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English Section

Seventeenth Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata

(Devotional Week)

We have great pleasure to announce that the 17th *Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata,* organised by Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha will be held this year from 20th to 26th November at Mata Anandamayee Ashram, Vrindaban.

The aim of the *Saptaha* is the realisation of one's own Self and the Supreme object of one's love. By observing the vows of truthfulness, continence and non-violence during the period one should try to further one's spiritual development. Such observance, it is hoped, will help the spiritual advancement of all concerned.

Mother is expected to be present in Vrindaban during the period.

Those who are unable to participate in the function at Vrindaban may follow the programme in any of our Ashrams, or in some sacred place, or in their respective homes, according to their convenience.

DURGA SINGH
(Raja of Baghat)
President
Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

Note:—

1. Those who intend to participate in the function in the Ashram at Vrindaban are requested to send an intimation by the Second week of November at the latest to :

Swami Paramananda
Mata Anandamayee Ashram
P.O VRINDABAN, MATHURA

2. There is no restriction to any one, even if he cannot participate in the entire programme of the function, joining the *Sat-Sang* subject to its rules of discipline.

—Vrindaban, September, 1966.

Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,
so there is also a door to Knowledge.

MATRI VANI

It is necessary to try and dedicate every action of one's life to Him. You are indeed a tool in His hands and therefore whatever is being done by you must be consecrated to Him. If you continue to do this, you will gradually come to feel : how can I offer such hideous things as greed, anger, possessiveness, etc. to Him who is so very dear to me, who is my own ? Does one give anything undesirable to one's beloved ? By thinking in this strain one will become incapable of engaging in anything that is not impeccable. Then, when you have poured out at His feet every bit of the strength and capacity that you possess, so that nothing remains that you may call your own, do you know what He does at this blessed moment ? He makes your littleness whole. Then nothing at all is left to be desired or fulfilled. At the instant in which your dedication becomes complete, at that very instant that which is eternally revealed, unimpaired perfection flashes into being.

* * *

The fact that you are aware of your incapacity to concentrate on God's name is also His grace. Even though not interested take the name as a medicine. This also will have a good result. You will improve. God's name is not like worldly medicine that acts at times and at other times fails ; God's name invariably bears fruit. This is why it is said, either get yourself admitted into the hospital, take the medicine prescribed by the doctor, regulate your diet and your illness will be cured. Or use the doctor's medicine and diet while remaining at home. That is to say, either

renounce everything and seek refuge solely in His name, or else, while remaining with your family, act according to your Guru's instructions and live a regulated life. Thereby also you may hope to get rid of your disease. Who ever likes to take injections ? Yet they are beneficient. Which child enjoys learning to read ? All the same, by studying regularly with the assistance of one's parents and teachers one becomes an educated person. This is where learning is concerned that serves worldly ends. Again, if you can acquire *brahmavidyā*, the Knowledge of Reality, there is hope of your recovering Supreme Wealth. What is Supreme Wealth ? None but God Himself.

* * *

It you can love God there will be no more sorrow. Even the feeling of separation from Him is joy. It is because of your love for Him that you are aware of the anguish of being apart. Only the man in whom God abides in a very special way is capable of this painful awareness (*viraha*) of separation from Him.

Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

Recorded by PROFESSOR B. GANGULI

(*Translated from Bengali*)

Ranchi Ashram, May 30th, 1965.

Questions : Are Kali, Durga, Chandi, Krishna distinct from one another or one ? If they are one, why then have they different forms ?

Mataji : God is indeed one. Just as man is one but of different forms. Thus Kali, Krishna and so forth are one as the *Brahman*, but where outer manifestation (*Śakti*) comes in, they are different. Men vary in character and temperament and therefore manifest in different shapes. By His grace God shows you the particular form under which you will realize Him. But in essence God is one. There is only one *Ātmā*—with form and formless—both are but the *Ātmā*. With form (*sākāra*) means He Himself as Form. Just as water and ice are eternally of one substance, even so God Himself appears in various shapes, yet He is one. On the plane of action He appears divided, as the *Ātmā* He is one without a second.

Question : If the Self is one, why then is the sorrow of one man not felt by the others ?

Mataji : Only while there is the sense of separation this is so. So long as there are others, experience is divided. But when there is no more question of difference, then the sorrow of all will be felt as one's own. When the distinction between knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower has been obliterated, oneness is realized. Until then experience varies for each individual. What you receive depends on your attitude of mind. That which is in constant flux is called the world. And what is bound is called the individual. In the world of individuals one reaps as one sows. How wonderful is God's dispensation ! He plays in an infinite variety of shapes and forms.

Question : What actually is a festival (*utsava*) ?

Mataji : Nārāyaṇa, what according to the *Śāstras* is a festival ?

Nārāyana Swāmī : There are various kinds of festivals, such as a birthday celebration, the festival of Durga, a wedding and so on. The manifestation of joy created by a reunion of people is a festival. A function held in order to call forth this joy is styled festival.

Mataji : Where there is no more question of festival or function, there is the *purnāhuti* (final offering) of a festival and therefore it is called supreme festival.

Question : At what level does a festival become more than a rite ?

Mataji : Where levels are, the question has not been solved. When questions cannot possibly arise anymore, then ! Where there is no more difference between diving deep and floating on the surface, where there is only one constant state.

Question : Are spiritual experience (*anubhāva*) and remembrance the same ?

Mataji : These two different words express two different states. When remembrance (*smriti*) is roused, the question of forgetfulness does no longer exist. Once remembrance is awakened, forgetfulness cannot arise, because forgetfulness is due to ignorance while remembrance is due to Knowledge. When supreme remembrance awakens, the experience and the experiencer merge into one. To be roused to the remembrance : I am eternal and indivisible is indeed called supreme remembrance. Then divided experience ceases—in the realization of supreme Knowledge the threefold division of knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower is annihilated.

Nārāyana Swāmī : Ma, today it was discussed with Sri Gopinath Kaviraj, how while the child is in its mother's

womb it has knowledge of its true being, but the moment it sees the light of day, forgetfulness supervenes. How is it that at the moment of birth breathing becomes divided into four parts ?

Mataji : It is for you to know what your *Śāstras* say. This body speaks in its own higgledy-piggledy way. When, the other day, I went for a drive, air was pumped into the tube of a wheel. When there was no air in it, the tube seemed shrunk, as if divided into bits, but when it was blown up again it became round and everywhere equally full of air. Similarly, by practising God's name, kirtan, meditation and so forth, in the case of some aspirants, *prāṇāyama* comes about of itself and the body suddenly trembles and becomes straightened ; a divine power begins to have its play and yogic postures, etc, manifest spontaneously. When this condition becomes permanent, the breath is no longer divided into four parts, everything merges into one undisturbed bliss, and Knowledge is awakened.

Not only by *haṭhayoga* and similar kinds of *tapasyā* can this be accomplished, but also by the practice of the name of Hari. The Name is itself God. One should give serious attention to God's name. By continuous *kirtan* of '*Hari bol*' other mantras also are uttered spontaneously and one's manner of sitting changes. When this body played the play of *sādhana*, something like this happened. When bhakti arises, a purified body may—nay, does have a similar experience. If one proceeds exactly according to the rules, the body will certainly experience vibration and shivering. Thereupon follow other divine realizations. The subtle *nādis* of the body will not each be separate anymore, one force will flow through all of them. So as to break all bondage, the knots of the heart will open automatically, each in the way that is needed. No matter what line of sādhana you may have adopted, when the 'switch' is pressed at the *mūlādhāra*, there will first of all be vibration and shivering

and then visions of light may be seen and divine sounds of various kinds heard.

While the child is in its mother's womb, its inner power is united with that of his mother and thus there is knowledge of Reality. By the *yogas* of meditation or inquiry or by *krīyāyoga*, and other *yogas* one must again reach the state of the child in its mother's womb. The *sādhaka*, the bhakta, the *yogi* must become the child-yogi in the womb of the Divine Mother. Then the breath will not be cut up anymore. All along there will be only one goal, one aspiration, one inner experience, one Realization.

No matter from what point the wrinkled tube may be filled, it will become straightened and equally full of air in all its parts. When by practising *prāṇāyama*, *kirtana*, meditation in the right manner the mind becomes one-pointed, body and life-force are steadied, or one may also put it the other way round and say, when the movement of the life-force is stilled, the mind becomes one-pointed, Then the life-force flows evenly through the *sushumna nādi*. At that moment remembrance is awakened, the state of Knowledge is achieved.

While in its mother's womb, the individual has no connection with the outer world ; there is thus no impediment and the blood circulation is not conditioned by the functioning of the breath but evenly flows straight in and out of the mother's blood stream. By the sight of outer things and by breathing the outer air, man's concentration is destroyed and the remembrance of his true nature vanishes. It is necessary for the aspirant to hide himself from the obstacles of the outer world by entering the Divine Mother's womb in the cave of his own heart. Thereby lost remembrance will be restored. Then the Mother will take on Herself all his burdens.

Today rather much has been disclosed by this body, even though the secret has been merely hinted at in broad outlines. He who is ready for it will understand it rightly.

From the Diary of a European

Melita Maschmann

(*Translated from German*)

Varanasi, November 1963.

Mataji does not assume the role of a Guru for anyone, in any case not in the formal sense. She does not give initiation and therefore, in the strict sense of the word, has also no disciples. But she does not contradict if someone declares : "I see in you my Guru." Many of her friends and followers have taken *dīkṣa* (initiation) from Didima, Mataji's mother. Sometimes in the early morning, I see Didima sit in a corner of the Ashram temple, giving instructions to a disciple. The disciples are mostly young men. They sit at Didima's feet and listen intently to the penetrating whispers of their master.

The other day I asked someone why Mataji did not herself give initiation. I do not know whether the reply covered the most important reason. It was as follows : "Where Mataji dwells, namely in the oneness of the *Brahman*, the distinction between Guru and disciple does not exist anymore. The relationship between Master and pupil still belongs to the realm in which we think there is duality."

In the records about Mataji's sayings, I find the following : "Since this body has no personal will and no fixed ideas or plans, there can also not be any such thing as initiation for it. On occasions *mantras* are suddenly pronounced by this mouth. It may then happen that someone hears these *mantras* and makes use of them. That is to say he adopts the *mantra* and considers himself as initiated, although no initiation has been intended or taken place. It even happened at times that people who knew very little about me, were convinced that everything had been prepar-

ed beforehand. Actually there was nothing of the sort. Only what is meant to be, comes about."

As to my relationship with Mataji : I feel, in her I have found the most important 'partner' of my life. Yet I cannot talk to her directly about anything essential. It is a relationship which has to forgo almost hundred percent the exchange with the help of words. For what are conversations through the mediation of an interpreter ? A miserable makeshift. Even if the interpreter is good. How much misunderstanding will not be caused by translation. All subtleties are lost at any rate. Because English is, for my translator as well as for me, a foreign language. Thus it may be said that I am dumb for Mataji and Mataji is dumb for me. Sometimes this is intensely painful to me, at other times I feel that it is good and salutary. In any case, that I am unable to talk to her is surely beneficial. To be for once entirely reduced to what one is without the masquerade of speech. Not that Mataji could be deceived by beautiful phrases ! But I could deceive myself through my words. How much does one not conceal by chattering, without noticing how superficial one is. To be forced to renounce language is healthy asceticism, at least for a time. We owe almost all our deceptions and lies to our dexterity in the use of words.

However, this is only one side of the medal. For on the other hand, I receive here an impressive lesson about the divinity of the word. "In the beginning was the word"— this has its counterpart in Hindu philosophy : the *Śabda Brahman*, explained by Sri Gopinath Kaviraj as follows : "*Śabda Brahman* is the eternal sound that is the first manifestation of the Supreme Reality and lies at the root of all subsequent creation." (Not by mistake does it say 'is' instead of 'was', and 'lies' instead of 'lay'. For the Hindu, creation, preservation and destruction are processes going on side by side eternally without beginning or end). The divinity is not only invoked but actually represented by the

word. By the *mantra* divine power can be transferred from the Master to the pupil. Not the knowledge expressed by the ideological meaning of the *mantra*, but the spiritual power inherent in the word itself is communicated to the disciple. To this category belongs also the mystic sound embodiment of the Supreme Reality (the Brahman) in the syllable '*Om*'.

* * *

Something which I can note in my diary really only with three crosses (the crosses that the illiterate puts instead of his name, because he has not learnt to write it) : Nowadays it, at times, overwhelms me, in the street, or while sitting here in the Ashram, or while dressing, or in the middle of the night. I then wake up suddenly and it is there : A joy without rhyme or reason, with no content except the Name of the Nameless ; annulling all physical limitations, extinguishing all desire. A joy that radiates by its own light. One single jubilant affirmation. Unconditional consent, embracing in the Now everything that ever was or will be.

* * *

Since we have come to Varanasi, Mataji has stayed in five different rooms. Or, may be, even more than five without my noticing it. In this number rooms in Gangadi's Ashram and in her brother's house are also included. Isn't it strange ? For the last forty years she has travelled the length and breadth of the country. Occasionally, but only very rarely, as for instance when she falls ill, does she remain in one place for several months. But even while in the same place or at the same Ashram she changes her roooms. Yet she never gives the impression of restlessness. On the contrary everywhere she rests equally well. I have now seen, her in seven different rooms and always had the feeling that it was the same room. Of course, all these rooms have some-

thing in common : their simplicity. They contain hardly anything except the couch on which Mataji sits in the day and sleeps in the night. All the same, they are distinct from one another. Windows and doors are situated differently, the couch is placed in various ways, occasionally there is a shelf or a cupboard

How we hesitate to suggest a change of residence to a person aged nearly 70 ! And how often do these 'old trees' not actually perish due to such a belated transplantation. But Mataji's detachment is complete. There is no room, no house, no street, no town, no landscape that she would prefer to any other. She never has to tear herself away, since she never binds herself to anything. This holds good for rooms and people as for anything else. But it does not mean that she is equally aloof from everything, rather is she everywhere equally at home.

This is an actual fact. When we arrived here she went all over the Ashram, looking radiant. I had a similar impression when watching her after her arrival in Kishenpur last year. She slips into the constantly changing localities of her environment as one slips into a dress that one likes especially but has not worn for a while. It fits her as if made to measure. She is at home everywhere, because even in this quite material realm, duality does not exist for her. There is only one single home—the *Brahman*. But everything is that *Brahman*.

* * *

A long, important private interview with Mataji. I am reporting only part of our conversation in broad outlines.

Mataji says : "If a man is able to do *sādhana*, this is due to the functioning of divine grace."

"Prayer is a kind of meditation. If you can concentrate well while praying, stick to this kind of *sādhana*."

Question . Would you agree if I declared that within

the hierarchy of the spiritual world, Christ is something like an elder brother to you ?

Mataji laughs and then remains silent for a long time. At last she says : "One can find everything in Christ. He is brother, father, son and beloved. Ma also is contained in Christ."

Question : Do people—or at least some people come to you with a mask or with their true face ?

Mataji (laughing) : A mask would not be of any use to you. I see you as you really are.

Myself : At times it seems to me that here in your immediate presence I am becoming from bad to worse. I never knew how much envy there was hidden in me. My selfishness is growing steadily, that is to say : I desire more attention from you than I am receiving.

Mataji : It is wholesome if your negative impulses are brought to light. They have to come out. Only in this way can you get rid of them. But I cannot see that you are bad. I only see your divine Self.

When taking leave I receive a vigorous slap from Mataji. It was probably meant to hit my head, but nearly becomes a box on the ear, which amuses us both.

* * *

Mataji's *darsāna* this morning surpassing by far everything communicable or describable. For more than an hour she kept us waiting on the veranda in front of the temples. When she finally emerged, she seemed as if enveloped by a cocoon of invisible light. I can express it only in this paradox manner. May be, others could even perceive that light. One had the impression that her body was surrounded by a veil of air that was not of the same quality as the air that usually surrounds us. It was of course transparent, but at the same time seemed an impenetrable, protective mantle

not of glassy rigidity but rather pervaded by fluent animation. Mataji sat down on the low stool between the two temples. As a rule, a lively conversation at once ensues with the visitors who pose questions. Today she seemed plunged in such an aura of stillness that nobody dared to utter a word.

She made a sign to Pushpa who began to sing without delay. I have often observed that Mataji gets someone to sing when her radiation is specially intense. In this way she eludes a general discussion, the spiritual value of which cannot be foreseen.

Never have I heard Pushpa sing as today. Mataji sits perfectly relaxed, leaning against the wall. She listens with her eye-lids half closed.

Pushpa begins with a great many variations of the jubilant invocation : "Jai Ma, jai Ma." A song follows of which every verse starts with : "*Mahārāni, Mahādevi.*" (Great queen, great goddess.)" To begin with there is a slight disquiet in Mataji. Her shoulders and hands are moving. Then even this unrest subsides entirely. Mataji's eyes are now shut. Her head is almost imperceptibly tilted to one side. Suddenly the expression appears that struck me so forcibly when I saw Mataji for the first time about a year ago. That day I wrote into my diary : "Sometimes one has the feeling as if Mataji revered herself, but this attitude has something absolutely impersonal". Last year I did not understand what I perceived. Now I know its significance : she, who embodies holiness in front of our eyes, joins us in the reverent contems plation of this sanctity which is herself. *Aham Brahmāsmi.* The *Brahman* am I.

Mahārāni, Mahādevi : the Mother of the Universe am I, Durga am I. Whatever you see in me, that I am; for *Brahman* am I, the One who is All in All. Mataji's eye-lids raise themselves, the irises glide away and return. Her glance is now—beyond our heads—focussed into the far distance and remains there. But it perceives more than we do.

We can only divine that it must be inexpressible. Light that would blind us ? A beauty for which we have not been created ? Radiance and transfiguration on Mataji's countenance. Even this bearable only behind the veil of tears.

Then nearness and presence can be felt again in Mataji's gaze. Not suddenly, but gradually. Hesitant recognition. Wandering about like a search-light that is rotating in all directions. A smile, still very distant and without object. But it starts filling itself—with remembrance : Yes, you are here, my friends. A spark leaps into her eyes ; love. Her mouth remains closed and encircled by shadows, but her eyes are speaking : for your sake I let It go again. I am remaining with you. *Mahārāni* : the great queen that lives with beggars. But it is no sacrifice to her, The pain of letting It go is not more constant than a gliding shadow.

For your sake I let It go ! This is expressed as we understand it. There, where Mataji is, there is neither grasping nor letting go, neither leaving nor remaining, neither love nor melancholy, neither beggars nor Kings—only That, *TAT*.

Svayam Prakasha

GAURIDASI

A state of being exists where it is immaterial whether He assumes a form or not—what is, is THAT. In this case what is there to express in words? Furthermore, at a certain level, the Self may reveal Itself to Itself. At the same time He does not reveal Himself at all. To whom is He to reveal Himself? Where there are neither form nor attributes, what is to be put into language? Where nothing is excluded, how can Oneness be obstructed? In this state of complete poise, nothing at all is any longer apart from Him. What is, IS. So what can be said or left unsaid, since it is entirely beyond words. Obviously, each one speaks from the level at which he finds himself. Yet whatever is uttered are His words—His song, addressed to Him.

—Mataji

How often I think that I would like to be able to write something about Mataji for the West. But it is so very difficult to say anything at all about her. Even the *Pandits* are at a loss to define or explain her to their own countrymen. One cannot seem to make satisfactorily clear to oneself what she is, how then to convey her adequately to another! To try to draw a simple, objective word-picture of her as she appears to us, proves to be not possible. One loses all perspective; for the most ordinary act of her daily life will suddenly assume in the mind of the observer such inexplicably overwhelming proportions as to become fraught with both meaning and mystery, any attempt to explain which results only in providing a distorted or totally false picture.

It is not without significance here that no artist has ever been able to complete a successful portrait of Mataji. From "Sitting" to "Sitting", may be from moment to moment,

she can, and does, appear so different that to catch her with a brush, as with a pen, is impossible. This difficulty is most evident on looking at a number of her photographs. Each one is so unlike the next that it might be of another person. Yet at the same time Mataji's own strong and unique personality reaches us through them all. While each may be a true picture of her it is only that of an instant. And though we may be thoroughly delighted with a previously unseen photo of her, who, curiously seems at first to be wholly present to us in it, we very soon become dissatisfied. Every image of her, we find, is like beholding only a tiny fraction of what we have known, a brief and fleeting moment out of that Timelessness to which she calls us.

There are today, perhaps many, spiritual aspirants who are unable to accept a traditional concept of the deity with form, but who are as yet unable also to contemplate the Self or God as such. Some of these seekers, attracted by Mataji, attempt to make her the focus of their concentration. If such concentration is found to be extremely difficult, we can see that there are obvious reasons for this. Even as Mataji herself appears to us to be constantly changing before our very eyes, so also, naturally, our mental images of her are continually shifting. She can be caught neither by paints, nor words—nor by our thought. While a traditional form or symbol of deity—at least until we have acquired strong powers of concentration and perhaps some degree of mystical experience—tends to remain static and retain definite characteristics on which to fix the mind, Mataji seems to be ever moving away from the mind that would hold her in any one attitude for the length of a *dhāranā*! As soon as we have formed some mental image of her in any way large enough to contain her and small enough to be contained by us, she gets up from her seat, as it were, and runs off—laughing. She does not easily lend herself to any kind of fixity of conception. However, for this very reason, inspite of the difficulties, contemplation of

her, of her life and her words must be pregnant with exalting possibilities.

There are other problems as well. Apart from the ever present and sometimes disturbing question : "Who, what is Mataji ?"—Many another queries arises in the mind regarding her, questions to which we know that we shall probably never learn the answer but with which the mind insists upon distracting us.

For instance : Why does she never enter the living quarters of a householder ? This is, so far as I know, unique in the religious history of the world. No other of the great teachers of mankind has behaved in this way. It can be easily seen that such a rule might be of very real value to the life of a *sādhaka*, but what can its significance be in regard to Mataji ? Making this consideration more enticing, therefore, is the fact that she does not—except perhaps in particular cases for a specific period–object to her *sādhakas* going into the homes of householders, while she herself is unable to do so . What can it mean ?

Then there is the equally mysterious question of her complete inability to take food with her own hand. This, as in the above instance, is the result of no volition of her own. The body simply will not feed itself. She once said to me, "My food is dedicated lives." There is perhaps some profound connection between these words and the fact that since many years ago she has had to be fed, like a tiny child, by someone else, However, I do not think that the connection is as simple at it might at first seem or that it is anything to be understood by the intellect. For just as the significance of her actions is seldom to be seen on the surface, so also the meaning of her utterances lies deeper than the words alone.

What is most extraordinary, and perplexing in Mataji—whatever she may be in herself – is the evident and simultaneous manifestation in her of both the personal and the impersonal. Her personality is strongly individual

and quite definite, notwithstanding the constant play of change. There is about her a unique and very intense sense of personal presence. She is extremely observant of everything that goes on around her; and this awareness extends not only to externals but to the inner needs and thoughts of her devotees as well. No detail of the requirements of the Ashram escapes her. She gives the impression of being wholly present to, fully, highly conscious of the here and the now. And, paradoxically, this seems to be equally true when she appears totally unresponsive and withdrawn from our world. However it may seem to us, I do not think that the modes of the personal and impersonal are alternating states in her; they are simultaneous and continuous. And even in those moments when we sense a great and unconcerned Impersonal Presence shining through her, we can also feel that complete conscious awareness which excludes nothing whatsoever. It is then that we are aware that Mataji does not experience this world as we do, through the instrumentality of mind and the individual senses. Rather with the whole of her being she "perceives" the whole of existence. To think, when her eyes have that withdrawn or faraway look, that she does not "see" us is a mistake. But to believe that she sees us as we see others is to be equally in error. She seems to be the veritable embodiment of consciousness, of conscious—and highly self-conscious—awareness, the very epitome of man's nature. Yet how much more than that! For of what is she conscious? Even when her attention seems to be fully directed to us and she speaks with us, of whom is she aware? To whom does she speak?

Here is obviously something for which the mind can give no explanation. Yet our minds go on raising such questions, just as they continually present impossible queries regarding the nature of the universe, its origin and purpose, as if deliberately to divert us from "the one thing necessary" the unbroken contemplation of the Divine Fact–even though we have been told again and again, by the Scriptures and

the Gurus of the world, that our questions regarding the Ultimate cannot be answered within the realm of mind and that beyond it they do not arise.

Whatever Mataji may be, she is certainly, for us, a living symbol of the Living God. To ask questions aroused by her extraordinary life and state of being is useless. However, to hold lightly the mysteries of her existence in our minds in an attitude of prayerful meditation will surely one day result in "fruits" far beyond anything our intellects could conceive.

"One may see the events of thousands of one's former births, but when the realization has come of what creation with its ascending and descending currents in reality is, what will he see then ? He will see, and also not see ; neither will he not see, nor see. Where everything that exists is revealed in its fulness, this is called Self-revelation, THAT Itself, the Self-luminous One—call it what you will."

Psychosynthesis and the Ishopanishad

PROF. Bireshwar Ganguly

II

We have already considered the central idea of Dr. Roberts Assagioli on Psychosynthesis and have got glimpses of the correlation between his thesis and the main philosophy of the Ishopanishad. In the words of Prof. Max Muller, "The Upanishads are the...sources of...the Vedanta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to have reached its very acme." Among one hundred and twelve Upanishads the Ishopanishad is one of the earliest, being the fortieth chapter of Shukla Yajñasamhita. The first thirtynine chapters of this Samhita deal with *Karmakānda* or the path of spiritual action and the fortieth deals with *Jñānakānda* or the path of synthetic knowledge. Though one of the shortest Upanishads, consisting of only eighteen *mantras* or aphorisms, the Ishopanishad is one of the best from the point of view, the very essence of *Karmkānda* of the Vedas and the Tantras and the *Jñānakānda* of Vedanta phylosophy.

This Upanishad reconciles the apparent contradictions between Being and Becoming, *Nirguna Brahman* and *Saguna Brahman*, the path of action and the path of knowlege and asserts the goal of a synthetic, integral development of the personality, which is tantamount to liberation. In other words, psychosynthesis or the synthesis of all the levels of consciousness, is the main concern of this Upanishad. All the eighteen chapters of Srimad Bhagavat Gita may be said to be the extended commentary on the philosophy of the Ishopanishad.

In this Upanishad the first mantra speaks of *Brahman* as pervading the universe and that after knowing this, one should experience pain and pleasure of life in a detached

way. The purpose of the second mantra is to give a philosophy and art of synthetic living for the yogi, who performs works of life with a God-consciousness, whereby he is not bound by the evil effects of action. He becomes liberated in life and the conflict between *Jñāna* and *Karma* does not arise. The third *mantra* narrates the fate of the faithless, self-destructive men, who suffer a life of darkness and ignorance after mortal death. The fourth mantra speaks briefly of the *Nirguna* and *Saguna* aspects of *Ātman* (the Self), who is the seat of all actions. In the fifth mantra, the two aspects of *Ātman* are more clearly set forth. The sixth and the seventh *mantras* speak of the monistic knowledge and mental purity of the liberated soul, who has known the *Ātman*. The eighth mantra speaks of the primary characteristics of *Ātman* as the *Kūtastha* (original) consciousness and of his secondary characteristics of the *saguna* creator.

From the ninth to the thirteenth *mantras* we get an exposition of the central theme of this Upanished, viz. the reconciliation of the apparent contradiction between *Vidyā* (Knowledge) and *avidyā* (ignorance), between *Nirguna Brahman* and *Saguna Brahman* and between *Jñāna-Kānda* an *Karmakānda*. It is asserted there categorically that action without knowledge leads to blinding darkness but that knowledge without action leads to even more blinding darkness. Real liberation does not come without the psychosynthesis of the lower self and the higher self, of the individual consciousness and the collective unconscious.

The *mantras* from the fifteenth to the eighteenth show, in the guise of the prayer of a dying *Rishi* (integral yogi), the function of the external Sun God as an external unifying centre and helper in the liberation movement for the yogi. The Sun is the abode of *Gāyatri*, the deity worshipped by all Brahmins in India and the worship of the Sun, the visible external representative of God, has a secret spiritual significance not only during the life-time of the Brahmin, but also after physical death in the '*devayana marga*' or the

path of divine ascent for the subtle body of the soul. The conscious self or the empirical "I" has to attain the Higher Self (*Ātman* or *Brahman*) through the external unifying centre, *Surya* (Sun), who is at the centre of our solar system. Similarly for the beings of other solar systems, till the last Sun (*Bharga* of *Gāyatri mantra*) is reached and finally there is *Brahmanirvāna* (final merging with *Brahman*).

III

Let us now consider a textual translation of the mantras of the Ishopanishad for getting a first-hand glimpse of the Upanishadic philosophy of psychosynthesis.

ॐ ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥१॥

All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy ; lust not after any man's possession.

— Sri Aurobindo

By *Iśa* is to be covered all this, that which is changeful in the changing world. Hence by renunciation it should be enjoyed. Do not crave for anybody's wealth.

—Satyananda

Comment :—*Iśa*, the Lord is referred to as *Purushottama*, *Paramātmā* in the *Srimad Bhagavad* Gītā. Both *Kshara Purūsha* (the manifested universe) and *Akshara Purūsha* (transcendental *Ātman*) are within Him and manifestations of Him.

The wise man should always live in this faith and should perform *nishkāma* Karma (work done without attachment and offered to the Lord) and while thus performing duty, he should welcome joy and suffering, as they flow automatically from *prārabdha karma* (past action,

which has begun bearing fruit). But there should be no craving for wealth possessed by others according to their own *prārabdha karma*, for the wise man who lives in God-conscionsness feels that he is an instrument in the hands of God and cannot take initiative in any new work bound by desire.

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥२॥

Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee and not otherwise than this ; action cleaves not to a man.

—Sri Aurobindo.

It is by doing work in this way that one may desire to live here a hundred years. To you man, there is thus no way other than this by which Karma will not stick.

—Satyananda.

Comment :—The whole philosophy of *nishkāma karmayoga* (performance of duty without desire for deserts) in Srimad Bhagavad Gītā is an exposition of the truth contained in the first two mantras of the Ishopanishad. Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna, to perform duties according to one's respective station in life and as prescribed in the religious scriptures. By offering the fruit of work at the feet of the Lord one can perform duties, which are ethically categorical imperatives, and yet attain the highest state of Self-realization, sometimes in this life and sometimes just before physical death. The Gītā prescribes 'स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः', i.e. a man can attain psychosynthetic self-realization, not by renunciation of work, but by worshipful performance of work. Hence we find in Vedic civilization such an emphasis on sacrifice and duty and such an enthusiasm for worshipful creative activities.

(to be continued)

Parsis—Do they believe in God ?*

(2)

PROF. A.N. Ghose

In my previous article I have tried to show that the Parsis are not a race, apart from Hindu religion, which does not believe in God. I should rather prove that the Mazdian religion (The Parsi religion) is also a sublime type of Hindu religion and stands on the same plane as the other world religions. It believes in God—His Divine Will—in the word "Logos" (reference "*Praṇava*" of the Hindus) and considers Him to be the Omniscient Source of Existence (*Ahura Mazda*). For the Parsis fire, as I have already explained, is the most active and dynamic of the elements, as it coalesces many flames into one just as our souls join in God's unity. It purifies all it touches as does the Grace of God... Being everywhere equally pure, its shows God's Omnipresence. Shedding light all round it is the Wisdom of God. The source of fire is the sun and thus it is the source of Divine Love.

A pure and undefiled flame is certainly the most sublime natural representation of Him who is Eternal Light.—The birth of the Parsi Prophet Zoroaster recalls the birth of Krishna, their *Avatārbād*, Soul, the Vedic Nature-Gods (Mithra like Mitra of Rigveda). Their conception

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* In the article under the same title in the last issue of Ananda Varta, p. 74, 3rd line, it should read "Iranian prophet" instead of "Indian prophet". Editor.

of Divine elixir, the juice of Haoma (soma of Vedas) their spirit of worship in the temples[1], their idea of mind-control, "Bhakti" and worship and prayers, their attainment of God through righteousness *Asha*), their faith in *Karma* (past and present deeds)[2]. The custom of reading out the Zend Avesta (like the Hindu Gitā) to the dying—all these speak of their relation with Eastern religions (specially Hindu religion). The Parsis are not idolators, as they say God is many but without a second. Their duality (*Dvaitavāda*) means *good and evil.* God is the only "Good", other things are non-God. Their duality means *Life and Non-life* i.e. *whatever is subject to decay is devoid of Eternal Life.* God is thus everlasting, without decay, and all else is transitory and therefore evil. 'Satan' is evil yet not in revolt (cp Christianity, Hinduism) against God but does his work as assigned to him. God is as great as the Jehova of the Old Testament.

The Divine Hierarchy of the Parsi religion (God and His Angels) does not mean that He is many. He is the Supreme Head and the other members of His council are either under Him or are simply His qualities. God is All-Good, and evil is the negation of good. It is self evident that good and evil are not throughout parallel ideas of equal values but *the latter has a purely relative existence.*

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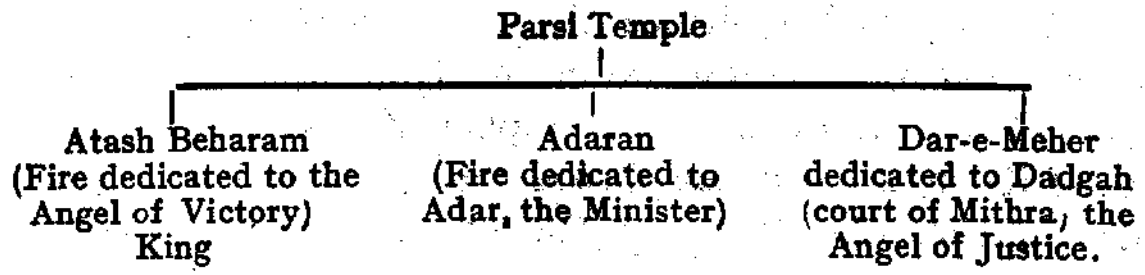
1 They have three grades of temples :—



There are 8 Temples in India, 4 in Bombay, 2 in Surat, 1 in Udwada and 1 at Navasari.

2 They say "Industry is better than asceticim". To sit in a dark corner of a temple with doors all shut or to pass the whole day in *Nāmasankirtana* would not be a virtue to a Mazdian.