

Ananda Vārtā

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

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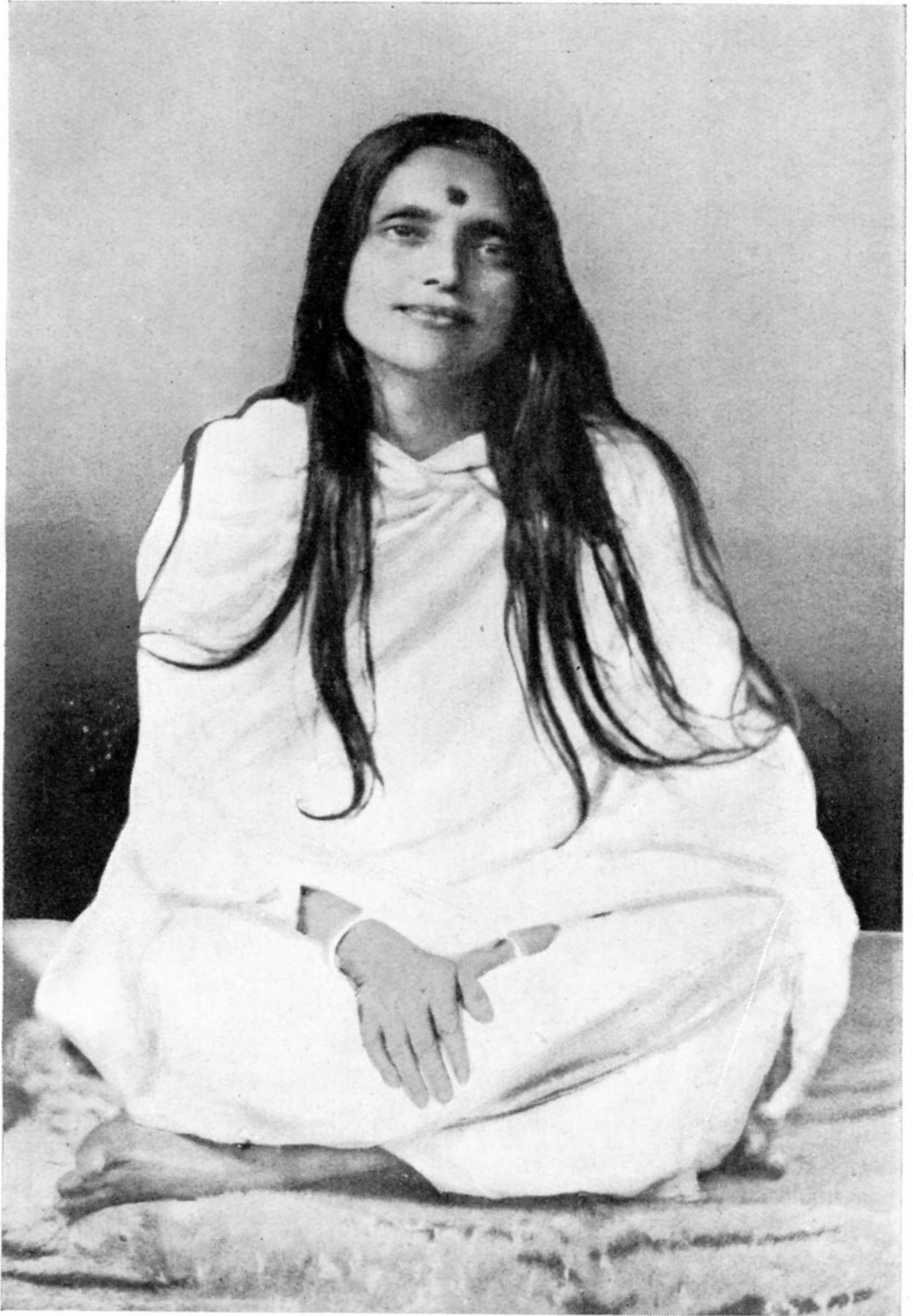
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The ONE who is the Eternal, the Ātman,
His Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,
He is all in all, He alone is.

MATRI VANI

He who yearns for God will find Him, and for the man who has found Him death dies. One should look forward to the vision of God which is the death of death and endeavour to let one's mind at all times be engrossed in activities or practices that may prepare one for such a vision. You do not know in what shape or manner God Himself is with you. Ever try to spend all the twenty-four hours in the contemplation or remembrance of the Supreme Being, in the repetition of God's Name or the study of books of wisdom. By some realization, by a divine mood or appearance, even by tears shed in longing for Him, the One at times makes His Presence felt. Endeavour to keep your mind anchored in the thought of Him, and in readiness to experience His touch in all forms and modes of being. The day that is gone returns not. Try to make the best use of every precious

moment, being ever intent on the Realization of your own Self.

* * *

God is the support of the helpless. Time cannot pass in one way only. Abide in patience. Just as when having tumbled down, one rises up again by supporting oneself on the very ground to which one has fallen, even so—never remain without Him. Pray to your *Iṣṭa* for His revelation. When asking for worldly goods, happiness and comforts, one will be disappointed time and again; this only creates distrust in one's *Iṣṭa* and in God. But to pray to God for His own sake and to the *Iṣṭa* for His revelation, leads to peace and faith.

* * *

Aiming at liberation and peace, spend as much time as possible in the contemplation of God. Man's body is the result of his actions in former births and therefore it is but natural that he should have to endure all' kinds of suffering and disease. Let your mind ever dwell on the One by the remembrance of whom all pain and sorrow are healed.

* * *

He who would find Immortality must at every moment try to look upon all things as manifestations of the Supreme Being. The search after Truth is indeed man's duty, so that he may attain to THAT which is immortal.

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Not to have the guidance of a competent Guru is indeed detrimental—this is certainly very true.

Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

(Translated by Atmananda)

(8)

Ranchi Ashram,
21st May, 1958.

Question : What does "*Guru seva*" (the service of the Guru) mean ?

Mataji : To obey the *Guru's* instructions without reasoning.

Question : To me the Name and the One whose name it is seem different ; how can they become one ?

Mataji : In the indestructible* Brahman there is no division. God Himself is present as the Name. Just as the seed and the tree are one, so are the mantra and the *Iṣṭa*. The tree is contained in the seed. If the seed *mantra* is implanted in the heart, the *Iṣṭa* will be revealed. When a seed has been sown, it must not be taken out of the earth and looked at, or shown

* A play upon words : '*Aksara*' means indestructible as well as letters of the alphabet. Therefore the Indestructible and the Name are one.

to anyone. Similarly the seed *mantra* should not be disclosed to others, since it thereby loses its power. If kept concealed and tended in the heart, the reality underlying the Name or *mantra* will become revealed. Then He who is indestructible will be realized as the Name. By suitable practices the Name or seed *Mantra* has to be fostered ; keeping it hidden within one's heart, the mantra has to be repeated regularly every day according to the prescribed rules. Thereby the One will finally be realized in all forms.

Question : May the *mantra* not be disclosed even to a realized Being ?

Mataji : Why should it ? Since by telling him the *mantra* one would become his Guru. However, when it is necessary to correct the mantra or clear up doubts, then an opportunity for this arises on occasions.

Question : If the meaning of the *mantra* is not understood, will the *japa* bear fruit ?

Mataji : The fruit of the *japa* will be reaped, but not the result of understanding its meaning. If the meaning is understood, the result will be still better.

Question : What does "*mantra caitanya*" (a *mantra* that has become alive) signify ?

Mataji : When the One blazes forth as the reality that underlies the *mantra*, then the *mantra* has become alive.

Question : Is bestowal of the *Guru's* power identical with the *Guru's* Grace ?

Mataji : The words are different—but essentially they signify one and the same thing. Power is bestowed by the *Guru's* Grace.

Question : What is the significance of a *mantra* ?

Mataji : This is explained in detail in the *S'āstras*. By the regular and sustained repetition of the *mantra*, its significance may of itself become revealed.

Question : If all of us are *Brahman* in any case, why should we have to accept a *Guru* ?

Mataji : Why do you ask ? Because you are in doubt. "I am *Brahman*"—if this has become knowledge beyond the possibility of doubt, who can be called whose *Guru* ?

Question : Does the *Ātmā* become divided or not ? In what sense does the *Ātmā* become united to the *Paramātmā* ?

Mataji : When the *jīvātmā* is united with the *Paramātmā* they become one. When a pitcher of water is emptied into the ocean, the water remains water ; only it is then not called pitcher—water but sea-water. It is similar when the *jīvātmā* is united to the *Paramātmā*.

Question : Why should the fruit of one's actions in this birth be reaped in another birth by another body ?

Mataji : All bodies in the world are indeed your bodies. Only you are unable to realize this. You perform actions with your present body and reap some of the fruit in this body and some portion of it remains over. Birth after birth the results of your actions are experienced in different bodies.

Man's life must be oriented towards finding Himself. To find one's Self means to find God.

The day that is gone will never return. Do not waste precious time.

“Ma”

Pages from my Diary

GURUPRIYA DEVI

(Translated from Bengali)

27th May 1957.

After the birthday celebration at Ahmedabad, Mataji has come to Poona via Bombay about three days ago. This morning a few of us were sitting in Mataji's room up to eleven. At that time Sri Dilip Kumar Roy*, together with some devotees and disciples arrived for Mataji's *dars'ana*. Attired in the ochre robe, with a yellow cap on his head, a silk shawl printed with sacred names slung round his shoulders, his forehead adorned with a mark of a new style, his whole appearance was bright and pleasing. We were meeting him again after a considerable number of years, but no special change was noticeable in his features.

Srimati Indira was also accompanying him. Dilip Kumar introduced her to Mataji in the following manner: "Ma, she is the daughter of your devotee Kriparāmji of Dehradun. Her actual name is Janak Kumari. I have called her 'Indira'. She has two sons. The elder one is studying engineering in Bombay and the younger one stays with his

*The famous singer Sri Dilip Kumar Roy. Formerly he used to live in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. At present he resides in his own newly built Ashram at Poona.

mother and studies at home. Her husband is also an engineer. From time to time he comes here."

We had already heard of Indira. She also was dressed in a yellow sari. Her face was ever smiling. After bowing to Mataji, she sat down near Her.

Sri Dilip Kumar said : "Mataji, you must please come to our place one day."

Mataji : *Baba*, don't you know, that this body has not entered the home of any householder for the last so many years. (Dilip Kumar and his party are at the moment putting up in Sir Chunilal Mehta's house.)

Dilip Kumar : There is a consecrated image in the house. What wrong can there be in entering it ?

Mataji : Nothing wrong, surely, *Baba*. But such has been the way of this body for many years. Everyone knows it.

On hearing that Mataji never enters a householder's home, Srimati Indira's feelings seemed somewhat hurt. She said to Dilip Kumar in English : "*Dada*, how is it the home of a householder, since you are staying there !" Mataji caught the meaning of her words and said : "*Baba*, although at present no householder is living there, yet there was before you came and there will be again after you leave."

After a short pause, Mataji continued : "All the same,

nowadays it does occur at times that a householder's home is converted into a temple or an ashram, and on such occasions, provided that no householder will occupy the house in future, this body has quite a few times been taken to a place of this type."

Dilip Kumar expostulated : "I remember having seen you in a householder's home in Calcutta."

Mataji said laughingly : "No, *Baba*. At Calcutta there are some families who, in their loving kindness have built a separate room or cottage for this body. Those rooms or cottages are never occupied by any householder, and this body does not have to pass through a householder's home in order to get to those rooms or cottages. You must have seen this body in a place of this type."

The conversation went on in this strain for a little while, then Mataji addressed Dilip Kumar thus : "*Baba*, you have such a beautiful voice. Won't you sing to us ?"

Dilip Kumar at first objected, remarking that nowadays he would sing only before the consecrated image of a deity, and that he would not make any exceptions even in special cases. However, Mataji Herself had requested him to sing. Therefore, after consulting Srimati Indira, it was decided that they would today sing their evening *bhajan** in Mataji's presence. They stayed for a little longer and then took leave.

* *Bhajan*—religious songs.

Before dusk a car arrived from Dilip Kumar's residence. At 7:30 sharp he started the *bhajan* together with his party. He first chanted the *Guru Pranama*, then the *Nirvanastakam Stotram* and the hymn to *Bhavani* with an extremely sweet voice. Then he sang his own compositions of songs about Sri Krishna's *Lila*.

At 8-45 p.m. silence is observed for 15 minutes wherever Mataji happens to be. The *bhajan* ended exactly in time for the silence. Dilip Kumar sat down near Mataji's feet, saying : "This short time I shall spend at Ma's feet."

After the silence, he said, pointing to the women who had come with them : "They are all Indira's disciples. They do their *bhajan* together with her."

A little later they all left by car.

31st May, 1957.

After dusk we all sat in Mataji's room. The conversation was about some *Siva Linga* that Yogibhai (the Raja of Solan) had brought from the banks of the Narmada river. One of those *linga* had been consecrated in Yogibhai's *Siva* temple at Hardwar. The remaining three had last year been installed in our Vrindaban Ashram. In this connection we also talked about the *Mahatma* whom Mataji had seen in his subtle body at Rameshwaram, during Her tour to South India. While this conversation was going on, a wire arrived announcing the death of Yogibhai's stepmother at Solan. Mataji

remarked : "Look, the *Mahtama* who had been seen in his subtle body on our pilgrimage to the South, was the son of the priest of Chidambaram. Fifteen or sixteen generations ago, one of Yogibhai's ancestors had been born in the family of that priest."

After saying this much, Mataji remained silent. The thought entered my mind that the *Mahatma* who had been seen in his subtle body was related to Yogibhai's family. Mataji does not always make things clear. When the time is ripe some more may be disclosed.

I remember something else : Mataji was lying on Her bed. I sat by Her side, fanning Her. Mataji opened Her eyes and said : "Look, Didi, I am seeing a very large open space with a number of houses scattered over it. These houses are all occupied by sick people. In the centre a spacious hall is to be erected, and for this purpose Swami Paramānanda has been sent for. He is standing there with a copybook in his hand." This was all that Mataji said. The significance of Her words has so far remained unexplained. But I wondered whether in future a hospital or something of the sort would not be built in Mataji's name, of which Mataji had seen a vision today.

At night Mataji was sitting on Her couch in silence. Kaniabhai* asked Mataji hesitatingly : "Mataji, please tell us what kind of a life a householder should lead !"

* Sri D. I. Kania is the son-in-law of Sir Chunilal Mehta of Bombay. Kaniabhai and his whole family are greatly devoted to Mataji.

Mataji replied with a very soft voice : "You see, the *Brahmacharya* Ashram is not observed anymore, and for this reason all the other Ashrams cannot either be lived as they should be. Unless the foundation is solid a house cannot be built. Ashram means "*a-shram*" absence of strain. Again, everything except God causes strain. Where else can one be at ease but in Him ? Even a householder, provided he does all his work as a service to the Supreme Being, lives in a regular Ashram. The husband should be regarded and served as the Lord of the Universe, the son as *Balgopal* (the child Krishna), the wife as a manifestation of *Mahamaya*. You say, do you not : 'Wherever a man is, there is *Siva*, and wherever a woman, there is *Gauri*.' Rather than being the master of this world, be its servant. For one who is the master there will be endless complications and quarrels, but if you can become its servant, there will be none. Thus, feel that this world belongs to God and you are but his server, acting according to His commands. If you live in this spirit, then even while in the *grihastha ashram* no new bondage will be created by your actions. You will only reap the fruit of your *prarabdha karma*.* What fear can there be for a family man who ever keeps this in mind ? The Almighty will take care of everything."

June, 2nd, 1957.

This morning, after the reading of the Scriptures, Sriman Tapan asked Mataji :

* That portion of one's past actions, which is bound to fructify in the present life and cannot be averted.

“Please tell us something that will be conducive to our spiritual welfare ! ”

Mataji : To endeavour to know himself is man's bounden duty. To know oneself means to know God, and to know God means to know oneself. Not until one has found God can there be an end to sorrow. In order to realize God one should be exclusively engaged either in the repetition of His Name, in singing His praises, or in the contemplation of Him. Apart from this there is no path to salvation.

A little later Mataji continued : *Satsang** and the study of Scriptures and books of wisdom are also helpful on the Path. This body maintains that sense objects (*viṣai*) are poison (*viṣ hai*). By indulging in sense enjoyment one gradually advances towards death—it is comparable so what is called 'slow poison.' And moreover one has to purchase a 'return ticket' and come back to this world. Therefore this body tells you again and again that you should give as much time as you possibly can to the thought of Him. Time does not stand still.”

Soon after this discussion Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, Srimati Indira and their party arrived. They had been invited to have their lunch here to-day.

5th June, 1957.

At Mataji's request I sent some sweets, which our

* *Satsang* The company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth; also a religious meeting, or in its widest sense the practice of the presence of God.

Ashram girls had prepared, to Dilip Kumar house this afternoon. In the early evening, Dilip Kumar and Srimati Indira came and said to me laughingly : "Didi, you have made yourself unforgettable. How many delicious things you got prepared and sent to us. Can one forget this easily ?" This evening we have been invited to their place together with Mataji. They had come to remind us once again of this.

At 7-30 p.m. we all arrived there punctually. Sitting arrangements had been made in the open air. On the top of a staircase a solitary *asana* had been placed for Mataji. They had invited many distinguished personalities of Poona to have Mataji's *darśana*. Sādhu Vasvāniji was also to be present, but due to illness was unable to come. Sri Vasvāniji had Mataji's *darśana* some time ago at Varanasi. He is well known in many parts of India.

In expectation of Sri Vasvaniji's visit, the evening programme started with some delay. As soon as Srimati Indira came and sat down, Dilip Kumar started the *bhajan*. First of all reciting the *Guru pranāma*, a song to Sri Krishna, then one to Siva and again one to Sri Krishna followed, after which he sang one of Indira's compositions in Hindi that had been translated by him into Bengali. The words, the melody and the rhythm of the song were in complete harmony with its idea. It was quite uncomparable. Then *Nāma kīrtana* was performed for five minutes, followed by *arati*.

After *arati*, Dilip Kumar spoke in English about Mataji.

The gist of it was : Mataji is now very renowned, both in India and in many places abroad. Many men and women have been helped by Her to tread the path that leads to Peace. So many years ago when he met his *Gurudeva* Sri Aurobindo for the first time, he had heard him say that many had attained great heights by doing *sadhana* and had for themselves realized Supreme Bliss. But to find a Being who could communicate this Bliss to others and bring them real Peace was difficult indeed. Among this type of supermen or superwomen Mataji is quite unique.

In this strain he talked very beautifully for about 15 or 20 minutes. When after the silence at 9 p. m., Srimati Indira began to perform Mataji's *arati*, Mataji objected with the words : "Do *arati* to your *Guru*." But Indira did not listen and completed Mataji's *arati* with much devotion.

On taking leave, I said to Srimati Indira : "We have not yet heard you sing !" Dilip Kumar exclaimed : "Yes, all right. Indira will sing to you and Didi will give us sweets !" With great mirth and laughter Mataji was seen into the car.

With Mataji on the Bank of the Gomati River

(II)

KRISHNANATH

It now seems appropriate to mention some of the anecdotes from Mataji's life, which She Herself related from time to time when reminded ; some of these have a miraculous quality, but Mataji told them as if they were ordinary happenings.

Once a young woman of about 20 or 22 asked for Ma's help in her devotional practices. As there was a large crowd at the time, Mataji told her to see Her in private afterwards, but did not get a chance to talk to her. After a few days the girl came and said Mataji had appeared to her in a dream and whispered a Mantra into her ear. She repeated it and it was in pure Sanskrit though the girl was illiterate. When she dreamt, Mataji had been thinking of her. Mataji then asked her not to eat meat in the months of वैशाख, श्रावण, कार्तिक, and माघ. The girl said she had already given up eating meat, though everyone else in her home ate it.

In another place Mataji said to a very dark girl of 12 or 13 who came to see Her, 'You want the necklace, don't you ?' and asked Udas to bring that. When it was brought and given to the girl, everyone was surprised to see that it was a string of valuable pearls, which had been presented to Mataji a

few days previously by the Rani of Sirmur ! When Mataji was wearing the pearls on Her wrist, She had seen this little girl in the crowd, whispering to her mother that she wanted them. Mataji wanted to give them to the girl at that time, but she had disappeared. Mataji knew that she would come after a few days and had told Udas to keep the string with her and to bring it whenever Mataji would ask for it ; that is how the pearl necklace was brought and given to the girl. Later on the girl had come again to show how nice the white pearls looked against her dark skin. Mataji said that when She was living in Ashtagram, there used to be *chamaras* (low caste people who clean dead animals' skins) dwelling nearby and a little girl of theirs used to come and stand at a distance looking at Her. This was about 40 years ago. The little girl who got the necklace was the same low caste girl in a previous birth.

This habit of Mataji' to give away whatever valuable presents She receives, is well-known. I have already related in a previous article how the costly Banaras sari and ornaments received at the end of the Bhagavata Saptah were bestowed on the sweeper woman. As for smaller gifts like sweets, fruits, flowers or garlands, they are given away immediately. Referring to this, Mataji once humourously remarked that She noticed how the face of the donor becomes smaller and smaller as She started distributing his offering. "To placate him I ultimately leave one and say, I have kept this ; but it is only for the time being." Dr. Pannalal told us two stories in this connection. Once some students had brought an expensive garland for Her and as usual She immediately gave it away. The students said, 'We wish you had worn it at least

for ten minutes to please us.' Mataji replied, 'If I am to wear it for ten minutes to please you, will you do whatever I tell you to please me?' There was dead silence—nobody dared to say, yes, for fear that She might ask them something they would not be able to fulfil. On another occasion, when Mataji was going away by train, Dr. P. had brought for Her some very costly choice oranges and told Gurupriya Didi to hide them under the berth till the train started, so that Mataji might not give them away. Mataji was not told anything about this, but just as the train began to move She put Her hand under the berth, took out the oranges and started throwing them to the people on the platform. Those who often go for Mataji's *darsan* are familiar with Her way of throwing fruit and other things into the crowd for people to catch, and they know how good She is at it.

We learnt one day from Gurupriya Didi that Mataji's munificence had earned for Her in Naimisharanya the reputation of being the Goddess of Wealth incarnate. A lady who arrived at the camp that day had heard the coolies at the station saying that a Mataji had come who was an *Avatar* of Laxmi—She gives away gold thrones and *ashrafies* (gold coins)! Mataji laughed when She heard this and told us that for the Bhagavata Saptah She had enquired what was prescribed in the Scripture to be given as *Dan*. On hearing that it was 12 tolas of gold, She had asked one fourth of it, i. e. 3 tolas to be used to give a gold polish to a silver throne on which the sacred book was to be placed for reading. This was given away to the *purohit* at the end, and people thought it was a gold throne. I forget what Ma said about another

three tolas, but the remainder was given away in the form of a gold *ashrafi* to each of the 108 readers. No wonder Mataji seemed Laxmi incarnate to poor people who had never seen so much gold being distributed.

In the course of his discourse on the Narada Bhaktisutra, Dr. P. was once talking about how महापुरुष (great saints) come to the help of their devotees and in this connection he told two stories about Mataji. She had once gone in a boat to the other bank of the Ganga and a devotee on this side wanted to join Her. He jumped into the river and started to swim across, but when he had reached half way, began to drown. There was no one to rescue him but he cried out to Ma and suddenly, apparently from nowhere, a boat appeared and saved him. On another occasion, Ma's great devotee, Bhaiji, while drowning in Banaras, was pulled out by an old woman who waded into the river. At that time Ma was actually in Dehradun and those near Her saw, to their surprise, that Her clothes were dripping wet.

Another story was told by Mataji Herself about how one of her devotees had once made up his mind to die at Her feet and for this purpose taken a very large dose of opium and eaten sweets thereafter to make the poison more deadly ; when he was quite sure he could not be saved, he came and lay clinging to Mataji's feet. Even though nobody was aware at the time that he had taken poison, Mataji somehow kept him awake through the rest of the night. In the morning there were all sorts of difficulties in transporting him to the hospital and getting medical aid, but these were all somehow surmounted and he was saved against all odds.

One morning while Dr. P. was talking about the relinquishing of the fruit of action, Mataji laughed loudly at some idea that had struck Her. She would not say what it was that made Her laugh; but quoted the saying, "प्रशंसा प्रतिष्ठा, सूकरी विष्ट" which condemns hankering after praise and position. Dr. P. said there was nothing he did, which was not for earning praise; Ma remarked it required courage to admit this, but somebody pointed out that what Dr. P. had said might itself be for the sake of evoking praise!

One evening Didi Gurupriya gave us a leaflet in Hindi issued in the name of Ma's devotees entitled, "The Perpetual Remembrance of God." It is a scheme for continuous round-the-clock meditation by a relay of persons, each choosing a fixed period of 15 minutes any time, night or day, for engaging in meditation wherever he or she may be. Ma explained that about 20/25 years ago when the Harijan uplift movement was started a great *yajña* was performed. At that time Ma thought that while performance of a *yajña*, as laid down in the scriptures, was all right, something more should be done for the general public. She realized that it was impossible for any-one to give all 24 hours to the contemplation of God, not even 3 hours, and for a गृहस्थ (house-holder) even one hour might be difficult. So She decided upon 15 minutes, and began asking everyone, whatever his caste, creed or religion, to give 15 minutes every day to God, observe *Maun* (silence), and take God's name, wherever and whatever condition he was in. She would demand this from Her followers and from strangers ask it as charity. Some people selected a particular time and observed *Maun* (silence). Later the

practice started of everyone observing silence between 8.45 p.m. and 9 p.m. and this is now the rule in all Ma's Ashrams and wherever Ma is. Recently Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj had suggested the present idea of having people join in a regular scheme of a chain of continuous unbroken meditation. In such an arrangement the weak would also get help from what the others were doing. We were asked to join the scheme and when I expressed the fear that one might sometimes forget the time, Mataji narrated the following true story: There was a man who himself was the disciple of a great Saint but whose daughters were followers of Mataji. He did not like their talking about Ma and said, "Why do you say Miau like a cat?" He had a favourite cat which used to sleep in his bed. One night this cat scratched him badly in the face. After that he came to see Mataji and agreed to observe the 15 minutes' silent meditation at a particular time. Once when Mataji was sitting with several people round Her asking questions, this man who was present, suddenly felt disinclined to ask or say anything or even to listen to what was going on. He looked at his watch and found that it was his time for *Mauna*. And so, Ma said, if you make up your mind, you will be reminded somehow. (In spite of this assurance I must admit that I have not yet had the courage to join the scheme by taking up a fixed time, as I find that my time keeps on changing. Mataji's devotees may be interested and get a copy of the leaflet from Shri Panu Brahmachari, Sri Ma Anandamayi Ashram, Bhadaini, Varanasi).

The time was approaching when I would have to leave

for Bombay and it was also getting colder and more uncomfortable in the tent every night. So I decided one morning to ask for Mataji's permission to go, but before I could say anything, Mataji Herself said to Sri Pragnarain's wife that She would leave for Sitapur on the 23rd November, and after spending the night there, go to Lucknow on the 24th. The Pragnarains wanted to arrange for a 24 hour continuous reading of the Ramayana at their home in Sitapur and had requested Mataji to come. So Mataji asked them to start it on the 22nd, so that Ma could be present at its conclusion on the 23rd. Now all this suited me exactly, as I could accompany Mataji up to Lucknow and leave the next day, so as to be in Bombay in time for my business. I almost felt that Mataji had fixed not only the time of leaving, but the whole programme in Naimisharanya and on the bank of the Gomati for my special benefit and to suit my personal convenience. Such is Ma's *Lila*.

After this announcement preparations for departure began in the Camp and some of the Ashramites started leaving in advance for other destinations. Mataji was going to spend some days in Lucknow with Sri and Srimati Rameshwar Sahai and seemed to be eager to ensure that only a few persons were left in Her entourage so as not to be a burden to Her host. It was a pity I could not stay on in Lucknow and accompany Mataji to Banaras and Rajgir, where also, everybody later told me, Ma continued to be in the same jolly mood and was easy of access. At Rajgir there was the additional treat of listening to Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj on the enlightenment of the Buddha and His teachings. If I

had continued with Ma, I might have derived more lasting benefit; the beneficial effects of Naimisharanya soon wore away, and it seems now as if I had then something within reach which I allowed to slip away.

The day before we were to leave the Gomati bank, Mataji, who generally speaks about spiritual matters only in answer to questions, said of Her own accord that she wanted to tell us some thing. 'You have lived in this holy place and you must take back with you something good from it. Decide not to tell an untruth under any circumstances. If the situation is such that you cannot speak the truth, keep quiet, but do not depart from your vow. God is truth and to reach God you must be truthful.' She then related a story of a man whose Guru gave him a *Mala* and told him to wear it and never to tell a lie. He observed this for one year. Then there was a quarrel between him and his wife and she went away to her father's place in a huff. When she did not return for a long time, he sent word to her that if she wished to see her husband alive, she should return by such and such a date. The wife asked the messenger what was the matter with her husband's health and was told that there was nothing wrong with him. So the wife thought she would go in her own time. When she did not come back on the day specified by him, the man died. By observing truthfulness for one year he had acquired the power that whatever he said had to come true.

Before I take up the last day's account, I might mention an episode that has led to my signing this article as

'Krishnanath'. One day as I was entering Mataji's cottage, I heard Her asking Dr. Pannalal and Mrs. Sahai, 'Why do you call him 'Ambe'? Hasn't he got a name?' I intervened and said, 'Yes, Ma. My name is Krishnanath.' Mataji then declared that I should be called Krishnanath, and so I have decided to use this name here also.

In a previous article I have described what a grand function the Bhagavata Saptah at Naimisharanya was, when the Bhagavata was read by 108 Pandits. When narrating the history of the events leading up to the holding of this Saptah, Ma also told us that She had desired that, since the Puranas were originally composed at Naimisharanya, some arrangements should be made for the reading of the Puranas during the Bhagavata Saptah. Brahmavarta Purana was selected for the purpose as it was thought that it contained a reference to Naimisharanya. Nobody had however remembered to bring the Purana and curiously enough not a single copy was found even at Naimisharanya where the Puranas had been compiled. Ma then asked Swami Avadhutji to make arrangements for the reading of the Purana and it was sent for from one of the Ashramas. Mr. Modi arrived providentially at that time and his car was available for this purpose. The man who went to get it looked only at the first part of the title and brought Brahmanda Puran instead but, it turned out to be the right Purana in which Naimisharaya was referred to. Actually only a little while after Mataji had asked Avadhutji, a Pandit had turned up with a copy of the Purana, and if he had come earlier it would have been unnecessary to get it from the Ashram. Avadhutji gave the Brahmanda Purana to Bharat

Bhai and, starting from the full-moon day when the Bhagavata Saptah was concluded, he read a little portion of it every day while Mataji was staying on the bank of the Gomati.

This arrangement would have come to an end with Mataji's departure, but the Raja Saheb of Solan and others had suggested that there should be some permanent memento of the great functions held at Naimisharanya and from this had originated the idea of setting up one Purana temple there. A beautiful site on the Hanuman Tila was selected, and after looking through the village records maintained by the Patwari and consulting the Tahsildar it was decided that it would be best to acquire the plot through land acquisition proceedings, so as to leave no room for future litigation by other claimants. It was suggested that a building should be constructed there for daily public reading of the Puranas, and that it should be called the 'Purana Mandir'. And thus Ma's visit and the functions at Naimisharanya were to be commemorated by a resuscitation of the ancient tradition and thus reviving the knowledge of the Puranas which are gradually being forgotten. As however it would take a considerable time before the project could materialise, Mataji suggested that in order to avoid a break in the reading, which had been started, it should be continued in the meanwhile in the cottage on the river bank which Mataji had been occupying. Accordingly, a Shastri was engaged for the purpose and a formal inauguration of the reading by him was performed on the morning of the 23rd November, the day of Mataji's departure.

As usual in the Ashram, everything was aesthetically

arranged for the occasion. A beautiful picture of Vishnu Bhagavan was hung up on the wall to provide an audience when we would have all left. (This was one of those delightful devotional touches which Ma gives to impart a feeling of reverence and sanctity to a ceremony). Dr. P. and I had been asked to be the first audience, but all the other inmates of the Ashram also attended. (We were in all 9 inside the cottage and 9 on the verandah and thus we conformed to the lucky number 9 and also the number 18 of the Puranas. Omitting the Shastri inside and Ma outside, we were 8, 8, and tradition refers to 88000 Rishis practising penance in Naimisharanya). The Shastri was dressed in the colourful yellow garments, incense was burnt and the Ashram girls sang two Bhajans. At 9 A.M. exactly Bharat Bhai did the Arati and then handed over the sacred book to the Shastri as a symbolical gesture of the continuity of the mission, which Ma had first entrusted to Avadhutji from whom it had come to Bharat Bhai. The Shastri had a charming way of reading the Sanskrit text and of explaining it in Hindi. The portion he read was a description of भूगोल और खगोल (universe). After finishing at 9.30 A. M., the Shastri told us that the Brahmanda Purana was the first Purana and so the reading had commenced in the proper order, though this was fortuitous. It was also lucky that the month was मार्गशीर्ष about which the Lord has said in the Bhagavad Gita, "मासानां मार्गशीर्षोऽहं ।" The day, Wednesday, and the Hindu date पंचमी (fifth) were also auspicious. So in every way it was a good start and it may be hoped that the Purana reading will go on continuously and the scheme of the Purana Mandir will soon be a reality.

At about noon a party arrived from Lucknow. It was headed by Brahmachari Mohanananda, a fair, handsome saint with an oval face and a long, dark beard. The other people in the party were also Mataji's devotees. Mataji seemed very happy and joked and laughed with all of them. Some of the Bengali ladies sang *bhajans* (devotional songs).

Everything had been packed by 2-30 p. m. I travelled in Mr. Singhals car with the Irrigation Executive Engineer, Sri Bishambhar Dayal and had a sumptuous tea at his house on reaching Sitapur. We then went to Sri Prag Narain's house where Ma had come directly to attend the conclusion of the Akhanda Ramayana. There was a terrific crowd and we could not go inside. Dr. P. who had travelled with Mataji came out and we took him to Sri Dayal's house for tea. When we returned with him to the house of Sri Sripal Singh where Mataji was staying, we heard that She had been making anxious enquiries about Dr. P. as he had gone away without informing Her and She was afraid he might have been hurt in the crowd. This is an example of Ma's loving care for everyone.

Sri Sripal Singh had had a special room built for Ma in his compound. In it was a statue of Mataji made by an amateur sculptor ; the angry look he had given to Her was inexplicable, as no one has never seen Ma getting angry ; there was only a slight resemblance to what Ma might have looked like some years ago but Mataji was quite amused to see the statue. There was also a very beautiful though awe-inspiring picture of Kali as *Mahishasur-Mardini*. Everybody admired it and I think it was sent with Mataji to the Varanasi Ashram.

In the evening the usual singing of Kirtans took place in the Pandal erected in the compound ; there was a large crowd and the Bhajans were not very successful as they could not be heard by all. The customary *Mauna* between 8.45 and 9 p. m. was however very effective and the talk which Ma gave afterwards was particularly illuminating and will serve as a fitting end to this chronicle. It was Dr. Pannalal, acting for the last time as our Shaunak Muni, who asked the question, 'Where is the time in the modern struggle for existence to take God's name ?' In reply Mataji spoke for nearly half an hour which is quite unusual. The following is the gist of what She said :—

'Man's struggle for existence does not give him the three things he is seeking after, namely : सुख, (happiness), शान्ति (peace) and आनन्द (bliss). These can be found only in Him. You must try to realize your Self, which is the same as realizing Him. You must give up दुर-बुद्धि, (the feeling that He is far away from you) and thus getting into दुर्गति (a state of separateness from Him). You can easily devote a little time morning and evening to the taking of His name, in spite of all your occupations. But apart from this you can take God's name at other time also, in whatever condition you may be : God's name is holy and purifies everything. God will manifest Himself to you in the form you worship. If you see God in everything, distinctions like मेरा और तेरा ('This is mine, that is yours) will disappear'.

JAI MA.

The Background of our Letters

U. C. DUTT

(II)

In dealing with the background of our letters, we shall try to peep into the constituents of the Absolute (*Parama Shiva*), the final source of the entire creation in its pure forms, the elements of 'being' as different from those of 'becoming', with the help of seers of Agamas to whom many secrets of the transcendent Reality were revealed.

An idea about *Vāk*, *Nada*, *Bindu* and *Kalā* is indispensable for the understanding of letters. *Vāk* is the same as *Shabda* or "Word". It comes from the root *Vach* (Latin *Vox*) which means to speak. *Para Vāk* is the causal stress which is the cosmic Ideation (*Sristi Kalpanā*) of *Ishvara*. *Pashyanti Vāk* actually going forth as *Ikshana* (seeing), manifesting as *Sukshma Madhyama Vāk*—the *Matrikā* state of *Shabda*, prior to its gross manifestation as the *Varnas* in speech—*Vaikhari Vāk*.

In the transcendental quiescent or *Parama Shiva* there is neither *Shabda* nor *Artha* nor *Pratyaya*. There is neither name nor form. In the infinite calm there arises a metaphysical point of stress or *Bindu* which stirs forth as the multiple forces of the universe. This energizing is the cause of the

world experience with its duality of subject and object.
(Woodroffe)

The notion of the "word" is very ancient. God speaks the Word and the thing appears. God said : "Let there be light" and there was light. The Word has creative power. At the *Pashyanti* stage *Shabda* and *Artha* are identified. Thus we have the Supreme and the Logos, *Brahma* and *Shabda-Brahma*. The Logos is the self-presentation of God. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the word was God". The same idea is expressed in the Veda-Prajapati. *Vāk* is thus the power of the Brahman and one with It. This *Shakti* which was in Him and with Him evolves into the form of the universe, still remaining what It is. It has appeared as *Jivas* and various forms of matter. The substance of the whole world is *Vāk* (*Jagat Vāṅmaya*), for the world is *Shabda Prabaha*.

"Prajapati alone was the universe. He had *Vāk* too as His own, as a second to Him." (35th Br. Upanishad xx-14-2).

"By that *Vāk* and that *Ātmā* He created all things whatsoever, the Vedas, metres, sacrifices and all creatures."
(Br. Upanishad).

Shiva has two aspects, namely *Nishkala* (without parts), *Nirguna* (without attributes) and *Sakala* (with parts), *Saguna* (with attributes). The first is the manifested, transcendent Supreme and the second the manifested and immanent.

Creative Lord (*Ishvara*). The first is *Nishpanda* (without movement) for it is the eternal, changeless Brahman. It is *Ashabda*, without sound, being unmanifest. The other aspect is called *Shabda Brahman* which appears from Brahman, the equilibrated condition of *Shakti*. It produces all kinds of *Shabda*. It is in itself *Avyakta* (unmanifested) *Shabda* which is the cause of *Vyakta* (manifested) *Shabda*, *Artha* and *Pratyaya*. It rises up from the form of *Bindu* which is the undifferentiated *Shiva-Shakti*. With such activity *Bindu* becomes three-fold as *Shabda*, *Artha* and *Pratyaya*.

Nada is said to be the *Maithun* or union of *Shiva* and *Shakti*. The *Shakti-Tattva* is really the negative aspect of the *Shiva-Tattva*. It is the will of Shiva as yet unmanifested. When they commence to act, the first movement towards creation takes place. After the restful state of *Shiva-Shakti* there follows union for the purpose of manifestation. From this union arises creative ideation. This union and mutual relation is called *Nada*. *Nada* is really *Shiva-Shakti*, from which is evolved the whole Universe.

From *Sakala Parameshwara* appeared *Shakti*, from *Shakti*, *Nada* and from *Nada*, *Bindu*. On the other hand *Nishkala Shiva* is *Nirguna* or the aspect of Brahman which is unconnected with the creative *Shakti*.

Bindu evolves from *Nada* (*Nadad Bindu Samudbhavati*). Literally *Bindu* means a drop or a point. It is an aspect of *Shakti* or self-consciousness ; here, in *Ishvara Tattva* consciousness completely identifies itself with the object as

unmanifested *Idam* and thus subjectifies it and becomes with it a point of consciousness—thus a diffusive point (neither with magnitude nor position). The state was neither *Sat* (existent) nor *Asat* (non-existent).

Nada and *Bindu* are states of *Shakti* in which the germ of action (*Kriya Shakti*) increasingly supports with a view to producing a state of compactness of energy ready to create. *Bindu* is said to be the massive state (*Ghanāvasthā*) of *Shakti*.

Kalās are parts or Power. *Shiva* has two aspects : *Nishkala* (without parts or attributes) and *Sakala* (with parts or attributes). The former is in a state called *Unmani*, the latter as *Shakti* is in a state called *Samani*.

Kalā is a particular display of Power or *Vibhuti*. *Kalā* is also one of the *Kāñchukas* (enveloping *Shakti*) that go to the making of the *Purusha*-consciousness.

Shiva is *shunyatishunya* (absolutely void), there is not the slightest trace of objectivity whatsoever. *Shakti*, the objective aspect, then gradually unveils the universe for the consciousness of *Shiva* who is *Prakāsha*, the subjective aspect of things.

It may be noted here that *Shiva* is never without *Shakti*, the two are one and the same, and *Shakti* in Herself is a form of consciousness (*chaitanyarupini*). They are two aspects of *Parama Shiva* (Ultimate Reality), like a serpent at rest and in motion. When they are separated in thought, *Shiva*

without *Shakti* becomes *shava* (dead) and *Shakti* without *Shiva* is *achetan* (unconscious). In fact both are conscious, one is passive consciousness and the other is actively self-conscious.

Besides Agamas or Tantras Sufi literature indicates three Journeys of the Divine : (1) Outward Journey from God to man, (2) Inward Journey from Man to God and (3) Journey within God towards the Unmanifested. In the first, God uses His own power of ignorance and becomes man, passing through the stages of matter, life and mind. In the second, man returns to God by acquiring true knowledge of Self or God. In the third, the divine stuff after Self-realization moves towards the unfathomable abyss of the Supreme and stops at a point, bewildered. Some of the highly spiritual Christian mystics too have distinguished God-head from God, suggesting thereby the possibility of a third Journey. Indian scriptures, particularly Tantras, have made sufficient progress on this line of the third Journey. The present article is a humble attempt at presenting the Tantrik notions of some of our letters as revealed to the travellers of the Third Journey.

The state of *Parama Shiva* has been accepted by the Agamas as the final state of perfection. Here is a synthesis of *Shiva* and *Shakti*, the static and dynamic aspects of Pure Consciousness. *Shiva* is light—consciousness. Everything else receives light from Him. When *Shiva* becomes self-conscious or knows Himself, He becomes *Shakti*. Then begins creation ; creation, preservation and destruction of the universe depend on the working of *Shakti*. At Her initial stage

the entire universe is reflected in the total illumination and thus distinguishes Light from shade by a Law of Higher Relativity, as it were. This creation is a mere objectification of the great light, transformed as one Self. This objective side at first assumes the form of utter void (*Sunyam*) and then manifests itself infinitely at different stages.

Now we shall try to analyse some constituents within *Parama Shiva*. The succession that the analysis points out is not one in time, it is of understanding only.

According to the scriptures, Brahman is *Satchidānanda* (Existence-knowledge-bliss). In fact all the three aspects are one, yet each of them is significant. They can express themselves both independently and collectively. At the deepest layer of perfection none of them can be imagined. Let us call it *Sat* (Pure Existence) from which emanates one *Kalā* or *Shakti* (energy) which Tantriks describe as *Ehit*. It is the first outward impulse of complete Truth. It is called *Anuttar* in Tantra. The vibration of *Chit* operates both outwardly and inwardly. As a result, a part of *Chit* goes out of itself and is followed by another successive impulse of the same kind. The first impulse sees its reflection in the second as in a mirror, and knows itself as Joy, *Ananda*. *Anuttar* and *Ananda* have अ and आ as their symbols.

Sat.Chit.Ananda as one undivided whole is revealed as Brahman. But taken separately, *Sat* remains the eternal substratum, *Chit* all alone is cool and indifferent and *Ananda* in duplicate is blissful due to sporting with itself. "Alone He

was not feeling happy, so He divided himself into two." (Br. Upanishad.) It means अ emanated from आ. They are the pre-requisites of creation. "All creatures are born of *Ananda*" (Shruti). Those who know Brahman enjoy the state of *Ātmarama*—sports with itself. From the source of *Ananda* rush out particles of Joy incessantly like sprays from a fountain. There is neither 'in' nor 'out' as in space. The outer state is a mere supposition of a joyless condition. As soon as a particle of *Ananda* is separated from the original spring, it becomes enclosed in a cover and does no longer feel its inherent joy. Naturally, there is a desire to get it back. The technical term for it is *Ichhā*, the symbol is इ. The object of *Ichhā* (desire) is *Ishtam* which is nothing but *Ananda*. *Ichhā* is the power to search out *Ananda*, and it ceases to exist after reaching the goal. The entire creation emanates from *Ichhā*. So there is a sense of mad search everywhere, from atoms and molecules to the solar and the stellar systems. It is an intense desire to recover a lost treasure—*Ananda*.

(To be continued)

New Diary Leaves

ATMANANDA

(7)

Hardwar, April 1st, 1961.

We are staying at Baghat House, Kharkhari, where the Raja of Solan has built a *dharmaśāla* with a *S'iva* temple in the centre. One portion of the building is reserved for Mataji and Her party. So many foreigners come to see Mataji nowadays that, when She gives *darśana* in Her room which is small, it sometimes happens that there are more Europeans than Indians.

To-day at midday, the Maharani of one of the Rajputana states and her daughter were in Mataji's room. A German lady, a young girl from Switzerland, and myself were called and asked to join them. A little later an American gentleman and another one from Scandinavia arrived from Rishikesh. Six different nationalities had gathered in the small room.

The German lady asked : "Has the mind a limit, and where is the limit ?

Mataji : The limit of the mind is to find the Self.

The Questioner : Is the mind inside or outside ?

Mataji : When the mind remains outside, it wanders here and there ; this is why one should turn it inside so as to find one's Self.

The Swiss girl : How should one meditate ? Is it better to concentrate on some object, say a flower or the like, or should one try to make the mind blank ?

Mataji : There are two methods : one is to concentrate on a Deity, such as *S'iva*, *Kāli*, *Durgā*, *Krishna*, *Rama* and so forth. This is meant for those who feel attracted to any particular aspect of God. The other procedure is to empty the mind and stand back as a witness. It depends on the temperament and inclination of the person who meditates. However, to keep the mind empty is extremely difficult for the great majority of aspirants. Therefore one may concentrate on the inner light, the light by which all outer objects are also perceived. Even a blind man sees an inner light. Another method is to sit absolutely still and watch the movement of one's breathing. This will steady the mind.

After having said this much, Mataji was called and left the room. The Maharani told us that she had been wanting to ask that very same question about meditation, but had felt too shy to do so. She had therefore hoped that perhaps Mataji would of Her own accord enlighten her on this point. To her great joy she found that the Swiss girl had voiced her question and so the Maharani had received her reply as well. She said, this had happened to her already a number of times when she was with Mataji.

Hardwar, March 1961.

Sometimes letters are read out to Mataji during *darśana* time. A devotee from Germany, who is not keeping good health, had asked among other things, whether it might not perhaps be better to stop speaking and thinking about her ill-health and to ignore it altogether. Mataji replied : "Do as much for your health as is your duty to keep your body fit. But your mind should be engrossed in God."

Kankhal, April 4th, 1961.

A newcomer, an elderly Brahmin by caste, related that he had been living in Hardwar for a number of years, devoting himself to spiritual practices and to *satsang*, for the purpose of attaining to liberation. But inspite of all his efforts he was disappointed to find that no real transformation had taken place. He wanted to know whether, if he was to die in his present condition, he would attain to liberation.

Mataji : If a person lives in a holy place in holy company, spending his days in *sadhana* and inspite of this does not progress as he had hoped, it is due to his intention not being quite pure. This is the reason why, together with the good effects of what he is doing, undesirable things will crop up as well. The influence of the sacred place and the *satsang* are bound to have a beneficent effect, but side by side with it the results of one's bad *karma* have to be experienced. *Karma* will work itself out to the minutest detail. At any rate one

should continue steadfastly to exert oneself and persevere in one's determination and efforts. It is said that during the *Kaliyuga* man is so weak that his mental sins are forgiven. He has to bear the consequences only of what he actually does, not of what he thinks—for otherwise there would be no chance at all of attaining to liberation during this *Kaliyuga*.

Question : We are told that if a man dies in Kashi or in certain other sacred places he will be liberated. Is this true ?

Mataji : There is a story of a man who had committed some wicked deeds, but because below the spot on which he died there happened to be a *śalagrām**, the messengers of death had no power over him and he was taken away by the messengers of *Viṣṇu* instead.

Kankhal, April 9th, 1961.

A well-known industrialist asked, what was the sense of calling a doctor and undergoing medical treatment, since everything was in any case ordained beforehand by Providence.

Mataji : The fact of your consulting a doctor and submitting to medical treatment is also part of your fate. Unless you are fated to be cured, the doctor is helpless. But when you are meant to get well, the right medicine will be given and you will recover.

Question : Suppose one has intense faith in God and

* *S'ālagrām* A stone image representing *Viṣṇu*, the Preserver of the Universe.

leaves everything to Him and does not consult a doctor. Can one be cured even so ?

Mataji : There are two ways : one way is to have intense faith that God will do all that is needed and pray to him to be cured. If one has reached a state of genuine faith it will have the power to bring about the cure. If on the other hand, one's faith is merely superficial, it will not act.

The other way is, not to pray to God for anything, but to leave everything to Him. Then, whether one gets well or not is exactly the same.

Kankhal, April 10th, 1961.

This morning, a lady who had a beautiful voice, was asked to sing. She sang one song in praise of *Rāma* and then kept silent. When Mataji asked her to sing another song, she replied : "Mataji, the flies are disturbing me too much."

Mataji : It is only the 'me', the 'I' that feels disturbed. Let the flies also have some fun !

Poona, June 18th, 1961.

Today Sri Haribabaji Maharaj related to us that Mataji had once explained to him the significance of doing *Namas-*

kāra. It meant to dedicate oneself to one's *Iṣṭa* or to God with all that constituted one's nature at the moment, be it good or bad, one's virtues, vices, capacities, talents, shortcomings, everything; to offer one's whole being at His Feet. Then, purified by His touch, to receive oneself back, as it were, as His *prasāda*.

Haribabaji further said that the custom of washing one's feet before entering a temple or any other sacred place was symbolic for washing off one's sins. On hearing this it suddenly struck me that the fact that so many people lose their shoes or sandals when coming for Mataji's *darśana* may have a similar significance. I suppose we should be grateful for being deprived of our foot-wear on those occasions, instead of grumbling?

Poona, July 3rd, 1961.

A *Sannyasi* asked: It is said that God is all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful. Why then does he allow so much sorrow and grief to continue in the world that is His creation? If He were all-knowing and all-loving, but not all-powerful, one could understand; or if He were all-loving and all-powerful, but not all-knowing; or even if He were all-knowing and all-powerful, but not all-loving. How can He be endowed with all those three attributes and in spite of it let the misery of the world run its course?

Mataji: Everyone has to reap the fruit of his actions.

The suffering is for your own best. A mother occasionally gives a slap to her beloved child for his own good, in order to keep him on the right path. God cleanses you from the effects of your actions committed life after life by what you call suffering. When a fond mother gives her baby a bath, the child may scream desperately, yet the mother will not let the baby go until she has thoroughly washed and scrubbed him. Then she will carefully wipe the child, dry his tears and take him on her lap. Likewise, when you have been cleansed, God will comfort you and take you into His arms. Whatever happens in this world is His *Lila*, His pleasure.

The *Sannyasi* : Pleasure at all the misery ? Where then is His love ?

Mataji : Who is it that loves and who that suffers ? He alone stages a play with Himself ; who exists save Him ? The individual suffers because he perceives duality. *Duniya** means 'du-niya' (based on duality) and it is duality which causes all sorrow and grief. Find the ONE everywhere and in everything and there will be an end to pain and suffering.

Poona, July 5th, 1961.

It has been raining almost incessantly for days. This morning Mataji was commenting on this and how sorry She was that people had to take so much trouble in order to

* World.

be able to get to Her. Then She said : "It is pouring and pouring. If everyone's *bhakti* rained in a similar manner, how wonderful this would be ! It is said that the rainy season is congenial to the feeling of love and devotion for God. In this way even nature can be helpful to *sādhana*. Let your devotion for Him stream uninterruptedly like this rain."

Question : Why does God allow so much suffering in the world ? Ask everyone of the people assembled here, none of them is quite happy, and yet they all long to be.

Mataji : God is teaching you that there are two possibilities. If you desire the things of this world, you will be unhappy ; but by advancing towards Him you will find happiness. This is how he induces you to turn to Him. If you had no troubles or sorrows you would never even think of Him.

Question : Why does God not cause us to move towards Him ?

Mataji : He does, indeed. For it is only by His Grace that you are able to remember Him. But you are not single-minded, you crave for all kinds of things and therefore you remain unhappy. There is a story which aptly illustrates what your position really is.

A *dhobi** kept a few donkeys to carry the clothes he

* Washerman.

collected for washing. Since he was poor and his house small, he left the donkeys in the open during the night. Often they would wander far away and the *dhobi* had to waste hours in search of them. In his plight, he invented a device that worked admirably well. Every evening he touched the four legs of each donkey with a rope. The donkeys, having felt the touch of the rope on their legs, took it for granted that they had been tied to the spot and thus remained standing in the same place all night long. A similar thing happens in the world. *Mayā* touches you and you imagine yourself to be bound. You think, how can I be without my husband or my wife, my children, parents, my house and comforts and so on. Thus you remain standing where you are, instead of advancing towards Him.

Poona, July 1961.

Every evening Sri Haribabaji Maharaj relates to us a story of a *bhakta*. One evening Mataji said : "Today this body will tell you the story of a *bhakta*, which it has heard somewhere. While Sri Ramachandra lived in the jungle, he one day went to a lake to drink water. He left his bow and arrow on the shore standing upright, stuck into the earth. When he returned and took out the arrow, he saw that a frog had been pierced by it. "Why did you not complain, when I hurt you so badly ?" he asked. "*Rama* is my refuge," was the frog's reply. "Therefore, if *Rama* Himself pierces me with His arrow, to whom am I to complain ?"

Another day, someone, referring to the story, asked :

“Mataji, since Rāma is supposed to have been omniscient, He must have known all along that He had wounded the frog. Why then did he do it, and why did He ask ?

Mataji : It was His *Līlā*. Just as it was His *Līlā* to search for *Sītā* desperately when *Ravana* had carried her away. Moreover, if he had not asked, how could the frog have given such a beautiful reply ?

“Throughout the twenty-four hours abide in the awareness of the Presence of God. Then only can there be hope of Realization. Who can foresee at what moment He may choose to reveal Himself ? This is why one must ever keep wide awake.

“Ma”

MATRI LILA

15TH OCTOBER, 1961—15TH 'JANUARY, 1962.

From October 15th to 20th Durga Puja was celebrated at Swadeshi House, Kanpur, at the invitation of Sri Mangtaram Jaipuria and his son Sitaramji. Mataji arrived at Kanpur on the 8th of October, at the beginning of *Navaratri*. The Jaipuria family made excellent arrangements, taking endless trouble to make sure that every detail was carried out to perfection. Needless to say, the celebration was a great success, proceeding in a spirit of great harmony and deep joy, inspite of the difficulties caused by the inclemency of the weather. A beautiful pandal which had been erected to start with was blown down by a terrific rainstorm; however a new one with a tin roof was provided at lightning speed.

Devotees flocked from far and near, eager to be with Mataji on this happy occasion. A few foreigners also came for part of the time, among them were Sister Dayamata, the President of the Self-Realization Fellowship with some of her companions from the U. S. A.

On October 19th Mataji left for Varanasi where Lakshmi Puja was celebrated on the 23rd in Her presence. Immediately after She motored to Vindhyachal for a rest after the

hectic days at Kanpur. Yet, at Vindhyachal also a great number of devotees came by turns to enjoy the solitude of that unique Ashram, where one can be with Mataji more intimately in small groups and without any fixed programme. A number of Americans and Europeans came to see Mataji during that time. Sisters Durga and Sailasuta and Mr. Benvau, all belonging to the S. R. F., and a South Indian couple who are running an Ashram in Durban, belonging to the same association, spent about a week with Mataji and seemed altogether charmed by Mataji as well as by the beautiful surroundings. The American gentleman who accompanied them was so fortunate as to accomplish some excellent tape recordings of Mataji's voice, songs as well as Her conversations in Bengali and Hindi. On occasions Mataji seemed in a communicative mood, relating some most interesting incidents from the history of the Ashram and also from its 'pre-history'. The original Vindhyavasini temple is supposed to have been where our Ashram is now situated.

In the early morning of November 4th, Mataji motored to Allahabad where She spent a few hours only, boarding the train to Dehradun that very evening. On the 5th morning She alighted at the Kishenpur Ashram, only to leave for Suktal on the 7th. Diwali was not specially celebrated this year, but a festive mood prevailed throughout Her short visit at Kishenpur, which the Dehradun devotees enjoyed immensely.

Mataji reached Suktal (near Muzaffarnagar) on the 7th.

night accompanied by a large party. Suktal is a very special place of pilgrimage on the banks of the Ganges. Sukdeva is supposed to have related the *Bhagavata* to King Parikshit at Suktal. The temple of Sukdeva is situated on a hillock which commands a fine view over the mountains which were already snow-capped so early this winter. A motor road leads up to the hillock and a flight of steps right up to the temple. One of the Mahatmas told us that Suktal should really be called '*Suktirtha*'.

Each *Samyam Vrata* seems to us to have been the best of all. It may well be imagined that this 12th *Samyam Saptaha* topped the list. A number of Mahatmas, Swami Vishnu Ashram, Swami Akhandanandaji of Vrindaban, Mahamandaleshvara Swami Maheshwarananda of Bombay, Swami Krishnananda Avadhutaji and others, daily gave us new inspiration by their talks, which dealt mostly with the history and greatness of Suktal and the significance of the *Samyam Vrata*. They one and all stressed the point that human birth was coveted by all other creatures of the universe (84 lakhs of different species), since man alone has the possibility to attain to Self-realization. Even so most men do not live up to this precious boon and thereby waste an invaluable privilege. In his last talk Swami Akhandanandaji urged everyone with eloquent words to make a firm resolve to think of God and repeat His Name daily with love and longing for the divine Presence. No happiness in this world can be lasting, the only real happiness is to be found in God.

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj gave some very interesting replies to questions about Buddhism. Mataji attended the *Satsang* mornings, afternoons and evenings. We also had the good fortune to listen to Her singing several times during that memorable week. On some days Mataji replied to questions during the last half hour of the programme, from 9—9-30 p.m. In response to a question, why it was so difficult to sit still and concentrate for a whole hour at meditation time, so that some people longed to hear the song that followed, Mataji said : “Your whole life is arranged so as to make you outward turned ; your work, your food and drink, the way you spend your leisure, everything. The important thing is to create conditions for yourselves that will help you to turn inwards. Already many years ago this body therefore suggested that people should practice *Samyam* on certain days of every month. On those days at least they should make a special effort to speak the truth, to regard everyone as a manifestation of the ONE, to eat only as much as necessary and nothing for the sake of taste or enjoyment, to be kind to their servants and refrain from scolding them. They could attend to their duties as usual but do them as a service to God. They should look upon all children—be it their own or others—as *Gopal* or *Kumari*, regard their husband as *Narayana* and their wife as *Sri Lakshmi*. Every moment of their leisure should be spent in practices such as *japa*, meditation, *kīrtana* or the reading of holy books etc. Then Yogibhai had the idea that all might gather in one place for a week and practise *Samyam* collectively. This is how this function started about 10 years ago.”

At the closing function of the *Samyam Vrata* Mataji exclaimed : "Are you not sorry this wonderful week has come to an end ? To perpetuate the remembrance of it, keep *Samyam* at home once weekly, or at least once every month." "How should we observe it ?" "Keep the food restrictions, speak the truth, be kind to everyone, do japa, meditate and read books of wisdom." Some one put in : "Ma, why don't you say : 'I shall be with you ?' Mataji : "When this is not always so, it has to be specially mentioned. But where is He not ? This tiny child is with you at all times, even when you think there is nothing—even there." Mataji asked everyone to try and do some extra *sadhana* in memory of our pilgrimage to Suktal. The people present agreed to practice *Samyam* in their own homes or ashramas every full-moon day.

On the last day of the *Samyam Vrata*, the *Bhagavata Saptah* began and continued until November 22nd. It had been prepared carefully and with much love and devotion for the last so many months and therefore was singularly beautiful to the last detail. The Sanskrit recitation took place every morning in Sukdeva Temple while the Hindi explanations were expounded very lucidly by Swami Vishnu Ashram for about 6 hours daily, every morning and afternoon. The last two days of this function coincided with a *mela* on the occasion of the full-moon. Thousands of villagers arrived by bus and in bullock carts with their whole families, camping in the open spaces round about and bathing in the Ganges in the cold of the early morning. Many of the villagers, men, women and children crowded into the compound in hundreds

eagerly waiting for Mataji's *darshan*. They were rewarded at intervals by Mataji appearing in the French window of Her room upstairs and blessing them with Her radiant smile and also with a rain of *batasa* and other sweets. The reverence and devotion of these simple, unsophisticated people was extraordinarily moving.

Mataji stayed on at Suktal with a few of Her party until November 30th, when She proceeded to Bulandshahr at the invitation of Swami Vishnu Ashram. On December 4th, She alighted at Vrindaban, where She has remained upto date. It had originally been planned that She should go on to Hardwar at the end of December, but largely due to the coldwave, this programme was changed or rather postponed.

The Vrindaban Ashram is one of our largest and most beautiful ones, with its spacious grounds, its two temples, the large hall, the guest house and a number of houses and cottages, each nestling between shady trees and an abundance of flowers. All the buildings contain underground rooms which are specially suited for rigorous *sadhana* during all seasons.

Another *Bhagavata Saptah* was held at Vrindaban from December 13th to 20th, arranged by the widow and children of the Late Pundit Parasuram Dhammi, a great and most generous *bhakta* from Dehradun. The reading of the *Bhagavata* was followed by the recitation of 300 "Durga Saptatis for about 10 days. The crowds of visitors that had come

for the functions gradually dispersed and Mataji is now able to enjoy a comparatively quiet time. There is no fixed programme. Some building work is in progress in the Ashram grounds, which Mataji inspects at intervals. We find Her walking about in the sunny garden. She gives *darsana* in the open during the day and in Her room at night.

It behoves a human being to aspire solely at the realization of Truth. To be regularly engaged in the practices and techniques into which one has been initiated by the Guru is the path to Enlightenment. One's prayers and petitions should be addressed to God and to God alone.

"Ma"