

The Programme :- The programme of the Sanyam Saptah has been organised in such a way that the Vratis spend all their time in satsanga, meditation, japa and remembrance of God's name. According to Ma "Once the mind is devoted to God, Self-mastery is automatically gained."

On being questioned about Mahanisha dhyam Ma had said "There is a special power during the moments of confluence (sandhya) of two opposite currents. In the 24 hours there are four such points where coming and going meet. If someone practices his sadhana at Brahma Muhurta (early morning before dawn) at mid-day, at sunset and at mid-night, he will become aware of this special power current."

"The Brahma Muhurta is known as Amrita Bela (nectar time) because divine nectar is showered at that time. Therefore one should not sleep during the Brahma Muhurta but practice one's sadhana. Some people sleep till late in the morning. Thus they miss the chance of experiencing the sanctity of Amrita Bela."

Some aspirants perform their spiritual exercises at mid-night. You know that Lord Krishna was born at mid-night. The cult of Sakti worship is also practised at night because special power is received then. Yogis sleep in the day and keep awake at night. While sitting in meditation at midnight some yogis are blessed with visions. It is a wonderful injunction to sit down in the stillness of midnight and try to concentrate. I have heard that great mahatmas then graciously come forward and help the sadhaks. Some people of course get frightened as the ordinary person is not ready for such experiences. If one can ward off fear and sit down to meditate this special power will be felt."

"Some get so immersed in meditation that they do not notice if birds alight on their bodies. During collective meditation, in this very Sanyam Saptaha birds came and sat in the hall. Some mahatmas were so deeply absorbed in meditation that even when the birds released their excreta on their bodies they never felt anything. How free from external vibrations such a condition is !"

"It is necessary to regulate one's eating and sleeping. Some people lose their tempers if they don't get their meals in time. But here tempers have been dispensed with for the present. Food should be such that satwik qualities should be developed."

"By continuously living in this way for a prolonged period you will gradually become revealed as the embodiment of Truth and Knowledge."

"We observe 'maun' so that there should be no expectation, no other place for the mind to go, no alternative."

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS (regarding Asana, Japa and Dhyana)

ASANA - It is not correct to sit on the bare ground while practising **Japa** or **Dhyana**; one should be seated on a **Kusasana** or on some other covering spread on the floor. As regards the posture of the body one should follow the instruction of one's spiritual guide or **Guru**. In the absence of such instructions one may use the pose to which one is habituated. Those who have neither instructions from their **Guru**, nor are accustomed to any particular pose, should try to sit as comfortably as possible and then engage in spiritual exercises. But they have to be careful to keep the spinal column erect and not to let the head sway either to the left or to the right.

Persons engaged in spiritual exercises usually sit with their faces turned to the North or to the East. Those who are not actuated by worldly motives should generally face the North. In this respect too, one should follow one's **Guru's** instructions. In **Mataji's** presence, however these rules need not be observed.

JAPA - Those who are under the instructions of their spiritual guides or, of their own initiative are accustomed to perform **Japa** on a rosary of beads, may follow the practice. But anybody who wants to adopt this course for the first time should have his rosary properly consecrated. When counting the beads during **Japa**, it is necessary to see that neither finger nails nor finger joints are touched in the process and that as far as practicable, there is no gap between the fingers. If one cannot help yawning or sneezing during the **Japa**, it has to be begun anew. Those, who are in the habit of performing **Japa** in rhythm with their breathing may do so.

As regards the length of time to be devoted to **Japa**, one should make a formal resolve beforehand. If desired the resolve may cover the whole of the week, but it must be remembered that any falling off from it is considered an offence. It is permissible to make the resolve from day to day. On conclusion of the **Japa** one should dedicate the result to the **Guru**, the **Istha** or **God**. This is to be repeated as often as **Japa** is practised. Nobody should engaged in **Japa** with an eye to worldly benefit. It is important to bear in mind that **Japa** is done solely for the sake of **God**.

During the Sanyam Saptaha the number counted during Japa should not be less than five thousand per day. If those who have to recite lengthy Mantra like the Gayatri, and are unable to complete the requisite number of five thousand, they should try to do their best to approximate it. Those who have been initiated should of course practise the Mantra received from their Guru; others may choose any name of God they like best.

DHYANA - Regarding Dhyana also one's Guru's instructions should be carried out. In the absence of such instructions one should concentrate on the Deity whose name is being repeated or else on pure Light, either in the heart or between the two eyebrows or in some other centre. Fixing the mind on the sound of the Mantra amounts to Dhyana. In this case the contemplation of a form is not necessary.

When sitting for Japa or Dhyana one should first of all endeavour to cleanse one's mind of all impure thoughts and think of oneself as pure and divine, engaged in the service of God, having no time to indulge in other thoughts. An effort has to be made to suppress anything that may bubble up in one's mind due to force of habit. One should feel that one is in the Presence of God, who is all-transcending, all-pervading and all-seeing, and try to realise Him, having firm faith in His Grace. This is the attitude to be constantly cherished in one's heart.

Mother says - While engaged in Dhyana or Japa in a spiritual gathering one must strictly avoid making signs and gestures with one's eyes or hands. During Satsang one's mind should be occupied exclusively with spiritual things. Japa and Dhyana have to be practised according to the Guru's Instructions; when adopting a new method one should abide by the rules pertaining thereto. At the time of Mouna, silence will of course be observed; even at other times one should speak in case of necessity. Everybody should be careful not to talk loudly and to see that the calm serenity of the assembly is not disturbed in any way.

Those who wish to join the spiritual congregation should endeavour to follow the above rules as far as practicable.

Other Restrictions, rules and regulations are as follows :-

1. No drinking of tea, coffee or any intoxicant.
2. No chewing of betel leaves, smoking cigarettes etc.
3. No oiling of hair or cutting or manicuring of nails.
4. Beddings etc. used should be as simple as possible in conformity with the spirit of the Sanyam Mahavrata.

THE DIET FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

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

Class A

1 st day	-	Water (Ganga or Jamuna)
2nd day	-	Anandamayee Khichuri (i.e. rice boiled with ghee and vegetables).
3rd day	-	Vegetables & Payphala
* (Ekadashi)		
4th day	-	Khichuri (i.e. rice boiled with pulses, ghee and vegetables).
5th day	-	Dalia boiled in milk (i.e. wheat porridge) now changed to Anandamayee Khichuri.
6th day	-	Khichuri.
7th day	-	Water (Ganga or Jamuna)
8th day	-	Bhandara

Class B

Mid day	-	Same as in class A excepting:- 7th day - Phulka and Vegetables.
Night	-	Milk (1½ powa or 375 ml.).
NB.	-	<i>Phulka and Vegetables may be supplied on other days on medical grounds only, if previous notice is given.</i> <i>* 11 th day from New Moon</i>

*Previously there was Class C which has now been withdrawn.
Persons taking diet of either class may take water freely as they require.*

MATRI VANI ON SANYAM

"Since you are living the lives of Sadhus you should try to ignore the cold as much as possible. If one moves about and takes exercise one feels it rather less. By leading a strictly regulated life one becomes firmly anchored on the spiritual path and then one does not have to suffer so much. You might exert yourself a little more in this direction. If the cold is extreme do not bathe early in the morning, but later in the day; on rising from sleep change your clothes, sprinkle some Ganges water on your body and then proceed with your morning worship. Brahmacharis must completely shun sarcasm and frivolous jokes." It is therefore important to observe silence as much as possible. Brahmacharis are forbidden to sleep during the day. Rising early, they should take pains not to fall asleep during the day. If for a prolonged period of time one makes a special effort in this direction, the habit will be established. Do not lose courage and be persevering in your sadhana."

"The capacity for uninterrupted Sadhana is also potentially in oneself : It will be discovered by wise discrimination. One should continuously be immersed in the particular Sadhana which will enable one to become possessed of the Supreme Treasure which is by its very nature one's own."

In a Sanyam Saptah held in Vrindavan from November many interesting questions were put up to Ma.

One of them was "Can God be realised without suffering ?" How ? Mataji replied "To realise God is a different matter. "

"One has no right to make the body, suffer under any condition. There is a reason for this. To whom does the body belong ? He whose body it is, who has created the body, who has manifested in that shape, has given it to you that you may do service."

"The body is God's dwelling place. Keep your body clean, keep it pure, keep it undefiled. This is what you have to do..... Regard the body as a temple of God."

"Seen from a certain position there is a veil of ignorance, a screen that hides him. In order to remove that veil you have to scrub the temple clean, purify it. The practice that will cleanse your body is your duty.

"What happens to the man who is bent on sense of enjoyment ? It acts as a slow poison : step by step it takes him towards death and he leaves with a return ticket to come back to this world..... to ful-

fil his longings..... God has made certain laws." So long as you go on pursuing the objects of the senses you can never be released from the wheel of birth and death.

"But if you proceed in the other direction, if having stilled with great patience and endurance the agitation of the senses you take to the path of 'Who am I' 'From where have I come?' So as to remove the veil of ignorance, then the realisation of your immortality will dawn. The problem of birth and death will disappear and death will die".

"Therefore, in order to reveal your immortality, to bring to light that you are the offspring of the immortal, that you are deathless in essence — you are practising sadhna and are all taking part in the Sanyam Vrata.

Why is Sanyam essential ?

"Without leading a life of restraint the road to God realisation does not open out when your desires are thwarted when you are obstructed in what you want to do, then these enemies (egoism, passion, desires) come to the forefront and assert themselves. Even against your better judgement and will, they make their appearance. When this happens you feel remorseful and unhappy. Through aversions and dislikes also these enemies make their appearance. All this is but natural in the life of man, it is the usual thing with everyone."

"For this reason if the understanding dawns on the aspirant that the practice he does for the sake of God is spoiled by giving way to the promptings of these enemies, and he conceives the desire to aspire after Supreme Knowledge (Brahmavidya) then what is his endeavour? To lead a restrained disciplined life. When he does not abstain from self indulgence what happens ? Such people come and participate in the Sanyam Vrata who are used to catering to the appetites of their senses, to behave as they feel like, to say what they please, to act according to their whims, to give full freedom to the ego. Their habit has been to eat what they fancy, to put on the clothes they feel like wearing, to behave according to their own sweet will. They have become accustomed to this kind of life. On no account are they prepared to forgo their worldly comforts. Driven as they are by desires for comforts and enjoyment, rather than aspiring after Yoga, it is but natural that they should experience back ache, pain in their legs, a burning sensation in the body, great restlessness of the mind. This is what one hears. Many have told this body about these things."

"You lack practice, you are not used to meditating. Consequently, when you are trying to practice Yoga, to realise that you are eternally united to Reality, that you are a Yogi, joined indissolubly to God, that you are a supremely great Sadhaka, the offspring of a Rishi, that rishihood is within you - when your mind turns in that direction and you are attempting to sit still, then the habit that you have formed of doing what you please will pull you and make you feel ill at ease."

"Note this carefully, when you asked whether it is necessary to inflict suffering on the body in order to find God, you should remember that what seems painful to you is endured in order to find the Beloved."

"Why do we experience pain and suffering, sorrow and trouble? Because we have not yet found the Beloved- Him who is eternal fountain of all goodness and well being, who is all merciful and gracious, we are not experiencing Him as such. If those who are sitting here felt desperately eager for the bliss of God-Realisation they would not feel what you call suffering, the sensation of physical discomfort or pain. To inflict suffering on the body is not right."

"To sit down comfortably and indulge in easy familiar talk will nourish one's personal desire and ego. Now discover for yourself where the suffering lies. If it were really irksome you would not come and sit here."

"You come because you do aspire after God Realisation each according to his own line of approach. You long for his touch, His revelation, His vision; that is why you have taken recourse to the Sanyam Vrata. Now say how there is suffering or hardship?"

Ma further stated

"Just as it is right to perform Sanyam Vrata, without observing Sanyam Vrata you will never attain supreme peace. He is responsible for whatever comes to pass. If he puts an impediment in your way, this also is as it should be. And if He grants you success, that again is proper"

"You cannot get peace of mind by indulging in the pleasures of this world, by eating and drinking by merely catering to your senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and so forth. If you want to calm your mind-child then take recourse to Satsang. The Mahatmas provide you with counsel on how to realise your trueself. Go forward in the company of Him alone. Choose the company of the travellers on the path, that is associate with Mahatmas - seek Satsanga."

LIST OF SANYAM MAHAVRATAS

1 st	6th Aug. '52	Varanasi (Benaras)
2nd	30th Jan. - 7th Feb. '53	Vindhyachal
3rd	14th Nov. '53	Ballygunge Calcutta
4th	18th - 24th Nov. '54	Juhu, Bombay
5th	22nd - 28th Nov. '55	Kali Bari, New Delhi
6th	12th - 18th Nov. '56	Sapt Rishi Ashram, Haridwar
7th	20th Nov. '57	New Delhi Ashram
8th	13th Nov. '58	Kanpur on invitation of Shri Jaipuria
9th	15th - 22nd Apr. '59	Ramnagar, Rishikesh
10th	5th - 14th Nov. '59	Agarpara Ashram, Calcutta
11th	21 st - 27th Oct. '60	Naimisharanya
12th	9th - 15th Nov. '61	Shuktal
13th	5th - 11th Nov. '62	Pilani-on invitation of Shri J.D. Birla
14th	23rd - 29th Nov. '63	Ahmedabad on invitation of family of Late Shri Kantibhai Munshaw
15th	11 th - 18th Nov. '64	Vrindavan Ashram
16th	1st - 7th Nov. '65	Hazaribagh - on invitation of Shri Jagannath Rai
17th	20th - 26th Nov. '66	Vrindavan Ashram - Sponsored by Maharaja Bhavnagar
18th	9th - 15th Nov. '67	Vrindavan - sponsored by Shri Suresh and Baby Mahendra.
19th	29th Oct. - 4th Nov. '68	Dehradun - on invitation of Shri M.L. Khaitan & Raja behn.
20th	17th - 23rd Nov. '69	Vrindavan Ashram
21st	4th - 10th Nov. '70	Shuktal on kind invitation of Shri 108 Vishnu Ashram Ji
22nd	26th Oct. - 1 st Nov. '71	Vrindavan Ashram
23rd	11 th - 18th Nov. '72	Haridwar - On invitation of Shri 108 Swami Brahmanandji at Surat Giri Bungalow.
24th	3rd - 10th Nov. '73	Vrindavan Ashram
25th	22nd - 26th Nov. '74	Ramtirth Ashram Dehradun on kind invitation of Shri Govind Prakash Ji

26th	10th Nov. '75	Kanpur on kind invitation of Shri S.R- Jaipuria.
27th	30th Oct. - 6th Nov. '76	Gondel - On kind invitation of Laxmibai of Gondel.
28th	18th Nov. '77	Badrikashram - On kind invitation of Shri 108 Swami Brahmanandji
29th	7th - 14th Nov. '78	Nadiad - On kind invitation of Sant Maharaj.
30th	28th Oct. - 4th Nov. '79	Kurukshetra - On kind invitation of Mahant Ganeshanandji.
31st	15th - 22nd Nov. 1980	Rishikesh Kailash Ashram - On the invitation of 108 Swami Vidyanandji Maharaj.
32nd	4th - 11th Nov. '81	Kankhal Ashram
33-49th		All held in Kankhal Ashram.

HISTORICAL BACK GROUND

People often say to Mother : "You ask us to live in the constant remembrance of God, to aspire to Self-realisation ; but our worldly duties and our families keep us busy all day long. Even if we set apart a few minutes every morning and evening for the thought of God, for the rest of the day we are immersed in our work, over-powered by our habits, our desires and cares. What are we to do ?"

Mother has frequently been heard to reply something like this : "All right, if your time is taken up by your every day occupations and thoughts, at least you can set apart certain days and dedicate them entirely to the "Supreme Quest", If possible let the members of a family co-operate and devise together the programme for those special days, which may be observed once or twice a year, once or twice a month, or better still once or twice a week. Decide that on those days at least you will strictly speak the truth, avoid all gossip and unnecessary talk keep Brahmacharya, forgo your favourite foods and drinks and live on simple moderate diet. Let the thought of God be with you all the time, read the "Gita" or some other sacred text, seek the company of sages and saints, do your work as a service to God, be in harmony with all, do not quarrel with anyone.

If on such a day you get even a slight touch of Him, who is your Self, you will begin to hanker after His constant presence, the thought of God will be with you more and more along with your outer activities and gradually your life will be changed.

Out of this originated the idea of 'Sanyam Vrata' to be organized by the 'Sangha'. Our President, Raja Durga Singh of Solan (Yogi Bhai), suggested that as many as possible might join together at set intervals for a week of intense aspiration and rigorous self-discipline in the presence of Mother. For, as Sri Krishnanand Avadhutji said in one of his talks : "While it is difficult for the sadhaka to live up to resolve when left to himself, literally nothing is impossible in the presence of Mother. Have firm faith in Mother's Grace."

The Raja of Solan submitted his proposal to Mother, and after praying for Her blessing and Her presence on the occasion. The date and place of our first gathering were fixed in due consultation with Mother and Gurupriya Devi.