japa.
9.00 A. M. — 9.05 A. M.	Songs suitable for the occasion.
9.05 A. M. — 10.00 A. M.	Recitation of the Gita, Chandi and Upanishads in chorus.
10.00 A. M. — 11.15 A. M.	Discourse on the Upanishads.
1.30 P. M. — 2.45 P. M.	Pursuits conducive to one's spiritual uplift to be followed individually.
2.45 P. M. — 2.55 P. M.	Devotional songs.
3.00 P. M. — 4.00 P. M.	Meditation and Japa.
4.00 P. M. — 5.00 P. M.	Discourses on the Purāna.
5.00 P. M. — 6.00 P. M.	Lectures by Mahātmas (Saints).
6.00 P. M. — 7.00 P. M.	Personal spiritual practices.
7.00 P. M. — 8.45 P. M.	Evening prayers, Devotional songs and religious talks.
8.45 P. M. — 9.00 P. M.	Silence.
9.00 P. M. — 9.30 P. M.	Conversation with Mother.
11.45 P. M. — 12.15 A. M.	Midnight meditation.

DIET OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

There are two classes of diet. Persons taking part in the function may choose either of them at their own discretion.

CLASS I (One meal daily)

1st day—Simple water.

2nd day—Rice boiled with butter and vegetables.

3rd day—(1) Vegetables (2) *Poyphala* (a preparation of milk boiled with sugar and pieces of various fruits added.)

4th day—Rice boiled with vegetables.

5th day - (1) Vegetables and (2) *Poyphala*.

6th day—Rice boiled with butter and vegetables.

7th day—Simple water.

CLASS II

Midday—As in Class I.

Night —Milk.