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

MĀTRI VĀNI

“*Mahashunya*—the Great Void—is alone His Form. But it has to be distinguished from the ordinary void that belongs to the world ; where this functions the Great Void cannot be comprehended. • What is and what is not ? Yet everything is and is also not—and neither is it not, nor is it. Albeit—to find all by losing all, this is what is wanted.”

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“You and I are two persons and yet you and I are one ; and the gap between the two of us, this also is myself : there can be no question at all of duality. Attachment and hate arise out of the sense of duality.”

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• *Mahashunya*—Great Void means Absolute Consciousness characterized by the absence of all creation. *Shunya* or (ordinary) void is the interval or gap between every two persons, things, feelings, thoughts, ideas, etc., which of necessity exists in the world of duality.

“You know in what manner service was done by this body : I myself was the patient, I was his suffering, and the nursing was also done by me. This is why whatever was required anywhere, at any time, came about in precisely the way needed. You also should exert yourselves and try at least to engage in service with heart and soul, considering whomsoever you serve as your own self : by so doing, no matter what be the nature of your service, it will in time become instinct with life.”

* * *

“It is characteristic of this body that from whatever point of view anyone may speak at any particular time, it will respond from precisely that point of view or angle. This body is not always consistent in what it says in the way you would be. Everyone’s varying thoughts and feelings are indeed ever clearly visible before my eyes.”

* * *

“If happens off and on that the forms (*murti*) of diseases† approach this body. They may even enter it and have free play for a certain period of time. It is the nature of this body neither to invite anyone nor to send anyone away. Just as you exist, so do illnesses. This body does not turn

† Mataji says that every disease has a distinct form (*murti*) that can be perceived on a subtle plane.

you away, as you well know ; why then should it mete out a different treatment to them ?”

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“For this body only the ONE exists, there is not even the possibility of a second. Who then can give trouble to whom ? Only if there be ‘another’ can he cause trouble.”

“Light is gained by His Grace alone. He is the One to be held in remembrance at all times. There is nothing else that you need feel concerned about, father : contemplate only Him and Him alone.”

“Ma”

Conversations with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

RECORDED BY PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

(Translated by Atmananda)

(2)

Question : What is the significance of the saying in the Bible : “Knock and the door shall be opened to you ?” Does it refer to the opening of the door of the ego ?

Mataji : What is your opinion ? One has of course to break up one’s own ego.

Question : When the walls that make up the ego have been demolished, what happens ?

Mataji : On what foundation do those walls rest ?

The Questioner : On the cover that is spread over the Light of the Self.

Mataji : Now you have yourself given the answer !

Question : What actually is the ego ?

Mataji : You imagine that you are the doer of your actions—this indicates the existence of the ego in you. ‘Duniya’ (world) means ‘du-niya’ (based on duality). Here the cause of the conflict lies in the idea that the ego is the doer of actions. Duality breeds conflict, problems, the separate ‘I’ and its activities. In the imperfect ‘I’ the ego is present, while the realization ‘I am the Self (*Atma*)’ is of the perfected

'I'. The result of egotism is blindness. In the attitude of mind : 'I am the Lord's eternal servant,' there also seems to be duality, but the worldly 'I' has not survived. Not until the I is perfect, in other words not unless '*Aham Brahmasmi*' (I am the Brahman) has been realized will the ego be destroyed from its roots.

Question : Which of the two is better : to break the door and enter, or having broken up the ego, to remain lying at the door ?

Mataji : In the first instance the ego has still confidence in its own power and capacity, while the second is a case of self-surrender—and therefore He is sure to open the door and let you see the Light Eternal. The door is meant to be broken ; this may be achieved either by self-effort or by the special *sādhana** that the *Guru* prescribes. All *tapasya*† has for its sole purpose the piercing of the veil of ignorance. But God is not revealed by the seeker's own effort, He is ever Self-luminous and does not depend on any action. However, by one's own doing has the veil been fashioned and by one's own doing will it be destroyed ; and then the One who is eternally pure, fully enlightened and free will shine forth. Only what is removable will be removed ; how is it possible to remove what cannot be removed by any means ? When your life is centred in activity, either in the world or in the domain of thought, you experience relative happiness, for the sphere of the mind is in fact the kingdom

**Sādhana*—Spiritual practice performed for the purpose of preparing oneself for Self-realization.

†*Tapasya*—Hardships undergone with the definite object of attaining to the Spiritual.

of delusion. There, true happiness, which does not depend on anything, cannot be found. To be delivered from this want one has to take recourse to *sadhana*, and then the Beloved (*Ishta*) becomes revealed by virtue of the *Guru's* power. Where nothing undesired (*an-isht*) can be, in other words no want or sorrow, that is indeed one's *Ishta*. Try to burn what can be burnt by Knowledge and to melt what can be melted by faith and devotion ; then the Beloved will stand revealed. The path of discrimination leads to the realization of the essence of Knowledge and the path of devotion to the revelation of the essence of Love. Verily, both are one : by *bhakti* one will arrive at a state where the Beloved is seen everywhere and in everything ; and by discrimination at the realization of the One-Brahman-without-a-second. Both are in fact one and the same ; no matter what be a person's method of approach, ultimately he will reach the One Destination. In nature there is gradual development, while the One State in which there are neither grades nor stages lies beyond nature. Here Pure Consciousness is realized, where even though the whole is taken from the whole, yet the whole remains unimpaired ; where even though the void is taken from the void, yet the void remains unaltered. He alone exists in the guise of nature as well as of supernature. By persevering in spiritual practice the 'I' (*Aham*) will be transformed into "I am THAT" (*Soham*) ; or in the case of those who advance along the line of devotion the wayward servant will be transformed into the Eternal Servant of the Lord.

In the realm of the fleeting there can be no peace, notwithstanding the great variety of objects of enjoyment,

for none of them endure. The sense of want will never vanish unless the Eternal One has been realized. Actions that are the expressions of the ego will only lead to more perplexity ; but by engaging in *sadhana* the Self will be found. Do not be a traveller on the path of death ; become a pilgrim on the path of Self-realization. A life burdened by desires for sense objects is the path of death. So long as craving and passion persist, one is obliged to take a 'return-ticket' as it were, in other words one will be reborn in order to experience pleasure and pain again and again.

Question : Convicts in jail know for how long they have been sentenced. Why do the prisoners of the earth not know for how long they will be confined ?

Mataji : Why, indeed, it is made known to them. Supermen, saints and sages by proclaiming Truth are at all times making it clear that this world is a prison-house. Try to return from your captivity.

Question : Who is a mother (*māti*) ?*

Mataji : A mother ? This is the mother—earth. (Pointing to the earth).

Question : May householders take initiation by *mantra* from a *sannyāsi* ?

Mataji : From whomsoever a person is fated to receive something, from him will it be received.

* *Mā* is the Bengali word for mother. The suffix 'ti' is commonly affixed to singular nouns, thus '*Māti*'. But *Māti* with long 'i' (ee) means earth.

