

"Spoken word, verily, must be of Thee alone,
All else is but futility and pain."

MOTHER'S WORDS

(Extracts from letters in reply to different people at different times).

The way to God-Realization and Peace.

1.

Indolence and lust — these two are the greatest obstacles on the path to Self-realization. It is patience and fortitude that are most helpful. If anyone has been so blessed as to feel that the spiritual path is all-beneficial—if God bestows His grace on anyone in this form — it is necessary that he should exert his will-power to the utmost and devote all the twenty-four hours to the service of God.

The various activities that aid the spiritual life have to be knit together closely with over renewed effort : as the thread is not seen in a garland — in like manner — without a gap. No sooner does the mind get an opening than it will direct all its actions downwards, towards the perishable. Therefore even though meditation may never be successful, persist to the limit of your capacity : one should engage in japa, worship, recite holy texts ('Path'), sing the praises of God ('Kirtan') — each-one as it suits his temperament and inclination — or read books on spiritual subjects.

Choose carefully and abide strictly by such occupations as awaken Godly thoughts and feelings. Be very firm in your resolve to cultivate as much as possible the actions that are helpful to a God-centred life. Engage in them even when there is no desire so to do, as one takes medicine. With or without inclination persevere in their performance, so that there may be no time at all left for the display of restlessness.

To indulge in physical comforts is to turn aside from the communion with God ; to yield to the likes and dislikes of the tongue and to taste in order to satisfy the palate is to deprive oneself in equal measure of the relish of the Divine. Therefore whatever food or drink is taken should be consecrated

to God and partaken of as His *Prasad*. Do not eat what does not agree with you. Take a full meal at midday, milk in the afternoon and fruit or some light refreshment and water at night.

Keep your thinking on a very high level. Praise and blame, filth and sandalpaste must become alike. Nothing in the world should be repulsive to you. Look into your own heart and become repelled by the repulsion. It is only so long as the mind is filled with the thought of God, with the awareness of His Presence, that there can be real rest.

Food, sleep, toilet, clothes, etc. should be given only as much attention as is needed for the maintenance of health. What is the use of a merely well-nourished body? Rather should it become an aid to the spiritual life. Exclusively to this end must the current of life be diverted, away from the world, moving entirely in the direction of God. Take pains to discover for yourself the various things that you can do with real joy and that will bring you nearer to God. Has anyone ever become great by sitting down and saying "I cannot"?

Anger, greed and the like must be altogether abandoned. Neither should you be swayed by praise or prestige. Do not retort in a spirit of contradiction to anything that is said. Reply politely with a smile and say no more.

All work must be done as a service to God. The longer you can be inwardly stirred by the feeling of His presence, the more will your body, your mind and your actions progress towards the Divine state of being ('*Divya Bhava*'). Attune yourself solely to God. Where the thought of God is, there He Himself is present in the form of that thought. To seek truth is man's one and only duty.

Learn by heart hymns and verses in praise of God and repeat them whilst you move about. Never allow your mind to be idle. Keep it engaged in the repetition of a mantra, of God's name, of sacred hymns and the like, or else in pure Remembrance.

One thing more : joys and sorrows are time-born and obviously cannot last. Therefore do not be perturbed by them. Keep in mind that they must pass with time. Aiming at the highest, steer your boat and attend to your work, totally unconcerned with the results.

And yet another thing : It is He, verily, who manifests Himself in all temperaments and forms : whomsoever you may hate, you hate but your own Lord ('Ishta').

In the whole universe in all states of being, in all forms is He. All names are His names, all shapes His shapes, all qualities His qualities and all modes of existence, truly, are His.

To help towards Self-realization He appears to different individuals in different ways : in the shape of the *Guru*, of the *Mantra*, of the *Ishta* (the object of one's worship) and of *Bhava* (devotion, inspiration.) Even if devotion and reverence are not natural to you, try to cultivate them through understanding. Do all your work with this attitude. The greater the difficulties and obstructions and the more intense your endeavour to cling to His Feet, the more will your power increase from within. And when the time is ripe you will gain mastery over this very power.

Time is precious and must be used well. The day, the hour that is gone returns not.

AMARA VANI

In response to questions from earnest seekers after Truth, pearls of the most profound wisdom invariably fall from Mother's blessed lips. In fact whatever She says on such occasions essentially belongs to the category of the *Mahavakyas* — is revelation of Truth Itself.

Convinced of the importance of preserving Mother's teaching as far as possible in Her own words, one of Her devotees has, since 1945, in spite of numerous other duties taken it upon himself to note down, whenever he got an opportunity, Mother's words as he heard them being uttered. Due to his untiring efforts a certain amount of Mother's teaching has thus been collected and made available. It is hoped that it will be published gradually in the pages of this magazine for the benefit and enlightenment of all.

Mother's language is simple and clear—yet it is not so easy to understand Her, for She speaks of That which is beyond our expe-

rience. Mother's replies are not thought out : as the question is asked, the answer comes spontaneously and finds expression through Mother. Yet what She says is never in contradiction to the Shastras nor to the experience of great sages and saints throughout the ages.

Mother's teaching varies according to the inquirer's capacity to understand, his temperament, conditioning and line of approach. At the same time Mother throws light on every problem from the various angles of vision. In Her we find united all creeds, all philosophies and schools of thought, all methods of yoga.

We have spared no pains to render into English as precisely as possible what Mother said in Bengali, yet we are fully aware of our incapacity to make the translation at all worthy of the original. It is not an easy task. We pray for Mother's forgiveness and for the indulgence of our readers.

Banaras, 11th July, 1947.

Question : The other day, when speaking about visions and the like that one has during meditation, you said that these are not the Vision of Reality ('*Prakrit Darshan*'), but a mere "touch".

Mataji : Yes, viewed from the level where glimpses exist, this may

be said : in other words, there is no transformation (due to the experience), but it is attractive to you and you can express the feeling in words — that is, you delight in it. Therefore it is a mere "touch". If it were a state of Being ('*sthiti*') you would be unable to enjoy it in this way. In

the state of Pure Being ('Vastavika Sthiti') there can be no relish ('rasa').

Question : The self ('Atman') and the Supreme ('Brahman') are different only by way of posited limitation. The realization that comes by the constant meditation on "I am Sachchidananda" * is self-realization ('Atma Darshana'). Since there can be no realization of the Supreme it must therefore be a partial, that is a limited realization. Is this correct ?

Mataji : If you think there are parts in Brahman, you can say "partial". But can there be parts in the Supreme ? As you think and feel in parts, you speak of "touch" — but He is whole. That which *Is*.

Question : Are there grades ('krama') in knowledge ('jnana') ?

Mataji : No. Where Knowledge is of the Self ('Swarupa'), there can be neither diversity nor grades. Knowledge is one, when it is of the Self. "Gradualness" ('Krama') refers to the stage, where one has turned away from the pursuit of sense objects and one's gaze is entirely directed towards God. God has not yet been realised, but the treading of this path has become attractive. Along this line there are meditation ('dhyana'), contemplation ('dharana') and Divine Extasy ('Samadhi'). The experiences of each of these stages are also infinite. Where the mind is, there

is experience. The experiences of the various stages are due to the thirst for Knowledge Supreme. The mind that had formerly been engrossed in material things, arguing that one cannot know whether God exists or not, had come to deny Him. Now that it has turned the other way, is it not natural that light should dawn on it according to the level it has reached ? These stages are known under various names.

When do the visions that one gets in meditation cease ? When the Self stands Self-revealed ('Svayam Prakasha').

Question : Does the body survive, when the mind has been dissolved ('Manonasha') ?

Mataji : One has to ask oneself, how then does the World Teacher give instruction ? From the state of ignorance ? If this were so, the mind would not have been dissolved, the threefold differentiation ('triputi') of the knower, the knowing and the knowable could not have been merged. So what would He be able to give you ? Where could He lead you ? But there is a stage where this question does not arise. Is it the body that is the obstacle to Supreme Knowledge ? Is there even a question of whether the body exists or not ? At a certain stage this question is simply not there. On the plane where this question arises, one is not

*Sachchidananda—the Supreme Reality as self-existent Being, Consciousness, Bliss.

in that state of Pure Being and one thinks this question can be raised and also replied to. But the answer lies, where there is no such thing as questioning and answering — where there is no "other", no division. And so, how can one possibly approach the Supreme Teacher and receive instruction? Likewise the teaching of the scriptures ('Shastras') has then become equally useless.

This also is one way of seeing it.

To say "stage by stage", as if one were studying for a University degree, is presenting it from the point of view of *Sadhana*. Where Self-illumination is, questions cannot arise. On the other hand, where there is personal effort like meditation or contemplation, it will certainly bear fruit. But in that state of illumination there can be no question of fruit or fruitlessness : there is result in resultlessness and resultlessness in result — just like that.

Some say a last vestige of the mind remains. At a certain level this is so ; again, there is a stage beyond, where the question of whether a trace of the mind remains or not, does not exist. If everything can be burnt up, cannot this last vestige be consumed too ? There is no question of either 'yes' or 'no' : What is — is. Meditation and contemplation are necessary, because one is on the level of belief

and disbelief. The aim is to go beyond accepting and rejecting. You want a support, do you not ? The support which can take you beyond, to where the question of support or supportlessness does no longer arise — that is the supportless support.

What can be expressed in words, can certainly be attained. But He is That which is beyond words.

Question : I have read in books that some say they have to descend in order to act in the world. This seems to imply that though one is established in Pure Being one has to take the help of the mind when attending to work. Just as a king when acting the part of a sweeper has for the time being to imagine he is a sweeper.

Mataji : In assuming a part, surely, there is no question of ascending or descending. Abiding in his own Essential Being ('Swarupa'), he himself plays with himself. But when you speak of ascending and descending — where is that state of Pure Being ? Can there be duality in the state of Pure Being ? Brahman is one without a second. Though from your angle of vision, I grant, it does appear as you put it.

Question : You have explained this from the level of ignorance. Now be pleased to speak from the level of the Enlightened-one ('Jnani') !

Mataji (laughing) : What you say now, I also accept. Here (pointing to Herself) nothing is rejected.

Whether it is the state of enlightenment or of ignorance — everything is all right. The fact is that you are in doubt. But here (with Mother) there is no question of doubt. Whatever you may say and from whatever level — it is He and He and only He.

Question : If this is so, is it of any use to ask you further questions?

Mataji : What is — is. That doubts should arise is natural. But the wonder is that where THAT is, there is not even room for different stands to be taken. Problems are discussed, surely, for the purpose of dissolving doubts. Therefore it is useful to discuss. Who can tell when the veil will be lifted from your eyes? The purpose of discussion is to remove this ordinary sight. This vision is no vision at all, for it is only temporary. Real vision is that vision for which there is no difference between sight and the seen. It is eyeless — not to be beheld with these ordinary eyes, but with the eyes of wisdom. In that vision without eyes there is no room for 'di-vision'.

Here (pointing to Herself) there is no question of giving and taking, neither of serving. On your level they exist, from there these topics arise.

This evening the following statement was made : "Through the observance of silence one attains to Supreme Knowledge ('Jnana')."

Mataji asked : How is that? Why has the word "through" been used here?

A Voice : Silence is itself wisdom—the means is itself the end.

Someone else : By silence we have to understand the stilling of the five senses.

Mataji : Yes, but why say 'through'?

Another voice : Complete concentration on the self, that is the significance of 'through'.

Mataji : When speech is suppressed, the activity of the mind still continues. All the same this silence helps to control the mind. As the mind dives deeper, this outer activity slackens off. And then one comes to feel that He who provides for everything will arrange matters. When the mind is agitated by thoughts on worldly things, the benefit that should be gained by observing silence is lost. One may for instance check one's tongue at the moment of anger, but some time or other it is bound to burst forth. When the mind is centred in God, it keeps on advancing steadily and along with this emerges purity of body as well as mind. To let the mind dwell on the objects of the senses is waste of energy. When the mind is in this condition and silence is not observed, it finds release in speech. Otherwise this kind of silence might put undue strain on the senses and possibly result in ill-

health. But when the mind is turned inward, not only can there be no injury to health, but more than that, by constantly dwelling on the thought of God all the knots of the heart ('*granthi*') are dissolved and thereby will be realized that which has to be realized.

To observe silence means to keep the mind fixed on Him. At first one feels the urge to talk, later all inclination and disinclination vanish.

It is also like this : just as the bee collects honey, so all that one needs is gathered together automatically. What is necessary becomes available of its own accord — presents itself as it were, when there is ever closer union with Him.

When silence without gestures ('*Kashtha Maunam*') is observed, how is the body kept alive ? Everything dovetails and the silent person just watches as a kind of witness. In the measure as one progresses in union, one will notice that obstacles disappear and whatever is necessary provides itself. It is one thing if everything happens by itself and quite another to make arrangements by one's effort. To keep silence means there is actually nowhere else for the mind to go. Finally whether the mind exists or not, whether one speaks or not, makes no difference.

To say 'through silence He is realised' is not correct, because Supreme Knowledge does not come 'through' anything — Supreme Knowledge reveals Itself.

To destroy the 'veil' there are suitable spiritual disciplines and practices.

Question : What about the silent sadhu at Navadvip ?*

Mataji : By practice he has made the body still, but his mind has not been transformed at all : it is a case of mere physical control. If his mind had been stilled, this kind of worldly behaviour would be impossible.

However, even such practice is not altogether useless, it does lead to some result. But That which is the real need has not been found.

* Many years ago, when Mataji went to Navadvip with Bholanathji, a sadhu there attracted very wide attention. He used to sit all day long in the lotus pose, so perfectly still that Bholanathji remarked, it was difficult to find out whether he was a living man or a statue. Everyone felt awed and took it for granted that he was a great saint in a state of deep *Samadhi*. Mother however made no comment on the matter. Staying next door to the sadhu, She soon found out that he bathed, ate and slept secretly during the night. By and by the sadhu confided to Mother that he was made to pose for the sake of money. Through Mother's benign influence he gave up this life of deception.

A Unique Personality

(Akshay Kumar Datta Gupta)

To many people Mother Anandamayi is not only a wonder but an enigma. Even in her early youth she was a wonder to all when she performed all her household work with a knack and neatness much beyond her years, but a puzzle when she frequently went into a condition resembling swoon which not being like ordinary hysteria or epilepsy, they were all too slow to recognise as *Samadhi*. Next, to their awe, many things (to use the Mother's own expression) came to pass through her physical being without any apparent effort on her part, in fact without her will or wish. They were, as she explained long later, *Yogic* states or experiences of various sorts coming spontaneously. This indeed is a unique feature, especially as no *Guru* or other directing hand, visible or invisible, is acknowledged, nor any previous birth admitted in which they might have been gone through so that residual impressions were left to germinate and fructify in this incarnation. Has anything like this been seen or heard of before?

The *Yogic* states and experiences spoken of above, be it noted, were not

merely symbolic or partial, but as thorough and complete as they could well be. To give an example: One day the Mother asked Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Copinath Kaviraj, a very high authority in such matters, how many forms of *trataka* was he aware of? On his modestly replying: Only four, the Mother proceeded to demonstrate some thirty forms of *trataka*, needless to add, to the unspeakable astonishment of the great Pandit.

Uniqueness clings to the Mother like the beauty or complexion of her person, and is evident in all her words, bearings, and proceedings. They are never insipid, trite, or humdrum, but always bear the hall mark of superior wisdom and genius.

The Mother has no affiliations so to speak, a feature which differentiates her from all saints and godly characters that we know of. She never acknowledges having formally practised any creed or cult (much less all, as in one well known case) for any length of time, and, therefore, never betrays any fondness or partiality for any in her words or recommendations. Nor does she repudiate any creed or

cult honestly pursued by any individual or class of devotees. Votaries of all creeds and cults find in her a ready and sympathetic listener. Not dignified toleration but perfect understanding marks, and indeed adds strength and weight to, any advice or guidance that she readily gives to those troubled by doubts or indecision.

Another unique feature of the Mother is that she never owns having a will or wish (*ichcha*) for anything. All her proceedings are said to be unplanned and unpremeditated. Now *ichchha* in the sense of desire (Sanskrit *kama*, *trishna*, Pali *tanha*) so far as it implies a sense of want is a sign of imperfection and dependence. This may conceivably be absent in her as it is said to be absent in *Jivanmukta* persons, that is, those liberated from the shackles of *Maya*, though still in the flesh. But does she, people ask, also without any *ichchha* on her part exhort people to live purer and more spiritual lives, practise *samyama* (abstemiousness, continence etc.) herself prescribing the *modus operandi*, and do other things likely to promote their welfare spiritual, sometimes also temporal? Here is an enigma.

To be absolutely free from wish is not in conformity with the theistic, or at any rate Puranic conception of God—Even in the Yoga Philosophy

(Patanjala System) we are told by the great scholiast Vyasa that though God (*Isvara*) has no axe of his own to grind (I am merely giving the sense and no translation of his actual words), He has still a concern viz. to help those who strive for *Kaivalya* that is complete dissociation from *Prakriti* the material nature. A concern is not very different from will, though God is perfect, in all respects.

Sruti also uses such words as *aikshata*, previewed, *akamayata*, desired, when speaking of Brahma intent on creation. And Brahma is without question perfect and independent in all respects.

In Tantrika poetic thought (e.g. the well known song) the great Mother of the Universe is described as *ichchhamayi*, *ichchha* being conceived as Her nature.

How to conciliate all these views with the Mother's repeated affirmation of her complete freedom from *ichchha*?

The Mother often likens herself to a harp which requires to be struck in the proper way to elicit the desired tune. The greater the skill of the performer, the more perfect and varied is the tune. She is yet more cryptic when she says with reference to any of her acts, whatever comes to pass at any moment passes. It is apt to convey the idea (wrong as we believe it to be) that all her acts and proce-

dings are but reactions of outside forces on a perfectly vacant, though sensitive, mind.

According to a very Great Yogi, *Maha Sakti*, the highest and ultimate entity, has only one definable trait which he described as *spandana*, vibration. It is from this *spandana* that creation proceeds. It is no mark of any sense of want or imperfection or dependence on Her part but of perfection and independence.

Do Mother Anandamayi's proceedings result from some such *spandana* essential to her nature ?

The above is not offered as an explanation but a very humble and no less diffident suggestion.

But explanation or no explanation, the Mother remains a wonder. Even her supposedly enigmatic words are delivered with a charm that is truly angelic. Wonder holds its ground, enigma gives way.

The Miracle at Bindhyachal

(Ranjan)

Miracles happen. But we either reject them dogmatically or search for some such explanation as can be comprehended by our known laws. Doubt, I think, is the most powerful force created by our sense-bound-intellect to keep us in the dark. That, it seems to me, is one of the greatest ironies of human fate. Science does not claim that our known laws can comprehend the entire creation. The tendency of modern science is rather the contrary. Still we doubt.

A few years ago some of us were at Bindhyachal with 'Mother' for a few days and we were a very happy family. 'Mother' was always available to us and even at night we slept near 'Mother.' It was summer and the heat was very oppressive. But we had the relief—a grand relief indeed—in Mother in the back ground of Bindhyachal Ashram. I have no hesitation in saying that the site of the Ashram at Bindhyachal is one of the most beautiful spots of nature, that I have seen in India.

One afternoon, while 'Mother' was sitting in the centre room on the ground floor with all of us around Her, and She was talking to us and distributing

fruits, Dr. Pannalal (one of the well-known devotees of 'Mother') suggested that 'Mother' should show us some 'Vibhuti' (miracle). I at once strongly supported Dr. Pannalal. 'Mother' laughed. We discussed amongst ourselves as to what should be the nature of the Vibhuti. I suggested that we should be made to see the spirits of the departed ones so that we may all be free from any doubts regarding life beyond death. I had very strong personal reasons for suggesting that, but it is needless to say that here. Others made other suggestions. 'Mother' did not commit Herself but suggested that for 3 nights consecutively, for 2 hours each night, we should sit with her in the dark in silence at Kharistitalla, at a little distance from Ashram proper, for meditation. Time was fixed from 10 to 12. Those were very dark nights with stars in the sky but no moon.

Kharistitalla was the foot of a tree on the hill with boulders scattered all about with a big one at the centre, small shrubs surrounding them. I should consider it a rather dangerous spot at night as scorpions and snakes would naturally be there, more so in a

summer night. Under ordinary circumstances I should not like to be there even for 5 minutes in the dark.

However for 3 nights, two hours on each occasion, we did sit there. 'Mother' used to sit in the centre and we all sat surrounding 'Mother' in deep silence. From my point of view, I should certainly consider it very strange, if not a miracle, knowing myself as I do, that I did sit there for full 2 hours each night without the least feeling of nervousness, regard being had to the very unsafe character of the spot.

During the first 2 nights nothing happened. 'Mother' was sitting in the midst like a marble statue radiating a glow in that deep darkness which, I am sure, inspired us all in our meditation. Didi used to come after 2 hours from the Ashram with a lantern in her hand, to indicate that the time was over.

On the 3rd night, at the close of the period just before Didi came with the lantern, something did happen. I had my eyes closed then. Suddenly I felt that the whole world was lit up with a light which was at least 50 full-moon power and which penetrated through my eye-lids. I at once opened my eyes. I saw the light, the like of which I had never seen before. I looked up and saw a star in the sky right above the head of the 'Mother' coming down and brightening up as if to its utmost capacity. It lasted not even a second and suddenly 'Mother' burst out into a laughter which remained in my heart and is in fact still there long long after it was heard.

I am not a scientist. It is only for the scientists to say if stars sometimes behave like that. To me, that it happened there, is a miracle.

Mother Plays Holi at Brindaban

(By a Devotee)

March-1953

The opening ceremony of the new Anandamayee Ashram and the inauguration of Sri Sharananandaji's "Manava Seva Sangha" had been celebrated in Mother's presence two days before Holi. On the morning of the actual day of the festival there was 'Shiva Pratishtha' at the new Ashram and Mother was present throughout. There was a general expectation that Mother Herself would take part in the Holi play. Accordingly some devotees had the previous evening procured 'Abir' and 'Gulal' (red and pink powder) and dye, as well as a bucket and a syringe (*Pichkari*) for the coloured water.

After the morning function Mother returned to her room at Oriya Baba's Ashram. A number of devotees had assembled in the hall of the Ashram waiting eagerly for Mother to come out. Suddenly Mother appeared. Someone sprinkled a little coloured water on Her and handed Her the syringe. The dish with the red powder was presented to Her. In the twinkling of an eye Mother's expression changed. She seemed to have become the spirit

incarnate of the festival. Everyone was seized by the magic of a riotous joy. Was it the Krishna Leela that we beheld and took part in ? We all sang loudly "Holi Khele, Nandalal," feeling that it was more than a mere song.

Mother began by throwing coloured powder up into the sky. For a moment we were enveloped in the fine crimson dust and blinded. Then she smeared the red powder on our foreheads, one by one. Next she took the *Pichkari* and shot some coloured water up into the sky. This she did several times. Her silent gesture seemed to say, "Upwards is Godwards." Our minds were lifted up. Now Mother aimed the *Pichkari* at the inmates of the Ashram, who were watching from the first floor, then on each and everyone present, sparing none. With the coloured water Mother's blessing was showered on us. By that time we were in an almost ecstatic mood.

We followed Mother out of the courtyard of the Ashram. Her face and hair were covered with red powder. Her clothes splashed with the coloured water. Her movements were swift and



MOTHER PLAYS 'HOLI' AT BRINDABAN

light, Her feet hardly touched the ground. She went to Sri Hari Baba's place, then to Sri Akhandanandaji's to Kathia Baba's Ashram and so on. With the extreme cleverness so characteristic of Mother, She caught everyone unawares and none escaped.

Hari Baba cautiously peeped down from the roof and as quick as lightning Mother had already sprinkled coloured water on his robe. He fled with a smile.

A similar treatment was meted out to a number of well-known Sannyasis as well as to the Mahant of Nimbarka Ashram. Mother said: "Whoever is at Brindaban has to join the play, or else let him hide in the jungle."

She coloured the cow and the calf, the Tulsi plants, the altar where the new image was to be installed, in fact everyone and everything that came Her way.

We were swept along on a mighty wave of Divine joy and unity and from the depths of our hearts we sang the praises of God. All difference, all separation had been swallowed up in the rhythm of the festival.

Back at the courtyard in front of Her room 'batasha' was placed before Mother. With large sweeping movements she flung it in all directions and everyone tried to catch as much of it as possible. The floor was covered with batasha bits and colour. Mother rolled in it and returned to Her room as suddenly as She had come out. We prostrated in great awe and wonder, steeped in delight. Mother had revealed Herself to us in one of Her rare moods and we deemed ourselves thrice blessed.

"Through all appearances I am always the same. I do not do anything, I do not go anywhere, there is no change for me" and "See that in all forms, in all modes of being is He." So many times had we heard these words from Mother, but had we grasped their meaning? Now amidst the wild, uproarious Holi play, with its mirth and noise and the surging crowd, understanding had broken in upon us in a flash, for the fraction of a second.

Strange are the ways of the Great.



"DIDIMA"

Atmananda

On this joyful occasion of the birthday of our adored Mother, Sri Sri Anandamayee, when we are breathless with jubilation at the thought that one so unfathomable, so incomparable, so utterly pure and holy and wise is walking the earth, that God's Grace itself has taken the form of a human body — on this joyful occasion it is but natural that our hearts should go out in love and gratitude to the one who bore the precious burden and in whose care Providence had placed the tender body, when it needed the protection of elders.

Those who come for Mother's darshan very often find a venerable old lady, clad in the ochre robe of a Sannyasi, sit next to Mother. On enquiry they are told she is Mother's mother. Utterly simple and unassuming, the very ideal of self-effacement, she does not attract attention to herself. Some touch her feet after doing Pranam to Mataji, some offer a garland — and a few moments later are absorbed in Mataji herself,

the great magnet who, by Her very being captures all hearts and minds.

But those who get closer to Mother, come to know and to love Didima, the slender almost frail old Sannyasini, who is always sweet and gentle, always quiet and friendly and helpful to everyone without exception : in fact she is taken for granted as the grandmother of all the thousands of Mother's children.

But how many of us know anything about her extraordinary qualities ? How many of us realize that the mother of our Mataji has been nothing less than a saint throughout her life ? After her husband died about fifteen years ago, She took Sanyasa and became Swami Muktananda Giri. But even from her childhood her's has been a flawless character. It is said—ands he confirms it—that she has never known what anger is that she has never in her whole life quarrelled with anyone. Though she and her family very often lived in dire poverty, she never felt bitter about it, nor did she worry. Complete



MUKTANANDA GIRI (MOTHER'S MOTHER)

trust in God has been natural to her all along, from the beginning did she lead a dedicated life. Sometimes there was no food in the house, but she would give her last crust to a beggar and go without any thing herself, quite naturally without feeling specially virtuous for it. Never, as long as she can remember, has she wilfully told a lie or been envious of the possessions of others. She did not read any books of child psychology; but intuitively she knew what was right for her children. Thus her extraordinary daughter never received a harsh rebuke or a slap from her mother, And being so utterly simple and God-possessed it never occurred to Didima to feel proud of Her wonderful daughter.

Which mother does not take pride in her offspring ? And in this case the temptation for such a feeling was

unusually great. It was so obvious that God had blessed her with a Divine child. There was so much that pointed to this from the very beginning. The birth was painless and not preceded by labour, the baby did not cry when She was born, neither did she ever cry throughout her infancy and childhood except on one occasion when She saw mother weep over the loss of three of her sons, who had passed away in quick succession.

Before Mataji was born Her mother repeatedly dreamt (5 or 7 times) that the goddesses Kali and Durga had come to stay in her house. There were other strange features, ever increasing in number and variety. But nothing could make Didima feel conceited or superior to others. She is, what she has always been, the hand maiden of the Lord. May we be blessed with her saintly company for many years to come.

MOTHER

A Symbol of Higher Life for Man

Gangacharan Das Gupta.

When we sit before mother we feel we are dwelling in a Divine atmosphere of peace and repose. She sits like the morning Star heralding a new dawn in the East. We move freely, breathe freely. All the cares of our worldly life drop away for the time being. The whole outlook of our life undergoes a "Sea change into something rich and strange", * in the warm Mediterrane of Her Mind.

With filmy eyes and yet with a heart full of humility and devotion we watch Mother's ways. We realise She has drawn us very close to Her and the welfare of each one of us is Her great concern. When She talks, Her words shed a Divine grace and lead us away from the dirt and smoke of our material life.

Her voice is soft, low, mellow in timbre like that of a violoncello it; wafts us away to regions where the forces of Heaven mould human destiny, where we cease to feel ourselves as isolated units, where,

with invisible ties, all beings feel united in one Composite Being-God. We come to live beyond the petty restrictions of our selfish daily routine. Her life radiates the glory, the joy of serving One Master who pervades all creation.

Those of us who feel life burdensome and bitter to the point of tears, find great relief in Her presence, when we notice in Her a child-like, tender quality, always eager to listen to our woes and cares and to give aid whenever needed. Her words act as a balm to our lacerated hearts. It then becomes as clear as daylight how poisonous and foolish and petty were our squabbles for individual little happiness in the face of the menacing events of the present age. Her smiles at the corner of Her tender and sharp lips indicate Her great sympathy for our follies and errors as men. She points out with unerring fingers that our only path of escape lies in and through God. Compassion for suffering souls produces a moist glitter in Her eyes, while Her hair tied on Her

* Shakespeare — The Tempest.

head in a knot with stray curls fluttering and breaking away from it gives Her a look of the Mother Divine.

The way She talks to Her children will be best illustrated by a few extracts from a diary of one of her devotees.

1. This is the English Translation of the gist of a conversation in Bengali between an old man and Mother :—

Etawa, 15-9-50.

Q. — Mataji, Is a Vision of God possible in these days ?

Ma.— Why in these days ? It has always been possible.

Q — I mean direct vision with our eyes.

Ma.—A vision as clear as daylight. There is no doubt about it. It is His Nature; if you call Him, He is ever ready to appear. He manifests Himself clearly; it is on this account that there goes a saying that Bhagawan (God) is at the disposal of His Bhakta (devotee). It is the nature of a living being to create life. So human soul is called *Jivatma* and not *Paramatma*. *Jiva* moves in a closed curve of birth and death. In a stagnant pool germs of life thrive and these develop into living beings. Strain that water through a filter and it will be pure. But there was pure water at first and

it becomes pure again. So *Jivatma* is in nature *Paramatma*. It is *Atma* all along before and after.

. The belief that God does not exist in you is the chain by which the *Jiva* is bound: it is the smoke-screen called *Maya*, that covers your real Self. Remove it and God will stand revealed in all His glory.

Pitaji, there is no peace in the world. You get just a drop of happiness in your family life and your face beams with joy. When it is gone there come sorrow and doubt and despair. A child is born and there are shouts of joy. When it passes away, darkness clouds our mind. All our joys have turned into mourning. Pain and pleasure go together like your body and its shadow. Such is human life !

How to avoid this dilemma ; this swinging of the pendulum, between happiness and misery ? You lose yourself in the little happiness you obtain in your worldly life but care not at all to discover the source from where all happiness springs — which is called Supreme Bliss (প্রমানন্দ). How long will you move in a vicious circle in this way ? Choose one line of action. Can you hope to have all the enjoyments of the world and capture at the same time, the supreme source of joy by living a worldly life ?

But there must be a way to find the source of supreme happiness. You all desire it. *Ananda* is the very essence of your life; you are by nature immortal and pure; intelligence (*ज्ञान चित्*) is the sole basis of your being.

You don't want ignorance and affliction, nor decay and death, because you are by nature their opposite. You don't desire what you possess already. But the course of events in the world gives a different turn to your life and this causes your pain and despair. You are not asked to retire to the forest or to become inert, unresponsive like a stone to what goes on about you.

You have to start your life from the position God has placed you in. Be His servant. If you repair to the forest let your mind feel that it is your own home for the time being. From there the way will be open to higher life. Look upon your child as *Balgopal* (Sri Krishna in His Childhood), your little daughter as *Kumari Uma*, your wife as *Griha Lakshmi*. Don't do any harm to anybody. Let the little attachment you have developed to people about you, continue within its minimum limit. When the call will come for your final exit, all the ties of life will have to be snapped up and you won't have a moment's delay. Why do you weep? Judge it your-

self this world is but a *Dharmasala* (Traveller's inn). We meet people there who are on the way. The goal of your final re-union is the *Atma* or Self. Forgetting this, you look upon your body as your own self and that is the root of all bondage, of all the miseries of life. This world means perpetual motion; you yourself are in the chains of the Ego. So you want to know your birth-right. You desire to be free, to throw off your chains. Try to enquire from where you have come. When there is serious disorder in the body, the thought of your son, wife, friend or brother vanishes. You are engrossed with the sole idea of saving yourself. So you find that your self or soul is the highest object of your love. Self is none other than Ram who dwells in every one of you. Lower animals pass their lives enjoying only food and sleep. But how do you pass your days as a rational being?

Just as there is a veil of ignorance over you all, there is also a way of escape. Gird up your loins and say, "I must try my best to find a way out." This will-to-be-free is your sheet anchor. "God is and I must find Him" should be the motto of your life. See that not a single breath be wasted in the pursuit of this aim. What you spend after things of the world is a sheer waste.

Hari Bhajan or worship of God is choosing one line of action, one way that would lead you to His presence. It does not mean that there is only one way. You can go to the station from every house in the locality. What is important is to stick fast to one way and march. Let truth be your refuge. For God is Truth. Abide by Truth in all ways of life and God will stand revealed. He is Truth, Intelligence and Beauty. You have such a lovely body; God forbid that such an asset be not wasted with the poison of the feeling of enjoyments of the world !

Mother continued, - "This little girl of yours, Pitaji, implores you all to choose one way, here and now. You must not nibble away your time in idle pursuits. Trust not a single breath of your life. It may pass away any moment. At all times think of Him. This will give you peace. When we desire little things of the world, we obtain them easily. But in your quest for Him, don't expect anything from Him, except His Grace. He is One, Indivisible, Perfect, - the one goal of all men."

Here Mother narrated a parable in Her own exquisite way :—

There was a great devotee. He spent years in prayers, but could not get a vision of God. Full of grief

and despair, he decided to tour about the country, but kept up the spirit of search after God. 'The more I shall labour for Him', though the 'The more His unfailing mercy will destroy all obstacles in my path'. He developed such concentration of mind that the remembrance of the Divine came to him without any effort.

He soon met a fellow traveller. The two started together on this journey. On the next evening they came to the mansion of a house-holder who entertained them lavishly with food and drink served in golden vessels. They informed the host that before dawn they would be away and would not meet him. So before they left at dawn the stranger companion stole one golden cup. This caused some surprise to the devotee, who asked the companion, "Is this the reward for such hospitality ?" The reply was prompt, - "You do your work, let me do mine."

Next they went to the house of another person on their way to another village. They were driven out from every house of the village. Some said, "Both of you are stout and strong ; why don't you work and earn your living ?" Both were suspected of being thieves or dacoits. However, with great difficulty they were given shelter for the night in a corner of

the cow-shed. Before dawn when they left that place, the said stranger companion left the golden cup in the cow-shed.

The devotee felt some relief, they retired for the night to the house of a pious worshipper of *Ramji*. The husband and wife with a baby, few months old, were the only inmates. Both the guests were cordially entertained. But when they left before dawn, the associate of the devotee throttled the baby to death. The devotee expressed horror at the strange conduct of his companion. At this the latter replied as before, "You do your work, let me do mine."

The devotee seriously thought of shunning the company of the stranger, when they got to a river-crossing. There arrived a young handsome boy with a letter in his hand. On seeing him the heartless companion of the devotee hacked the lad to pieces. This was too much for the devotee. He screamed out, — "You must be a demon in a man's shape. Get away from me."

But the fellow traveller said in a calm and unruffled voice :— "I stole a gold cup in the first village. Because all persons in that village were so lavish in their hospitality to the *Sadhus*; was a great snare and harmful to their spiritual uplift;

it fostered a love of show amongst the house holders too. To all saints there is no difference between gold and a clot of earth. But my theft of the golden cup would make them change their conduct towards ordinary *Sadhus* who should shun entertainments like poison.

"In the second village people were totally indifferent to *Sadhus*. Finding a gold cup as a reward for giving shelter to two *Sadhus* will lead them to change their attitude."

"In the third village, both the husband and the wife had almost reached their goal by the worship of *Ramji*. The attachment to the new born babe had drawn away half of their devotion away from *Ram*. With the child gone, the intensity of their *Vairagya* (non-attachment) to earthly objects, will increase a hundred fold.

"In the fourth case the boy was the son of the Chief Minister who was carrying a letter with instruction to kill the young prince about to succeed the king his father who only recently died. The minister was plotting against the life of the prince to instal his own son on the throne. In which case there would have been misrule and bloodshed, and many persons would have suffered in consequence."

The devotee was struck dumb with astonishment. When he requested

the stranger to disclose his identity, he replied — “I am your *Ista*— God for whose vision you have yearned so long. I have been with you all along watching the course of your life”.

After telling this story Mother

continued the thread of Her conversation. “Look here. No action, done from a good motive, is in vain. The fulfilment of his desires came to the devotee in this shape. What little you will do day after day will lead you on the goal and shorten your path.

MOTHER ANANDAMAYEE

(Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma, Ph. D.)

Mother Anandamayee is a standing miracle. It is difficult to understand how she can work for at least 20 hours a day for 365 days of the year without feeling any fatigue, how she can be in the midst of crowds of thousands of people eager to have her *darsana* throughout the day and for the major portion of the night without feeling disturbed or disgusted in the least, how she can manage with her crowded programme to find time to grant private interview to earnest seekers of truth and help each of them with her invaluable instructions, how she can retain the sweetness of her temper when giving replies to all sorts of questions which are very often irrelevant and profitless, how she although almost illiterate can give very satisfactory answers to the most difficult philosophical problems, and how she can keep a close watch over the affairs of the many Ashrams situated in different parts of India and direct them all without allowing herself to be touched by them.

Mother Anandamayee is a great

and strong personality. The simplest indication of her wish is a command to her devotees and it cannot be disobeyed. When all her intimate companions and devotees are perhaps expecting that she would take all of them with her when she is starting for a new place she tells them all on a sudden that she wishes to go all alone leaving behind even Gurupriya Devi, and nobody has the courage to entreat her to change her decision. She has never been found not to fulfil the word that she has given or to move an inch from her resolution. She attracts thousands of persons to her side every day who do not know what they would gain by going to her or rather do not care to think about that at all but they feel that they must go.

Mother has the simplicity of a child and sometimes she talks like an unsophisticated village girl. Her sweet voice, the manner in which she speaks, and her gestures leave no doubt about her sincerity. When she says, 'This body does not tell a lie. Believe that no

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action goes in vain. Recite the name of God as often as you can. God is watching you and listening to your utterances. As God is Infinite, he wants unending and continuous remembrance, ceaseless meditation without any gap, from his worshippers and devotees. See that there may not be any gap, any break, in your worship. Have a fixed time for thinking, for meditating. It may be only for 15 minutes or for ten minutes; but see that there is no break, no discontinuity and you do it every day." She says it in such a manner, with such directness and force, that it is difficult even for

the atheist or the agnostic and the sceptic not to accept her at her words.

The peculiar charm of the Mother lies in her transcendent smile. One who has once observed the smile can never forget it in one's life. The smile expresses that the things of the world which men are ordinarily attracted to, have no permanent worth and are all evanescent and fleeting, and it also shows that only the Absolute, the Eternal Reality, is of lasting value. The smile indicates that men should ignore the world and be drawn towards the Infinite.

NOTES & COMMENTS

To resume our brief report of Mother's movements since the last issue. Mother had gone to Brindaban after Shivaratri Festival at the request of Shri Hari Baba on the occasion of the Holi festival celebrated there with a varied programme of Satsang, Kirtan, etc. lasting for a month. She stayed there till 5th March when She returned to Banaras. Basanti Puja (the original worship of Durga in spring) was celebrated as in other years at the Banaras Ashram from March 22 to 25. It was after several years that Mother happened to be at Banaras during this function. Her presence there drew a large number of devotees and visitors to the Ashram, reminding one of the gaiety, animation and the devotional mood of the Dashera, though on a smaller scale. At the instance of Raja Durga Singh of Solan, the reading of the sacred text of 'Devi Bhagavata' by several Pandits to be completed in nine days (Navaha Patha') was organised on the occasion. A popular exposition of the text was given daily in the afternoon to the assembled persons. As readers are aware, the 'Devi Bhagavata' gives an account of the various incarnations of

Shakti or the Divine Mother as the 'Srimad Bhagavat' does of those of Vishnu.

Basanti Puja was followed immediately after by the Geeta Jayanti celebrations which culminated on the 29th March. For the past few years these celebrations have been conducted under the inspired lead and guidance of Sri Gopal Thakur of Allahabad.

* * *

Mother left Banaras on 14th April and went to Calcutta. She stayed for four days (from 15th to 19th April) in a room specially constructed for Her by a devotee of Calcutta not far from Dum Dum Aerodrome. From there She went to Puri on the 19th and after a short stay there, She returned to Banaras on the 24th April. On 29th April, Mother left for Hardwar and although Mother's movements are always uncertain, She is expected to stay there till the beginning of June.

* * *

Mother's 58th Birthday celebrations are being held at Hardwar this year under the auspices of the

Sangha. These celebrations began on 2nd May and will culminate on the 1st June when the Tithi-Puja will be performed between 3 and 4 A. M. in the presence of Bhaktas and devotees congregated there from all quarters for the purpose.

We offer our humble and respectful homage to Mother on this auspicious occasion with the prayer that She may, out of Her Infinite grace and Pity, lead all humanity and creation to light and peace by awakening their true nature and the Divine in them. That as we see it is the sole object of Her advent. Beings such as She have no 'Samskaras' of their own to work out; they assume the human form only for the sake of universal welfare. We recall what She has often declared that it is our needs and prayers that have

brought Her body here, that it moves and acts only in response to our wishes and desires, that it is as a drum which gives out sounds as it is beaten. So far as She is concerned, Mother says that She is and has been ever the same : birth, childhood etc. have made no difference at all. To speak of Her birth therefore and celebrate Her birthday in the conventional sense is meaningless. Her birth is for us that we may be born into Immortality and Truth. Let us therefore unite in our prayer that She may purge each of us out of our weaknesses and ignorance, take us out of our petty desires and selves and make us fit children of Immortality and Light. Let the Divine Mother be born in each of us and become for us the only living reality. Let our 'I' and 'we', die. It is only then that our Birthday celebration of Mother will prove fruitful and fulfil its object.