

CONTENTS

English Section

1. Matri Vani	...	...	...	107
2. Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma—	...	...	...	110
3. From the Diary of a European —Melita Maschmann	...	...	...	113
4. Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladhak—A devotee	...	...	...	120
5. Sri Thirumangalai Alvar —T. Krishnaji	...	...	...	128
6. Psychosynthesis and the Ishopanishad —Prof. Bireswar Ganguly	...	...	...	135
7. Charity—K. G. Ambegaokar	...	...	...	142
8. Matri Lila	...	...	...	149



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

MĀTRI-VĀNI

The Wise keep on declaring and the *Sāstras* also say that if someone is engrossed in the quest of the Supreme, it can never be that he will not find. Constant effort; so long as you have not reached, do not relax your effort. Is not God, Who is Truth Itself, within you? Therefore do not abandon meditation, the contemplation of your Self. Being your very own, it is destined to be found by you. This is bliss and nothing but bliss. Where then are gloom and dejection? HE alone IS.

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To tread the path that leads to the realization of one's Self and cannot be relinquished, this is *dharma*. For every individual the road to Illumination is different. Wherever you may be, from there itself start advancing. For there is only He and no other. He Himself is holding you. He never, never forsakes you. Again, the practice (*kriyā*) that aims at the realization of God is called *dharma*. That which distracts one from the remembrance of God or Truth is *adharma*. There is but one *dharma*.

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Man is born in order to exhaust his karma, he is also born to exhaust the cycle of birth and rebirth. The man of supernormal power, that is to say in whom divine power has been awakened, he can also himself change his karma.

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The Guru manifests from within. When real, genuine search supervenes, real Enlightenment is bound to come. It cannot possibly be otherwise. HE Himself, having appeared as the Guru, reveals Himself or is being revealed.

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The way to God-realization is straight and simple indeed. The mantra which the Guru communicates is certainly the most excellent one. If the mantra received from one's Guru is repeated in the right manner, realization is bound to occur. How wonderful God's dispensation is! When the power transmitted to you by the Guru begins to function, action will not bear fruit anymore. If one enters fire one will of necessity be burnt. Although all names and forms are His, the One is yet again without name and form. For the man who loves the Name, God is truly present in all names and forms. And for the person who feels drawn towards the Absolute, He is beyond name and form.

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Never attempt to do barter with God, do not foster the mentality of a merchant or trader. "For so many years I have practised meditation and yet reached nothing!" This is not the attitude to be taken. HE is the breath of your life, the Self of yourself. HE is one with you.

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The Name and the One Whose name it is are identical: For He Himself appears as Name. The letter (*akṣara*) is indeed God's own guise. When the name becomes alive, it is as when a seed is sown the tree grows out of it. If the name that appeals most to any particular person is constantly repeated, one arrives at the realization that all names are

His names, all forms His forms. Furthermore, that He is without name and form will also by and by come to light.

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In wealth and property there is certainly no peace. What then does give peace? My own true nature is Peace, Knowledge, Divine Consciousness—unless and until this is realized, how can there be peace? In order to find your Self you must become revealed to yourself. How beautiful!

Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

(TRANSLATED FROM BENGALI)

Ranchi, June 7th, 1965.

Question : If a householder devotee is in trouble, is it right for him to pray to God for redress ?

Mataji : Various attitudes may be taken. There are those who have dedicated themselves entirely to God. They say : "My Lord, whatever you may do, howsoever you may keep me, it is all right." According to the state of people's minds their conditions differ. Some are at a stage at which they just cannot help praying. Others, when visited by trials and misfortunes feel disappointed with God and drop their religious practices. On the other hand there are persons who turn to God more eagerly when in sorrow. And some remember Him with greater fervour when they are happy. In all circumstances He is the great Healer. Therefore many are moved to appeal to Him in trouble. Then again a state comes when one does not anymore feel the inclination to pray to Him for relief in adversity, pain, ill-luck, and so forth. To invoke God is always good. For whatever reason you may pray, from whatever motive—at least start praying to Him ! Be it for alleviation of distress or for Enlightenment, be it even for wealth and possessions. The Wise ever live in the remembrance of God.

June 8th, 1965.

Question : Someone who is a *karmayogi*, who believes in the path of action, says, there is no need of God, Guru, the company of saints and sages, and so forth. Is this correct ?

Mataji : The Sankhya philosophy also is of a similar opinion. The existence of God cannot be proved by the mind. You concentrate on God in order to transcend the

individual mind .When the Lord Buddha was asked whether God existed or not, He kept silent. One will have to accept whatever anyone advocates, in the light of his particular state, *sādhana* and experience. Each one's practice depends on the stage he has reached and on the nature of his particular line of approach. Where the question of belief and explanation arises, there it is like this. When a salt doll enters the sea, it is dissolved and mingles with the water. In the state beyond mind and intelligence there is no reply. There—about what is one to speak and who speaks ? There, I do not see any others, I do not go anywhere, do not accept anything from anyone, do not eat anyone's food. There is no question at all of talking. Whether you call it inert or undecaying—everything is all right. Here to ask questions or not to ask is equal. To be satisfied by knowing this from hearsay will not do : the progress of one's *sādhana* will thereby be arrested. One must experience this for oneself. Someone told the following incident :

In the course of doing puja, a man was performing the ceremony of instilling life into an earthen pitcher. All of a sudden the pitcher began to talk and related to him the story of its life. "When I was still earth I was lying somewhere and people came and walked on me. Then someone eased himself over me. I bore everything. One day a man came with a spade and broke me up. This also I endured. He put me into a basket, carried me away on his head and deposited me in some place. A little later he took a stick and beat me mercilessly. After putting cold water on me he went away. For a short while I felt at peace. But he returned again and kneaded me first with his feet and then formed me into a ball with his hands. Thereafter I was put on a potter's wheel. I was turned round and round and by the potter's hand moulded until I became a pitcher. Carefully he placed me on the ground. For a few days I was exposed to the sunshine. Sometimes I had to bear extreme cold and sometimes scorching heat. Then I was

put on a fire. What a huge fire it was and how terribly the flames burnt! When I had been baked red and hard and solid, I was carefully taken off the fire and put away. One day I was carried to the market together with other pitchers. Those who wanted to buy me took me up and banged me hard. Finally someone bought me for money and took me away. And now I am sitting here, filled to the brim with Gangeswater. Look, if you can develop similar patience and forbearance your life will become a vessel for the sacred waters of the Ganges. Be enduring as earth. Then you also will be worshipped by the people. Divine Life will be awakened in you."

(Translated from Hindi)

Vrindaban, August 1967.

Question : Mataji, please give us a talk !

Mataji : Here, there is no question of giving talks. Here all are one *ma* : Just as one's hand is one's own, so one speaks to oneself. For all are one. One must transcend talk and no talk. One should speak about that which takes one beyond the opposites of talking and keeping silent. And what is that? The remembrance of God. Practise *japa*, the name, a *mantra*, whatever anyone has got. *Ah-g-ara* (the letter or syllable) is that which is indestructible*. Keep that *ah-g-ara* always with you. Practise the awareness of God, contemplate Him so that He may be revealed to you. Don't allow the mind to remain vacant. Otherwise, just as water leaks out of a vessel with a hole, so if the mind is left to itself, the really important thing leaks out of it and the mind turns to vain matters instead of to Him. God is Truth. One should seek *satsang* and read sacred books. Whatever the Guru instructs must be followed.

* *Ah-g-ara* means 'letter' as well as 'indestructible'.

From the Diary of a European

MELITA MASCHMANN

(IX)

(Translated from German)

Ahmedabad, 1st December 1963.

Mataji's complete gesturelessness ! The only 'gesture' that she makes is that of the Indian greeting : the raised folded hands. With this gesture she does not only greet but also expresses a request and thanks.

The richness in gestures of all religious ceremonies of all civilizations. As for instance in high mass or *pūjā*.

I remember one evening at Varanasi, when Mataji stood before one of the Ashram temples while a *pūjā* was performed there. I was reminded of it when I saw her stand near the fire sacrifice that was celebrated by several priests today. She stood perfectly still while the priest was going through a worship full of gestures. He is a quiet old man, slender and delicate and very reserved. I have often listened to the language of his gestures. It sounded serious and dignified, convincing even for me although I could not understand their meaning.

And yet: when Mataji watched him that day, the poverty of the language of religious gestures struck me with cutting clarity. The *pūjā*—that is to say the divine presence—was not in the worship of the priest but in Mataji's motionless being.

While she stood near the fire sacrifice today, only watching, without any active participation, it overwhelmed me : In her there is Reality, Being of a different order, a different density or quality from that of the priests and all the others who were standing around.

Poona, December 1963.

I have the impression that here Mataji is sometimes being left alone in a sense, although many people crowd

round her. Probably she is a responding spirit. When faced with sincere searching after truth or the longing for God, she flashes light—suddenly all fatigue is forgotten—and then it may happen that a current of spiritual intensity forces its way out with great power. But when there is no call that really touches her, she may occasionally sit in front of us like a rock. Of course this happens only very rarely.

I remember one morning in the train after a whole night's travelling, Mataji was sitting on her bed. She had a fear-inspiring expression of unapproachability. I experienced this with Mataji only on that single occasion. Her beautiful, sensitive face all of a sudden appeared as if carved of stone. Her features looked angular and seemed armoured with impenetrability. Her expression was not to be unriddled. As far as I could see, it neither showed anger nor pain nor impatience nor disgust: only immeasurable distance, inaccessibility, remoteness.

Sometimes, while *ārati* is being performed, Mataji seems transported into a contemplation that also takes her far away from the here and now of outer circumstances; but then she remains open to us, so that—provided our eyes are not blind (which unfortunately is often the case) we can catch a reflection of the light radiating from her. That morning in the train she appeared completely walled up in her terrifying unapproachability. Even the movements of her eyes, her arms, her head, seemed empty, as if occurring merely on the surface. Their impulses did not seem to emerge from the centre of her being.

For about two seconds I stood on the threshold of her compartment, then I fled. But soon I returned, sat down in front of her compartment and remained there for a long time. Mataji saw me, but whether she was aware of me I cannot say. I returned to her because I felt that wishing to be in her presence only when she emits serenity and kindness, was wrong. God alone knows what was hidden behind the impenetrable surface of her appearance.

One thing is certain : what takes place within Mataji is far more incomprehensible for us than we realize when we are daily with her. Even when she appears quite 'open' to us, we can only by the vaguest intuitions touch the outer fringe of her being.

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Calcutta, December 22nd, 1963.

The journey from Bombay to Calcutta has taken us 58 hours what with trains running late. For the first days of her sojourn, Mataji is the guest of a wealthy family of devotees. Their property is situated in a quiet street. Behind the house a small pandal has been erected. In a thatched garden-house Mataji receives people for private interviews. Multi-coloured electric bulbs have been fixed on bushes and trees in the garden, the tent is profusely decorated with flowers and garlands. Already the first evening two or three hundred men and women gather and everyone is eager to welcome Mataji with ardent veneration. Gradually the enthusiasm rises to such a degree that Mataji can hardly cope with the situation. From all sides simultaneously people are trying to embrace her. Never before have I witnessed Mataji allowing her devotees to get physically so close to her. She sits laughing amidst the impetuous throng and indefatigably distributes blessings by the touch of her hands. Occasionally she catches hold of a head with both her hands. Then again she caresses the face of an old woman ; with a humorous expression she pulls the hair of a boy kneeling before her, all the while making jokes with everyone at the same time.

Then an old gentleman starts a discussion about religious problems. A fencing with repartees ensues, interrupted by crackling volleys of laughter. Someone whispers to me that the old man is a hard-boiled atheist. In the midst of all this hilarity Mataji's face suddenly turns serious. She shuts her eyes and remains silent. It takes some time until

