

"Of Thee alone must be the spoken word,
All else is but futility and pain."

MATRI VANI*

(*Replies to letters from different people at different times.*)

How to Meet Adversity and Danger

10.

No two days pass alike. Do not allow yourself to be overpowered by despair. Have complete trust in Him in spite of everything — to Him you should call out, whether surroundings make it easy or not. If you have fallen to the ground, use it as a spring-board to raise yourself up again, for it is man's duty to exert himself, no matter what he undertakes.

11.

Misfortune must not be looked upon as a disaster: it would be a sin to do so, for Who sends the misfortune? What *He* does is all-beneficial. Under no circumstances, however adverse, should man accept defeat.

"Gurudeva, you do only what is for my real well-being," keep this thought ever with you. In this world there are bound to be all sorts of troubles. If you have lost wealth and position, let them be gone. Pray to God only for the lives of your family.

*Mother's Words.

12.

At all times let patience be your stronghold. Say to yourself: "Lord, everything Thou doest is for the highest good!" Pray for the power of endurance. Nothing happens that is not an expression of God's Grace: verily, all is His Grace.

Anchored in patience, bearing everything, abide by His Name and live joyously.

13.

What else can be expected from this world, whose very nature is constant flux; times are never the same. To live in time is to be bound by it — by death.* If you do not rise above time, how can you escape the clutches of death? Had time not swallowed up the moment that brought you such acute distress and agony, would any life be left in your body? This is the way of the world. What you have experienced continually happens to every family in one form or another. Console yourself with the thought that this is how the world is fashioned.

When one resides in a country not one's own, how can one possibly evade the hardships that are a foreigner's lot? Your motherland is where there is no question of distress and sorrow, of violence and hatred, of alienism, neither of the opposites of light and darkness.

The endeavour to find Himself in his real home, in his true nature, is the sole duty of man. Courage and steadiness is what is required.

Consolation in Bereavement.

1.

It is the will of the Almighty that prevails at all times, verily is the law of creation. 'World' means a ceaseless round of sor-

*Here Mother plays upon words. *Kala* means both 'time' and 'death.'

temporary happiness and affliction : to experience this, man is born. Do you not see that the world is nothing but this in infinite variety ?

For him who has set out on this life's last journey with the name *Durga* on his lips, there should be no grief, no tears ; at any rate do your utmost. If weep you must, weep for God. Fortunate is he who breathes his last pronouncing God's Name. One must strive to keep one's mind ever concentrated on His Feet. Pray for the Guru's Grace and constantly remember His Lotus Feet.

2.

Such is the nature of the world. Girded with fortitude like a hero you must try to calm yourself. There simply is no hope of peace save in the contemplation of God. Let this be your firm conviction. It is man's duty under all circumstances to seek refuge in Him, by virtue of whose Law all things are wrought. Not to wail or pine for the physical presence of the departed should be your sole effort. This is a journey which everyone without exception has to take and it is necessary for each one to provide himself for the way. Those who have been received into His Arms should be abandoned entirely to His care.

Regard as the Supreme Being whomsoever you serve. Rely on Him absolutely.

The Fear of Ghosts and Evil Spirits.

1.

Where God's Name is, no ghost or evil spirit can exist, for His Name is the destroyer of all sorrow and sin. Cherish this Name ! Be sure to attend to your *japa* regularly morning and evening and ever let your thinking be pervaded by his Name. Make a special effort to understand and have faith that where His Name is there can be no danger or adversity of any kind.

2.

Do not give into your inclination to think about ghosts and apparitions; rather keep your mind solely on God's Name and meditate on Him. In the presence of His Name no other power can function. This is the truth, be firmly convinced of it. The moment you have recourse to God's Name you should feel that no other lesser power can touch you. If at that time you are aware of any physical anxiety, be quite certain that it is merely a bodily reaction.

3.

When he retires for the night he should repeat the Lord's Name and fall asleep with it. If he be afraid even then, let him place a sacred book like the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Chandi* or the *Rāmāyana* near his head. Besides he should unceasingly sustain the flow of God's Name and remember that where scriptures are, there is He Himself and no fear of any kind can exist in His Presence.

The Duties of a Brahmachari.

Those who attempt to be *Brahmacharis* or *Sadhus* must live a life of renunciation. Sloth, greed, fame, praise and impatience constitute serious obstacles. Taking great care to avoid them, all work should be done in a spirit of service. Furthermore the rules enjoined on *Brahmacharis* and *Sadhus* have to be given special attention. What might seem an offence in the eyes of others should not be pursued, nor what is likely to cause even the slightest harm to oneself.

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(4 *)

Question : So long as physical existence, which is the result of one's actions in former lives (*Prarabda*) † continues, must not at least a trace of ignorance be left over ?

Mataji : If everything can be consumed, cannot this trace be burnt up too ? At a certain stage of course a last vestige of ignorance does persist ; however there is a state where there is no question of it.

Question : It is said, a Realized Being remains in his body in response to the wishes of others on the basis of their *Prarabda*.

Mataji : One's own desire, another's desire and indifference — these terms certainly indicate the various kinds of bondage that desires represent. If, although one seems established in one's True Being (*Swarupa*), one can be touched by desire or its opposite, it is a sign that dependence in one direction or another still continues. Remember that where there is no sense of having a body, he who is under the spell of the physical, sees the body as a concrete fact. If you say after enlightenment the body will not survive, is embodiment then an obstacle to Supreme Wisdom (*Gyan*) ? Where the revelation of the Self is, there the problem of the body simply does not arise, for in that state there is no question of anyone or anything in particular.

Question : Since illumination can consume everything, it is only logical that the physical body should be consumed too ; some hold this theory.

Mataji : Most certainly the body will be consumed ; 'body' means what is subject to change, and this will be burnt up. It is as you say. When you hold to a theory you thereby commit yourself to a certain position

* The Bengali original appeared in "Ananda Varta" Vol. 2, No. 1.

† *Prarabda Karma* is that portion of one's past actions which is bound to fructify the present life and cannot be averted.

and you will be limited to it. But where the revelation of the Self is, the query whether the body survives or not, cannot possibly occur.

Question : What is 'Nitya Lila' (God's Eternal Play) ?

Mataji : What do you understand by 'Nitya' (eternal) ?

From the audience : That which cannot be affected by the states of waking, dreaming or deep sleep is called 'Nitya' (eternal); this is how I have heard it explained.

Someone else : Duality (*Dwaita*) and non-duality (*Advaita*) are both eternal, it is merely a matter of divergent angles of vision. When one allows for different points of view, then amidst this diversity the non-eternal will find a place.

Mataji : In the Supreme, in the Ultimate, when limited vision has disappeared, how can there be distinctions such as duality and non-duality ? He who inquires, perceives the two and there is likewise duality for him who practises *Sādhana* although he aims at Oneness. You must grasp the truth that He who is duality, is the One who is non-duality — just like water and ice.

A voice : Ice is not mere water, it is necessary to mix something else with the water to obtain ice.*

Mataji : No simile can be complete in every respect. Therefore in this case one's attention is focussed on the water which is melted ice.

A state exists where the distinction between duality and non-duality has no place. He who is bound by a particular angle of vision will speak from the stand-point which happens to be his at the time. But where *Brahman* is, the One-Without-A-Second, nothing else can possibly exist. You separate duality from non-duality because you are identified with the body, which means you are in a condition of constant wanting.

*This question was asked by a dweller of the Indian plains, where the temperature never sinks to freezing-point and he therefore was ignorant of the fact that ice is nothing but water; below a certain temperature.

†Here Mataji plays upon words: *deho*—body, and *'deo'*—the imperative of give.

Besides it has to be pointed out that, if through sense-perception of any kind or description, anything arises which is not THAT and THAT alone, then it is *avidya* (illusion). To say 'there is only one Vishnu', when you do not behold Him everywhere, what is the sense of it? Again whether you call it *Shabda Brahman** and therefore *Brahmā*, or whether you call it *Vishnu* or *Shiva*—these are only the various manifestations that are necessary at different states and stages. Thus all names are His Names, all forms His Forms, all qualities His Qualities, and the nameless and the formless are also He alone.

A state of being exists where it is immaterial whether He assumes a form or not — what is, is HE. In this case what is there to express in words? Furthermore at a certain level the Self may reveal Itself to Itself. At the same time He does not reveal Himself at all : to whom is He to reveal Himself? When there is neither form nor quality, what is to be put into language? Where nothing is excluded, how can Oneness be obstructed? In this state of complete poise nothing at all is any longer apart from Him, what is, is the THING ITSELF. So what can be said or left unsaid, since it is entirely beyond words! Obviously each one speaks from the level at which he finds himself, and whatever is uttered are His words, His song, addressed to Him. In the Supreme State nothing whatsoever can possibly be an obstacle : if it is, then ignorance has survived. In reality there is only He — He alone and nothing but He.

Suppose you have modelled a doll in butter ; whichever aspect of it you may survey, its shape, peculiarity or appearance, butter it remains and nothing but butter : it is one indivisible substance. If you try to split it up, its integrity will be lost, that is to say, division is out of the question.

What is called "*Nitya Lila*" means God playing with Himself. Where God is — His play can never be transient. He, the Almighty, engages His infinite *Lila*, His endless Play. Within the Infinite lies the finite and in the finite Infinity. He alone, He who is the SELF, He engages a play with Himself : this is called '*Nitya Lila*'. Viewed from this

* *Shabda Brahman* is the eternal sound which is the first manifestation of the Supreme Reality and which lies at the root of all subsequent creation.

stand-point, whatever is required at any level becomes manifested, for is it not the sphere of Pure Consciousness! Here even division partakes of the nature of Pure Consciousness, since it is transcendental. When you speak of non-duality (*Advaita*), is not the idea of duality implied? But in the realm of Pure Consciousness, if you say '*Maya* exists', so it does; and if you say 'there is no such thing as *Maya*', it is equally correct, for nothing can be excluded. Non-duality which cannot be conceived of, is as true as that which one is capable of conceiving, for all is HE, and so discord, doubt, dissension are not there. The false as such must vanish. How can one speak of *Advaita* and include individuals, the world? Since there is non-duality, can there still be individuals, can there still be the world? Where do these find a place? Where exclusively Oneness is, how can there be room left for the two? Furthermore is it not said: 'Wherever a living being is, there is *Shiva* and wherever a woman, there is *Shakti*.' From such a point of view you should now try to ponder over all this.

Albeit, whatever anyone may say from any standpoint, everything is always right, nothing can be outside of THAT. Whether you say there is or there is not the appearance of *Maya* — actually there is no place for speech. Using words or not, seeing or failing to see is merely a matter of angles of vision. On the other hand where THAT is, there can be no angles of vision. Problems are born through want of knowledge, due to the veil of ignorance. Until one is established in one's own Essential Being (*Swarupa*), it is natural that queries should arise.

In the realm of phenomena there are all kinds of differentiation such as 'above' and 'below'. But THERE — what is and what is not. Where ascent and descent can still be spoken of, what will you call such a state? Must you not admit that various directions have remained? If you speak of descent and ascent it is implied that there must be a place to descend to: but whither can He descend? To Himself alone of course. Ascending and descending are one and the same thing and He who ascends is He who descends, and the acts of ascending and descending are also He. Although *you* may well speak of Divine Descent, *He* surely does not become divided. You see fire flare up here and there, but this does

not affect its unity : fire as fire is eternal. This is how you should understand it. No simile is ever complete. He who descends, whence he descends, and whither — all are one. There is nothing whatsoever outside of THAT.

Question : If the Thing Itself remains what it is, what then do ascent and descent mean ?

Mataji : What you say represents a particular viewpoint of the world. Where the Ultimate, the Supreme is, the question you ask is impossible. On a certain plane descent and ascent exist. It is *you* who say : 'God descends.' On the other hand there is no such thing as descent : where He is, there He remains and all possibilities are contained in Him. To understand* intellectually, which means to be burdened by mental conceptions, prevents one from grasping the Truth.

Again, to what can you attain ? It is already present here itself ! Anything gained will be lost again. To prepare oneself for the revelation of THAT which eternally IS, there are injunctions, numerous paths. But do you not see, every path must come to an end ; in other words you should concentrate upon that imagination which will sweep away all other imaginations, which means when you have gone beyond all imagination there is the revelation of THAT which you really are.

The beauty of it is that man's very nature is to desire the Real, Supreme Wisdom, Divine Joy ; his nature to return home when the play is over. The field of the play is His, the play His as well, and so are those who take part in it, friends and fellow-beings — all is He alone. Ignorance surely, is not what one seeks. To aspire to Immortality is man's true nature — or is death desirable ? The world is concerned with the knowledge which is ignorance. Although it is true, even here one can observe how man builds a solid house in order that it may last for a long time, because he wants stability. At times one may tell a lie under some uncontrollable impulse, yet one feels uneasy about it.

*A play upon words : 'bhoja' means 'to understand' as well as 'burden.'

To long for the cessation of want is your very nature and to explore and penetrate to the root of whatever you perceive. When you buy clothes you choose durable material, which will not wear out quickly; even this is an indication of your innate tendency to seek the Everlasting. It is your nature to crave for the revelation of THAT which IS, for the Eternal, for Truth, for limitless Knowledge. This is why you do not feel satisfied with the evanescent, the untrue, with ignorance and limitation.

To yearn for the revelation of WHAT YOU ARE is your true nature.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT ALMORA

By

Kali Prasad

The turning-point of every year in the lives of Mataji's Bhaktas is the period, varying between two and four weeks, when Her birthday is celebrated in the month of Vaisakh. This year Mataji stayed in Almora for the whole period and a very large number of Bhaktas from all over India had gathered, besides those of the Almora District, to join in the one-pointed devotion of worship; also coming for Mataji's Darshan were people from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, England, Scotland, America, Canada, Australia and Mauritius. Facilities for residence were made in or near the Ashram for the gradually increasing number of visitors. From May 2nd to 23rd the Ashram was the scene of constant activity, Satsang, discourses by Sanyasis and Pandits, Kirtan, Bhajans and a variety of ceremonies, all for the purpose of maintaining intense dedication to the worship of God throughout the twenty-four hours of every day. A harmony and single-mindedness was forged from the feeling of love and devotion for Mataji in the hearts of

all assembled. Here was a friendliness devoid of obstructive attachment, which only those united in a single purpose such as this can create. There was a buoyancy and joy in all, inspired by the constant loving attention bestowed on everyone by Mataji, a detailed attention, utterly selfless, which She alone can give. Many, who for the first time were living close to Her for a prolonged period, were amazed by the endless pains She took, to ensure the comfort and welfare of each person. Thus She created the atmosphere of Love and Service which pervaded the weeks of celebration and transformed all the routine activities and natural *Tapas* of Himalayan Ashram life into a source of profound happiness for everyone. From early morning almost until late at night Mataji was in our midst; hardly was there a time when She was not somewhere in the Ashram supervising every little detail, seven hours of every day remaining with us in Satsang. So many things happened, so many moments of significance and

beauty that in this small space it is not possible to record them.

Mataji had been in Almora since April 14th and by May 2nd a number of Bhaktas were already there to prepare for the arrival from Brindaban of Sri Haribabaji Maharaj with his party. The night preceding May 2nd there was all-night *Nam-Kirtan* with Puja at 3 a. m. Next morning with decorations going up and beautiful Pahari floor patterns (*alpanas*) being completed, Mataji was seemingly everywhere at once. In the evening the huge crowd assembled in the Bhajan Hall were fortunate enough to hear Mataji lead the Kirtan with Her own exquisite voice. Throughout the evening and after the arrival of Sri Haribabaji Maharaj there was much rejoicing, and a feeling of elation spread through the vast gathering.

Every day in Satsang Sri Hari Babaji read and discussed Bhaji's book about Mataji '*Matri Darshan*'. Swami Svatantranandaji of Sri Shankaracharya Math discoursed on Vedanta and Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhuta on the *Bhagavad Gita*. On these occasions anything up to 500 people were present. In the morning and evening Sri Hari Babaji sang Kirtan with his disciples, and whether one was present in the hall or perhaps somewhere out on the slopes of Patal Devi, this was a profoundly stirring

sound which imbued all with a sense of exaltation as they came to sit at the feet of Mataji.

On most evenings after the fifteen minutes of silence at nine o'clock Mataji would answer questions and give profound discourse on many subjects. The mood in the evenings was always one of happiness and laughter. Manohar (now Paramananda Das) and others of Sri Hari Babaji's party performed religious parables with brilliant characterisation and rich humour. These parables always illustrated some serious spiritual subject, sometimes one of Mataji's own stories which She often invents or recounts, and their humour and real devotion kept everyone enthralled. As Mataji has said: "Whenever you have the chance, laugh as much as you can. By this all the rigid knots in your body will be loosened. But to laugh superficially is not enough: your whole being must be united in laughter, both inwardly and outwardly. Do you know how this is expressed? You simply shake with merriment from head to foot, so that it is impossible to tell which part of your body is most affected."

"What you usually do is to laugh with your mouth, while your emotions are held in check. But I want you to laugh with your whole com-

tenance, with your whole heart and with all the breath of your life." *

After the first few days, Didi, who had been ill for some time, had a set-back and therefore unwillingly consented to leave Mataji on the great occasion in order to go to Calcutta for treatment. Her dynamic presence in our midst was sadly missed and we wish her an early recovery to full health. Swami Paramananda was in charge of all the arrangements in the Ashram, no mean task as by the end of the celebrations a few hundred Bhaktas were living in or near the Ashram, and with the many ceremonies, he was constantly busy, yet ever smiling and ready to give assistance and to work at any task.

People began to flock to the Ashram and news travelled from village to village that Anandamayi Ma was in Almora for Her birthday. Some of the hill people travelled long distances on foot to have Her Darshan. One evening a man arrived from a remote village after walking for nine days, remembering Mataji from 1937 when She had visited Nilash. Just as he was saying: 'I do not know whether I shall have the chance of Mataji's Darshan today,' Her door opened. She looked

towards him, as if solely to give him what he wished, after he had travelled that tremendous, hard distance. Outstanding faith and devotion always call forth a correspondingly wonderful response from Mataji, and She performs the real miracle of granting exactly one's deepest wish.

As all present became gradually transformed by long periods of japa, meditation, Satsang, by joining in the daily Arati and Puja and by the inspiration of Her Presence, the significance of Her birthday dawned in our hearts. Yet the true inner meaning of Her birthday will perhaps always remain a mystery. This is not just the celebration and rejoicing, the presentation of gifts which are the spontaneous expression of the event. Nor again is it only a celebration of the blessed day on which She came into the world. Living amongst us and directing us solely towards God, the day of Her birth when She assumed this Her body could perhaps be considered of no importance. Yet She has said. "This body is what you think it to be." Here lies the crux of the matter that we, almost unconsciously, for we do not know the full reason, desire to enter some kind of communion with Her on this anniversary of Her birth. If

*.Quoted from "Sad Vani."

