

The ONE who is the Eternal, the Atman,
He Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,
He is all in all, He alone is.

MATRI VANI*

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

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What does entering into one's own True Being (*Swarūpa*) signify? To realize what IS: that He, the Self-luminous One is all-pervading, present in all shapes, states of mind and modes of existence. *There* speech, words have no place. For can Essential Form (*Swarūpa*) or formlessness (*arūpa*) be described by any language? He and He alone is.

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You cling to that round†, rolling thing, believing that it constitutes your wealth; this is why there are so much trouble and confusion. What is this 'round thing'? Money of course. Try to cling exclusively to Him who is the Whole, where one can speak neither of form nor of formlessness and where trouble and confusion are non-existent.

* The Bengali original appeared in Ananda Varta Vol. VII/2 p. 59.

† This whole passage is based on a play upon words that cannot be rendered into English. *Gol* means round, *mal*=possession and *golmal*=trouble and confusion.

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How many things in this world can you not perceive with your naked eye ; and how many more again may be seen with the help of a microscope ! Thus it is said that the One is contained in the infinite number and the infinite number in the One.

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Having obtained the rare boon of birth in a human body, the quest after Truth is man's bounden duty. Supported by truthfulness, renunciation, self-restraint and so forth one should remain anchored solely in what one has received from the Guru.

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A person who knows that he is ignorant must be credited with having most certainly attained to some measure of knowledge.

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Verily, He Himself is attraction : consequently just as one feels drawn to commit an undesirable or evil action, you will find that there is also a pure and holy attraction towards good and laudable deeds. All is contained in each and everything. At all times He is indeed fully present in everything.

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and again and again. Never allow your thoughts to dwell on your helplessness, rather devise ways and means. Do not desire to be poor : to crave for his Real Wealth is man's constant duty. There is but little time left to you.

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To realize Him is the Goal—Him, Divinity Itself. You are bonnd to take whichever path He has chosen for you. Nobody can do anything according to his own sweet will. He is all—gracious, all—compassionate : towards Himself is the direction in which He pulls you.

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Regarding all beings as His forms, with a spirit of service and utter calm serve the Lord, serve the Lord, serve the Lord and only Him. In the measure as you grow more and more perfect in your capacity of a servant of the Lord, fondness, love and devotion for Him as well as implicit faith will awaken in you.

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Let "I cannot" be eradicated from your vocabulary. Time is gliding by swiftly : for a few days only lasts this reunion with friends and kinsmen. Gather up your possessions, brother, no one accompanies you on your final journey.

SIDELIGHTS ON MATAJI'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

VIJAYANANDA

My intention is not to give an account of the celebrations—this will probably be done by persons who are better qualified for the task than myself; I just want to write about a few points that struck me on that occasion.

1

Many people have noticed and some have even complained that there is apparently no organization to see to the welfare and discipline of the people who take part in the large gatherings around Mother. It looks as if there were no one to direct and no staff to carry out the orders. In fact to a mind trained in the western way it may at times even seem somewhat disorganized. But this is mere appearance, due to viewing the situation superficially. If we observe carefully and with an unbiassed mind, we shall soon discover that in reality everything is proceeding as it should, that every person gets what he or she needs; that in spite of the apparent disorder nobody comes to harm, no harsh words can be heard (except, may be, on the rarest occasions); that most people look smiling and contented.

How can this be possible ?

If we look round and watch the actions of our daily life and the ways of Nature, we shall find that there are

two different methods of working, that actions can be performed in two different ways: the way of the human mind and that of Nature.

The former has its origin in the intellect, the ego fully conscious of its possibilities. Let us consider for example the building of a house. The plan of construction has been devised by the mind of the architect. Before starting on the building work, every detail has been thought out and calculated: the amount of the various materials needed, their cost, the number of workmen required, etc. etc. The architect's calculations are done with extreme care, for if the house collapsed it would be disastrous.

All this shows the functioning of a power, namely that of the intellect, the ego—conscious of its capacity no doubt, but aware also of its limitations; a power capable of perceiving only its small circumscribed sphere of activity, but not its relation with the universe.

The way of Nature is quite different. Let us take for example the growth of a mango tree. If we go into details we can notice that branches, twigs, leaves and so on are growing without symmetry. There may be a huge branch on the one side and a very small one on the opposite side. Some branches yield an abundance of flowers and fruits, others almost none. Thousands of blossoms fall down that will never bear fruits. Many unripe mangoes are shaken off by the wind; and when finally the fruits have the chance of producing a new tree? Very few indeed—although, this is surely the ultimate aim of the fruit.

In this way a power acts that is conscious of its infinite wealth, of its omnipotence. The apparently irregular growth of the tree puzzles the intellect used to geometrical forms and to symmetry. But the ultimate result is the majestic beauty of a gigantic tree.

The huge waste is the token of a power that has a storehouse of infinite riches at its disposal. In actual fact there is no waste, but only circulation of matter within the oneness of the universe. The flowers and fruits that fall from the tree are not lost. They will enrich the soil and help other plants to grow, or nourish birds and insects. The power that causes the mango tree to grow does not only see this limited part of its functioning, but knows its relation with the Whole.

A higher aspect of that very same power arranges for welfare of the hundreds of people who collect around Mother. It is the power that pervades all beings and moves them from within. This power is aware of the needs of every single individual and knows the measure of his capacity to receive according to the results of his *Karma*. It is conscious of the relationship between all beings and of the Oneness behind the appearance of diversity, whereas the power of the ego sees only the superficial diversity, the splitting up into individuals.

During the last night of Mother's birthday celebrations (or rather in the early morning) at the end of the *Tithi Puja* everyone is allowed to go near Mother to do obeisance and offer flowers or anything else of his choice. This can only be done one by one and as hundreds of people are present it is bound to take a good deal of time. The mind would naturally

wish that there should be some efficient organization keeping people in a queue and making them recede by a different way after doing their *pranams*. But in Mother's presence discipline and organization from outside may be out of place and perhaps even harmful, for by it the free play of the Divine Power might be hampered through the rigidity of the human will. In fact on most occasions, without any organization, people walk upto Mother one by one in perfect order and in complete silence, but on this occasion in Dehradun this was not the case.

I was present during that holy night at Kishenpur, and as every body else, I also tried to approach Mother when the *Puja* was over. On that night Mother usually lies on a couch, absolutely still and to all appearance far removed from bodily consciousness. As soon as She returns to the normal state, offerings and salutations are stopped and Mother is led back to Her room.

I had brought a beautiful bouquet of flowers, intending to offer it to Mother. I tried first to follow one queue, but another one had formed from a different direction. After several unfruitful attempts I at last managed to come near Mother with only three or four people in front of me. But at that moment a few ladies rushed in and we were obliged to stand back. I then reflected that one should after all take things as they came on all occasions and thus remained aloof.

At that very moment Mother sat up. A human semi-circle was formed around Her to protect Her from the crowd. Offerings and salutations had to stop. It looked as if the

bouquet I had brought would not fulfil its purpose of existence.

A few minutes later Mother rose. On those occasions it takes some time until She fully recovers body-consciousness and She is led to Her room, supported by several persons. Two human walls are formed on both sides of Her way to enable Her to walk, undisturbed by the intruding crowd. Strangely enough, the spot where I stood aloof was just on Mother's way and between the human walls. Mother advanced, facing exactly in my direction. I deposited the bunch of flowers at Her feet, made obeisance and stepped out of Her way.

When afterwards I mused about this incident, I realized that in that holy night, notwithstanding the dense crowd and the apparent confusion, I had had the chance to present my offerings to Mother in a unique and exceptional way, in fact in precisely the manner that I preferred. Probably many other persons had similar experiences.

2

During that holy night I had the good fortune of being able to observe closely Mother's countenance almost immediately after She got up from the state of absolute stillness. It is well known that during the *Puja* of the last night of the celebrations, She usually lies with Her face covered entirely or almost entirely by Her sari. She appears to have left body-consciousness. I do not know whether any one has until now been able to ascertain whether Her pulse and breathing stop on those occasions. The reverence we all

It was a long and deep gaze full of significance, which I clearly understood to mean : "No ! I have not gone far away from you ; I am ever, ever present with you, very, very near you !"

This year at Dehradun when I saw Mother rise after the Puja, it seemed to me that She bore the expression of one who had just carried away the heavy load of our miseries.

3

The night of the anniversary of Matajī's birth is for most of us a vigil. I myself took rest for only a few hours before the function began. In general when my sleep is cut short even slightly I feel drowsy during the next day. But I have experienced this year as many times before that when we forego sleep for Mother's sake, not the least inconvenience will be felt. I returned from the celebration at about 6 a. m. feeling fresh and rested and immediately got busy with my daily routine.

4

A conversation with a friend from Calcutta, an old and fervent devotee of Mother, attracted my attention to one of the most extraordinary features that have been observed by many people in connection with Mother. The crowds round Her may consist of thousands or tens of thousands—yet She will never forget any single person. If one asks Her for a private interview, She will grant it in due course and at the most propitious moment. If a request has been made to Her, the response will come without fail. If someone wishes to take leave of Her before going away, he will be received at the

right time. She knows where and how everybody has been accommodated. If one encounters a difficulty, She is always there to solve the matter. When She talks to people about their personal problems, She gives the impression of knowing every detail. Not only this; the living interest She takes in every individual gives him the conviction—although it may seem absurd at first thought—that Mother's attention and care are fully focussed on him and on him alone, just as if he were the dearest of all Her children. Many people are convinced of this and although it sounds almost ridiculous it is nevertheless true. How can this be possible? Mother has no ego consciousness, no limiting personality of Her own. She is one with the pure, blissful, impersonal, all-pervading *Chaitanya* (Consciousness). When Her attention is directed towards one individual, the centre of consciousness is fully focussed on him. She is identified with him, nay She is his own Self. And there is nothing dearer than our own Self. "Indeed, it is not for the love of all that all are dear, but it is for the love of the Self that all are dear", says the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

Mother's Life : A perpetual Deed of Sacrifice !

M. M. VARMA

It has been my life's privilege to be associated with Shree Shree Mā Anandamayee for some years. Last when I attended her Birthday celebrations at Dehra Dun a few weeks back, certain thoughts overwhelmed me as I watched her daily routine ; which I am penning down very briefly to share with fellow devotees.

It is apparent that MOTHER barely lives in this world ; she is visibly a dweller of the Divine region : And, as she herself has admitted to enquirers, she is not born in this world of *bhoga* to exhaust any personal *karma* of hers. What, then, makes her live such a busy and crowded life in this world of shadows—moving, talking, joining our ceremonials and celebrations which could be of little use to *her*, looking after ever so many details of the numerous *Ashramas* which she enriches by visiting one by one, granting incessant personal interviews to the sorrow-stricken aspirants and enquirers, and what not.....inspite of indifferent health which could ill afford to bear such heavy strain ?

It is her love and compassion for poor, struggling souls in agony, like us, that makes her live *and toil* all the time in this world. Could we just imagine the *sacrifice* she has undertaken in descending from her world of Bliss into our world of sorrow, disease and death, our egos would melt in gratitude and we would ascend into her world : thus fulfilling

her Divine mission. Yet we refuse our co-operation even for our own liberation, which is her mission ; while she, with limitless patience, forgiveness and forbearance, goes on and onawakening our souls not with strokes of hammer but with a Mother's caresses !

Further, her love and compassion are universal : *not* limited to the band of *sadhakas* surrounding her in the various *Ashramas*. *Anyone* who goes to her for solace or comfort discovers in her his own Mother : overflowing with love and compassion for him as much as to her closest devotees or disciples. And so, everyone would tell you that Mother is most kind to *him*. Yes, the limitless can afford to give itself limitlessly to each and all. The electric lamp is limited and has its price ; so is the breeze generated by a fan or the water in a vessel ; but the Sun, the Ether and the Sea know no limits in their dispensations.

Even so, inspite of the seemingly sectarian rituals, ceremonies and sacraments going on around her all the time for the benefit of the people at large, Mother is *not* circumscribed by them. She unreservedly helps all men and women *at all levels* and in whatever manner they approach her. The Divine is all things to all men — *Kalpataru* !

Blessed indeed are those who have rallied round the feet of The MOTHER DIVINE, for they have found their unailing refuge !

The Malady of the Age—its Cause and Cure

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(3)

The most important and startling discovery of psychical research, now also called Parapsychology, is that man, and some men particularly and in greater degree, is capable of acquiring knowledge of objects, and of thoughts and feelings of others, without the usual means of knowledge, by the direct action of the mind. This supernormal kind of knowledge, formerly called clairvoyance, lucidity and cryptesthesia, is now called Extra-sensory Perception (in short ESP) by Dr. Rhine of the Duke University in U.S.A. It finds expression in various forms and manners, such as Telepathy (communication of thoughts, experiences, and feelings of one mind to another at a distance without the use of normal means), Clairvoyance (in a restricted sense meaning seeing, without the use of eyes, events taking place at a distance), Clairaudience (hearing sounds and words which convey information of distant events without the use of ears), Pre-cognition (non-inferential knowledge of future happenings), Retro-cognition (direct knowledge of events that happened in the distant past), Psychometry (Power of acquiring knowledge of events of a person's life by simply holding or handling some object used by him), Dowsing (divining the presence of water or minerals underneath the earth), Crystal-gazing (seeing veridical scenes in a bright reflecting surface), Automatic

writing (scribing without volition or consciousness veridical information), Inspirations of geniuses, veridical statements made by entranced persons, and verifiable reminiscences of "previous life" expressed by babies. All these types of supernormal cognition (ESP) have been very carefully, empirically and experimentally investigated, and have been established as facts by scientifically trained investigators all over the world. ESP or supernormal cognition had been found to have four peculiar features which distinguish it from the normal cognition. (1) It does not stand in need of the use of sense-organs, physical or physiological contact with the object, or even the immediate presence of the object concerned. (2) It does not work under the limitations of space. Distance does not affect its operation. (3) Its function is not limited in time. It operates equally well in the present, past and future. (4) It is not always under the conscious control of the person who exercises it.

Another class of very important supernormal phenomena studied and investigated by psychical research is what was called Telekinesis by earlier investigators and is now called Psychokinesis by Dr. Rhine. The former term literally means production of movements at a distance and the latter means movements effected by mind. The idea underlying both the terms is that the mind is capable of moving or lifting things at a distance from the body without any physical contact between one's physical body and the external material object. This power of mind is symbolised by Dr. Rhine as PK. He brings both ESP and PK under one symbol PSI. According to him and many other investigators, PSI capacity is not very rare. It is potentially possessed by all human beings

and perhaps by animals too. In his latest work, *Parapsychology*, Dr. Rhine writes, "The capacity is, therefore, a normal equipment of the species."

A third type of paranormal, rather unknown normal phenomena, investigated by psychical researchers and other investigators is what may be called supernormal psychophysiological effects, which are observed in miraculous cures of physical ailments effected by suggestion, hypnosis, prayer and creative imagination; in extra-ordinary control over the autonomic nervous system and the organs controlled by it found in case of yogis and faqirs; in cases studied by psychosomatic medicine; and in all treatments brought about by Christian Science, New Thought and the use of mantras (incantations). All such cases evince a remarkable power of the mind over the body.

Still more and perhaps the most remarkable cases investigated by psychical research are Astral Projection, Materialization, Ghosts, Apparitions, Haunted Houses, Trance-personalities and Remembrance of Previous Life. In astral projection, a person can, while alive, temporarily get out of the physical body, roam about, show himself to his friends and relatives, and return with memories of his sojourn. In materialization, temporary living forms of human body, such as limbs, like face, hands and larynx, are created and formed out of a strange substance, called ectoplasm, supplied by the body of an individual present nearby. These materialized forms do often resemble those of some persons no longer present in the world. Prof. Richet, in his *Thirty Years of Experimental Research*, writes about materialization, "Absurd as the matter it is true". (P. 544) In the phenomenon of

and apparitions, and haunted houses, we see visions of persons who are either already dead, or are still living elsewhere. In trance-personality we have a very strange phenomenon of a person passing into a trance or temporary and partial or complete suspension of consciousness, and his body and speech being apparently used by those who no longer exist in the world. In cases of memories of the previous life we find young children remembering some events which occurred in the lives of persons who died long ago and with whom identity is claimed.

On the basis of these data psychological researchers, many of whom are great scientists and philosophers of the world, have come to a conclusion that man is not the physical body alone, that his mental activities are not merely the functions of his bodily organs and systems, that in his deeper nature he is not merely the unconscious and brutish Id, but, on the other hand, some very superior type of psychic principle. This psychic principle, call it mind or soul, is capable of existing and functioning independently of the physical body. As such, it survives the death of its physical body with which it was temporarily associated. Before getting associated with the present body, it must have been associated with some other body, now dead and gone, whose life it sometimes recalls. Potentially, this psychic principle has great powers of knowledge and action. It is capable of effecting a lot of changes in the physical body. This psychic principle is not governed by mechanical laws of matter and is not limited in its operations by time and space. It is not born with the body, nor does it perish with it. It has got a life and being of its own and perhaps in a psychic world different from the

one. Mysticism is an attempt to withdraw from the affairs of the external world and from the activities of the physical body into the being of the psychic principle in order to understand and realize its nature and potentialities. In this attempt the mystic comes to have very strange and fascinating experiences within himself. When the mystic passes into the deepest recesses of his being he experiences a state of inner illumination in which all sense of individuality is lost, in which no kind of duality or multiplicity is experienced, and in which there is a feeling of supreme delight which was never experienced in the enjoyment of sense-pleasures. In the literature of *Yoga*, Indian mysticism, this unique experience is called *Samadhi*. Here we touch the very essence of our being, and, in the words of Patanjali, exist as "*Swarupmatra eva*". Mystic experiences of various kinds and grades and experience of *Samadhi* are not mere hallucinations. They are facts which can be experienced by all those who follow the particular disciplines which lead the seeker to them. In a complete understanding of man we cannot afford to neglect them. Mystic training is important from another point of view also. As a mystic proceeds along the path of Self-realization, he automatically gets most of the supernormal powers (*siddhis*) which Psychical Research has discovered some persons to possess sporadically. Great miracles have been performed by the great mystics of the world. In Chapter III of *Yogasutras*, Patanjali makes a mention of the great powers that a yogi comes to acquire in the course of his training in *yoga*.

(continued)

MATAJI'S AMARA VANI ❀

Question : Ma, may I ask a question, please ? But you will have to give a reply that I am able to understand !

Mataji : Very well, if it comes !

Question : When Supreme Knowledge (*Jnāna*) has dawned, does the memory remain of the fact that one was in ignorance at one time ?

Mataji : When Supreme Knowledge comes about, by the very fact of its coming about, Eternity stands revealed. How can one say : "there is darkness below the Light." One dwells indeed in the Light ? What is darkness ? Who is darkness ? From which stand point is this said ? But don't think that darkness does not signify light or light does not signify darkness ?—this is not the point.

Put from one angle it is like this : One feels : "Really, when was I in ignorance ?" It is quite clear. To say : "I was" or "I became" is an error. IT IS—this is the Truth. The indestructible has never been or will be destroyed. Very well, your condition before you became acquainted with the alphabet has remained in your memory, has it not ? That is to say while preparing for the I.A. or B.A. examinations, can one recall one's state of mind at the time when one was studying for the matriculation ? All these stages are not each separate, all are He. He is Self-luminous, understand this now ! But to say that ignorance exists and Knowledge also exists—this is not correct.

* The Bengali original appeared in Ananda Varta Vol. VII/2, P. 61.

Just as darkness vanishes at sunrise, a moment comes when there is Light. When Supreme Knowledge supervenes one sees: I have for ever and ever been "THAT which IS." Since the Whole has been realized one understands that one has never been in ignorance. When does Creation occur, when Preservation, when Dissolution? The question of division no longer exists.

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After the discussion was over, all sat in silence for some time. Then Bhupen asked: "Ma, shall I sing *kirtan*?"

Mataji: Yes, it is better to do something than to remain idle.

Someone from the audience: Surely, the mind cannot stay idle, Ma?

Mataji: Unless it is engaged in conversation about Him or in the contemplation of Him, the mind may be said to be idle and this state is fruitless and painful; for the mind cannot remain entirely inactive, it will naturally be occupied with something or other. To be occupied with worthless things serves no purpose. Therefore do not indulge in vain talk.

The mind must of necessity be anchored somewhere—it is bound to be in the grip of one thing or another. This is why one should fix it on Him who is the Support of the supportless—HE, the Self is the sheet-anchor one should firmly hold to. He is indeed in every one and in every thing.* Thus in the guise of a device is also none but He.

*A play upon words that cannot be rendered into English
Sakal = all, *Sa* = He, *kal* = device, machine.

That is to say He is present in the practices (*kriyas*) that have for purpose Self-realization, such as *japa*, meditation, *kirtan* and so on

The mind roams and rambles without finding peace. It flits here and there and everywhere like a small child. When here, there and everywhere become the One, then only will there be an end to its wandering. It turns to this and that side in search of food, without being able to find any. If the mind receives the right kind of sustenance, which will keep it in one place, if you give it such nourishment, a full and perfect meal, it will itself become fulfilled—a perfect child resting in his mother's lap. Whether you say reposing with his Mother or in the Self—call it by any name—they are undivided although each separate and though separate yet one and indivisible. In other words when one is wholly absorbed in meditation or in *samadhi*—one is immersed in 'THAT' which is the essence (*Swarūpa*) of delight, happiness, bliss—call it what you will. Merged in the Essence of Reality (*Swarūpa*) means merged in the Self.

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Question : Ma, please tell us something !

Mataji : Father, you know, do you not, here (with Mataji) if it comes, it comes !

The inquirer : Then I am going to put a question. Well : Unless there is the realization of non-duality (*advaita*) it cannot be proved ; yet it is beyond knowledge. In view of this fact, how is it possible to attain to the truth of non-duality ? For otherwise it is nothing but imagination.

Mataji : The difficulty is that the speaker is himself an instructor, he has come into your midst.

The inquirer : How ?

Someone else : May I say something, please ? So long as it is possible to use language, one is still in the realm of changing conditions—happiness, pain or whatever they may be. But when this happiness is transformed into a happiness that does not depend on anything at all, what is it called then ? Love.

Mataji : Why does one speak of *Karma*† ? Because it goes on creating more action. But when one feels so ardently attracted to one that action no longer brings forth new action, this is called Love. Why is it said to be Love ? Because after it has been kindled there can be no more question of Creation, Preservation or sorrow. Desire perpetuates the created world and therefore it is delusion (*moha*). Thus inversely it is said, to feel drawn towards God is Love *prema*, while worldly attraction is desire, passion (*kāma*). Where no 'other' is and the 'after' has ceased to exist—this is called Love, this is called true Knowledge : here the movement of time has come to a standstill.

When Love has awakened, Self-revelation (*Swa-Prakāsh*) will come and by the path of Knowledge one's Essential Being (*Swarūpa*) will be realized. If you proceed along the line of Love and Devotion—what will be revealed ? Your own Essential Being (*Swarūpa*). Here questions can no longer arise. But you will perhaps say : "How can I at my stage speak of Him who is Self-luminous ? How can the truth of Oneness (*advaita*) be realized ?"

Very well. You have attained to the status of a

†The word '*karma*' denotes 'action' as well as its inherent results, that is the chain of cause and effect.

professor. Do you say this from any particular level or stage? Can you for instance disclose everything that an M. A. knows?

The inquirer : Everything cannot be told, of course, but some part of it I am able to divulge.

Mataji : You cannot bring to light the whole. When you read a book, you read the whole of it, but to speak about it is a different matter; you cannot communicate the whole of it to those to whom you are talking. Yet there are hints by which they can get an inkling of your knowledge. In Him who has realized the *Brahman* you will find no imagination. It must be understood that He is Self-revealed. Intelligence can throw no light on this, nor can words express it. There are however indications of His state; you may not understand everything you hear Him say, but you can detect the signs of His Realisation.

That which is the natural realization pertaining to any particular state, that only will be apprehended. Therefore something has to be pointed out: how can one who is not a professor understand the level from which a professor speaks? Suppose a person who has returned from Europe narrates his experiences; his listeners will be able to grasp something of what they hear, but until and unless they themselves go to Europe it will be difficult for them to understand what precisely it is like. Understanding and not understanding are of this world. But where THAT is which IS—by what means can It be grasped?

Question : How then can spiritual instruction be given?

Mataji : Whatever you are able to comprehend that

My Visits With The Joy-Permeated Mother

DAYA MATA

Disciple of the Paramahansa Yogananda and President
of Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society of India and
Self-Realization Fellowship of America.

February 12, 1959, was a wonderful day in my life, for on it I met a holy personage, the joy-permeated Ananda Mayee Ma! Many years ago, in Los Angeles, California, U. S. A., my blessed Gurudev, Paramahansa Yogananda, showed me a photograph of Ananda Mayee Ma and said to me: "Strive to become like her." That memory has remained these many years in my heart, and on February 12th I met at last my Ideal in the mother-form.

A small group of us came to India from America in October 1958 to look after some organizational affairs of our Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society, founded in 1918 by Paramahansa Yogananda, with headquarters at Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar. Knowing that Ananda Mayee Ma also has an asram very near Dakshineswar, I secretly hoped that she might visit it during my stay in Calcutta. That desire was fulfilled, for on February 12th, I attended the Saraswati Puja at her asram, filled with expectancy. As my eyes first beheld the blessed Mother, it seemed that a great dart of love went out from her and struck my heart, leaving me transfixed. I remained in that state for some moments, eyes locked on the Mother, feeling great waves of love surging within me.

Later our party was asked to go to an open tent where the Mother was already seated on a dais. We were motioned to sit next to her. I could not take my eyes away from her sweet face, so enchantingly full of love. My tears flowed. She tossed flowers to our party. Sri Prabhas Chandra Ghose, Vice-President of Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society, then introduced me to Ananda Mayee Ma. The Mother placed a garland of yellow flowers around my neck and I was plunged into an ecstatic state. When I opened my eyes the Mother gazed long and lovingly into my eyes. What sweetness—what blessing! I can say no more. She is a divine being.

We were served with prasad, while the Mother rested in her room; then we were told to go to the verandah where she would see us. I touched her in deepest reverence and love, just to have the blessing of her sacred hand. She put her hand over mine and gently stroked it. It seemed that my heart would burst with the love and joy that filled it. My tears could not be stemmed in this holy presence that so tangibly reminds us of the great Universal Mother of us all.

On the morning of February 13th our party again visited the Mother. She was seated on a wooden bedstead. Our group made their pronams and left gifts in front of her. I said, "O Ma, we offer you these fruits and flowers on behalf of all the disciples of our Gurudev, Paramahansa Yogananda, as a token of our deep reverence for you. They are but an outward expression of the deep devotion we feel for the formless Divine Mother that dwells in you."

Later in the afternoon Ananda Mayee Ma was out

walking on the lawn facing the Ganges. Some of our party went forward to take her picture. I remained in the background deeply absorbed in that bliss within. As our group prepared to leave, I knelt silently on the grass, inwardly praying to the Lord within Ananda Mayee Ma for a blessing. I opened my eyes and saw her blessed tiny feet beside me. How tightly I held those feet within my mind and heart! I could not take my gaze away from them, because for months I had been inwardly crying to the Divine Mother to let me see Her Blue Lotus Feet. She had answered my prayer through Her child, Ananda Mayee Ma.

During one of our visits, Swami Kriyananda and I went to the main hall where the Mother meets the devotees each morning at eleven. The Mother was resting. Chitra, the young devotee who travels at times with the Mother, came and sat with us, asking questions about our work in America and about our way of life. I explained to her about our Gurudev's training and how he had taught us to control the body and mind through yogic techniques so that we can go deep in meditation—that whenever we had stirred unnecessarily he would say: "Is your love for Divine Mother so superficial that you allow outer distractions to take your attention away from Her?"

After a time Ananda Mayee Ma came in and took her seat on the dais. We sat quietly meditating while she listened to the people who had come for a darshan. How sweetly she smiled on each one! At times her laughter rang out merrily. She is like a divine child.

Our party visited the asram of the Mother every day that she remained there. Later she went to Calcutta and on the evening of February 20th we went to the home where she was staying, to show her a motion picture film of herself and our Guruji, taken during his visit to India in 1936. Paramahansaji first met her then, in the Bhowanipur section of Calcutta. Later she visited him at his school for boys in Ranchi, Bihar.

Gurudev wrote a chapter about her sacred life, in his book, "Autobiography of a Yogi." That book has now been translated into many Eastern and Western languages, and thus readers all over the world have come to know and revere Ananda Mayee Ma.

On February 21st our group attended a kirtan at the Calcutta home where the Mother was staying. Her devotee, Chitra told me that after the kirtan the Mother would see me in her room. When the chanting was over I went to her room. After a time the Mother entered, and as I opened my eyes to behold her, I noted her arms outstretched carrying a sari. How thankfully I received this blessing from her—one of her own cloths. She looked at me lovingly while I told her that I sought no counsel, I wanted nothing except love for the Universal Mother, to serve Her and my Gurudev until the last breath in my body. She smiled sweetly and replied, "Think of the Divine Mother in the morning, all day long, and the last thing at night."

During this visit I said that I felt selfish that she had given me so much love and attention. She answered gently :

“No, that is not selfishness at all. It is selfishness when one’s attention is on the body, but your attention is fixed on this Self. It is not selfishness at all.” What utter tranquility my soul felt in her presence !

Our final visit with the Mother was on February 23rd. She was to leave Calcutta early the next morning, and so a vast crowd, wishing for a darshan of her holy form, was present. The Mother had invited our group to see her at the home of a devotee. We went there and sat in front of her, meditating. I found, in Her holy and loving presence, that my consciousness became immediately withdrawn, centered upon the Beloved Mother. On this occasion, as I sat on the lawn, absorbed within, suddenly I felt a tremendous spiritual experience in my spine, centering at the heart chakra. A feeling enveloped me of great, expanding peace, spiritual fulfilment and oneness with the Universal Mother. It seemed, too, that my heart would burst with the great surgings of love that flowed through it the sweetness of which flooded my eyes with streaming tears. After a time Chitra came up to me and said that I might now present to Ananda Mayee Ma the offerings I had brought, red and pink roses and a silk chaddar. As I placed them at her feet, she removed from her neck a string of small rudraksha beads. She put them about my neck and said with great tenderness : “This daughter of yours ever lives in your heart.”

During March and April our party from America travelled to north India. While we were in that area we made it a point to visit the blessed Mother again, this time in Rishikesh, during the “Week of Self-Restraint.” How wise is the Mother

to have inaugurated such a period every year, when devotees from far and near can gather about her to receive more concentrated spiritual nourishment from her motherly heart divine. I had other opportunities to see the beloved Ma during this stay in Rishikesh, and above all, to meditate deeply in her presence. On one of these occasions I told her, "You have captured my heart." How sweet was her reply, when, like a tiny child, she said, "And I won't give it back!"

During our visit to Rishikesh it seemed that the Mother could not do enough for us, through her wonderful devotees who looked after us. The more I saw of them the more I was impressed with their selfless spirit and devotion.

It happened that I was asked to speak before the gathering one evening. I was told that Mother would give me part of her time in the program. I was introduced to the assembly as a disciple of Pitaji Yogananda. I told the audience about Master's limitless love for the Divine Mother, about his great task in the West to spread the message of Yoga. Then I dwelt on the duty of disciples—the duty to take up the mission of the Guru with ever-increasing zeal and selflessness. Having seen in India how devoutly saints are worshipped, I reminded the gathering that it is not enough to praise these saints and to seek their darshan; that we, the devotees and disciples, must use our lives rightly by striving to follow in their footsteps. Only by constant meditation and good actions may we become divine. The best way, by which we can truly appreciate what the great ones like my blessed Gurudev and Ananda Mayee Ma and other holy ones have to give us, is to

become like them. I finished by saying that the only mission of such holy beings is to rouse in us the desire to find the Beloved within ourselves.

The next morning, after the meditation in the large hall with the Mother and her devotees, she placed around my neck a beautiful garland of roses. As she gazed at me with the tenderness she showers on all, my eyes filled with tears. I was burning with the divine desire for the Divine Mother and with longing to serve my own beloved Gurudev's work better and better, with greater humility, love and wisdom. All other thoughts were gone and my soul was afire. How can I ever forget those treasured moments spent with the Mother, and the words she uttered during our meetings, which are forever etched on my consciousness. Never can I forget her words, uttered at our last meeting, "The same spirit (*bhava*) that I saw in your Master, I see in you. With all of you who are devotees of Pitaji Yogananda, one feels here as if you were from his own asram." How deeply was I touched as she spoke of her regard for my Guru.

As we were leaving the asram, beholding for the last time the Mother's soft, loving gaze, I thought of my blessed Guru, who had chosen, as an eternal example for us, this flower of divinity, Ananda Mayee Ma, through which we have beheld the spirit of the ancient, Holy India he loved so much, and which we too have come to love.

PAGES FROM MY DIARY

GURUPRIYA DEVI

(Translated from Bengali.)

22nd May, 1952.

A few days ago Mataji has come to Simla from Solan at the request of the Raja Sahib of Solan.* The Raja Sahib has recently had a new house built on Jacko Hill. Hoping to inaugurate it during Mataji's stay, he has not lived in it before.

Mataji was still lying in bed this morning while I was busy with some work, when suddenly Vimala came to tell me that Mataji was singing a most wonderfully beautiful song. I at once hastened to Mataji's room and found Her quite immersed in Her song.

*"Aao mere salona chhaliare Banwari re,
Aao mere salona chhaliare !"*

She repeated this verse over and over again; its melody was of such unearthly sweetness and tenderness as cannot possibly be described in words. Her eyes were shut. What a marvellous tune! The whole atmosphere was vibrant with its wonder. I stood in silence, listening with rapt attention.

After a long while Mataji at last opened Her eyes and said to me almost in a whisper: "I heard someone sing. It is the song of a Gopi of course;" and She went on singing. A little later She spoke again: "You should preserve the song. Call Vibhu."†

*The Raja Sahib Durga Singhji of Solan has been a very faithful devotee of Mataji for many years. Mataji has named him 'Yogiraj.' Since then we all address him as 'Yogibhai.'

†Vibhu is a Brahmachari of our Ashram, who is a very good singer.

Vibhu* came and with great patience tried again and again to sing in unison with Mataji, but was unable to catch the precise modulation of the tune. Mataji remarked: "This is the melody of a subtler plane. Here it gets mixed up with the atmosphere of this world. It will be difficult to preserve it in its original purity." We felt sorely disappointed.

During the morning *Satsang* Sri Krishnanand Avadhutji questioned Mataji about the song. With great seriousness Mataji replied: "If these things do not come spontaneously, how else can they occur?" After hearing the verses, Avadhutji declared: "This is the most exquisite language of *Broj*.† '*Banwari*' means one who sports in the forests; '*salona*' means delightful, bewitching and '*chhaliare*' is an expression of endearment, the language of love."

At first I was unable to understand the words of the song. Later I began to grasp their significance. Sri Radha in her desolation is calling out to her Beloved. It is not a song of this world and that is why Vibhu, try as he may, cannot reproduce the tune precisely. However, Mataji comforted us by saying: "If anyone feels inclined to concentrate even on the semblance of the melody that you have succeeded in grasping, it will no doubt be of great benefit to him."

*The surprising fact is that so far whenever Vibhu has started singing this tune, he has gone into a peculiar state. Many have witnessed this.

†*Braj* is the country round about Mathura & Vrindaban where Sri Krishna was born and spent much of His life.

28th May, 1952.

At the special request of the Raja Sahib, Mataji returned to Solan to-day. In the evening something remarkable occurred that is worth recording. One of the Brahmacharis of our Ashram had a talk with Mataji about his *sadhana*. Immediately afterwards, Mataji called me : "Just imagine, Didi," She said, "what a strange thing has just happened. The Brahmachari, although a disciple of Sri Devi Giriji, asked this body what should be the object of his contemplation. To start with, this body had the *Kheyal* to tell him he should proceed as he had been instructed at the time of his initiation. He also explained clearly what kind of *japa* he was practising. All of a sudden I saw in that corner of the couch (Mataji indicated the side where She usually keeps Her head when lying) the figure of a person who with his raised hand pointed to that spot. (A nice large picture representing Mataji is kept there). He did so once. While talking ! kept on casting glances at him. Once again he distinctly pointed to the same spot."

Mataji laughed heartily when She added : "Who can tell, perhaps he was drawing attention to your room, Didi." I also joined in the laughter and said. "How very nice ! No doubt he must have pointed to me ! But what was the figure like ?"

With a smile Mataji replied : "He looked like the charioteer of the *Partha*,† He wore that kind of dress. He

† Sri Krishna is described as the charioteer of the *Partha* (Arjuna) in the Bhagavad Gita.

stood up very straight, and with His long arm that reached down to His knees he pointed in that direction. Think of it, at first it did not strike me, but later it became clear that He appeared exactly in the place where the Srimad Bhāgavata is being kept."

The Brahmachari was called and in Mataji's presence I told him all about the strange incident. He responded by saying : "Oh yes, I did notice that while talking Mataji seemed as if were preoccupied with other thoughts. The atmosphere here in the room also became as if enchanted. As She spoke to me, Mataji's eyes twice wandered in that direction. But I could not see anything at all."

Without a word Mataji listened to our conversation, smiling gently. I then told the Brahmachari : "It is well known that Mataji does not always explain clearly what happens; there can, however, not be the shadow of a doubt that today Sri Krishna Himself has appeared and indicated to you by His gesture to contemplate Mataji as She is on that picture."

Finally Mataji said to the Brahmachari : "At any rate you should do one thing : whenever you sit down for your meditation, first of all concentrate on that form of Sri Krishna and then, after doing obeisance to Him, contemplate whatever else it may be. For He Himself has come to-day in that form to intimate to you what to do. This is why you should start your meditation by thinking of Him !"

3rd June, 1952.

In the course of conversation Mataji related something that had happened long, long ago. At that time Mataji and

