

Ananda Varta

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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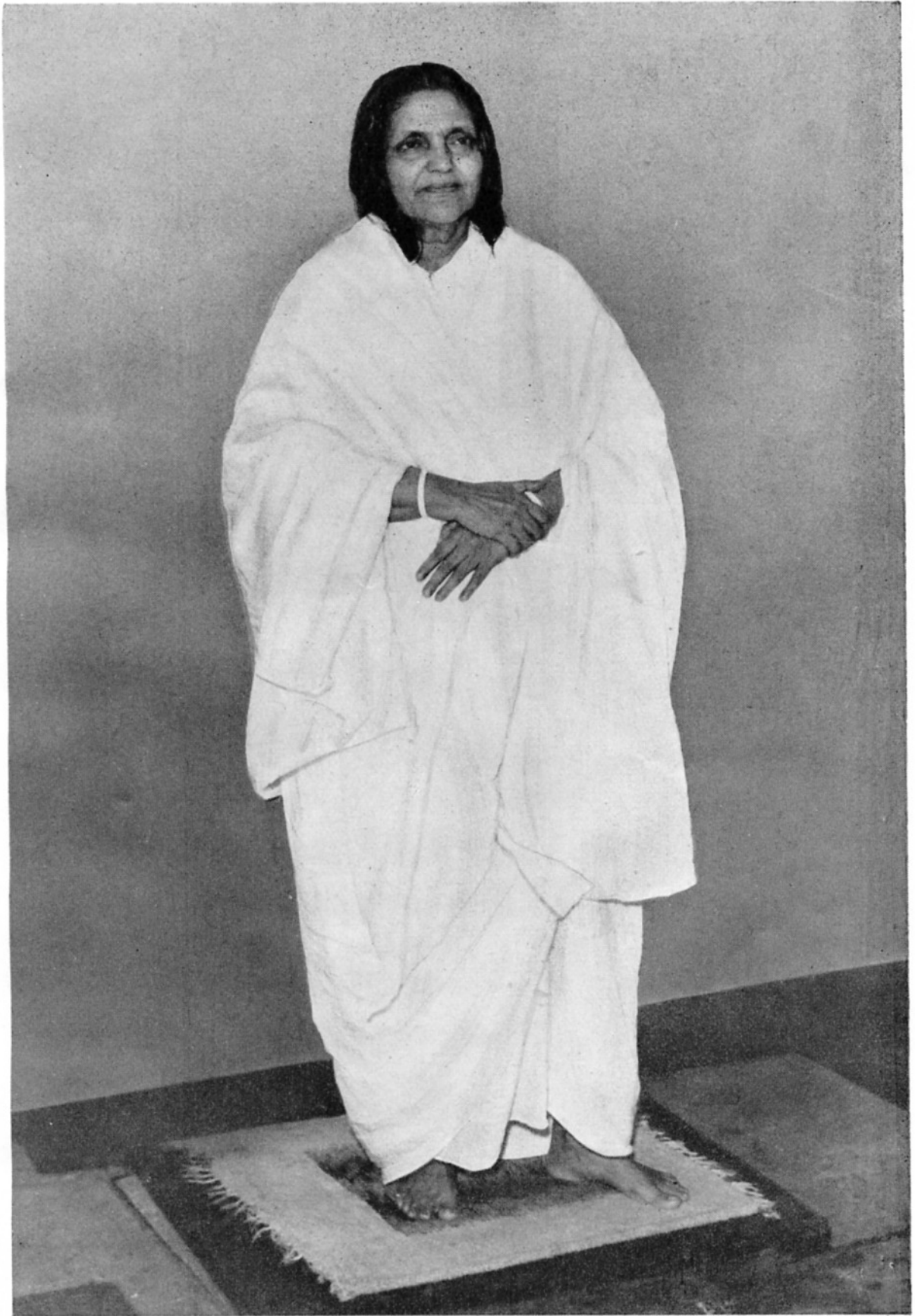
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The ONE who is the Eternal, the Ātman,

He Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,

He is all in all, He alone is.

MATRI VANH

Leaving one's home one has to go forth and tread the path—then only will one come to know all about that path.

• • •

HE is the destroyer of all sorrow. Try to invoke Him at all times: contemplate Him alone, pray to Him, bow down, dedicating your whole being at His Feet. He is the Fountain of Goodness, Peace itself, all Bliss—and what else? Verily, the life of your life, the SELF.

• • •

At the root of the action of the three attributes of Nature—*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*—that are always in wavelike motion, lies but the primeval life force (*prāṇa*)

• • •

Out of one individual many individuals arise : this is the current of individual development. Again, it is the One Lord (*Iśvara*) who has divided Himself and is present in all sentient beings. This is why it is said : "Wherever a living being (*jiva*) is, there is *Siva* (God)"

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Your body, which is part of and depending on this illusory world, is on the other hand the expression of a hidden inner process. You are yourself the many, appearing in various aspects, forms and modes. Each one of them exists in fact to fulfil a particular need. Yours is the give and take of the universe, yours the need and yet you yourself are the fulfilment, that hidden inner process is generated by you.

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Someone asked Mataji : "Have you seen God ?" Mataji replied without the slightest hesitation : "Why, indeed, He is always visible. Yet again, who sees whom since all are He ? In very truth, nothing exists apart from God"

Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

(Translated by Atmananda)

(9)

Ranchi Ashram,
22nd May, 1958.

Question : Is this universe an expression of rhythm ?

Mataji : It is and it is not, depending on one's angle of vision.

Question : Is it the aim of a *sādhaka* to bring the rhythm of his individual life in harmony with the universal rhythm ?

Mataji : His aim is to realise that it is in fact part of the universal rhythm.

Question : How does the teaching of *Bhagavad Gītā* agree with that of the *Chandi* ? The *Gītā* teaches renunciation, while the *Chandi* advocates prayer.

Mataji : The prayer that the *Chandi* advocates is for the ultimate Good. One prays to the World-Mother for the

• *Chandi* or *Durga Saptā Sati* is a work in praise of Devi, the Supreme Energy (*Sakti*) of the universe.

essence of things, for the Supreme Treasure, for that which, when it is obtained the question of receiving or not receiving has ceased to exist. Moreover, at the early stages it is necessary for the aspirant to have his worldly wants fulfilled. Gradually prayer for the Supreme Wealth awakens in him.

Question : So then the Great Mother gives, while the Heavenly Father urges us to renounce ?

Mataji : 'Mother' means Being (*satta*) conceived as a woman. Being means Self (*ātma*), which is neither male nor female.

Question : Is there a mediator between the individual and God

Mataji : In any way you put it, it is all right. Whatever method the Guru indicates is right for that particular person.

Question : Have the miraculous stories in the *Purānas* any real significance ?

Mataji : Everything is possible. Similar happenings as in the *Purānic* age may occur even now.

Question : What evidence is there to prove that the impossible can become possible ?

Mataji : If the impossible were not possible, how could this question arise at all ? *There*, everything is possible

from the worldly point of view one distinguishes between the possible and the impossible. Sometimes you definitely decide to accomplish some particular work, yet by the play of *maya* it is made impossible. But where *Iśvara* (the Lord of the Universe) is concerned, this is not so.

Question : Can nothing be called false or illusory ?

Mataji : There is the false and there is the real. The Supreme truth, however, is that the One alone exists in all forms and beyond form, call Him manifested or unmanifested.

Question : How can everything become possible ?

Mataji : Put on the spectacles of wisdom and you will be able to see this for yourself.

Question : Why is the individual born into this world ?

Mataji : To fulfil his own desires, to experience happiness and sorrow.

Question : Is it not possible to go beyond desire and experience

Mataji : If everything is possible, why should not this be possible as well ?

Question : Is there any shortcut towards this goal ?

Mataji : By the grace of God such a short cut may sometimes be found.

Question : What necessity is there for the *Paramātmā* to take on the guise of the individual, when the individual has to return again to the *Paramātmā* ?

Matiji : It is this pleasure. You speak of the whimsical *Sankarā**, of the playful *Bhagavant†*,—the play is his delight.

Question : His delight is pain and trouble for us.

Matiji : Where the sense of I and mine, you and yours, he and his is, in other words, where distinctions are, there is misery and distress.

Question : How can we get rid of the ego with its sense of I and mine ?

Matiji : There is a path for everyone. Take one of them and adhere to it.

Question : Are those also reborn who do not believe in rebirth ?

Matiji : *Sādhana* is necessary because there is belief and disbelief. Yet the law will act, whether you believe in it or not.

Question : What actually do you call faith ?

Matiji : When breathing and doubt have ceased there

* A name of *Śiva*.

† The conception of God of the *Vaiṣṇavas*.

is real faith*. There are two kinds of faith, namely blind faith and real faith. Real faith that is aroused by the touch of an Omniscient Being does not depend on anything. One who has awakened to Pure Consciousness makes you conscious. But blind faith, the faith of the mind is unripe and can be shattered. All the same, real and genuine faith quite often develops gradually out of blind faith. To state an example : A certain *szdhu* had a disciple who was a thief. He would tell lies, since this suited his convenience, and refused to obey his Guru who bade him to speak the truth. One day, the Guru asked him to follow his Guru's orders in blind faith for a certain number of days at least, and be completely truthful. The disciple agreed. One night he broke into the *Raja's* palace and on being caught, spoke the exact truth. The *Raja* was so impressed by his frankness that he not only let him off, but provided for him and his family, so that he was enabled to give up both stealing and telling lies. In this way he gained real faith in truthfulness.

* A play upon words. *Vis'vas* means 'faith', *s'vas* 'breath,' the prefix *vi* sometimes 'without'.

Sri Thiruppan Alvar

T. KRISHNAJI, M. A., B. L.

The Alvars were the devotees or mystics of South Indian Vaishnavism. All the Alvars lived between the 2nd to 8th Centuries. According to the traditional order they are: 1. Poyge Alvar, 2. Bhutat Alvar, 3. Pey Alvar, 4. Thirumalisa Alvar, 5. Nammalvar, 6. Madhura Kavi, 7. Peria Alvar, 8. Andal, 9. Kulasekhara, 10. Thondaradippodi, 11. Thiruppan Alvar, 12. Thirumangai Alvar. Thiruppan Alvar lived in the 7th century A. D. The Alvars preceded the first Vaishnava Acharya Sri Nāthamuni. Devotees of God are a class by themselves. Caste, learning, wealth etc. mean nothing to them since they care for God only. We find among the Alvars men belonging to all castes, and also women and outcasts. Thiruppan Alvar himself belonged to the *panchama* or *harijan* class.

In Tamil the word *thiru* means Sri, and the word *pan*, a minstrel. Thiruppan Alvar was a minstrel of Sri Ranganatha of Srirangam. Srirangam is the spiritual centre of *Vaishnava* religion and mysticism. The *Bhagavat Purana* says "*Sri Rangakyam maha punyam yatra sannihito Hari.*" In the history of a *S'iva* mysticism and the lives of Nayanmars, Chidambara is a great spiritual centre. Maharashtra mysticism centres round Pandaripur. The famous Harijan Saiva saint Nandanar, by the grace of God *S'iva*, entered the sanctum

sanctorum of the Chidambaram temple and had the unique experience of merging with *S'iva*. Thiruppan Alvar, a Harijan *Vaiṣṇvite* saint, had a similar divine experience of merging into God Ranganatha.

Thiruppan Alvar was a foundling, brought up by a Harijan couple, living at Urayur, a town 2 or 3 miles from Srirangam. He grew up in devotion to God Sri Ranganatha and spent his time on the river bank, singing the name and glories of Sri Ranga to the tune of his lyre. Before dawn, he swept the roads leading to the temple in a spirit of holy service. Often he went into trance and became absorbed in divine consciousness. He pined to have *darsana* of Sri Ranganatha, but he knew that as a *harijan* he was not allowed to enter the temple. The melodious songs of the Alvar greeted God Ranganatha and Sri Lakshmi Devi. Once goddess Lakshmi, the fountain of kindness and grace, pleaded with Sri Ranganatha to bestow His Grace on His devotee Thiruppan. Sri Ranganatha is ever ready to lavish his grace on His devotees.

It is customary for the temple priests to fetch water from the river Kaveri for the temple ablutions. One early morning before dawn, the priests of the temple, led by the high priest Loka Saranga Muni, were carrying water from the river and on their way saw Thiruppan Alvar. They beckoned and shouted to him to move out of their way. Thiruppan was engrossed in divine contemplation and so did not hear the calls of the priests. One of them pelted a stone at him. It hit him on the head and blood flowed from the wound. The Alvar silently went to his quarters and sang his prayers

