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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.* )

144.

While one is still guided by reason there is always the possibility of straying from the right course. So long as one has not realized that He and He alone is manifest in all modes of being, in all forms and in the formless, single-mindedness and unswerving faith are indispensable. Such one-pointed devotion must have for sole aim the revelation of the Beloved. Living among your people in a spirit of service be helpful to everybody.

145.

Twice daily when performing your morning and evening worship (*sandhya*) dedicate your *japa* to the Lord by the prescribed formula. At other times of the day when doing *japa* to further your spiritual progress such dedication is not necessary. But when at any time you decide to do a certain, previously fixed amount of extra *japa*, then this should be formally consecrated to Him after completion. While walking or moving about, while eating or sleeping, while doing no

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\* The Bengali original appeared in Ananda Varta, Vol. VI/4, p. 257.

matter what, try to sustain in your heart the remembrance of God in the shape of your *mantra*.

146.

How much *karma* from former births remains yet to be worked out! Just as when for example someone has ruined his digestion by indulging in excessive and unrestrained eating; even though he later adopts a frugal and well-regulated diet, the results of these wise measures will not be noticeable straight away. Thus: whatever be the nature of one's actions at the time, one also has simultaneously to enjoy and suffer the accumulated consequences of one's previous conduct. In God's Creation there is perfect justice. Generally speaking man is born into this world in order to reap the pleasant results of his good deeds as well as the outcome of his wrongdoing. What about the consequences of any impropriety or injustice he commits at the present time? He will of course have to endure them. Man enjoys the fruits of his accumulated former good works, but he will also have to suffer the effects of his evil deeds. The Almighty's Will is being fulfilled. Man must foster the desire to perform right actions, yet even the impossible becomes possible by God's Will: let His Lotus-feet be your sole refuge!

147.

The following are some questions which a European lady wrote to Mataji and Mataji's replies.

*Question*: Since the religious conception is the highest, the only goal in life, what becomes of those who do not attain to it in their life time?

*Mataji* : They have to continue in the realm of death, which is the ceaseless round of birth and rebirth ; whereas those who attain to the Goal of human existence realize Immortality.

*Question* : Since our only reason for living is to return to that from which we came, why is there this life, why were we separated from this Being ?

*Mataji* : Everything is His Will, He is absolutely free, He is His own law. This coming and going is His very nature, His dispensation. He Himself plays with Himself, everything is He and He alone.

*Question* : Will man ever destroy this world and himself ?

*Mataji* : Man has certainly not got the power to create, preserve or destroy. In Him, whose Play all this is, all possibilities are contained. The destruction of one's own self virtually amounts to the destruction of the universe. Where this self is, there the world exists. To be destroyed lies in the very nature of that which is of the world and therefore perishable ; it has ever been destroyed, it is being destroyed and it will be destroyed. But where He is and He alone, who is to destroy whom ? There the question of destruction cannot arise. Where is He who is THAT SELF ? Find out ! The SELF is not subject to destruction. The ceaseless endeavour to know THAT SELF is man's bounden duty.

*Question* : Is there no love between mortals or must all love be first for God and then love for another being ?

*Mataji* : Between individuals true, unadulterated love or fondness is impossible. Where love or affection has

grown perfect this question cannot arise, for in such a case who is the beloved? God and God alone.

148.

In all forms, in all diversity and disparity He alone is. The infinite variety of appearances and manifestations, of modes of becoming and states of being, of species and types, all the numberless distinctions as well as all identity are but HE Himself. With whom are you then angry? Whatever anyone says is according to his stage and condition at that particular time and therefore right for him. Surely, he is only demonstrating what he perceives and understands at that point of his development. This also is but an expression, a guise of the ONE.

149.

A person who expects this body to be always supernatural in its dealings with the world, will be disappointed: for this little girl (Mataji) acts according to her *kheyal*—whatever it be at any time. In other words accept what little service you may be able to receive from this child. In what light anyone sees this little girl depends on his ideas and attitude of mind. To her everything appears delightful.

If you can give your undivided attention to the Goal and remain concentrated on it with unwavering steadiness, you will hold your ground in spite of everything that may be opposed to it. The kind of world in which one lives and the company one keeps in that particular world will naturally

exercise powerful influences on one's mind and character. When one has entered into close contact with one's Real Guru provided He has let this close relationship be established—then the responsibility for one's actions rests no longer with oneself, for He can do everything. In what manner He may choose to impart His teaching to a particular person ;—for sometimes a child is taught to walk by catching hold of His hand and at other times by being left to himself,—the aim will always and in every case be the same, for the disciple is the Guru's very own. He Himself selects the method by which to draw His children close to Himself, the method that is best suited to each one. Such is His own free and absolute Will. Those who, taking the responsibility upon themselves, wish to judge from their own level, will reap the consequences of their way of proceeding. Quite obviously it is difficult for the ordinary person to understand all matters, for he does not know what course of action is right for which purpose. This is why the ONE appears to him in the form of disappointment and failure.

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# SHREE ANANDAMAYEE

## A SIGNIFICANT MANIFESTATION OF ECSTATIC GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

SWAMI SIVANANDA, RISHIKESH.

Shree Anandamayee is one of the finest flowers of the Indian mystical life; she is the best image to contemporary consciousness, of the silent and radiant greatness of a God-intoxicated individual. In her we find the brooding East brought into a dynamic realization, in everyday life, of the transcendental states of spiritual awareness and being. She is one of the most shining diamonds in the luminous crown of contemporary Indian spiritual life. May She live amidst us, longer and yet longer and continue to spread by the very mere act of her living, abundant joy and peace! May the Almighty Lord grant her health and strength and preserve her amidst us, for many many more summers to come!

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# ANANDA TATTVA

DR. ROMA CHAUDHURI,

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A general notion amongst Westerners regarding Indian Philosophy is that it is wholly pessimistic in nature, and as such, has rather a baneful and depressing influence on life. This idea has gained ground abroad because of the famous Buddhist maxims, accepted by all the systems of Indian Philosophy as their very starting points, viz. "*Sarvam Duhkham Duhkham*", "*Sarvam Ksanikam Ksanikam*"—"Everything is Sorrow, Sorrow", "Everything is Transitory, Transitory." But the point to note here specially is that this Pessimism of Indian Philosophy is only initial, never final. As a matter of fact, it is a preliminary kind of healthy Pessimism, which instead of depressing the individual concerned and damping his energy and enthusiasm, rather stimulates him to a greater effort, and encourages him to get rid of his present defects which alone are responsible for his present sufferings.

Thus, it is never the contention of Indian Philosophy that the universe is a place of eternal sorrows and sufferings, that it is impure and imperfect through and through, that man is inherently sinful, selfish, weak and small. On the contrary, the holy sages of this holy land of ours, at the very dawn of human civilisation, saw the sublime vision of a Universe in which the Universal Self has embodied itself.

What or who is this Self or Soul or *Atman*? This *Atman* is, first *Prāna*, the Eternal Life behind all apparent mortality and destructibility, as found in the world. Thus, according to the Indian view of creation, God is not a distant Creator, who creates the world from outside out of Primal Matter and then leaves it off to itself, as absolutely separate and different from Himself. On the contrary, the Primal Matter or *Prakriti* is nothing but a *Shakti* of God Himself, it is nothing but the *Achit-Shakti* of God, and the material world is

nothing but the manifestation of God's *Achit-Shak'i*. In the very same manner, individual souls are manifestations of God's *Chit-Shakti*. In this way, the same God, the same *Prāna*, the Eternal Life is throbbing in infinite glory in every nook and corner of this vast and variegated Universe of souls and matter. In this way, to a discerning Indian, the whole Universe is a living entity, pulsating with the Life of the Source of all lives. This is the real idea behind Indian theories of Nature-Worship and Image-Worship. If the Universe be the *Parināma* or transformation of God Himself then any and everything on earth is God Himself—every particle of dust is God, every drop of water is God, every blade of grass is God. Hence, our *Upanisads* have declared beautifully :—

“Whatever is there in this world, emanates from *Prāna* and throbs in the *Prāna*” ( *Katha Uṇ. 6. 2.* )

“*Prāna* is *Brahman*. So, all beings arise out of *Prāna*, is sustained by *Prāna* and return to *Prāna*.” ( *Tattiriya Up. 3. 3.* )

Thus, the Universe is not a lifeless, mass of Matter, but a visible embodiment of Life Eternal which alone laughs in the light of the sun and the moon, dances in the ripples of rivers and falls, frolics in the beauty of flowers and foliage—what all these are besides the joyous exuberance of the *Prāna* of *Brahman* ?

This *Prāna*, this Life Eternal, is at the same time *Saundarya*, Life Beautiful. In fact, what is living, what is full of energy, can never be ugly or disharmonious, death is ugly, lack of energy disharmonious, but where there is life, there is beauty ; where there is energy, there is harmony. That is why, the Universe is not only living, but is also beautiful and harmonious.

Again this *Saundarya*, this Life Beautiful is, at the same time, *Ananda*, Life Blissful. “A thing of Beauty is a Joy for ever.” Beauty brings its own Joy is, in fact, Joy in essence.

Thus, Life, Beauty and Bliss, *Prāna*, *Saundarya* and *Ananda* are identical. And the sublime “*Ananda-Tattva*” of Indian Philosophy

is first and foremost, nothing but this Trinity, this Unity of Trinity. Further this *Ananda*, thus implies serenity. Bliss is eternal and ever-flowing, Bliss is ever-full and exuberant, yet Bliss is never effusive, unstable, sprightly. This calmness, this stability is a result of its fulness and depth. What is full, what is deep, what is sublime is also serene. Hence, just as there is nothing lifeless, nothing ugly, nothing sorrowful in the world, so there is nothing fickle, nothing gushing, nothing perturbed or disturbed in it.

Finally, crowning all, *Ananda-Tattva* implies Purity, *Suchitā*. Nothing can live, nothing can be beautiful and blissful and serene, if it be impure. For, impurity is something self-inconsistent, self-contradictory, it involves an exception to the course of Nature, a violation of her order, a contradiction of her inner, harmonious essence.

This five-pointed *Ananda-Tattva* is, indeed, one of the most exhilarating philosophical doctrines of the world. For, it is a Doctrine of Progress, the greatest incentive to all to rise above the present lifeless, inert and, static existence to a state of *Eternal Life*; from the present ugly, disharmonious and unsystematic existence to a state of *Eternal Beauty*; from the present sorrowful, depressing, and hopeless existence to the state of *Eternal Bliss*; from the present unstable, fickle and ever-busy existence to the state of *Eternal Serenity*; from the present impure, lowly and narrow existence to a state of *Eternal Purity*. In fact, the life we are leading now, the world we are inhabiting now, are only distortions or concealment of our real life, of the real world. The aim of *Sādhana* is to enable us so get rid this distortion, this Concealment, and *Ananda-Tattva* is, thus, the greatest *Sādhana* of our lives. It enables a man to realise the inherent greatness of his own nature, to be "*Amritasya Putra*" or "son of Immortality" in the truest sense of the term, nay, even more—to be himself one with the Immortal Being. Contraction is Pain, Expansion is Bliss. Hence, this Expansion of Life, this Fulness of Nature, this Perfection of Existence is *Ananda*—*Ananda* is its beginning, *Ananda* is its end; *Ananda* is its cause, *Ananda* is its effect;

*Ananda* is its be-all and end-all, *Ananda* is its essence and manifestation. Fortunate, indeed is the man who, in this way, in *Ananda* and through *Ananda* realises the infinite *Ananda* of his own nature.

Thus, this *Ananda-Tattva* is nothing but *Bhūmā-Tattva*, as declared by our own *Rsis*, right at the dawn of human civilisation—  
 “What is *Bhuman* or Great alone is *Sukha* or Bliss. There is no *Sukha* or Bliss in *Alpa* or Small. The *Bhuman* or Great alone is *Sukha* or Bliss, Know the *Bhūmā* or Great alone” (Chāndogya Upanisad 7, 13, 1.)

Let us end this short account of *Ananda-Tattva* with a similar, exhilarating Ode to Humanity, re-echoed in the thundering voice of a modern saint—

“Never forget the glory of Human Nature. We are the greatest Gods. Christs and Buddhas are but waves on the boundless ocean which *I am!*” (Vivekananda).

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# **The Malady of the Age, its cause and cure\***

*Dr. B. L. Atreya, M.A., D.Litt.*

PADMABHUSHAN, KNIGHT COMMANDER, DARSHANACHARYA.

Honoured Guests, Members of the Reception Committee & Fellow Delegates,

I am very thankful to the Executive Committee of the Indian Philosophical Congress for the honour it has done me. I feel diffident in occupying this chair, which has been, in the past, occupied by distinguished thinkers of India. My only justification for being here is that it is another opportunity for me to serve the great organization of which I have been a member since its very inception, and which I have served as a Joint Secretary and Treasurer for the last six years and as a Sectional President for two sessions.

Ladies and gentlemen ; We are living in a very strange age today. Whereas our knowledge of the external world, and our means of securing mastery over it are increasing by leaps and bounds, our acquaintance with the inner nature of man and his aspirations, powers and potentialities is decreasing. We are more worried about wealth, power and possessions than about the right use we should make of them and the purpose they should serve. Although, thanks to science and technology, the world is becoming one and its parts more and more interconnected by economic and political ties, mankind is becoming more and more divided into political blocks, parties and groups. A cold war is going on everywhere. Even families are breaking up. While all nations and communities are talking of peace, goodwill, co-existence and non-aggression, they are preparing for war under the cover of defence. Power-pacts, military aids, and federations for mutual protection are common. There is a keen desire for independence all over the world, still all small and weak

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\* Presidential Address delivered at the XXXIII Indian Philosophical Congress, 1958.

countries are becoming more and more dependent on the resources of big ones and appending themselves to more powerful ones, risking their own freedom of thought and action. While old castes and communities are breaking up and vanishing, new political castes and communities in the name of parties and groups are springing up, generating greater difference, hatred and enmity than the older divisions ever did. All kinds of propaganda, mostly false, are made use of for lowering others in the estimation of the ignorant masses and securing support for oneself and one's party. While nations talk of *Panchashila*, individuals and political parties within a nation cast to winds all the time-honoured principles of *sheela* ( good conduct ).

In place of self-control, control over others' property and resources has become the desired end of clever individuals. In this age when much public harm can be done by negligence of one's duty and when countless lives can be jeopardised thereby, negligence of duties has become common. Most accidents in buses, trains and planes are said to be due to this factor. We care more for rights than for duties. Stability has given place to revolution, obedience to revolt, co-operation to competition, harmony to discord, contentment and meekness to ambition and aggression. Administration being carried on by those who are appointed on key-posts on account of party-allegiance, and not on account of adequate qualifications, there is mismanagement, partiality, injustice and dissatisfaction everywhere. Even commodities essential for existence and health are becoming rare, difficult to obtain, and costly beyond expectation. Every body tries to put the highest price on what he possesses and can supply to others. Even when it is purchased at the highest price, the buyer is never sure of the genuineness of the article, for adulteration has become a common practice. Food-materials, medicines, and even the free gifts of nature—air and water—are being adulterated and contaminated on account of the cupidity of those who observe no moral principles, and who are neither afraid of God nor of the Law of Karma, simply because they have ceased to believe in their existence and operation.

The common man is now living more or less a vegetative and

animal life, and is more concerned with food, clothes and house than with any higher and deeper problem of life. And even those he is not able to secure with ease. No one has initiative and freedom to think and live independently. His thoughts and life are controlled by party-affiliation, and unconsciously guided and determined by newspapers, radio and cinema. Life has lost value and sanctity. Regimentation, conscription and compulsion are coming into vogue in every country. Man has lost faith in religion, in morality, and even in himself. He is pessimistic, pleasure-seeking, secular, party-minded, money-minded, amoral, confused, nervous, quarrelsome, explosive, exploitative, and restless. He has little respect for life, private property, age, wisdom and woman. Life is meaningless, purposeless. Its only business is to eat, drink and be merry. Money being able to purchase all pleasures and comforts, it has become the only object of pursuit throughout life. Our happiest moments are only those when we enjoy the pleasures of senses. Those who are not fortunate enough to secure them continuously and in abundance try to forget their very existence by the help of anaesthetic drugs. Much of our vital and nervous energy having been exhausted on account of over-work and over-enjoyment, we seek the help of stimulants. Our social life is in a chaotic condition. All respect for parents, teachers and administrative authorities has vanished. Either there is too much of regimentation and police control or every individual is a law unto himself. Where the former exist, fear and anxiety are common, and where the latter, social anarchy prevails.

Many western thinkers (and some eastern too) attribute the present unsatisfactory state of the world to modern science and technology. Tyrrell, for example, writes in *Man the Maker*, "The scientific perspective is hopelessly out of focus with reality and the philosophy to which it has given rise is useless as a guide in life" ( p. 291 ). "The central feature of the modern outlook is, however, the belief that the universe is without purpose or meaning, without directing factors, without anything which transcends the range of our senses and our powers of intellectual investigation. Man, it is asserted owes his origin to the forces in the physical world which lie within

the range of his observation. There is nothing beyond this. There is nothing teleological or supra-teleological." ( p. 293 ). About the ~~advance made by technology~~, he says, "These achievements are not simple steps to Paradise. They are blessings; but they have repercussions.....They make life too complex for peace of mind. They have increased the speed of living to such an extent that there is no time to look beneath the rapidly moving surface and to reach firm foundations." ( p. 27 ). "The urgent need of our times is not for more and more science but for clarity of vision which will enable us to raise our eyes from the foreground and to realize something of the importance of those things which lie in the shadow.....*must* see the whole in true perspective and not any longer build on the flat screen which the specialized technique of science has created" ( p. 304 ). Alexis Carrel similarly writes in his well-known book, *Man the Unknown*, "No advantage is to be gained by increasing the number of mechanical inventions. It would perhaps be well not to accord so much importance to the discoveries of physics, astronomy, and chemistry. Man must now turn his attention to himself, and to the cause of his moral disability.....There is no shadow of doubt that mechanical, physical and chemical sciences are incapable of giving us intelligence, moral discipline, health, nervous equilibrium, security and peace" ( p. 50 ). Gerald Heard writes, in his work *The Source of Civilization*, "The ship of our civilization goes now with so great and so growing a list that we are compelled to throw any ballast we can on the other side." ( p. 239 ). "Our dangerously disproportionate advance in physical knowledge and power over means" ( p. 239 ), he says, "must be counterbalanced by psychological knowledge, knowledge of that complementary aspect of reality which can only be obtained through our subjective, common, integrated depth of consciousness" ( p. 391 ). "A psychological revolution is therefore our only escape from material destruction and mental derangement." ( p. 421 ).

We have to consider these opinions very seriously in view of the fact that in our country, where science and technology are not yet sufficiently advanced, there is a cry for more and more of science and technology ; and science, scientists, and science teachers and students



are being patronised by our state in the same way as poets and philosophers were patronised by kings in the past.

There is no doubt that technology has given unimagined and unprecedented power to man ; and this power is a double-edged weapon. It can be used both for good and evil, and it has been used in the recent history of the world more for evil than for good. Automobiles, aeroplanes, atomic power, telephone, film, fire-arms, anaesthetic drugs, bacteria, hypnosis, suggestion, scientific methods of propaganda—all are capable of being used with equal advantage by the benefactors of mankind and by antisocial individuals and groups. The police and criminals vie with each other in making use of the same means in trying to defeat each other's purpose. If today the world is enjoying the benefits of technology, it is as much suffering from its harmful effects. It is, however, not the fault of technology that it is misused. It is that of those who misuse it. Neither power nor possession of it is evil. It is but natural for man to crave for power. The evil lies in the misuse of it. As Shakespeare said long ago, "It is excellent to have a giant's strength ; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant "

Technology is science in use and action. It is a natural outcome of the present-day advancement of science. All knowledge is power. Much more the scientific knowledge of nature. There is nothing wrong with science as such. Science has penetrated deep into the secrets of nature and life, and has given us exact knowledge of most of the things and happenings around us. Knowledge being power, man is more powerful today than ever before. He has conquered space and time : neither oceans nor mountains nor even clouds offer any barrier to him. He can fly not only to any place on the earth, but also to any place within the earth's atmosphere. Nay, he is likely soon to land on the Moon or the Mars. His voice can be heard instantaneously at any place in the world, and even far away from it. He has at his disposal enormous electrical, atomic and solar energy with which he can reshape the world or destroy it in no time. Medicine and surgery are now capable of performing miracles, and no disease is now regarded as incurable. Large areas of earth which were

formerly sterile have been made fertile and habitable. In short, science has given us mastery over Nature. How can man part with the knowledge and power he has acquired? How can he cease to have a craving for more and more knowledge and power?

It is really not science, pure or applied, that is to blame for our miserable plight, but a particular outlook or philosophy of life based on the findings of some of the physical sciences. This great success science has achieved is due to the self-imposed limits within which it has worked. Science has confined itself to the knowledge of impersonal facts of objective experience, and has tried to formulate a working thought-model of the world around us with the help of the intellect working on the data collected by verifiable and shareable observation and experiments. It is satisfied with description, classification, and explanation of one phenomenon in terms of other intelligible phenomena. It tries to avoid all reference to unverifiable ultimate realities and to human feelings and values. It tries to reduce the variety of its data to a common denominator which may be amenable to mathematical calculation and formulization. Our objective world, which is in itself an abstraction from our total experience, being vast and varied, scientists had to approach it piecemeal; and this division of labour gave rise to a large number of sciences dealing with the different aspects of nature but following more or less the same method of investigation. Success was inevitable and humanity came to possess greater and greater theoretical and practical knowledge in narrower and narrower fields of experience. Thus we have today experts and specialists who have greatest acquaintance with minutest things and who know very little about other things in the world. They are apt to see the whole world with the glasses coloured by their experience in the narrowest field of nature.

Scientists, students of science, and common men affected by science, are, after all, human beings. They have problems, theoretical as well as practical, which extend beyond the narrow limits of science and which press for their solution. There are certain questions which every human being, unless he is an idiot, likes to be

answered. Some of them are : What am I ? How am I related to the world and to other beings in the world ? What happens to a person when he dies ? Is my birth an accidental coming into being ? Why inequality and differences in men ? Is there any purpose or goal which I should strive to attain here or hereafter ? Are some actions right and others wrong, and do they effect me favourably or unfavourably ? Am I free to make a choice between two courses of action open to ? Is nature or the universe hostile, indifferent, kind or benign to man ? Is there any intelligence behind the processes of nature ? Was the world ever created by some intelligent being ? If so, what is its nature and powers, and how is it disposed towards its creation and the creatures therein ? What is the ultimate nature of the stuff of which the world is made ? Is it one, two, or many ? If two, or many, how are they related ? If one, how has the plurality and variety been created ? What is knowledge ? How is the subject of knowledge related to objects ? When is knowledge regarded as valid ? Is there anything like Truth, Goodness, and Beauty ? Is life worth living ? What is happiness ? Can it be attained ? If so, how ?

Genuine scientists who are experts and specialists in their own particular fields and who are too busy with their special problems plead ignorant and refuse to answer such questions. Pseudo-scientists, fanatic admirers of science, and scientists who go out of their way, do attempt to answer them or some of them. But their answers are coloured by and soaked in the limited knowledge of a particular aspect of nature or life, with which they are specially acquainted. The basic sciences—mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology—deal with only physical entities, forces, forms, qualities and the laws governing them ; and, therefore, an outlook of life and universe built around their findings cannot but be materialistic. All questions of life and death are answered in this science-ridden age in terms of the known laws of these sciences, and it is forgotten that there is in men something which defies materialistic explanation. Materialism, which in some form or other, has always existed in the world, has now gained great status, and is the most popular outlook today on

account of a false belief common to mankind that it is the only outlook which science supports.

According to Materialism man is a product of nature and is wholly governed by mechanical laws. There is nothing like a soul or spirit in him. Even the mind is not anything immaterial. Consciousness and other mental processes and activities are either movements or products or functions of the brain and the nervous system. Life and consciousness are accidental and recent phenomena in the history of the world, originating out of material forces, which have been in operation for an incalculable period of time. In such a material and blindly and mechanically working universe there is no place for God, and there is no possibility of survival or immortality. An individual is nothing more than an effect of natural causes, heredity and environment. He has no power and freedom to carve out a destiny for himself. There is no final meaning or purpose of life which is governed by blind forces of nature. Individual life begins with birth and ends in death. Nature is indifferent to life, which it produces in abundance and destroys ruthlessly. Serious consequences have followed from this doctrine. It has made man sceptic about all that was formerly regarded as valuable, sacred and holy. It has exploded belief in the spiritual ends of life. It has crushed faith in Truth, Goodness and Beauty, as the highest values of life. It has deprived man of the support of the Deity, and of the hope of Heaven. Under its influence man now thinks of truth as expediency, of goodness as prudence, and of beauty as attractiveness. Under its spell man insists upon "the right to the unfettered enjoyment of the pleasures of the moment." Spiritual life is regarded as an escape, religion as an opiate, and mystic experience as an illusion. There can be no doubt that our present day malady is due to the prevalence of such an outlook on life.

What then is the remedy for the malady from which the world suffers today? Certainly not bidding a good-bye to science and technology. It is not possible nor even desirable. Scientific method, the great knowledge that science has given us, and the

technical skill and gadgets we now possess are great achievements of human intellect ; and we should be proud of them. We should make greater and greater use of them, particularly in India which lags behind other countries in having them. What is actually to be given up is the narrow incomplete and wrong outlook which has been built on the basis of a few physical sciences.

Will the revival or acceptance of any one or all of the historical religions help ? Certainly not. Simply because there is much in all religions which is in conflict with the findings of science, and which the modern man cannot accept and believe. Most of them are based on wrong concepts of history, geography, physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, biology, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. Most of them require blind faith in prophets and scriptures. Most of the doctrines of the same religion are self-contradictory, and all the religions are at variance with one another on the major issues of life. They need not be revived in their old historical forms, simply because they do not suit man in the age of science. A scientific age needs a scientific religion, which is yet to be born.

Can the ethical teachings of great saints and sages of history help the modern man ? Certainly not. Most of them are merely exhortative, self-conflicting, unsystematic, unnatural and irrational. Often they are based on wrong religious beliefs or on unproved or unprovable assumptions. Their demands are impracticable ; and often they demand too much of sacrifice from the individual without giving any satisfactory reason. Modern man needs a scientific, secular and rational ethics based on complete scientific data about man.

( To be continued )

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# THE WAY TO SRI KRISHNA

DR. M. HAFIZ SYED, M.A., Ph.D., D.LITT.,

It is the innermost desire of every aspirant and devotee of God to attain His nearness and in due course be united with Him. Every religion, ancient or modern, has laid down certain methods of approach to Him. Some religions have enjoined the need of a mediator, a link between God and man and in order to attain Him one has to surrender himself heart and soul to the mediator before one is blessed with direct contact with the Divine. Lord Sri Krishna, the highest manifestation of the Divine according to Hindu tradition, is directly accessible to all earnest devotees. The only condition laid down by Him is complete self-surrender and utter devotion to Him. He says, "He who constantly thinketh of Me, not thinking ever of another, of him I am easily reached, O Partha, of this ever-harmonised yogi. (VIII. 14)

Knowing human nature full well as He does, He knows its limitations, drawbacks and shortcomings. For, a large number of people having trodden the path of fourth-going (Pravrtti marga), it takes time for them to become familiar with the laws and conditions of the path of Return (Nivrtti Marga).

The blessed Lord has advised them to march forward on their adventure step by step. The aspirant is expected to do everything as an offering to him. The Lord says, "Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou doest of austerity, O Kaunteya, do thou that as an offering unto Me." (IX. 27).

Thus he is gradually accustomed to hear Him in mind and develop devotion to Him by means of offering and service. Further the Lord says, "he who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept from the striving self, offered as it is with devotion." (IX. 26).

The easiest and the best way to Him, as assured by the Lord Himself, is through sheer giving, complete self-surrender to His Feet, unreservedly and unconditionally, not through any complicated rites or ceremonies. The disciple must reverse the process of grasping, which builds up a personal self, and strive to give away all that he has, including his petty self. Instead of expecting to get anything from Him in the form of earthly gifts he should desire the God and not anything that He can give him.

The first step in this process of self-elimination is symbolic gifts of leaves and flowers and fruits but afterwards the gift of self, the consecration of all acts to Him. Nor should any one think that his gifts are not accepted by the Lord. As a matter of fact all gifts, however small and insignificant, if offered with love and devotion, are acceptable to Him, because all giving as an offering is a breaking down and weakening of the barrier which cuts off the soul from the wide life outside. The smallest act of giving is a step upon that Path, and leads the aspirant by easy steps to that sublime stage where the whole personal life, with all its acts and thoughts and feelings, is dedicated to the service of the one in all, where acts can bind no more since the personal self is eliminated and nothing remains that can be bound by them.

The way to Him is clearly pointed out by the Lord Himself, but each has to tread it by himself. No special privilege can be found upon this Path. He who seems to climb with glorious ease today is not a favoured darling of the gods ; but one who reaps the fruit of arduous struggle undergone yesterday.

There is no other way to Lord Krishna than giving of the self to Him in service ; by his own efforts each must climb the Path, as the Blessed Lord Krishna dwells equally in every human heart. None who seeks to offer up himself can be refused. Though he must climb in weary loneliness, striving alone with his own heart, yet is that loneliness a mere illusion ; for there stands unseen his eternal Friend and inmost Self. Therefore, is it said that even if the most sinful of men turns to Him and serves Him with undivided heart, he too must

be accounted righteous ; for he too has entered on the Homeward path. Once the resolve is made and solemnly kept to act in future for the higher and not the lower self, progress on the Path is certain. It should be borne in mind that while treading the path the aspirant will have to face many a failure ; yet once the link with the Divine Self has been established he cannot fall again into the utter darkness, because something has been awakened within him, which will never let him rest again in matter, and though at times he may even fight against it, the inner pull will again and again be felt and the blessed Lord's words will be fulfilled, who says, "Know thou for certain that my devotee perishes never."

It should be remembered that the Atma dwells within the heart of all and therefore this Path is open to all without the distinction of race, caste or sect. The Path of Vedic ritual needed a wealth of learning and therefore was inevitably closed to women and Sudras. This path calling only for sincere self-giving needs no scriptural or philosophic learning and so is open to all.

In conclusion the most merciful Lord teaches us at the end of Discourse IX : "On Me fix thy mind ; give thyself in love to Me ; sacrifice to Me ; prostrate thyself before Me ; having thus united thy whole self to Me, with Me as thy Goal, to Me shalt thou come."

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# GOD INTOXICATION

SWAMI RAMDAS

My Beloved's kindness came to me like the cool rays of the moon. It released me from bondage and healed my sorrows. What a magic touch! What miraculous change!

Now life flows in a blissful stream, glistening with the light of the Beloved. What a vision! The worlds are the forms of my Beloved. He is at once visible and invisible—the Supreme being and non-being.

I wished Him to stand before my inner sight as an image of unsurpassing beauty—smile on the face, compassion in the eyes, and love pouring out of Him. Lo! He is there before me, the enchanting Lover of my heart.

When the thought of thee like a star sparkles in the sky of my mind, I am lost in Thee. The rapture I feel then is beyond compare. This rapture turns me finally into Thyself—raising me beyond all duality.

Thy glory—my Beloved, is seen everywhere. All objects and beings sing pæans to Thy greatness. I go near a tree and its green-leaves chant of Thee. I look up to the sky, Oh, it opens out the blue-veil and reveals Thy fascination.

A child comes to me—the little living figure of Thy love and I am charmed. I clasp it in my arms. I lean my head touching its head. Thrills and thrills! It talks dropping sweetness at every word. Honey is insipid in comparison. O God of love, all hail to Thee.

The enthralling strains of music that fall into my eager ears is surcharged with celestial symphony—the essence of Thyself—my life and soul. Thy feet, O my Beloved be ever on my head and I melt away in Thee.

I tell the scented flower that nods its head in the mild breeze—  
“Blessed art thou little beauty, for thou revealest the face of my  
Beloved.” It looks up and seems to smile.

Holiness and sanctity permeate all. My Beloved is everywhere.  
The entire nature is He. No God for me apart from nature. He  
covers all and is above all. I sought Him and became one with Him.  
I loved Him and became love itself. He shines in my eyes, my breath  
is fragrant with His breath. I move, because He moves. He is  
wonderful.

I prayed to be mad of Thee. The prayer granted has become  
so. Thou hast totally possessed me. Now I have none but Thee.  
My entire being is vibrant with Thy love, light and bliss. Truly, I  
am no longer myself. I am Thyself. One alone exists—either Thyself  
or myself.

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# ĀNDĀL

DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, M.A., Ph.D.,

Professor of Philosophy, University of Madras.

Among the Alvārs, Āndāl was the best exemplar of bridal mysticism, being a woman herself. The æsthetic approach to God is difficult but alluring. The Upanisads describe Brahman as the supreme Bliss (*parama-ānanda*) and as essential sweetness (*rasa*). The *bhakti-sāstras* speak of God as *Manmatha-Manmatha* (Cupid of Cupid) and *Bhuvana-Sundara* (the most beautiful in all the worlds). Many of the mystics adopt the way of bridal love and look upon God as the Bridegroom. In their mystic life are enacted all the incidents of the love-play—courting, engagement, marriage, temporary separation with its attendant pangs, and re-union. Although in this love-game there is not the distinction of male and female among the devotees—for all are females in relation to the only Male, God—yet the women devotees have a distinct advantage, as bridal mysticism is more natural to them. And, among the brides of God, Āndāl is pre-eminent because she gave herself to God, totally and unconditionally, right from her childhood, the age of innocence.

Srīvilliputtūr is a township, about fifty miles south-west of Madurai. It was founded by two brothers who were hunter-chieftains, Villi and Kantan. According to a legend, they cleared the jungles and created the town of Srīvilliputtūr (the new town of Villi) in obedience to a divine command. This became the birth-place of two vaisnava saints, Visnucittar who came to be known as Periyālvār, and his daughter, Āndāl.

Visnucittar (one whose thoughts were centred in Visnu), believed to be an incarnation of Garuda, was born in a Brahmin family whose members were dedicated to divine worship. Of the various incarnations of Visnu, he preferred the *Kṛṣṇāvatāra*; and of the different attitudes (*bhāvas*) in *bhakti* he adopted mostly that of

the mother towards her child ( *vātsalya-bhāva* ). While he was thinking about the form his service to the Lord should take, he was struck by the incident in the life of Srī Krisna relating to His gracious acceptance of the flower garland offered by Mālākāra while he was on His way to meet King Kamsa in Mathurā. So, Visnucittar decided to rear a flower garden with a predominance of basil plants ( *tulasi* ), dear to Visnu, and offer garlands everyday to the Lord in the temple at Srivilliputtūr. He was not learned in the *Sāstras*. The Lord appeared in his dream, one day, and commanded him to go to Madurai and establish the supremacy of the Vaisnava faith in an assembly of the learned convened by the Pāndya king, Srī Vallabha Deva. Visnucittar did as he was ordered to, and was declared victor in the debate. The king honoured him with presents ; everyone accolimed him as the greatest teacher of the time. The Lord Himself appeared seated on His mount Garuda and accompanied by Laksmi and the Celestials and blessed Visnucittar. The saint was overwhelmed at this grand and unique sight. But soon a fear overtook him. He became concerned about the Lord's safety. The parent in him made him feel that the Lord was running a risk in making His appearance in the world. This is by no means a safe world. Some injury might be done to the Lord's beauty, might, and glory. So, the saint blessed the Lord, even as a parent would his or her child. He sang the song of blessings called the *Tiruppattandu* in which he invited all men to join him in the Benedictory. As Visnucittar had the competence to bless the Lord, he received the appellation, 'Periyālvār'.

After the Madurai victory, Periyālvār returned to Srivilliputtur and resumed his services at the temple. As he was digging in his garden, one day, preparing the *Tulasi* beds, his attention was drawn to the appearance of a mysterious child. It was a fair young girl, bigger than a baby, lying under a *tulasi* plant. She was a gift from Heaven to Periyālvār, even as Sitā was to King Janaka. The saint took the child to his childless home, named her Godā, and brought her up with tender care and loving devotion. It was Godā that came to be known as Andāl later on. The date of her birth, according to tradition, is the ninety-seventh year of the *Kali* age. Modern scholarship assigns

Godā grew up to be a fine and accomplished girl. — Being an incarnation of Bhu Devi, her love spontaneously flowered towards Visnu, her Lord. Periyālvār contributed his own share to the flowering of Godā's devotion. He performed for her the purification ceremonies, initiated her into the secret doctrines of Vaisnavism, and taught her to appreciate and value the greatness of Visnu.

Even from her childhood Godā considered herself to be the bride-designate of the Lord as he appears in Srirangam. As she grew, she had no other thought except to prepare herself in everyway to become the consort of Sri Ranganātha. Everyday she used to deck herself with the garlands her father made for the worship of the Visnu image of the temple at Srivilliputtur, look at her own reflection in the mirror, and satisfy herself that she was equal in beauty to the Lord. Then she would remove the garlands and place them as before in the baskets. Periyālvār would take them to the temple, not knowing that they had been used by his daughter, and offer them to the Lord. But one day he came to know of what appeared to him then to be an act of sacrilege on the part of his daughter, reprimanded her, and did not take the garlands to the temple. The Lord appeared to him in a vision and asked him why he had not brought the garlands that day. When the saint explained, the Lord told him that the garlands worn by Godā were extremely dear to Him, that to offer them to Him was no sacrilege, and that such an act was profoundly holy. Periyālvār conveyed the Lord's command to his daughter, and thereforth he himself made her wear the garlands before taking them to the temple. Now that he knew the identity of Godā as the Divine Mother, he gave her the name 'Andāl' ( the Redeemer of the world ). As she wore the garlands and gave them to the Lord, she came to be called 'Sudikkodutta-nācciyār'.

As Andāl grew in age, her love of God also grew. Her wakeful hours were filled with thoughts of marrying the Lord. Her dreams were centered on enjoying His company. Her vivid imagination took her back to the times when Sri Krisna disported Himself with the *Gopīs* of Brindāvana on the banks of the Yamunā. She herself became a *Gopī*, rising up early in the morning, rousing her companions from

sleep, bathing in the sacred river, and going to Nandagopa's house to pay homage to the Lord of her heart. In the month of Mārgasirsa (Mārgali), she observed the *nāvai-nōnbu*, invoking the grace of Kātyāyini so that she might wed her chosen Lord. She sent her prayers to Kāma, the God of Love, to prepare her for God alone and to unite her with Him.

Anxiety took possession of Periyālvār when he saw his daughter's God-madness increasing. Marriage, he thought, would cure her disease. Gently he broached this subject to his daughter, one day, and asked her whom she would like to wed. Sternly she replied that she would rather die than consent to marry a mortal. She had resolved to wed the Lord, and nothing would make her relinquish that resolve. There are a hundred and eight temples dedicated to Visnu; in each of these there is a special manifestation of the Lord. Of these, whom would Andāl wed? Periyālvār was explaining to her the nature and glory of each of the manifestations. As he was giving a description of Sri Ranganātha, Andāl's heart melted, tears of joy trickled from her eyes, a thrill passed through her body, she became enchanted. It was evident that her heart was set on Sri Ranganātha. But how could this marriage take place?

Lord Ranganātha appeared in a vision to Periyālvār and allayed his fears saying that the miracle would happen, that He would Himself arrange for the marriage. To the temple priests of Srirangam there came the command from the Lord, asking them to go to Srivilliputtur with all the temple honours and bring Andāl the bride elect, to Him. Accompanied by devotees and priests and led by Periyālvār, Andāl was taken in a palanquin to the Srirangam temple. As she entered the *sanctum sanctorum* and beheld the entrancing Beauty of the Lord, she was irresistibly drawn towards Him. Walking upto the Deity reclining on the Sesa bed, and mounting up the bed itself, she stood by the side of the Lord. And lo! she disappeared into the Lord, getting absorbed in Him. Everyone present there was amazed. Periyālvār shed tears of joy and sorrow—joy at his daughter's union with the Lord, and sorrow at his own separation from her. The Voice of God was then heard, telling Periyālvār that he had now

become God's father-in-law, and asking him to go back to Srivilliputtur install the images of Sri Ranganātha and Andāl, and worship them with fervour and devotion, as also to continue his habitual mode of service at the shrine of Srivilliputtur.

*Tiruppāvai* and *Nācciyār-tiru noli* are the *prabandhams* composed by Andāl. They form part of the First Thousand. Both of them are lyrics portraying the varying moods of the lady in love, ranging from utter dejection and despondency to hilarious mirth and serene joy born of union with the beloved. Only, here, the Beloved is the Lord Himself.

In the month of Mārgasirsa, maidens observe a ritual called *Pāvai-nōnbu* which consists in the worship of Katyāyini early in the morning everyday with a view to obtain proper bridegrooms by Her grace and to secure the welfare of all beings in the land. The *Gopis* of Brindāvana adopted this ritual in order to gain union with Sri Krishna. In the *Tiruppāvai*, Andāl employs this allegory and gives expression to the *gopis'* devotion to and love for Sri Krishna, identifying herself with one of them. She offers herself in this lyric as a self-gift to the Lord, resolves to become His slave and do His bidding, and asks for nothing more than to be accepted. In the thirty verses of this poem corresponding to the thirty days of the month, the sports of Sri Krishna, His boyhood pranks, and His deeds of valour are extolled; and the burden of every verse is that He should receive the love of the devotee-soul.

God-love is the theme of the *Tirumoli* also, which is a longer poem. Every word of this lyric bespeaks of the boundless love of Andāl for the Lord whom she longs to wed. All that a love-lorn maiden would do, she does in order to gain union with Sri Krishna. She prays to the God of Love, Kāma, to intercede on her behalf and join her with her Lord. She sends love-messages to Sri Krishna through her companions, and even through birds and clouds. She complains to the elements that her Lord has turned a deaf ear to her appeals. She has pleasant dreams of marrying the Lord and living happily with him. After waking up, she shares her dream-experiences with her

friends. She implores them to take her to the place where her Lord is. She roams about without rest, asking all and sundry if they had seen her Lord. When they reply that they had seen Him in Brindāvana, she takes heart and continues her journey. Andāl's all-consuming love is picturesquely and tenderly expressed in this beautiful poem which gives us a grand insight into bridal mysticism.

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## REMINISCENCES

ATMANANDA

( 2 )\*

After I had had my first talk with Mataji I never ceased to marvel at the extraordinary ease and naturalness with which She had exploded my problem. Where there had been an almost constant dilemma, there was now a straight path. It was as if an open door had been shown to me : as I then saw, it had always been there, but I had not noticed it until she pointed it out. She had uttered just a few simple words, nothing particularly striking or unheard of, yet the effect was quite out of proportion. It may perhaps be likened to the miracle of electricity : by the mere pressing of a button a whole town can be lit up. Mataji's words evidently are not just ordinary words, but vehicles of power and light that open up one's understanding, that bring about definite changes in the person to whom they are addressed. The mind did not cease from wandering, but it ceased from worrying : there suddenly was nothing to worry about. I could perceive the next step, and full confidence had been awakened in me that I would always see the next step as I walked along. A new life had begun.

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\* See Ananda Varta Vol. VI/4, p. 325.



I conceived an overwhelming desire to be able to talk to Mataji without the help of an interpreter, to find out more about Her and Her teaching, which seemed so simple and yet again so very very subtle and far-reaching. I thus began to devote every free minute to the study of Hindi.

Bengali would have been more satisfactory, since it is Mataji's own language, but I already knew the Hindi script and had an elementary knowledge of the language, so, being impatient by temperament, I naturally chose the quicker way. It took me about a year of strenuous effort to understand well what Mataji said in Hindi and to talk to Her without help. No sooner had I achieved this than Mataji would quite often call me to translate for foreigners and sometimes for South Indians. I thereby got a unique opportunity to witness many private interviews with people of greatly varying background. This enabled me to get first-hand experience of the great universality of Mataji's teaching, of its innumerable aspects and facets : I could see for myself how She modified it to appeal to each person's nature, conditioning and need of the moment—and yet She never stepped it down. My desire was being fulfilled : slowly and gradually I got a certain grasp of what Mataji taught, by Her Presence as well as Her words.

Translating private conversations moreover gave me the chance to get to know intimately sadhakas from various countries, to get an insight into their problems, their approach. Fellow-travellers who meet on the way can often learn from one another.

My efforts were thus rewarded a millionfold, in fact, tenacious as they had been, they were negligible compared to what I had gained.

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In November 1945 I wanted to spend my Divali holidays with Mataji. I had never before stayed in any of Her Ashrams. Mataji was to be at Vindhyachal on that occasion. The war was not yet over, and, being an 'enemy alien', I could not leave Varanasi without obtaining a special police permit. I applied and

whether the permit would reach me in time. How great was my joy and amazement when I received the reply that I did not require any more permits! Henceforth, I was free to travel where I pleased within India, provided I kept the police informed of my itinerary. Ever since the beginning of the war in 1939 my movements had been severely restricted. I had had to apply giving valid reasons every time I wanted to leave Varanasi even for a single day. Permits had often been granted, but by no means always. Was it a coincidence that the moment I had no more desire to go anywhere except for the sole reason of being near Mataji, I was suddenly free to go wherever I liked?

At Vindhyachal *Kali Puja* was celebrated. I had never before witnessed a *puja* of this kind, nor was I used to staying up all night. In those days the crowds that thronged round Mataji were not so formidable as they are now. Besides, being a newcomer and a foreigner at that, I was readily helped to a good place right in front, from where I could watch Mataji and every detail of the *puja*. Mataji was present throughout the night in the room where the *puja* was being performed. She seemed to be keenly alive to everything that happened. I observed Her closely and was fascinated to see Her face change continually. A whole drama appeared to be enacted on Her features. She looked not only radiantly beautiful but also extraordinarily young that night—I could have sworn She was not a day older than 16 and yet I knew that She had been born in 1896, nearly fifty years before. Was it a human being or goddess sitting there in front of me, I mused. I cannot claim to know how a goddess looks, but surely this was not the countenance of a human being.

Another peculiar thing happened to me that night. My own mother died when I was just two years old and although I had seen a number of photos of her, much as I tried, I had never been able to imagine how she had looked. This puzzled me much, especially in my childhood. During that *Kali Puja* the thought suddenly flashed through my mind: I have seen this face before, long ago—Oh, now I know how my mother looked: this ( Mataji ) is my mother." It was a strange experience, inexplicable, which left a deep and lasting impression, unforgettable.

When the *puja* was over, I was told that it was 3 a. m. *Three A.M.*? Was it possible? We had been watching since 10 p. m. Had I really sat glued to the spot for five long hours? I did not feel sleepy even when I got up and I could not fathom how the time had flown so quickly—5 full hours! It seemed quite incredible. I went to my room and lay down. I had not yet fallen asleep when someone knocked at the door, calling my name. It was Sri Gurupriya Devi, holding an *asana*\* in her hand: "Mataji sends you this," she said. It was just 4 a. m., the time when at the Ashram we are supposed to rise for meditation. 'How very subtle of Mataji, I thought, 'to present me with an *asana* in this memorable night and at this hour, to remind me no doubt that this is not the time to sleep but to sit in meditation.' I went outside to thank Her. Mataji had not gone to rest, I found Her busy, surrounded by people. She smiled at me. "You were feeling cold, sitting without an *asana*," She said. The *asana* is still with me, but with the years it has become badly worn.

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It was probably in 1947 when Thompson received a letter from a friend in Pondicherry, recommending an old French gentleman to him, who had spent the greater part of his life in Africa and had now come for a short holiday to India, the land of his dreams. He wished to spend a few days in the holy city of Varanasi; would Thompson kindly assist him and show him round, since the old man did not know much English and of course not a word of Hindi. T. did what he could for him. However when he found that the old gentleman was a serious aspirant, who had practised meditation for about 30 years with the help of Swami Vivekananda's books, he said to him: "What will you gain by all this sight-seeing? The one whom you really ought to meet is Sri Sri Anandamayee Ma." The old man had never before heard about Mataji, but when he was told more about Her he was only too eager to have Her *darshan*. There was only one difficulty: Mataji was not in Varanasi at that time and the gentleman's visa was about to expire in a couple of days. "I cannot possibly

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\* A small carpet used as a seat for meditation or worship.

risk to stay on," he said, "I must go to Delhi at once to have my papers put in order and then leave India, or I shall get into serious trouble with the authorities." But T. was not the man to listen to such arguments. "Nonsense", he retorted with vehemence, "visas, police, authorities, etc. etc.—all these are creations of the mind. The moment a human being attends to reality all these phantoms lose their power, they simply cease to exist for him. You need not worry at all about those formalities, rest assured that nothing will go wrong. You cannot leave Varanasi now. Mataji is expected here in a few days, you will have to wait." T. could be fierce in his determination on occasions and the old man had not the courage to contradict him. Moreover, he felt utterly helpless at Varanasi without T's assistance and guidance. So he obeyed.

He was waiting at the Ashram when Mataji arrived. Once he had seen Her and She had glanced back at him he could not take his eyes off Her. Fascinated, for hours' together he stood speechless on the terrace over-looking the Ganges, with tears trickling down his cheeks, unaware of the passage of time. When late at night he got back to the Rama Krishna Mission, where he was putting up, he found the gate locked. With difficulty he roused the door-keeper. Everyone was asleep and he had to go to bed without his dinner. The next few days he spent at the Ashram. He had one or two private talks with Mataji, which I had the privilege of translating into French with T's help. Mataji asked the old man when he would return to India. He replied: "I am afraid there will be no more chance of that. I have come with considerable difficulty even this time and I shall not get permission again to take maney out of the country in which I live. Besides I am old." (He was nearly 70). Mataji made no comments. The gentleman left and he really encountered no difficulties due to having overstayed his visa.

Soon after reaching his destination he began to write letter after letter, all of them dealing with the same theme in endless variations: He could not bear the thought of living for the rest of his life far away from Mataji and from India. By hook or by crook he would have to return. 'Where there is a will, there is a way'—he

would manage to come somehow, sooner or later, the sooner the better. Lo and behold—he quickly discovered a way. India had just ~~gained~~ political independence and every country had to start an embassy or a consulate in New Delhi. In no time the old gentleman secured a post of some sort at his country's embassy in New Delhi. He consequently was not only granted a visa but also permission to bring his money to India.

When he arrived he went straight to Mataji and subsequently followed Her about wherever She happened to go for some two or three years. Notwithstanding his advanced age and the fact that he had been used to a very different and settled kind of life, he did not seem to mind hardships and discomforts; he was blissfully happy, having found what he had longed for most of his life. Later however his health deteriorated. He left India, only to come back a third time. But his enthusiasm had waned or perhaps he had grown too old. I have lost track of him and do not even know whether he still dwells in the land of the living.

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# MATRI LILA

( 15th January—15th April, 1959. )

After nearly two week's stay at Jhalawar Mataji returned to the New Delhi Ashram for a week end on January 16th and then proceeded to Varanasi, breaking journey at Allahabad for a few hours. On the 23rd night Mataji reached the Rajgir Ashram which is a solitary place. Rajgir ( Rajagriha ) in Behar has been famous since the time when the Lord Buddha walked the earth. He visited the ancient Rajagriha several times for longer and shorter periods. thence became a Buddhist place of pilgrimage. Apart from this it has been blessed by nature with hot springs that are said to have cured thousands of patients of all kinds of ailments. The Ashram at Rajgir was built fairly recently, but even before it came into existence, Mataji used to visit Rajgir now and again, putting up at one of the *Dharmasalas*.

On February 5th Mataji went on to Patna. Sri N. Bakshi, I. C. S., drove Mataji to Patna in his car. After paying a short visit to his house, Mataji proceeded to Prof. S. Choudhury's house where She spent the night in the family temple.

A party of devotees from Varanasi headed by Didima joined Mataji at Patna from where everyone entrained for Calcutta arriving at the Agarpara Ashram on the 7th morning. Since it was known that Mataji would most probably spend more than two weeks at Agarpara and would moreover move to the city during the later part of Her stay, the rush of devotees was not quite as great as usual in the beginning, since Agarpara is far out of Calcutta proper. Among the regular visitors were a number of Europeans and Americans, some of them belonging to the *Self-Realization Fellowship* that was started by the late Swami Yogananda. Their Ashram at Dakshinেশ্বর is not far from ours at Agarpara.

Mrs. Anitra Lucander, a Finnish paintress of repute, stayed in the Agarpara Ashram for a week, and then flew back to her country.

The Ananda Varta and the few English books that have been published about Mataji have found their way even into the countries

of the midnight sun. Mrs. Lucander had read them in her home and was ever since eager to meet Mataji face to face. Spending X'mas at Bethlehem she alighted in New Delhi early in January. As luck would have it Mataji happened to be there and within a few hours of her arrival she was able to have Mataji's *darshan*. She remained in the Chandraloka Ashram for a couple of days and later followed Mataji to Jhalawar, from where she went to visit the Ajanta and Ellora caves. Halting in our Ashrams at Vrindaban and Varanasi enroute, she joined Mataji again at Rajgir. She felt quite at home in India and we hope to welcome her soon again.

On February 12th, *Vasant Panchami* day, Saraswati Puja was celebrated with great rejoicing at the Agarpara Ashram. It has become almost a national festival in Bengal.

On February 18th Mataji stayed for one night in a room specially constructed for Her use in the house of Sri K.N. Banerjee, Rtd. Asst. Income-tax Commissioner, Bengal. The next morning She proceeded to the residence of Sri D. K. Nag, the son-in-law of the brother of Sri Jatish Chandra Guha. Their whole family are amongst Mataji's oldest devotees. The opening ceremony of Sri Nag's house was performed in Mataji's presence. Here a large number of people, who were unable to travel all the distance to Agarpara, had the golden opportunity of Mataji's *darshan*.

On the morning of February 24th, Mataji left for Burdwan, which is about 60 miles from Calcutta. There She spent six or seven hours in three different houses of devotees and left for Varanasi the same night, reaching on the 25th morning, only to leave Dehradun again on the 28th of February.

As early as in September 1957, the construction of two temples had been begun in the grounds of the Kishenpur Ashram, but left uncompleted for about a year. Only recently the building work was at last brought to a successful end and the consecration of those two temples, as well as, of a small Shiva shrine at "Kalyanvan" took place on the Shivaratri day, March 7th, in Mataji's presence.

Just as with everyone of our Ashram and the temples located within the precincts of those Ashrams, there is a long and interesting history behind those temples which we hope to publish in details in our next issue.

On March 9th Mataji paid a short surprise visit to the New Delhi Ashram and the next day motored from there to Vrindaban, where She remained for the Holi festival on March 24th. Elaborate accounts of this festival have appeared in the pages of this magazine before. A devotee of Mathura had arranged for a Bhagavata Saptaha there, which commenced on the 12th.

On March 25th Mataji left for Delhi and from there the next day by car for Patiala at the invitation of Rai Bahadur G. M. Modi of the Modi Industries.

After five days at Patiala Mataji and the whole party proceeded to Hoshiarpur, where everyone stayed at the Sachchidananda Ashram till April 6th. The next day and night were spent at the Savitri Devi Ashram, Jullundur. On the 8th April early morning Mataji and Her large party reached Hardwar. The same afternoon Mataji motored to Ramnagar, Rishikesh, the site for the next *Samyam Mahavrata*; after a short while, the car took Her on to Kishenpur, Dehradun, where She had three comparatively restful days. On the 11th afternoon She was back at Rishikesh. On April 13th Mataji accepted a special invitation to the Sapta Rishi Ashram, Hardwar, where Sri Jawaharlal Nehru addressed an enormous gathering, while Mataji sat by his side on the special dais. Sri Nehru took this opportunity of paying his respects to Mataji after a lapse of about seven years and having a few words with Her.

On April 14th Didima's (Sri Swami Muktananda Giri's) *Sanyasa Utsava* was celebrated by a programme that continued without interruption from early morning till late at night. The celebration took place at Atma Vijnan Bhawan, Ramnagar, Rishikesh, a truly wonderful spot on the banks of the Ganges, solitary and far removed from the hustle and bustle of modern civilization. From April 15th the Ninth *Samyam Mahavrata* will be observed in the very same place.

We hope to report in detail both about the *Samyam Mahavrata* as well as Mataji's 64th Birthday celebration at Kishenpur in the next issue of Ananda Varta.



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

It is indeed a matter of great pleasure and satisfaction to all of us that the magazine is beginning its seventh year with this Birthday Number. But we are really afraid that, unless the number of subscribers is substantially increased immediately, continued financial handicap may necessitate some deterioration in the existing quality of the journal. Each of our subscribers is, therefore, particularly requested to enlist at least *five* new subscribers among his friends and relations.

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With due consideration to facilities for packing etc. and lesser chance of damage in postal transit, the size of the magazine is being slightly reduced beginning with this issue. But it is guaranteed that readers will find more pages to read in future than before.

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Due to exorbitant rise in the price of paper, we have been compelled to increase most reluctantly the annual subscription of the magazine to Rs. 5/- (including postage) beginning with this volume.

\* \* \*

Several bound copies of Volume VI are now available. The price of each volume is Rs. 8/- only (excluding postage & packing).

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We had mentioned in the last February issue that all who had the privilege of coming in close contact with Ma know very well how difficult it is to give any definite information about Her programme. The 64th Birthday Celebration which was proposed to be held at Jamnagar will now be held at our Kishenpur, Dehradun Ashram. Ma is expected to stay there till the end of May, 1959.



## SIXTY-FOURTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SHREE SHREE MA

We have much pleasure to announce that the sixty-fourth Birthday Celebration of Shree Shree Ma will be held from 3rd to 26th May, 1959 at Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Kishenpur, Dehradun. It is expected that Ma will grace the occasion by her Divine presence.

The *Tithi-Puja* will be held on 25th night ( 26th according to the English Calender ).

All are cordially invited to attend and participate in the celebration.

*President,*

SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE SANGHA.  
VARANASI.

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