

Ananda Vārtā

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

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Bombay — May, 1960

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

MĀTRI VĀNI

Indeed everything that this body says or does—its actions, movements, its going hither and thither—is done for your sakes. Whatever is done for you by this body at any time, it is you who cause it to happen.



It is necessary to try and dedicate to the Supreme every single action of one's daily life. From the moment one wakes in the morning until one falls asleep at night one should endeavour to sustain this attitude of mind. By so doing one will gradually come to feel: How can I offer Him greed, anger and other undesirable qualities of this kind? To Him who is so infinitely dear to me—who is my very own? Does one give that which is bad to one's nearest and dearest? As one continues to reflect in this way one

the ground. The flowers and fruits of both trees will be similar. In the same way this body has no desire, no intention or set purpose—everything occurs spontaneously.

Very often this body keeps concealed both its behaviour and its words. This is the actual truth. It is necessary and therefore it comes to pass.

Conversations with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

RECORDED BY PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

(Translated by Atmananda)

(3)

Question : Why do all people seek happiness (ānanda) ?

Mataji : In the world there is happiness as well as sorrow. Not all men aspire at *ānanda* (supreme happiness, bliss). If momentary happiness be sought, there will be pain. Those who are attached to sense objects are indeed the greatest renunciants, for they renounce supreme Bliss in order to gain ephemeral joys.

Question : When God has been realized, is no 'return ticket' needed anymore ?*

Mataji : When God has been realized this question cannot even arise. The world is the place of doubt, the realm of coming and going ; but when one has recovered one's Supreme Wealth, attained to the Kingdom of God, the question of coming and going exists no more.

Question : What is the significance of the story of *Ajamil*, which is related in the *Srimad Bhāgavata* ? Does it mean that one can reach one's Goal only by intense faith and devotion ?

* Mataji sometimes says that if one does not attain to Self-realization, which is the Goal of life, one has to take a 'return ticket' and is reborn in this world.

Mataji : Achievement may come to anyone. It is necessary to persevere in doing one's own particular *sadhana*. None can tell what may be achieved by anyone and at what time. The power of God's name (*Harinama*) resembles a fiery spark.

Question : What actually is *anandamayi* ?

Mataji : You yourself are *anandamayi* (permeated by Bliss).

Question : Well, then our relation with that aspect of ourselves has so far not been consciously established.

Mataji : The relationship that is eternal exists here and now. There is only One Self.

Question : Yet we are not aware of it.

Mataji : This is why effort is necessary. The false idea that your Self is far away is the cause of your misery and of the ceaseless round of births and deaths. It is therefore important to take refuge in the *Guru* and endeavour to become possessed of supreme Knowledge. This Knowledge will come to you if you keenly aspire after it. Relationship means—the One reposing in Himself is ever bound up with each and all. In the various relationships such as those of mother, father, Lord, friend and so forth, the One is united with each. You also are ever and eternally united with the One. In order to realize Him you have to study, exert yourself and engage in spiritual practices. The great is contained in the small and the small in the great ; the drop in the ocean and the ocean in the drop.

Question : It is said that the atom is provided with infinite power. How can this be ?

Mataji : Indeed there is infinite power in the atom. Just as the whole of the huge banyan tree is contained in its seed, so Power is present in the atom. A human body develops out of a seed of microscopical size.

Question : Is science applicable to both the outer and the inner worlds ?

Mataji : The material world is connected with the subtle worlds. The subtle is contained in the gross and the gross in the subtle. Whatever line of approach is congenial to you, along that line will the realization of Truth come to you. Everything is wholly contained in everything else. If you study the development of plants or of man you will find that on the one hand they are all creatures with sense-perceptions, yet on the other hand they are also purely spiritual beings. The spiritual is the centre round which all manifestation and change revolve. Because man divides and makes distinctions he has to reap the consequences of his good and evil deeds, otherwise there would be uninterrupted, unbroken Bliss. Embrace the excellent and relinquish mere pleasure and you will advance from the grossly material to the sublime. A flower gives out perfume ; from the part you must proceed to the whole.

Question : One speaks of the *s'abda Brahman* and says that it can be perceived by the ear ; whereas according to modern science the supersonic sound wave is inaudible. What actually is the *s'abda Brahman* ? Is it both the sound that is perceptible as well as the sound that is imperceptible ?

Mataji : Whichever way you take it ; neither the one nor the other can be excluded. Together with the flash of lightning there is thunder ; the sound depends on the instrument by which it is produced. There is always sound, for movement itself produces it. Yet there is Being, which is beyond sound. Action causes sound, light also is an expression of sound. Friction brings about fire and therein lies sound as well. *Aksara** is that which cannot be distilled or divided and therefore is the *śabda Brahman*. The eternal sound is the *śabda Brahman*.

Question : Is an ordinary person capable of hearing it ?

Mataji : Everyone hears as much as lies in his power. Different people hear different sounds. When the mind has not been brought under control it cannot perceive the *śabda Brahman*. A sleeping man does not even hear ordinary sounds and a wandering mind cannot record subtle sounds. The individual is he who is bound and the world is perpetual motion. The hearing of the individual is not full hearing, but one who has the inner qualifications, namely a *yogi*, will be able to hear. It has happened to this body many times that it has heard the call "Mother!" from far off lands. Where the idea of distance is absent, there place and time present no obstacles.

**Aksara* means indivisible and also letter of the alphabet.

WORSHIP OF ONENESS IN ABSTRACT ART

ELWOOD DECKER, CALIFORNIA.

When people see abstract art for the first time they almost invariably ask, "What does it mean?"

The subtle word abstraction came from the Latin word *abstractus*, past participial of *abs*, from ; and *trahere*, to draw,—*abstrahere*, to draw from. Thus originally an abstraction meant a dynamic living process. With centuries of use as a process, the word abstract also became identified with generalities and results ; generalities that defined the purposes of the process and results from using the process that were definitely concrete,—more obviously so on the physical level, less obviously on the mental and spiritual levels.

The chronological evolution of the word abstraction reveals the psychological evolution of man. It is a man-made word. Man put himself in it, with his lowest and highest experiences. When a thief draws a purse from another's pocket, he is making an abstraction according to the dictionary. From this early use, the word took on a secretive tone, later indicating the abstruse, the difficult to understand, the Ideal. Perhaps Robin Hood had something to do with it. Ordinarily however, an act of theft is an altogether tangible experience, compounded of concrete particulars of fact, and unfortunately not to be considered as ideal or abstruse in any delicately ethereal sense whatsoever.

Another grossly physical example of the word abstract comes from the possible meaning of theft in the word conveyance. So we have an 'abstract of title', simply a piece of paper containing a list of the successive conveyances upon which title to a piece of land rests. Unless this piece of paper were definitely concrete, it would have no legal value. Note that here abstract means addition rather than subtraction. Even in these grossly physical examples, the word abstraction shows something of its flexibility to represent opposite attitudes of mind, illegal and legal, negative and positive. Subtraction and addition are only a beginning.

As abstraction became more useful to describe mental activities, it took on the characteristics of the mind, its power of concentration for instance. Broad areas of interest had to be condensed. Facts were not merely noted, but condensed with understanding. On this higher level of intellectual activity, a book may be thought of as an abstraction of a situation, an attempt to portray the salient characteristics of a situation,—perhaps with a series of climatic events revolving around a central problem, to intensify and reveal it more fully, so that it may be clarified and solved in the end. A book review is an epitome of the book, an abstraction of the book; an abstraction of an abstraction. Sometimes the power to analyze is described as the power to abstract, and our doctor may urge us for the sake of sanity to become more conscious of the fact that we are often making abstractions, of abstractions, of abstractions, of abstractions, of abstractions,—with an unnecessary verbal indirectness; when all the while we have an opportunity to make more reliable

abstractions on the non-verbal level, by the direct use of all of our senses. However, like much good advice, it is not always appropriate. There are times when it is better to depend on hearsay; for all direct abstractions are not equally constructive; for instance the thief's abstraction. It would be better to learn about many things from a safe distance on the sheerly verbal level. We are fortunate to be able to create our own works of art on the direct level of sense perception, but in the appreciation of the art of others it is helpful to know about their ideas, as well as see what they have created. It seems to me that in such matters our sense of design is just as important to motivate our interest, as it is in the creation of a work of art. The verbal level of abstraction is useful, not only to protect us from undesirable experiences, but also to introduce us to greater experiences beyond our present ability, but definitely possible to us, if we will only take the time to learn about them to begin to express them. It is difficult to leave what we already know and begin, perhaps awkwardly, with a greater possibility. In this our moral power of motivation is more important than our mental power to analyze and is a greater power of abstraction.

Now we at last are about to consider the final most mysterious and little known significance of the word abstract, the generality, the essence. Now I want to tell you why abstraction may be important to you and how it may change your entire life for the better. Between the infinity of detail that escapes our sense perception, and the INFINITE UNITY OF LIFE that transcends our limited thinking, there

is the Primary Variety of abstract qualities, an essential framework of limited generalities that *can* be comprehended by the limited mind, expressed through the limitations of sense, and thus evolve our power to be conscious.

We can evolve our consciousness by using this universal lumber to build a personal stairway of awareness from the least to the most inclusive unity involved in our interest. This ideal of *dimensional progression* is not a matter of thinking only. It requires the creative expression of all our faculties and is a natural one for artists.

As artists, why are we so fascinated by the fundamental qualities of the Image? What are we abstracting for in the first place? We are always trying to get at the essence of something, to grow in understanding, to satisfy our own ESSENTIAL NATURE.

In all the preliminary examples of abstraction we have considered so far, there is an attempt to get at the essence of something. The book review is an attempt to get at the essence of the book. The book is an attempt to get at the essence of a situation. An abstract of title is an attempt to establish the essential legal evidence of ownership. The thief is trying to get at what he believes to be the essence of wealth, the rustling paper and the jingling coins.

Similarly, Abstract Art is an attempt to express the essential generalities of Vision,—size, shape, value, color, space, form, motion, and motivation. All these are divisions of consciousness, and other divisions of consciousness are

necessary to comprehend them, such as observation, memory, conception and intuition. These in turn, depend on control of attention, emotion, and finally instinct. We can achieve this because the primaries of Vision are not all equally inclusive. They invite the mind on different levels of strength. A child instinctively expresses sizes and shapes ordinarily before values of light and dark. Gradually the child learns to concentrate the mental faculties, and later is ready to study the more complexly inclusive qualities of color, space and form. If the child decides to become an artist, it could be a great advantage to learn at an early age, the dimensional progression inherent in the pictorial primaries; for then it will be possible to plan an effective program of abstract expression to free the mind.

Value is only one of the elements of color, but it can be studied alone, achromatically. Hue, intensity and neutrality are equally important elements of color, but they cannot be studied apart from color. Therefore value is regarded as a special visual quality, an easy one to begin on. Similarly shape is only one of the elements of form, but it can be studied alone in its essential variation as a two dimensional effect. Size may likewise be analyzed two dimensionally. When we think of three dimensional size, we are thinking of space. Space, form and color are phases of motion. All our sensations of sense perception,—feeling, tasting, smelling, hearing *and* seeing are different rates of vibratory movement. Motion is four dimensional, yet it is governed by motivation that determines its rhythm and duration in time, ... and motivation is only one aspect of consciousness. CONSCIOUS-

NESS is our greatest generality, the Essential Basis of our art and life.

What we are always trying to do, is to get at the ESSENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, whether we know it or not. We are always trying to produce, or get into, a more Enjoyable state of Mind.

That is why abstract art may be important to us. Imitative expression is not enough to interest the mind in its own Potentiality. It humiliates the mind to be forced to imitate, when it could create. Abstract expression, when successful, not only reveals the creative powers of the mind. The original effects it creates from adequate knowledge of contrasts inherent in a primary generality, awakens the mind to its own ORIGINAL NATURE. To be humble enough to begin all over again with the next step up; the next more inclusive generality; to have the courage, the willingness to look foolish while learning a new element, a person must have some Vision of the Greatness of the GOAL.

The greatest definition of abstraction in the dictionary is the abstraction of the mind itself. To abstract the mind, according to the dictionary, is to withdraw the mind from all worldly objects. This would require perfect control of the mind, for it means to draw the mind's attention entirely from its sensations and conceptions, and concentrate it upon its Intrinsic Nature. Such a state of mind would transcend dimensions as we have described them, for it would be empty of them; but for an artist the way to it might well be through a four dimensional emptiness, time; a three

dimensional emptiness, space ; a two dimensional emptiness, size ; and a one dimensional emptiness, a point. So,—it takes a little time, a point to begin and the spiritual courage to leave the lower when we are ready for the higher.

Different religions and philosophies tell us we must first learn to control our instinctive desires, before we can hope to control the mind, because uncontrolled desires keep the mind in a constant state of restless distraction. If we can concentrate our desires creatively in art, then we can recognize uncontrolled desires as dimensions not yet understood. We shall know better where we stand and not be the helpless victims of the two infinities of sensation and awareness, so inscrutable to ordinary consciousness.

It would be normally difficult to withdraw the mind, all at once, from its dearly desired sensations and conceptions, because they have become deeply rooted habits that ride our befuddled consciousness like the old man of the sea. Fortunately, abstract art offers us a pleasant, easy, simple way to do it gradually.

When we go to sleep at night, what happens is that the poor tired mind abstracts itself *unconsciously* in order to get a little much needed rest. How much better if we can direct our interest in a consciously creative dimensional progression of abstractions, and know the Divinely Beautiful, Blissful, Peaceful Power of our Mind. Certainly the blank rest we get in sleep at night is a poor substitute for the Joyous, Fully Conscious, "PEACE THAT PASSETH UNDERSTANDING"

that we have all heard about and so few of us have experienced. Yet the opportunity is abundantly offered to us every day to practise on the lesser abstractions that can lead to it, especially the easier ones to begin on.

The illusions you are about to see are examples of abstractions in manifestation. If they remind you of your own opportunity to abstract your way to Bliss, they will mean more to you than passing entertainment. If any of you have ever asked, "What is the meaning of abstraction?", please know that there is more to it than meets the eye, and please know also, the answer that will completely satisfy you, will some day be your own original answer.

Footnote

This was composed for art students. A person at the top of the stairway may not need to think of the lower steps or their order. For many others below however, the ideal of dimensional progression could be a blessing. Many might profit by asking themselves, "Is there an inherent progression involved in my interests, a dimensional progression of relative unities from least to most inclusive, an invisible stairway of qualities I need to climb creatively, in sequence, to reach my highest Goal?"

This is no more for fish, birds and animals than it is for Sages. It is for those who have the gumption to realize that they are responsible for what happens to them because of their former attitudes, choices and activities and are ready to consider the more serious use of their creative powers.

IN QUEST OF GOD AND SAD-GURU

SRI P. M. VERMA, M. A., B. Sc., LL. B.

(Continued from the last issue.)

Testing the Sad-Guru.

Can one apply the foot-rule to measure the Infinite? Yet man, poor man of this Intellectual Age, who has lost his simple Faith, is vain enough to imagine that by his puny intellect he can sit in judgment and measure the depths of a Sad-Guru. With my early prejudices against all *gurudom*, to which I have alluded above, and being no exception to the intellectual venom, it took me nearly fifteen years to recognize the *Sad-Guru* and the Universal Mother in Sri Sri Anandmoyee Ma. I now feel very small and silly when I think of the tests that I applied to Her. The first time I had Her *darshan* well nigh 15 years ago. I had gone to Her in the company of a friend and asked Her what She would advise my friend to do, as he was an atheist. She promptly replied: "You yourself know everything. What you need is to devote more time. As to your friend, let him go on honestly saying: 'Not this! Not this!' and he too will reach the same goal." While Mother had at once recognized Her child, the latter was not then mature enough to recognize the Universal Mother. Next day again I went to see the Mother, when She was sitting in the midst of a big gathering. I had a particular desire to touch Her holy feet without anybody noticing that

I was credulous enough to do that. It so happened that I got a chance of fulfilling my heart-felt desire. Never again did I need to put any question to Her, as I invariably found all my doubts and misgivings resolving themselves in Her presence, whenever I happened to go near Her. Some of my friends too testified to the same experience. Many a time the answer to a riddle or a quandary weighing upon one's mind would come, not from Her but from the lips of someone else talking to Her. There is a certain magic in Her divine presence, which not merely draws people to Her, but literally makes them madly run after Her. I have seen men, who had come to scoff at Her, staring at Her with gaping mouths as if captivated and lost in mute wonder, and later confessing that they could see *Ananda* radiating from Mother's charming face, and that She fully justified Her name 'Anandamoyee'. I was also greatly impressed by the fact that there was something "contagious", as I used to remark, in Mother's laughter, because I noticed that when She laughed even the wryest face began to beam with smiles, and some of my friends told me that they went for Her *Darshan* merely to watch Her blissful face that made them feel younger. That reminds me of a Puranic story which I heard from a mystic, which made a deep impression on my mind. The story was that of a *Brahmajnani*—I forget the name—who as he was once passing through the *kunjgalis* of Mathura stood transfixed at a spot where he saw a small child playing, and as he found after a time that he was so much captivated by the radiant and charming face of that child that he could not take his gaze off him, he started shouting to the other

passers-by not to come that way as there lay a great danger ahead of them in that child Krishna who had completely fascinated him, a *Brahmajnani*, whose mind was otherwise far above this mundane world. The theme of that mystic's discourse was that *Sakara-Bhakti* was superior to *Nirakara-Bhakti*, and he was illustrating his point by saying that when the Lord comes down to this world for the uplift of His *Bhaktas*, His *Sakara Rūpa* is even sweeter than His *Nirakara-Rūpa* just as, he argued, sugar cane was so sweet, but how much sweeter would be the fruit of sugar cane if it had one ; or just as the sandalwood tree was so fragrant, but how much more fragrant the fruit of the tree would be, if it had one.

During the last five years I have had more occasions of having Mother's *darshan* during Her visits to Allahabad, although every time I preferred to go to Her 'incognito' in the sense that I did not seek to be introduced to Her. I felt She had always known me, and She fully satisfied every test by which I thought I could fathom Her depths as the Supreme Incarnation of the Universal Mother which Her *Bhaktas* acclaimed Her to be. To illustrate my point with a few specific instances, let me first begin with that fateful day, Jan. 30, 1948, when the news was broadcasted through the Radio at about 8 P. M. of the passing away of the father of the nation. I was at that time sitting in the Mother's camp in the *Maghmela* along with many other *Bhaktas* awaiting the arrival of the Mother. It was a very unusual feature that evening that *Kirtan* had started in the camp where She gave audience, but She had not come even

at that late hour. Somebody said that Mother was taking rest on Her return from Jhusi. A good few of the Bhaktas left after waiting for more than one hour. Those that kept waiting, and I was one of them, were taken aback to receive a rather peremptory direction from some whitecaps, who entered the camp, to stop the *Kirtan* immediately as the news had come of Mahatmaji's passing away. As I left the tent, the idea upper-most in my mind was that Mother had not come that day to give *darshan*, because She knew about that fatality, and might not have approved of the uncalled-for instruction of the busybodies.

On another evening later in the year 1948, while Mother was staying at Jhusi in Sri Prabhu Dutt Bramhachari's Ashrama, I went there for Her *darshan* at the invitation of certain clients of mine who were also putting up there. I sat for a while at Mother's feet without having anything to say. She put a few casual questions to my clients as to where they came from. As at that time of the season the pontoon bridge was being dismantled, I was in a hurry to get back across the bridge before it became dark, so I got up to take leave of Her. She directed one of Her *Bhaktas* to get some *Prasad* for me. There was a moment's delay and I was getting impatient to leave. She made a sign to get the *Prasad* quickly, not once but twice, as I was hurrying out of Her presence. A big *laddoo** was at last handed over to me just as I was on the point of leaving the place, and I carried it with me as if it were a prize won by me for all the trouble I had undertaken in going as far as Jhusi to have

*A sweet.

Mother's *Darshan*. On reaching home I found my wife suffering from a serious attack of colic and diarrhoea. As night advanced her trouble grew worse and worse, and no medicine seemed to help. At about midnight I felt there was no hope of saving her life, and so I thought Mother's *Prasad* which lay in my pocket might possibly come to my rescue, and with trembling hands and with *Rama-Nama* on my lips I forced a little bit into my wife's mouth, while she was almost sinking. Soon after I was happy to notice that she had fallen asleep and that was the end of her malady.

About two years later when it was again my good fortune to enjoy Mother's *Darshan* at the house of a neighbour of mine, it is not possible for me to describe the effect of the few words that fell from Her august lips in dispelling certain doubts that had arisen in my mind. When I found She had not touched the offering of sweets I had brought for Her, I protested to Her why She was not accepting any of it and narrated to Her how I had found Her *Prasad* efficacious in saving my wife's life. She said with Her usual smile and the condescension of a Goddess that She had already accepted it, and for my satisfaction She took a particle of it and made a show of putting it into Her mouth, whereupon Her devotee, known as *Didi*, remarked that Mataji had not a single grain of food for the last three days.

During the last Durga Puja celebrated by Mother's *Bhaktas* at Allahabad I wished I could ask Mother to give me some of Her *Prasad* once again. I had kept that wish all to myself, but to my great surprise a volunteer *Bhakta* approached to

tell me that I should not fail to take Mother's *Prasad* at noon the next day. Next morning I found another volunteer *Bhakta* coming to tell me that I should take Mother's *Prasad*, as Mother had given an express direction to carry that message to me. But for that reminder I might not have gone to take the *Prasad* at lunch time. I had no idea that invitation for *Prasad* really meant an invitation for lunch. So I went and partook of a sumptuous lunch in the company of a host of Mother's *Bhaktas*, and for three days I had a feeling of such a purification of the body as one feels after a bath in the Ganges.

In my work entitled '*The Coming Renaissance*' I had written : (*vide* P. 171, First Ed., 1928) 'The true test of the spiritually-evolved is whether one has overcome his external wants by an over-whelming sense of internal bliss—the peace of the soul—and thus discovering in the silence of the heart an unbounded source of strength and energy has forgotten the lower nature of the body-temple. All the truth and knowledge being already hidden in the depths of his soul is simply revealed intuitively to his spiritual mind like an open book; and he doubts no longer in the labyrinth of the intellectual regions.'

I have discovered Mother satisfies that test perfectly. Indeed, whatever She says or does, is done to perfection, and every one who comes in contact with Her testifies to that fact. A doubt may arise in one's mind whether it is at all possible to realize perfection in anything in this most imperfect of worlds. Theoretically it may not be possible to realize infinity in this finite world, but if this

finite world of ours is the creation and manifestation of the Infinite, surely it should not be impossible to get a vision of Infinity through some finite vehicle just as we can see things through a telescope or a microscope. The other day I questioned a friend if he had been to witness the last Durga Puja celebrated by Mother's *Bhaktas*, to which he replied that he had been there only on the first day of the Puja, as after that he had unfortunately to go out of station. He further added that he was simply transported with joy and wonder at the sight of the beauty of Goddess Durga as a more perfect image could not be made. If an image could give so much sense of perfection, what can one say of the visions of the beautiful, the compassionate and the perfect that Mother's *Darshan* raises before the mind's eye. Many a time when I had Her *Darshan* from a distance She appeared to me as a young maiden would look radiant with joy on her bridal night, and at other times I caught the vision of Her face shining like the orb of the full moon. Some friends have corroborated that experience of mine.

At the Feet of the Universal Mother

I am quite sure of my facts to-day, as a lawyer or a scientist would put it, when I say that anyone, who has cultivated a little earnestness in his search after Reality or has a little bit of Faith in things spiritual, can get a glimpse of the Universal Mother by a mere *Darshan* of Sri Sri Anand-moyee Ma. My quest for a *Sad-Guru* is now ended. My highest ambition to-day is to become free as quickly as possible of my wordly attachments and so-called, duties to be able to go to Mother and tell Her that Her long-deluded child

had at last arrived to beg of Her the *Kripa* of Her lotus-feet. Of course, she won't need to be told, as it is by Her *Kripa* that the compassionate Mother for ever and ever attracts Her children to Herself. I know Mother never gave *Diksha* to anyone except Her late husband. That exception was made, I presume, to show to the world that Her so-called husband was actually a disciple of Hers. It may well have been that if She were giving *Diksha* to people, I might with my prejudices against *gurudom* have continued to misunderstand of Her even to-day. As it is, I am now convinced of the fulness her *Kripa* towards everyone without any distinction whatsoever. Has She not said, according to a message of Her's recorded by Bhaiji in '*Sad..Vani*', that the saints are like the trees that give their shade and fruit to anyone who asks for it and that She cannot understand why people should fight shy of approaching Her whom they should consider their very own. What a motherly love She has for one and all of us.

Another message of the Mother which will be found most consoling for the suffering and misguided humanity of to-day, as recorded by Bhaiji, is :—

'When your heart has become the abode of the Lord, all your worries are taken over by Him. You have merely to hold tight the string and let the kite go on its flight where-soever it may go, and you will find the course of life running smoothly for you just as the kite goes on flying. By running after *Maya* you will find it evades you at every attempt to grasp it like the ignis-fatuus. Why then run after the mirage and not sit in quiet contemplation of the Lord ?'

A great void has been created of late by the passing away of two outstanding figures among India's known saints, namely, Maharshi Ramana of Arunachalam and Sri Aurobindo, and now by common consent of all the Bhaktas of this ancient home of spirituality Sri Sri Anandamoyee Ma is India's No. 1. to whom all eyes are turned to build a sanctuary in this holy land of ours and re-establish *Rama-Rajya*. I believe now the Renaissance as dreamt of by me in the following lines is not far off:—(*ibid*, P. 165)

'When men are born into this world who are gifted with spiritual vision and able to interpret the true harmonies of life and the complex processes by which the Divine Urge of Evolution works its way through the cycles of births and rebirths towards the consummation of man's higher destiny, the mediocre world of to-day will then believe them and will then alone be prepared to retrace their steps and master the "First Step" of 'Self-control, Self-discipline, Penance and Sacrifice' which the Western civilisation so long ignored. Then will people listen to the inner voice of conscience and look to it as the guiding-light which always points out the best course under the circumstances, because it knows with the knowledge of our weaknesses, in what our good lies. Then will people believe that the killing of passions is an ideal in itself, if for no greater reason, then because it is so in the Divine scheme of things and hence as positive to us as the nature of the properties of matter, which are such by the very nature of things and so unalterable; that the researches of our ancient sages cannot be wrong, for instance, when they said of the human mind, that 'it was a machine given to the individual ego to execute the ego's will, and that

so far as the mind went, went *Māyā* or delusion. 'Then will people appreciate the value of "Penance" in the words of the *Gita* : "In order to master the lower self one should be like an adroit charioteer curbing the wily and turbulent horses of desire and passion and avoiding the pitfalls of sensual temptations," and, then, again, the true definition of "virtue" and "vice" will be made in terms of what leads towards or away from the goal of Self-realization or spiritual vision. Then all the researches of the founders of the various religions will be harmonized and adjudged their merit on scientific lines in terms of so much faith and so much virtue, to whomsoever in name dedicated. Thus will Science come to the rescue of religion and religions, thus coalesced into one synthetic and harmonious unity, would have saved Science. There will be one religion in the world...that of faith and worship...of *Bhakti-Yogins* and there will be seen the largest order of men holding spiritual communion with one another. Just as it is said, that 'half a dozen men made Industrial Revolution,' verily may it be, that half a dozen men of enlightened vision will transform the world and initiate humanity on the spiritual path away from the pursuit of the Mammon. Then we shall remember those periods of Ancient India (the *Aryavarta*) of not such a very remote past as the so-called Epic Age, of which the present writer has learnt with pride from some of those gifted with spiritual vision, that there they were ninety per cent of people gifted with such in sight and only ten per cent ignorant. Then, possibly, we shall have discarded our modern means of communication, and on the contrary, adopted the old simple communal village-life of

India, since in each Indian village there was and still is built a small hermitage under the sacred *Peepul* tree which was the wireless station of the village, called the *Deomut*, and all the news of the world could be broadcasted through the agency of a single *Sannyāsin* stationed there as the representative of the Great Order of Sannyāsins, which practically ruled over the country and ever guided by their counsels the will of her mighty worldly Kings and Emperors.'

Hail Mother ! Jai Ma ! Jai Ma !

The Malady of the Age—its Cause and Cure

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Padmabhusan, Knight Commander, Darshanāchārya.

(5)

Value Judgement, Ethical Urge, and Religious Aspirations of man throw still more light on the nature of man. Whatever the particular concepts of truth, goodness and beauty, every man aims at truth in knowing and thinking, at goodness in conduct, and at beauty in creation and appreciation. For the attainment of these he is prepared to undergo hardships and make sacrifices; and in pursuing them he feels that he is acting like a man. Truth, goodness and beauty, therefore, seem to be the highest values for man, in comparison to which worldly goods and pleasures are much more inferior. Similarly, men may and do differ among themselves in judging whether a particular action is right or wrong, but all men agree that they *ought* to do the right. We seem to have a power of discriminating between right and wrong, and also freedom and power to choose and do the right. No man feels happy after having done wrong. Despite all their sacrifices and sufferings the righteous alone seem to be happy. In the same way, men differ in their religious beliefs and practices, but the longings and aspirations that find expression in religion are the same or similar in all human beings. In spite of what is contrary in experience, every man desires that all his desires should be

fulfilled. He longs for immortality, security, happiness, for omniscience, omnipotence, for justice in life, for love and goodwill, for victory over suffering, old age and death and for some secret to get all his desires fulfilled. He has an inner and unshakable faith that he can be what he longs to be with the help of a teacher, prophet or God. All religions are expressions of this faith, hope and imagination. One may agree with Freud that all religions are illusions, but it is difficult to deny that man needs religion to save him from despair, frustration and neuroses. Either nature tantalizes and mocks at man or man's innermost longings must be fulfilled here or hereafter.

Thus, taking all the data about man into consideration, we conclude that man is too deep, too complex, and too many-sided to be fully understood in terms of any of the objective and physical sciences, and that the materialistic, chemical and biological conception of man is very superficial, partial, and unsatisfactory. A life lived in accordance with this view is a life partially lived, lived on the surface or mere fringe, and therefore, to a great extent, wasted.

Although our knowledge of man is still very meagre, vague and shallow, there is no doubt that in addition to being physically embodied, man is mental and spiritual, and his potentialities, which can be actualised here and now are unimaginably great. The highest purpose of life seems to be the unfoldment and realization of spiritual potentialities here and hereafter, for want of which man is miserable. All our social, economic, religious and political institutions and organizations should be conducive and instrumental to

this supreme purpose. At present this is not so, simply because the present day leaders of humanity are ignorant of the real nature and deeper needs of man and are, therefore, concerned with superficialities of life.

Our society, education, economics, politics and religions have to be completely overhauled, to suit the conditions brought about by science and to serve the highest purpose of human life. We cannot properly and happily live in the new world of to day with our old prejudices of race, creed, community, caste, colour and country. Every one of us should cultivate a sense of world-citizenship and human fellowship. We have to realize and feel that the entire earth is our home and all human beings our brothers and sisters. The welfare of entire humanity and not of a particular group of people should be our guiding principle in all our activities and organizations. All individuals, groups, communities, nations and races should follow the time-honoured golden rule of conduct, namely, that we ought to behave with others as we wish them to behave with us, and that we ought not to do to anyone what we do not want to be done to us. Truth, honesty, justice, non-violence, kindness, goodwill, tolerance and forgiveness are universally liked by all and should, therefore, be followed in life by all. Our social life should be built on the basis of mutual help, service, co-operation and not on conflict and competition. Right men should be placed in the right places irrespective of other considerations. The society should try to safeguard the rights of individuals, and individuals should be mainly concerned with the performance of their duties. Men and women should have the same freedom and privileges, although their functions and duties may be

different. Woman should not only have economic independence but she should also be regarded as the head of the family. She should be free to decide with whom to live and how much progeny she should have. A matriarchal family alone can suit the modern age, if the institution of family is to survive. Although a casteless society is the demand of the age, the occupations of people should be determined by their vocational aptitudes, fitness and training. Once a profession is chosen, a discipline suited to and required by the profession should be strictly observed and followed. Individual life should be planned in accordance with the changing conditions of body and mind, and in such a manner that all the demands of life may be satisfied within a life-span. A scientific way of living which will ensure physical, mental and spiritual health should be adopted. The world should have a world-federation on a hierachical basis, the lowest rung of which should be village and city self-governments. Each higher stage in the hierarchy should be concerned with the management of only those problems which concern it ; the world-government should be concerned with world problems alone. Democratic socialism without party system, in which people will elect their representatives of their own free choice is the most suitable form of government for the present age. Party system leads to national neurosis and disintegration. The only way to make the world follow the above-mentioned suggestion is that the leaders of mankind live by them and educate the masses not by precept but by example to follow them. Otherwise there is little hope for the world.

NEW DIARY LEAVES

ATMANANDA

(2)

Ever more seekers from abroad write to Mataji, asking for help and advice. The following are extracts from a letter by a European gentleman received last winter and Mataji's reply to it.

The letter : "..... Will you hear my desperate appeal ? For the last 35 years I have been seeking God and have not found Him. During 35 years I have been questioning all religions, so as to get peace: at first European religions, then Indian ones. I have questioned Masters of India, but alas ! none could help me and now after 35 years of vain search I am without hope, desperate....."

"I am asking whether as a result of this search one will be driven to madness or suicide ? I can no longer run after Masters, I am exhausted. Ma Anandamayi is my last chance, I ask this question : Ma Anandamayi, Happy Mother, Divine Mother, Pure Mother, will you help me ? I want to become pure as Ma Anandamayi. Why are you in this world, if not to console your unhappy brothers ?"

Mataji's reply : "God is everywhere, He pervades everything. He, whom you think you have sought in vain

for so many years, is not apart from you. Just as man cannot be without bones, blood, flesh and skin, so the ONE is present everywhere, at all times, interwoven with everything that exists.

“A man who has gone forth in search of God—God will never give him back again. God is one’s very own Self, the breath of one’s breath, the life of one’s life, the *ātma*. Not until his true Self has been revealed to him may a seeker ever relax his search. By seeking one will find, the Self is within one’s own grasp. To feel fatigued, exhausted because one has not found Him is a very good sign indeed. It indicates that one is nearing the purification of one’s heart and mind.”

“But what is this? What is this that you say? You wonder whether as the result of searching God one will be led to suicide? By the search of Him whose contemplation, whose Name conquer death! To indulge in desires for sense objects, this is indeed what must be called suicide; and he who thinks of committing suicide is, at that moment, mad. Never allow the mind to dwell on the idea of suicide, it is a sin so to do. For one who has sought God for 35 years it is not right to contemplate suicide or madness. His mind should much rather be absorbed in the remembrance of God.

“In God’s Creation the possible becomes impossible and the impossible possible at all times. In order that this fact may become evident, one must ever remember to sustain the thought of THAT which is REAL. Verily this small child is always with you.”

“Write to him that for the present it is imperative for him to remain concentrated with single-mindedness on the One Goal. He should stay in solitude and endeavour with the help of *japa and dhyāna* (meditation) to control his mind and thereby become firm, calm and unwavering in his determination.”

* * *

From January 13th—February 2nd, 1960 Mataji stayed at the Kumbh Mela and at Allahabad. On February 1st I noted down the following conversations :

Question : Is it right to eat meat ?

Mataji : You should partake of whatever food that is helpful in your *sādhana* and abstain from what hinders it.

Question : But meat is *tamasic* !

Mataji : Exactly. This is why I said what I said. You can reason it out for yourself.

Question : When a man kills in order to eat, will not this affect him adversely ?

Mataji : Certainly, it will.

Question : What about animal sacrifice ? It is advocated in the *S'āstras*.

Mataji : This body does not comment on what the *S'āstras* ordain or forbid. However, it must be understood that the actual significance of the term animal sacrifice is not the sacrifice of animals but of one's own animal nature.

* * *

Question : What is the purpose and the fruit of *pūjā* ?

Mataji : When performing *pūjā*, specific *āsanas*, *mudras* and *bija mantras* are used, depending on the particular aspect of the Godhead that is being worshipped. *Pūjā* is done so that real *pūjā* may come about ; just as one *takes sannyāsa* so that real *sannyāsa* may supervene. What now does it mean to perform real *pūjā* ? To give oneself entirely to the object of one's worship. When this is the case, the appropriate *āsanas*, *mudras* etc. form of themselves. The purpose of *pūjā* is the realization of Him whom one worships. When one's dedication becomes complete, He reveals Himself. To find Him means to find Oneself and to find Oneself means to find Him. It is said, only after becoming one with the object of one's worship is one able to perform genuine *pūjā*. Thus the purpose and fruit of doing *pūjā* is that he who worships may become one with Him who is worshipped. The purpose of *puja* is the revelation of the essence of Him whose name one repeats, then alone the *japa* has become fruitful. The aim of engaging, say for instance in the *japa* of *Rama* is the realization of what *Rama* is in reality. The same holds good for any other *japa*, be it of *Kriṣṇa*, *S'iva*, *Durgā*, etc.....

Question : May women perform the *siddhāsana* ?

Mataji : When this body played the play of *sadhana*, *siddhāsana* came about effortlessly. When an *āsana* forms spontaneously, that is to say as an expression of a particular state of mind, it will be perfect, in other words the position of the legs, feet, arms, hands, the head, the gaze—every single detail will be precisely as it ought to be. Whereas

an *āsana* performed by an effort of will can never have the same perfection. *Āsanas* are closely connected with one's breathing and the breath with one's state of mind at any particular time. If *āsanas* are engaged in as *yogic* practice, that is to say in order to attain to the revelation of the union with the One, which eternally exists, then only will they yield the desired result. If on the other hand *āsanas* are done merely as physical exercises, they may bring about better health and fitness, but not union (*yoga*).

When, while practising *āsanas* as a *yoga*, one has achieved perfection in a particular pose and its essence has been fully revealed, one feels : 'I have accomplished this much, but what of it ? This is not my final Goal.' Such an attitude of mind is called *vairagya*. One is prompted to go on striving for the next stage and the next, further and further. Not unless one keeps on relentlessly until nothing remains to be reached, can the ultimate attainment come. If one's attitude be otherwise one will be apt to linger for a long time at any particular stage. Side by side with *hathayoga* (*yogic* postures) one has to practise *rajayoga*, otherwise the performance of *āsanas* amounts to mere gymnastics.

* * *

Allahabad, February 2nd, 1960.

A Chinese professor of the Allahabad University asked the following question : "Once while meditating in a dark room I had the impression that the room was full of moonlight. I opened my eyes and found the room dark. How am I to explain the moonlight that I perceived ?

Mataji : To see light is a good sign. How can one see anything unless the path becomes lit up? Just as in the physical world one cannot distinguish anything without light. At present there is outer light and inner darkness. When inward light comes, then this outer light appears dim, dull and unsatisfactory. We see this tree, but we cannot perceive its roots, for they are hidden under the earth, similarly do we perceive nature (*prakṛiti*), but we do not know from where it originates. The root of all that we perceive is hidden within. We see the tree, but we fail to see the seed from which it sprang. However when the tree is fully developed, it yields again the same kind of seed. When looking at a seed, we see only the seed, yet infinite possibilities of unfoldment are contained within it. The One is contained in the infinite number and the infinite number in the One. When light is thrown on the inner world, outer appearances fade into insignificance. Albeit at that stage there is differentiation between the inner and the outer. But a state exists where there is no more distinction between the inner and the outer, where all is seen as One Complete Whole.

AT THE FEET OF MOTHER

BY U. C. DUTT.

In spring I went to Rajpur, Dehra Dun, at an invitation from a Training Institute and stayed there for a week. From Mata Anandamayee Ashram, Kishenpur I could gather that Mother had not been at all well recently. She was taking rest at Ananda Kashi in the lap of the Himalayas. The place is thirty miles from Hardwar on the road to Deva Prayag. I did not like to miss the chance of seeing Mother in those surroundings, with the Ganga flowing through the Himalayas.

Before leaving the area I went to Mussoorie to see my relation, Dr. J. K. Dutta, Medical Officer, St. George's College. On the *Mahāstami* evening (4th April) Dr. Dutta and I were taking rest in silence on beds side by side, when Dr. Dutta exclaimed suddenly: "What is this? How can this be?" "What is the matter?" said I. He replied, "Ma appeared with a crown on Her head. She stood here for a while. Does She wear a crown?" I told him that Ma had been given a crown on Her 60th birthday. I enquired if the crown was white. Doctor Dutta said that it was yellow. I became speechless. Our eyes were turned in the same direction of the room. The Doctor was lucky to have Mother's *darshan* in his bed-room, while I could see only the wall, door and furniture. Is it because he is more deserving or was I being drawn to Her presence soon?

A few days later I was at Ananda Kāshi on the 9th

of April. It is a beauty spot ; lofty green hillocks ranged in a line like sentinels over-looking the babbling streams of greenish white below ; red, white, pink and yellow flowers blooming here and there in the gardens and orchards blossomed and bent. The blue vault of heaven hang over-head as the symbol of the infinite. All the aspects of nature vied with one another to add to the sublimity of the place. Why is it so called ? It is named 'Kāshi' as the Ganga flows north-ward and 'Ananda' after the blissful Mother Anandamayee.

It was 9 o'clock in the morning when the lovely sights greeted me. Along with some known faces I found there two Italian devotees, an old lady and a young stalwart, waiting to bid good-bye to Mother. They were leaving after a stay there of a few days. Mother would come out untimely to see them off.

I met the lady and the young man in a porch close to Mother's temple. The young man seemed to take keen interest in *Yoga*. He had a giant figure. Jovial by nature and friendly with all, his eyes sparkled when he saw me. After a word or two he asked me with which mythological person I should compare him. At once I said, "*Bhīma*". He refused to accept the honour of a comparison with our Indian Hercules. He liked to be *Ganesh* with a long trunk (he had an aquiline nose, though not long enough to be taken for a trunk) and a quill pen in his hand to be a scribe to *Vyasji*. He desired to be a child of Mother. He took my address and told me that I would see him shortly clad in the robe of a wanderer, moving along Indian roads.

Mother came out of Her room, sat on the verandah

and by Her divine presence showered grace on all of us. She smiled as usual when seeing me and chatted humorously with the Italian guests. On taking leave '*Ganesh*' was almost in tears.

At the after-dusk sitting, which continued till 9 P. M. including the period of silence, I related to Mother about Dr. Dutta's vision of Her at Mussoorie on the *Mahāshatami* night. Mother told me that She had been thinking of him on that day. She had been to his Mussoorie house once, many years ago, with Bhaiji. The Doctor's wife had prepared *puris*, vegetables, etc. and entertained them. In the evening Mother came down to Rajpur on foot and felt thirsty. I do not remember now whether at that time or on some other occasion when Her throat became parched due to excessive thirst, while drinking-water could not be procured, a devotee in Bengal offered water-melon to Mother as *bhoga*. Consequently Her thirst was appeased and the fact of the offering was duly verified by Bhaiji. Mother thought of the Doctor and that thought took shape and appeared before him. Thinking and being became identical. How to explain the crown? On that very day, I was told, a lady devotee had placed a *mukut** of yellow flowers on Mother's head. So the vision was wearing a yellow crown.

It was a rare privilege to get Mother so close and so often at noon, afternoon and night; talking, smiling, moving about freely and conferring grace on the fortunate few who surrounded Her. We had talks on various topics such as exalted souls or deities speaking through human mediums; *yogis* assuming astral or subtle bodies and visiting distant

* Crown.

places and planets, the secrets of *Nada* (sound)—*Parā*, *Pashyantī*, *Madhyamā*, *Baikhari* and so on.

We had the pleasure to listen to a musical entertainment by Brahmachari Vibhu, an excellent artist with sweet modulations of voice ; then the collective recitation of the *Gīta*, the *Chandi* and the *Upanishads*, and humorous discourses (*kathā*) on the *Devi Bhāgavata* by Kanti Bhai. The night programme included a devotional reading of the *Ramayana* by the Rajmata of Tehri Garhwal.

I offered a picture book, a collection of *Krishna Līlas*, to Mother, saying that as a child I had been very fond of pictures, that was why I brought the pictures for 'the little girl.' Mother felt much amused and replied, "The little girl has a great liking for pictures as you people have not taught her reading and writing." Mother often speaks of Herself as 'the little girl'.

Captain Amal Roy was with us. He is a disciple of Baba Bholanath. At one meeting he gave a vivid description as to how Mother saved his life in the battle field of Kashmir when bombs and shells were dropped by the Pakistanis. The charms of a moonlit night in the 'heaven on earth' (*Bhūswarga*) combined with a sense of duty to help the sufferers, dragged the doctor almost unconsciously out of his safe shelter to the danger zone. Having realized his position in 'the valley of death' he was going to take cover at one point when a sweet and distinct voice was heard within, saying, "Do not sit here". He knew the voice and responded to the call. He sat down behind a boulder a few steps away. A bomb fell and burst where he had intended to sit at first. As a result a vacuum was created and he could not breathe for a while.

However, he was saved. He had a narrow escape through Mother's grace.

I asked Mother if Her breath had stopped during Her recent illness. Mother replied, "Yes, it stopped and had to be created". I prayed to Mother to avoid playing such games in future and to neither stop nor create Her breath. Both are so alarming.

One afternoon Mother was taking Her walk as usual by the climbing creepers and smiling flowers in front of the temple. Some of us followed Her. Suddenly She turned and said about Herself: "There is no feeling of pain, no disease either; but something happens to this body. Nothing appears to be either sweet or bitter. Outer objects have no effect (on the subject); there is no sensation, no feeling. I am what I am. While talking I give it out to-day." Mother was smiling and looking at me. I felt supremely happy. After some time I thought: Does She live on the borderland of the Absolute, the transcendental plane always? It must be the fringe, otherwise how could She look into every detail of outer things around Her? Or is She one with both aspects of reality—the immanent and the transcendental? She alone knows what She is. Others impose their mental patterns or Scriptural estimates on Her. So far She has been incomprehensible and may remain so—a name, a voice, a mystery.

O Mother Gracious, please turn your search-light in the opposite direction and reveal your face that your helpless, ignorant children may catch sight of your true form and share in the festival of Life Eternal.

On April 13th fell the *Sannyāsotsava* of Didima (Mataji's Mother). The venue was transferred from noisy Delhi to quiet Ananda Kashi. The programme was a crowded one from 5 A. M. to 9 P. M.—*Aratī*, *Kirtan*, *Pūjā*, *Bhajan*, scriptural recitations, lectures and feeding of *Sādhus* and guests. A party of devotional singers came from Swami Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh and charmed the audience by their musical chanting of divine names; Mahāmandaleshwar Swami Sukdevananda of Parmarthaniketan gave a fine talk, explaining clearly the need for *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna yoga*, all these methods to remove respectively *mal* (dirt), *vikshep* (restlessness) and *avarana* (veil of ignorance) that keep a *jīva* in bondage. Swami Venkateshwarananda of the Divine Life Society compared Mother to the Ganga and Didima to the Himalayas and laid stress on the urgency of one method, namely self-surrender. All the while Swami Purushottamanandaji of *Vashishtha Gupha* sat on the dais like a statue, lost in meditation. He is over 81 years of age and a disciple of His Holiness Swami Brahmananda, spiritual child of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Many men and women of the country-side were drawn to Anandakashi by the *Vaisakhi mela* held in that compound, and also by Mother's presence and the festival. Some distinguished guests came from Hardwar. The crowd exceeded all expectations; the quiet corner was buzzing with life. The public meeting was interrupted at about 12. 30 P. M. for a midday meal and rest. It began again at 3 P. M. when Swami Krishnananda Avadhut gave a learned discourse on *Sannyāsa*—renunciation of objects, desires and ego,—*chidabash*, reflection of *chaitanya* (pure consciousness) on

buddhi (cosmic intelligence) causing ego, etc. I could not help saying something at the end. On behalf of the brothers and sisters present on the occasion I made an offering of respectful felicitations to Didima. I referred to some of her rare qualities—uncommon forbearance, a cheerful disposition, an over-flowing heart of compassion for the poor and miserable, and complete self-effacement. These have raised her to an exalted position. Then I narrated an incident that I had experienced in connexion with Mother 32 years ago at Hardwar. She then had remained in a superconscious state for 9 or 10 hours, when by the repetition of divine names She was with great difficulty restored to normal consciousness. More wonderful even were the spiritual states through which She passed in the process of restoration. Now She appears to lead a normal life. According to the scriptures a state of perfection dawns after one's passing through various kinds of *Samādhi-Jaḍa* and *Chetana*, *Samprajñata* and *Asamprajñata*, *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa*. It is *Sahaja Samādhi* in which consciousness and super-consciousness merge into one. Then one appears to lead a normal life, all active and alert on the physical plane and at the same time dwells constantly in a deeper layer of consciousness, on the threshold between the Absolute and the Relative, the timeless descending into time. Mother is in *Sahaja Samādhi*, so Her former spectacular states have given place to a high synthesis in a balanced seemingly natural life. Her past was an automatic preparation for Her present, a preparation for the role of a world-teacher (*Jagatguru*).

I then spoke about two *yogis* who flourished in the neighbourhood of Mother's birth place. One was *Jyotiji* who

could separate his subtle body from the gross one and go anywhere, to any planet, in a moment. He considered this feat only a supernormal power and did not attach much importance to it. He received real knowledge in *Dhruva Loka* (Polestar). Even his powerful *guru* who could go anywhere carrying his physical form (gross body) with him, got startled when hearing about his disciple's knowledge of Ultimate Reality. The other *Yogi* was Ananda Swami, son of Ram Dulal Dewan and father of Dr. Mahendra Chandra. All the three, father, son and grandson are considered to be men of Realization. Ananda Swami could plunge into *Samadhi* at will. He would see and hear things from a distance. He preached the synthesis of all religions and had numerous disciples including Muslims. He expired on the day predicted by him earlier. His son, Mahendra Babu regarded by our leader, the late Bipin Chandra Pal, as the Tolstoy of Bengal, recognized Mother's worth for the first time. He announced Mother's highly spiritual state when he was consulted as a physician. Her supernormal states and occasional 'fits' at deeper promptings had been mistaken for physical maladies and subjected to treatment. Since then She was left alone.

Mother is our pride and glory. She is the shelter of thousands in India and abroad. On the happy occasion of Her 65th birthday we re-dedicate ourselves to Her lotus feet. Blessed are those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. 'Her birth is a re-birth of the world', says a brother. May She live long, at least a century, to see the fulfilment of Her mission on earth.

MATRI LILA

APRIL 15TH—JULY 15TH, 1960.

In the last issue of Ananda Varta we had already mentioned that Didima's *Sannyasa Utsava*, which falls on April 13th (*Chaitra Sankranti*), and was originally to be celebrated at New Delhi this year, was transferred to Ananda Kashi, a magnificent solitary place, 15 miles distance off Rishikesh.* Suffice it to say that in spite of dearth of accommodation and the difficulty of providing food for so many people, the function proved a great success and everything was arranged in a most efficient and pleasing manner. A number of *mahatmas*, hailing from different Ashrams in Rishikesh, came and enlightened the audience by their fine talks and a party from Sivananda Ashram sang excellent *kirtan*. The programme of *satsang* continued through the day. In the afternoon many hill people in their colourful costumes arrived in order to attend the *Vaisakhi Mela*, which fell on the same day. They incidentally joined in the festival and had Mataji's *darshan*. This was a novel and charmingly picturesque feature that added zest to the joyful occasion.

On April 15th, after a stay of full 3 weeks at Ananda Kashi, Mataji motored to the Kishenpur Ashram near Dehradun where She remained till April 29th. At Kishenpur She had a comparatively restful time.

* See also. "At the Feet of Mother" by U. C. Dutt. pp. 95 of this issue and Ananda Varta Vol. VIII/1 pp. 56-57.



However on April 27th She went to Mussoorie to inaugurate a new house of H. H. the Rajmata of Tehri, who had been Her hostess at Ananda Kashi. In the early morning of the 28th Mataji returned to Kishenpur, only to leave the next afternoon by car for Delhi, where She spent the night in the Chandraloka Ashram and proceeded to Bombay on the 30th morning, reaching there on May 1st. As during all Her recent visits to this city, She was accommodated at the residence of Sri B. K. Shah, who has built a small, but charming cottage in the style of a Burmese pagoda for Mataji's use in his compound at Vile Parle. A pandal of moderate size was pitched nearby to serve for more intimate functions and meetings. In this very pandal Mataji's birthday celebrations began on May 2nd. *Mahamandaleshwara* Sri 1008 Swami Maheshwaranandaji gave an inspiring talk and *puja* was performed there in the night. For the main programme of the birthday celebrations, which continued from May 3rd to 14th from early morning till late night, a very large and beautifully decorated pandal, seating over 2000 people, had been erected in the grounds of the Nanavati Girls' School, Vile Parle, at about two furlongs distance from Sri B. K. Shah's house. The whole of the Girls' School had been put at our disposal and the majority of guests who had flocked from far and near were accommodated there. Thanks to the organizing genius of Sri D. I. Kania and Sri B. K. Shah and the efficiency of his wife Srimati Lilaben, who attended to everything personally in inimitable spirit of service, arrangements were excellent in all respects. The whole function proceeded in singular harmony and perfection.

As usual a number of prominent *mahatmas* took a

leading part in the *satsang*. Amongst them were Sri Hari-babaji Maharaj ; Sri Krishnananda Avadhutaji, Swami Swatantrananda, Sri Vasudevanandaji of the *Sannyasa* Ashram, Vile Parle, Sri Vishnu Ashram and Sri Akhandanandaji of Vrindaban who is now the President of the *All India Sadhu Samāj*. In the interval between the features first class musicians delighted everyone by their songs and kirtans. On one occasion Sri Raghunath Das Panigrahi sang beautiful songs from the 'Gita Govinda'.

A *Bhagavata Saptah* that was observed from May 4th—12th formed an important part of the birthday celebrations. The Sanskrit reading took place at Sri B. K. Shah's residence, while the exposition in Hindi was done very lucidly by Sri Srinath Shastri of Vrindaban in the large pandal. Mataji Herself was present in the *Satsang* three times daily singing kirtan on occasions, especially on the night of the 13th. In between She could be approached by individuals and smaller groups at Her own place. On the 14th the usual birthday feast was given to all who cared to partake of it. At the evening on that day Sri K. G. Ambegaokar, Ret. Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Sri S. R. Das Gupta, Chief Justice of Mysore and Srimati Lilaben Shah spoke about Mataji.

On May 15th Mataji motored to Poona, accompanied by a party of about 45 people. Everyone was accommodated at the Palitana House and at the house of Sri S. T. Nanda, who had had a special thatched hut for Mataji's use constructed in his garden. The Nanda family moved into the basement, while all the rest of their house was put at the disposal of Mataji's party, who were entertained with the utmost care and

hospitality. A pandal in the compound served as a *Satsang* hall. *Satsang* was held three times daily and Mataji gave *darshan* at those times. Every evening between 6 and 8 p. m. Mataji used to go for a drive and visited a number of places, such as for instance, the Bhandarkar Research Institute, a new branch of which was opened in Her presence; the National Chemical Laboratory; the Ashram of Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, who in turn came for Mataji's *darshan* several times and delighted the audience by his beautiful songs. The famous singer Srimati Hirabai Barodkar came for Mataji's *darshan* incognito at first. When she expressed her wish to sing to Mataji her identity was soon disclosed. At Mataji's request she subsequently arrived with her whole party of accompanying musicians and gave two or three thrilling recitals.

Several prominent personages came to pay their respects to Mataji, among them Dr. K. N. Katju, Chief Minister of M. P. and Sri Gulzarilal Nanda, a Minister of the Government of India.

On June 10th Sri Haribabaji Maharaj arrived and with him the *Rasalila* party from Vrindaban. They all remained in Poona for full three weeks. The daily performances of the *Krishna Lila* were, as ever, greatly appreciated and drew crowds that could not possibly be accommodated although the pandal was enlarged and then opened out—all this proved insufficient.

One evening Mataji and Sri Haribabaji paid a visit the *Mahant* of *Ramtekari*, a wellknown saint of Poona, who in turn gave us the honour of his presence in our *satsang*.

Thus, except for the first week, which was fairly quiet, Mataji had an extremely busy time at Poona. Originally She had been expected to remain there only for a fortnight or at the most for a month, but incidentally Her stay was prolonged till the end of June to the joy of our generous host and all Her Poona admirers.

Mataji had been in Poona just for a night when She returned from South India early in 1953. It was then that Sri S. T. Nanda met Her for the first time. Even on that occasion She responded to his humble request to bless his house by a visit of a few minutes. When Mataji stayed in Poona for some weeks after the birthday celebrations in 1957, the Nandas were again fortunate to receive Mataji's visit for a short while.

On July 1st Mataji, Sri Haribabaji and the whole party proceeded to Bombay for a stay of five days. Mataji, as before, put up at Her 'pagoda' in Sri B. K. Shah's garden at Vile Parle, but attended Sri Haribaba's programme twice daily at Khar. On July 6th She entrained for Delhi, reaching there on the 7th in time for *Guru Purnima* that fell on July 8th. The Delhi devotees had made very good arrangements for a beautiful and dignified function, that elevated all who took part. *Kirtan* was kept up throughout the day in the spacious Ashram hall, while Mataji received people from early morning till late at night in Sri Haribabaji's newly constructed room up stairs, which was inaugurated on that occasion. There seemed no end to the crowd that kept on surging in, eager to pay homage to Mataji on that auspicious day. Mataji, as ever untiring and over-flowing with grace,

abundantly blessed everyone and distributed flowers, fruits and sweets with Her own hands. At intervals She appeared downstairs in the hall and joined the *kirtan*. It had been planned that Mataji should leave New Delhi for Dehradun immediately after Guru Purnima, namely on July 9th. Instead a *Nāma yagñā* was held from the 9th evening till the 10th evening ; Mataji's departure was therefore postponed to July 11th. As always in Delhi the *Kirtan* was quite exquisite and roused everyone to joy and enthusiasm.

Among the persons who came for Mataji's darshan and to talk to Her during Her short stay in New Delhi were Sri C. P. N. Singh, Ex-Governor of the Punjab, Sri Subimal Dutt, Foreign Secretary to the Govt. of India ; and on the 11th morning just before Mataji's departure Sri Bhagawan Sabai, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi came with his family. Sri J. K. Birla also saw Mataji several times during those few days.

Leaving Delhi by car at 11 a. m. Mataji alighted at the Kishenpur Ashram at 7 p. m. On reaching Dehradun She went first of all to the house of Pandit Parasram Dhammi, who to our deep regret had passed away suddenly in the beginning of June. Pandit Parasram was one of the first devotees of Mataji outside of Bengal, when She stayed in Raipur (Dehradun) with Bholanath and Bhaiji in 1932. He was a most unassuming person and nobody could guess how real and genuine his devotion was and how much selfless service he did for the Ashram while he and his family lived in a very simple way. Everyone who has come into contact with him sincerely mourns the loss of this rare human being.

At present Mataji is at Kishenpur where She enjoys comparative rest after a very hectic spell. Her programme for the near future is uncertain. However it is hoped that She will be in Varanasi for the *Srimad Bhagavata Jayanti* at the end of August and in Calcutta for the *Durga puja* in the last week of September. The next *Samyam Mahavrata* is hoped to be observed at Naimisharanya from Oct. 28th—Nov. 4th, 1960.
