



ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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*The Eternal, the Ātman—
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality
Self contained—THAT is all in One.*

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“Practice, practice ! Through the practice of spiritual disciplines the heart will be purified and a new realm will open. You will realize that God alone is real and that everything else is unreal. But when through japa and meditation a little awakening comes, donot imagine you have achieved the end. Light ! More Light ! Onward ! Attain God ! Gain His vision ! Talk to Him !”

Swami Brahmananda
(Rakhal Maharaj)

* * * * *

“To live from moment to moment means to be conscious of your immortality. Feel always that you are the supreme undying Reality, and the circumstances and affairs that seek to involve you are passing phases of life over which it is not worth while to worry.

This is possible when you have surrendered your little self to the higher Self completely.

Swami Ramdas

SRI SRI MA'S UTTERANCES

(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Vol. I & II)

Once a student of the Medical College came to see Mataji. She asked him : "Did you come by horse-carriage ?" He said : "No, I walked. I avoid going by horse-carriage because to give trouble to the horse is a sin." Mataji said : "Look, to travel by horse-carriage is no sin, because just as you have been born to do certain kinds of work, and if you don't do it your karma will not be exhausted, so if someone gives you the opportunity to accomplish this work it is for your good. A horse cannot study medicine. By drawing carriages it fulfils its destiny. Therefore man should provide the chance for the horse to do this work. It is necessary for everyone to fulfil his particular duty.

* * *

One should decide to observe purity in every respect and to eat frugally at least one day every week. Gradually the number of days for living in this manner may be increased.

* * *

It is fitting, without paying attention to praise or blame, to carry out your work exactly in the right manner. If you are so concerned with outer things you cannot concentrate on your work.

Patience is the most indispensable part of *sādhana*. Be anchored in patience.

* * *

It is necessary to sit perfectly still in one place and to concentrate when engaging in spiritual practice.

* * *

Our unit is "one". We walk step by step, we eat mouthful by mouthful, we write one letter at a time, and so on and so forth.

* * *

Keep yourself in readiness, so that when the work is to start you will be able to do it.

* * *

Carry out without arguing whatever I say. Be certain that it is for your best.

* * *

Sri Sri Ma's explanation of the Gayatri: Let us contemplate the splendour of the Parabrahman, the All-knowing dweller in the heart, Him who constantly creates, sustains and destroys; who exists in all forms, who enlightens our intelligence.

* * *

Exactly in keeping with his actions everyone reaps the fruits. God's grace is also received according to one's karma.

* * *

It has to be admitted that everything happens as the result of one's actions. As anyone acts so he reaps the fruit. However, at a certain stage the aspirant becomes aware of God's grace. Then he declares that nothing at all happens without Grace,

Patience is the most indispensable part of *sādhana*. Be anchored in patience.

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Exactly in keeping with his actions everyone reaps the fruits. God's grace is also received according to one's karma.

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It has to be admitted that everything happens as the result of one's actions. As anyone acts so he reaps the fruit. However, at a certain stage the aspirant becomes aware of God's grace. Then he declares that nothing at all happens without Grace,

But in actual fact it is due to the results of his own actions that he has earned the privilege to become the recipient of Divine Grace.

* * *

Whatever happens is ultimately for the best.

* * *

By the performance of service and japa the householder and the housewife practise *sādhana*.

* * *

Two meals a day are necessary to keep the body fit. Similarly the remembrance of God and spiritual exercises have to be practised without fail with great regularity every morning and evening. Further, just as you drink water or eat pan or fruit in between, it is necessary to remember God as often as one possibly can or to repeat His name. This will also be a help on the spiritual path.

“Seek not that everything should happen as you wish ; but wish for everything to happen as it actually does happen, and you will be serene.”

—*Epicetus*

MĀTRI SATSANG

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

(Translated from Bengali)

Samyam Saptaha at Sri Sitaram Jaipuria's, Kanpur,

November 13th, 1958.

Question : What is the necessity for a *Samyam Saptaha* ?

Mataji : Why have you come here all the way from Calcutta ?

Questioner : Here only discourses on the paths of knowledge (*jñāna*) and devotion (*bhakti*) are held, but nobody even mentions the path of action (*karma*).

Mataji : Whatever is being said by anybody here, all relates to action. Whatever is being advised or done in order to realize God is all action of one kind or another.

At this juncture a devotee started reciting the *praṇāma mantra* for Ma :

“Bhavatāpa pranāśinyā ānandaghana mūrtayaye !

Jñāna bhakti pradāyinyei mātastubhyam nāmo namaha !!”

(“O Mother that destroys the suffering of life in the world, who art the embodiment of supreme bliss and who grants us knowledge and devotion, salutations to Thee again and again.”)

To destroy the agony of worldly life, which you are doing, is indeed the most excellent work of all.

Mataji : What is the purpose of doing work ?

Questioner : Work can lead to knowledge and devotion and by working karma will be fulfilled. But here most discourses are on knowledge and devotion. Nobody even men-

tions that by action liberation can be attained. In the Sri Sri *Candi* it is said : "*Samsāra bandha hetuśch śaiva sarveśvareśvarī.*" So work may lead to bondage as well as to liberation.

Mataji : What is your own opinion ?

Questioner : Will you please tell us your views !

Mataji : A small child is first of all taught the alphabet. Then he or she starts on his or her studies. What is the objective ? To understand the meaning of whatever book is being read. The rules and regulations of the *Samyam Saptaha* have been laid down by the *Riṣis* and *Munis*. *Samyam* means to go out on the pilgrimage to your own true Nature. Just as someone becomes a doctor by studying medicine or an engineer by studying engineering—(their objective is merely the acquisition of knowledge and its enjoyment)—so have the sages laid down the principles for leading a life of self-restraint.

Question : Don't you agree that *samyam* may become successful through action ?

Mataji : What kind of success ?

Questioner : Successful action.

Mataji : You people know what is written in your *Śāstras*. But this body talks in a topsy-turvy fashion. What is called action (*karma*) and what non-action or wrong action (*akarma*) ? The action that is helpful to the contemplation of God, to *japa* and the remembrance of Him is real action and all else is non-action or wrong action (*akarma*). To realize one's Self is to realize God and to realize God is to realize one's own Self. To undertake

the pilgrimage that leads to the realization that God is eternal in Himself and eternally manifested is called *satkarma* (right action). Everything else is *akarma* (worthless action). Total effort to realize God is real action. But you will have to transcend both *karma* and *akarma* and go beyond action. It is the bounden duty of a human being to engage in *satkarma* (action directed towards God). For this purpose a disciplined life is necessary. *Satkarma* alone is man's destined work. *Satkarma* has to be performed in order to open the lock. A lock indicates separation, therefore there is actually no such thing as a lock. Action that results in loosening man's bondage is real action and whatever results in strengthening his bondage is wrong action (*akarma*).

Question : In the Gītā it says :

*“Jñānāgni sarvakarmāni bhasmāt kuruterjuna !
Prakṛtim yānti bhūtāni nigrah kim karisyati !!”*

(“The fire of true Knowledge reduces all actions to ashes. Beings follow nature ; what shall restraint avail ?”)

If both the wise and the foolish are dancing to the tune of their inherent natures, what power does man possess ?

Mataji : The fire of real Knowledge reduces to ashes action prompted by passion.

Question : Is this correct from the point of view of Vedanta philosophy ?

Mataji : What has been said is in fact based on the philosophy of Vedanta. If one's natural instincts have remained, then what has the fire of true Knowledge burnt to ashes ?

Question : It is also said in the *Gitā* :

“*Sadriṣam cheṣṭate svasyā prakṛterjñānavānapi*”

Even the man of knowledge is led by his natural instincts.

Mataji : Baba knows everything, but he wants to sound this little girl, so he asks questions in a round about manner. He calls this child “Ma” and has made her sit on a pedestal. This is an expression of his love and respect.

Questioner : You are our Mother and we have all come to you.

Mataji : You have come to your own Self—having gone to one’s enemy he is punished by being regarded as one’s own. You are yourselves playing the instrument and are listening to the playing. This little girl always maintains that whatever anyone may say from whatever angle of vision is correct from his standpoint. He can only express what he perceives. Whatever he experiences at any particular point he keeps on stating. God is Himself manifesting in his line.

Something has to be said—you will probably laugh ! Just as you exist within yourself as your son and daughter, so everything is contained within you in a similar manner as there are an infinite number of seeds in a tree and therefore endless trees are potentially contained within those numberless seeds. In the tiny seed is contained infinite manifestation and infinite non-manifestation, infinite movement and infinite stability. If someone declares that the tree is different from the seed, he may say so. And if someone says something else, let him say it. The veil of ignorance causes conflict and

dispute—and so does darkness. Where conflict is there is sorrow and where sorrow reigns there will be death. So long as the concealing cover is not removed—whether by the path of knowledge (*jñāna*) or of devotion (*bhakti*) or of action (*karma*)—so long as God is not revealed, darkness and dispute are bound to persist. Some people ask, who is God? God is whatever you say He is, whether with form (*sākāra*) or without form (*nirākāra*). God manifests in all forms and in all modes of being. It is man's duty to engage in *sādhanā*, worship, reading of Scriptures and so on, to realize his own Self.

14th November, 1958.

Question : Will God be realized by observing this *samyam* week ?

Mataji : Are not all these Mahātmās speaking to you daily ?

Question : I fail sometimes during meditation.

Mataji : You have not practised *Samyam* at a young age and therefore you cannot bear its rigour. Hence you experience failure during meditation, yet you must not give up *japa* and meditation. Even if you experience a downfall when observing sustained self-restraint, you will again be lifted up.

Question : Will you yourself (*apni*) lift us up ?

Mataji : It is your own Self (*apni*) that lifts you up. Just as a small child falls down when trying to stand but rises again and again and

gradually learns to walk. It is not right to be afraid of a fall. Even if you do happen to fall, start all over again. Some ask : why practise self-restraint ? To drive out indiscipline, to raise up those who have fallen. Your whole life you have spent without discipline, hence it has been particularly full of pain and misery. It is imperative to live a disciplined life so that it may be revealed and realized that God Himself is urging you to advance towards Supreme Bliss, unalloyed happiness, the bliss of the Self.

Question : What does one gain from the *Samyam Saptah* ?

Mataji : Bābā, self-restraint is the one and only road of life, you will have to become disciplined.

Question : Can this be achieved by observing *samyam* for one week every year ?

Mataji : After practising *samyam* for one week, you must observe its rules throughout your life.

Question : So, by arranging for the *samyam* week you are giving us a sample, as it were ? (Everyone laughs.)

Mataji : In a life without self-restraint there is nothing but sorrow. *Duniyā* (world) means living in duality.* Therefore there is conflict, grief and death. Immortality is in fact your nature, you are the children of the Immortal. You are *Ātmārāma*, you are the Lord's eternal servant ; to realize this, to realize one's own Self, to know by direct experience that there is only one Brahman without a second, it is absolutely essential to live a life of self-restraint.

* *Duniyā* world. Du two, *niyā* based on. A play upon words.

Through *samyam* innumerable virtues will come to light. In fact, God Himself will be revealed, either God-with-form (*sākāra*) or God without form (*nirākāra*).

Question : In this *samyam saptaha* most of the talks deal with the formless and attributeless. Much less is being said about God with form and attributes.

Mataji : The *Mahātmās* talk both of the Supreme Being with form and attributes as well as about Non-duality. Continue to listen to what they say and try to understand it. Whatever they say is all right. By the mercy of the *Mahātmās* and their speeches further questions will arise which will also be resolved satisfactorily.

Question : How can the Vedas be explained to a child that does not even know the alphabet ?

Mataji : I want to ask you a question : you yourself tell what you consider proper and what not !

Question : God with form and attributes is sitting here right in front of us. Hence the speeches should be about our Divine Beloved (*Iṣṭa*) in whom we have implicit faith.

Mataji : He who truly experiences that God with forms and attributes is sitting in front of him will never harbour this kind of attitude of mind. One who has had the vision of God will speak sweet and gentle words. Your mind is obviously attracted by Divinity with forms and qualities, others prefer the One without form and attributes. This body observes that all kind of subjects are being presented here. Everyone may accept what is to his liking. Here the path of devotion is being expounded as well as the philosophy of *advaita*, the

Vedas are being recited and kirtan is also being sung. Whatever is to anyone's taste should be selected by him. The same does not appeal to every person. Inclinations and disinclinations vary.

Question : What can be done to make faith firm ?

Mataji : Try to take in what the Mahātmās are telling you.

Question : In the Rāmāyana it is said that Bhushundi became a crow by the curse of Rishi Lomash. If one has no faith in God-with-form, how can one develop faith in the One ?

Ma : You know that this little girl talks in a higgledy-piggledy fashion. Here it is fitting for everybody to think : he who is my Guru is the Guru of the whole world and my Divine Beloved is the Beloved of the whole world and the *Iṣṭa* of the world is my *Iṣṭa*. There cannot be two, there is only the One. Try to look upon your Guru or *Iṣṭa* in this light. Whatever anyone says is correct in his particular place, at his particular stage or state.

A Mahatma : In this particular case Bhushundi the crow was full of egotism.

Question : Is it right to worship God in a particular deity or is it not ?

Mataji : Mahatmas do say so. He who has faith in a deity may follow his inclination and he who believes in the Attributeless can advance along this line. *Iṣṭa* (Beloved) is called he who can never do any harm. He who has received a mantra from his Guru or *Iṣṭa* can perform japa and obey the instructions of his Guru. *Sādhanā* should be

engaged in precisely as the Guru prescribes. God is supremely gracious and full of mercy. God has infinite names, infinite attributes, infinite forms. With great regularity practise *japa* of God's name. By clinging steadfastly to His name God will manifest. He who has not yet found a Guru and has not yet been initiated should repeat whatever Name appeals to him most. By sustained practice of the Name, the longing for a Guru will awaken and faith and devotion will increase. When his yearning grows so intense that he feels he can no longer remain without a Guru, then the Guru will certainly appear before him.

Some people say they don't feel inclined to repeat God's name. Formerly there were four *āśramas* (stages of life)—the *Brahmacharya Ashram*, *Grihasthashram*, *Vanaprastha Ashram* and *Samnyāsa Ashram*. In those times life during Brahmacharya Ashram was strictly regulated and disciplined. Ashram means where there is no *shrama* (toil, forced labour). After life as a brahmachari, one entered the *grihasthashram*, but some would, after the brahmacharya ashram take straightaway to the *samnyāsa ashram*. One must pursue the life of *sāadhanā* with the utmost steadfastness.

Without leading a life of self-restraint one cannot know the extent of one's faith. When pursuing a life dedicated to the Supreme Quest, it is God's wonderful dispensation that in some aspirants faith, devotion, knowledge and the power to act along these lines are automatically developed.

This body says that all of you who are sitting or standing here are images (*vigrahas*) of God Himself. "Wherever my glance falls, there Sri Krishna is beheld." Rāma, Krishna, Mā, Śiva are indeed all one. You have all gathered together for this *Samyam Vrata*. It is fitting that you should learn here to lead a life of self-control and discipline. Just as you get spotted with ink if you go into an ink-room, or smell of sandal if you stay in a room feel of sandalwood, so sitting in the presence of Mahātmās while engaging in japa and meditation is the means to enhance your faith and devotion.

Everywhere is God and none but He. Invoke Him, call Him by any name that you like best. Just as you are father, son and husband in one person, so are all names God's own names. Meditate, practise japa, bow down to God, read the Gita regularly every day. And also—go and sit under a tree. Do you understand ?

Question : What sort of a tree ? A peepal tree ? (Everybody laughs)

Mataji : "Under a tree" means at the feet of Mahātmās. Just as when you sit under a tree it bestows on you not only shade and shelter but also gives itself in the shape of fruit, so also if you take refuge with Mahātmās they give you shelter, peace and their own selves, in the form of *Ātmā-jñāna* (knowledge of the Self).

There is one *jīvātmā*, when held in bondage it is called *jīva* ; and where there is continuous motion this is called the world. A *mahātmā* is

called he who is ever advancing towards the Great (*mahān*) and *Paramātmā* is the supreme *Ātmā* reposing within Itself. What will be the gain from seeking *satsang* with *Mahātmās*? All that is good in you, your nobler qualities and tendencies will thereby be enhanced.

Question : Two days of the *Samyam Saptaha* have passed. Five days remain. We are children. Please point out our mistakes to us so that in the five remaining days we may commit no further errors. Ma, please tell us what you have observed !

Mataji : You have to play the instrument. Having come here you are listening to the sound of your own playing—one listens to one's own playing.

(To be continued)

God has many ways of drawing us to Himself. He sometimes hides Himself from us : but faith alone, which will not fail us in time of need, ought to be our support and the foundation of our confidence which must be all in God.

—**Brother Lawrence**

TEN APHORISMS OF MA

AS UNDERSTOOD BY ME

Anil Ganguli

“Rain water flowing down from a terrace through spouts shaped grotesquely like tiger heads appears to come through the mouths of the animals, but in reality it descends from the sky ; so also the holy teachings that come out of the mouths of godly men seem to be uttered by them but in truth they come from God Himself.”

—**Ramakrishna Paramahansa**

The quintessence of Ma's message to mankind is epitomized in a nutshell in a number of aphorisms that have spontaneously welled out of Her in colloquial Bengali. Mostly enigmatic, these aphorisms cannot be easily understood even by Bengalis, because Ma does not bother herself about the dictionary or rules of logic, grammar or syntactic composition. They are not quotations but revelations enunciating important principles of supreme spiritual value. Invariably in conformity with the truths revealed to the seers of ancient India, Ma's sayings derive their authority from the inexhaustible fountain of Eternal Truth. These are conclusive. Ma's aphorisms have a completeness within the smallest compass, as if rubbed and polished to perfection. They are cut out in the mould of the mantras of the *Upanishads*.

Before attempting to explain the typical aphorisms of Ma, it is to be noted that not one of these sayings—seemingly jargon-like—can be grasped, far less explained, without *sādhana* and spiritual experience. Admittedly, I have little of the former and less of the latter. If I still venture to write on this difficult and delicate subject, it is because during the last thirty-four years I have, from time to time, been fortunate enough to hear a lot thereon in course of informal conversation with Ma in homely surroundings. What emanated from Her was, quite often, in answer to silly and superficial questions tolerated by Her with patience and sympathy bordering on indulgence. Fully aware of my limitations, I earnestly desire to communicate to the reader the conclusions arrived at by me, whatever their worth.

First Aphorism

“*Jā tā*” (Whatsoever—that)

Questions often arise as to What is Supreme Truth? Who is It or He? What is It? How is It? Ma’s short and simple answer is: “*Jā tā*”. This aphorism disposes of all these questions in one stroke. It is extremely enigmatic. Apparently it conveys no sense and sheds no light whatsoever. Curiously enough, the saying has neither any verb nor any noun. It just consists of two pronouns without any noun preceding—a distinct breach of the accepted rules of grammar and composition. Again, judged by the criterion of the dictionary, the saying is absurd and sacrilegious if applied to

God—its English equivalent being “worthless”, “good-for-nothing”. Obviously, such a meaning can be rejected straightaway in the present context. The literal meaning of *Jā* is “What” and of *tā* is “that”. The expression *Jā tā*, in telegraphic style, has been translated variously as “That is what it is”, “That’s that” and “Whatsoever—that”. The last rendering appears to me the best. But a tautological gibberish like *Jā tā* is of little assistance to a spiritual aspirant. It seeks to explain one unknown quantity by equating it with another quantity, equally unknown. Such a mode of explanation is contrary to the standard canons of logic. Patently *Jā tā*—if it is a sentence at all—is grammatically incomplete and logically untenable. Indeed, it is baffling for the beginner. But let us not despair. Let us try to understand *Jā tā* in the light of other aphorisms of Ma if we want to make something out of what appears to be nothing.

Second Aphorism

*“Āchche ; nāi. Āchcheo nā, nāi o nā ; Tār o āge’
Jā bolo tāi.”*

“It is and it is not and neither is it nor is it not ; even beyond that. Whatever you say so is It”.

Like the first aphorism—*Jā tā*—, the second one, too lacks a noun but has the merit of containing a number of verbs which, however, only deepen the mystery—they are self-contradictory and utterly misleading. This aphorism, expressed in free English translation consists of six clauses as follows :

- (i) It or He is,
- (ii) It or He is not,
- (iii) Neither is It,
- (iv) Nor is It not,
- (v) Even beyond that,
- (vi) Whatever you say, so is It.

Let us first analyse and elucidate each of these six clauses. For the sake of convenience "It, or He" will now be referred to as "God".

Clause (i)

God is

The *prima facie* meaning of this clause is easy to understand. But it is not possible to prove the statement by any scientific method to the satisfaction of one determined not to believe.

Clause (ii)

God is not

This is the antithesis which directly contradicts clause (i)—it positively denies the existence of God. Popularly known as atheism, that is to say, disbelief in the existence of God, it goes a step further than even the Sankhya school of Hindu Philosophy which simply maintains that the existence of God remains unestablished in the absence of proof.

The extreme view expressed in clause (ii) is founded on Ma's teaching that there can be nothing which is not God, not even atheism; so God is comprehensive enough to bring within His all-embracing umbrella a votary of clause (ii) however

repelling his attitude may appear to one who believes in God.

The obvious contradiction between clause (i) and clause (ii) of the second aphorism is verily a melting pot. Naturally it appears to be fantastic to a critic who depends solely on his so-called intelligence. And Clauses (iii) and (iv) make the position worse—in fact, simply bewildering.

Clause (iii)

Neither does God exist :

This clause directly contradicts clause (i) and supports clause (ii).

Clause (iv)

Nor does God not exist :

Again, this clause directly contradicts clause (ii) and supports clause (i). Irreconcilable contradiction of this nature has been explained by Ma in a third aphorism which is based on the authority of the scriptures. Let us pause for a moment and consider this aphorism before taking up clauses (v) and (vi) of the second one.

Third Aphorism

“Āchche, nāi, Jār madhyeⁱ sambhava”

(‘Exists’ and ‘does not exist’ is possible only with reference to Him)

The position seems to be this : what appears to us to be a contradiction is due to our limited capacity to comprehend. We are bound by the concepts of time and space. God is not. God—

and God alone—is above contradictions. In Him are reconciled opposites such as existence and non-existence ; in Him are resolved all differences. The *Gītā* also says that the Supreme *Brahman* is neither existent nor non-existent.¹ And, according to the *Swetaswara Upanishad*, *Brahman* is :

“With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere” and again, “Without hands and feet he goes fast and grasps ; without eyes he sees ; without ears he hears”.²

A logically trained mind is apt to be confused by such contradictory statements. Ma’s priceless aphorisms only confirm and reiterate in Bengali the truths revealed to ancient seers.

Clause (v)

Beyond even that

This clause makes confusion worse confounded. It suggests that the first four clauses are not exhaustive and that one must go even beyond that. But then what is meant by ‘that’ ? In continuation of the line indicated by clauses (i) and (iv) or that by clauses (ii) and (iii) ? Alternatively, along each path, one after another, in succession ? In the further alternative, along some new path ahead, in supersession of those already specified ? Nothing is clear on these points. The mystery deepens. Then, what precisely is Ma’s message as to where such a path lies ? No where ? No, we need not be so cynical as all that. Clause (v) of the second

1 *Gita* XIII

2 *Swetaswara Upanishad* III/16, 19

aphorism, as I have understood it, is not to be construed to mean anything more than a stimulus to march onwards. Once the journey has been undertaken in right earnest, light would come from a source, hitherto unknown, to show the seeker the way in front and to warn him against obstacles to future progress. The source, asserts Ma, is within one's Self. And this is what seems to be embodied in clause (vi) of the second aphorism.

Clause (vi)

Whatever you say, so is God

Every seeker is bound by certain limitations. To him the limitless God is, according to this clause, as he considers Him to be. Let us take the example of the limitless sky. Even the immense ocean can reflect only a small portion of the sky. Necessarily it is limited to the dimensions of the ocean below. A tank is also the proud recipient of a comparatively smaller portion of the sky; so also a tiny cup of water. The ocean, the tank and the cup of water can see the sky, each in its own way and the experience helps realization of some truth about the sky, though not the whole truth.

Clause (vi) reminds us that we are born to have a glimpse of the sky and we should straightaway make a beginning with whatever experience of God is available to each of us—be our capacity comparable to that of the ocean or the tank or the tiny cup of water. In any event, let us not despair. This clause inspires the seeker, perhaps frustrated hitherto, to feel that he is justified—even in

'creating' his own God and need not accept a God prescribed for him by somebody else. Without feeling disturbed or condemned, he forges ahead with greater fervour and with buoyant optimism.

Thus, the final clause of the second aphorism is unique, because it offers endless alternatives, one or the other of which is bound to be within the reach, and acceptable to every seeker, whatever be his spiritual status, intellectual capacity and emotional preference.

As a commentary of the first two aphorisms the following saying of Ma is worth quoting :

"He alone knows to whom He will reveal Himself under which form. By what path and in what manner He attracts any particular man to himself with great force is incomprehensible to the human intelligence. The path differs indeed for different pilgrims. To advance in the spirit means for everyone to tread his own path. One's own path is the path that leads to Self-realization, to the supreme, ultimate Goal itself.¹

This calls for deep meditation.

The main point of Ma's teaching is : There is only ONE and whatever exists or does not exist is of the ONE. Ma's first two aphorisms convey the inexpressible in a most perfect manner. 'Jā tā (Whatsoever—that), the shortest, seems to me to be the best. The second aphorism gives a comprehensive picture of 'Jā tā'.

Ma's message is all-embracing. It rules out the possible claim to monopoly on the part of any

1 *Matri Vani* Vol. II

particular school of thought to the exclusion of any other. It also allows every seeker to follow the track destined for him. Once a beginning is made along any path that appeals to him, Ma is always there to give guidance at the cross-roads so that he may reach the goal in due course in the fullness of time. The ultimate goal is common to all, however divergent the approach may be. It is not Ma's way to disturb any one's predilections or susceptibilities. At whatever point a particular aspirant may find himself, Ma sheds light on the path of his choice, enkindles more and more spiritual aspiration and encourages spontaneous flowering of the buds lying dormant in him.

Fourth Aphorism

"Jemon bajābe temoni sunbe"

(As you play, so you hear)

This aphorism is Ma's almost invariable answer to a common question as to Her identity and spiritual status. She compares Herself to a musical instrument and smilingly says :

"What you hear depends on how you play the instrument."

Thus, a violin gives out notes not of its own initiative but in response to strokes or vibrations received from outside and the music that is heard as a result depends on the skill of the player, the instrument remaining the same. Indeed, Ma is *Jā tā*.

Fifth Aphorism

“Jar Jemon bhāva tar temon lābha”

(As the approach, so the meed)

This aphorism is a supplement to the fourth. It is in line with the assurance of Lord Krishna : “As men approach me, so do I accept them”.¹

Ma adds that if the seeker comes one step towards God, God responds by coming ten steps towards the seeker.

It may not be out of place to give expression to some thoughts of mine arising out of the first five aphorisms as a whole in the light of Ma’s other sayings heard on different occasions.

Everything without exception is THAT, the ONE, who is also the MANY in different forms. God is generally believed to have created man. And man, observed a free-thinker, paid back the compliment by “creating” God. The God of an ant is, perhaps, a perfect ant and of an elephant a perfect elephant (assuming that the ant and elephant have the necessary power of imagination to “create” a God). Like some narrow-minded and sectarian human beings, the ant and the elephant may each claim that it and it alone is right and everybody else wrong. God Almighty, perhaps, smiles with indulgence. Ma’s teaching is : such a human being, such an ant and elephant —each is individually right from his particular point of view but wrong to the extent he dogmatically asserts that everybody holding a different opinion is wrong. All controversies of this nature

1 *Gita* IV/11

