

MĀTRI SATSANGA

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

(Translated from Bengali)

After the conclusion of the Saṁyamavrata in the New Delhi Ashram in 1957, Mataji remained in the Ashram for a few more days, and each night we had a wonderful opportunity of enjoying *Satsanga* with Mataji. I have tried to note down Sri Ma's exact words, but I cannot confirm with confidence that I have caught each and every word that emanated from Her lips.

In the *Devī Gītā* of the *Devī Bhāgavata* it is said, "In the whole universe who else is there but the Mother who can continue to put up with the errors the child commits at every step? There fore all of you must take refuge with utmost devotion at the feet of the Supreme Mother. It is She who will fulfill the task you have undertaken."

New Delhi, 27/11/1957.

Devotees requested Sri Ma to sing kirtana, so She sang very melodiously in ever varying modulations :

"He *Bhagavān*, He *Bhagavān*. *Jñeya Bhagavān*, *Dhyeya Bhagavān*, *Śreya Bhagavān*, *Preya Bhagavān*, *Mangalamay He Bhagavān*, *Śāntimay He Bhagavān*, *Ānandamay He Bhagavān*, *Premamay He Bhagavān*."

The kirtana was so enchanting that all present started repeating in chorus after Sri Ma. The whole atmosphere became surcharged with divine love—as if all present were having *darśana* of the Lord. A heavenly joy was reflected on the faces of everyone.

Question : Ma, I should like to ask a question.

Mataji : What do you say ? Only one question remains, all the others have been answered ?

Question : I have heard that once upon a time, when you went to bathe in a pond. You felt like playing amidst its waters. You had the *kheyāla* to mingle with the water, becoming water yourself. Please explain how such a thing happened.

Mataji : In those times this sort of *bhāva*¹ (mood) used to arise. This body had then not heard any Scriptures. Nowadays of course, the speeches of mahātmās are being heard. It does not always occur to this body to listen. At that time I was a young woman in veils. We had not yet visited Dehradun and Raipur—long before that. In those days this body on occasions would dance in ecstasy at the sight of dense dark clouds. This body was then staying at Ramna Ashram, Dacca. The ashram was surrounded by fields. One day this body went to bathe in a pond. And there and then the *kheyāla* arose to mingle and become one with the water. In water 'this' (*Mataji*) was water, seeing waves it was waves, with the wind it was wind. Who is it that appears as water or wind ? HE and no other. In those days the play of various *sādhana*s was being enacted. Sometimes during *kīrtana* a *bhāva* would ensue in which this body would roll about like dry leaves being blown about by the breeze. Sometimes, as soon as this body sat in a yogic posture, yogic *kriyā*s would start of their own. Now and then the whole body would

1 *bhāva*—Divine mood, also spiritual ecstasy, generally emotional in nature.

rise up. Then again this body would walk without touching the ground or even became invisible. Seeing all these strange happenings, Bholanath got frightened. This was the state of affairs in those days. On occasions, during kīrtana, such a mighty force would come into play that it became difficult to restrain this body even by application of considerable physical strength. People were afraid when taking part in kīrtana of what might or might not happen to this body. Didi once asked : "Ma, are you the same person as the one I saw in Dacca ?" In this manner were spent not a few days but year after year. It is difficult for people to believe all this.

Sometimes this body would hang by the index finger just a swing hangs from the boughs. At times there was such a powerful *bhāva* while singing kīrtana that this body would roll all over the room. In those days this body was clad only in a *śārī* which covered the whole body. Blouses were not worn by women of poor families. In winter as in summer nothing but a *śārī* used to be worn. This body's aunt once presented to me a black vest. Even while rolling about during kīrtana the *śārī* never slipped off. The Lord by singing whose name this sort of condition came about, protected this body through His name.

Chakrapāñji Maharaj : In 1944, at the Triveni Sangam (Prayag) I witnessed such a *bhāva* of Ma. Her body was then rolling about during kīrtana.

Mataji : It was after several years, many years after leaving Dacca—that such a big kīrtana was

witnessed again. Thus a *bhāva* arose. It is not as if this may not occur again. If the *kheyāla* comes, it may take place even now. Bhaiji once asked me. "Why don't the *bhāvas* that used to come over you occur anymore? What has happened? All this must have come about during the period of your *sādhana*. Once this stage has passed, perhaps such things do not occur anymore? Will they never be witnessed again?" This body told Bhaiji: "Why should'nt they?" Bhaiji replied: "The play of *sādhana* proceeded stage by stage. Now this cannot be observed anymore, Can it be resumed? By sustained *sādhana siddhi* (fulfilment) is attained. When by pursuing a particular line the goal is reached the play of *sādhana* is over."

Question: Ma, why can't these states occur again?

Mataji: This body talks in a topsyturvy fashion, being crazy, isn't it? This body maintains that by the protracted performance of worship a person may reach a condition where there is no more *triputi*, that is to say, the division into worshipper, object of worship and act of worship is obliterated. Then there are no more stages of existence. This here (Mataji) is only a tiny little child. When this body had the *kheyāla* to practise *sādhana*, various *sādhana*s followed one after another. Even now, by a combination of favourable circumstances, such things may come to pass again. Everything is ever present. Just as when you were small you had to learn the A B C and later you appeared for the M. A. This capacity has remained with you. Even after passing M. A., can you not

write A B C ? THERE the question of higher and lower levels no longer exists. Some people say, "previously Ma used to be in exalted states of *bhāva*, now this is no longer the case ; so perhaps Ma has descended to a lower level ?" A few hold this opinion. Whatever anyone may say is all right. But there is no such thing as higher and lower levels.

Question : Well, Ma, please contrive to do something whereby we may become absorbed in *dhyāna* (meditation) !

Mataji : First of all you must sit down quietly. It is true that you all love this little girl. You have taken such pains to give her *darśana* in this manner. You are very gracious indeed.

Pandit Sundarlal : This is how you are deceiving us !

Question : Did you observe anything special during the meditation today ?

Mataji : Sometimes, when the *kheyāla* arises. I talk about it, but when the *kheyāla* is absent I say nothing. Something or other is always taking place in the presence of this body.

28th November, 1957

Question : Please tell us something about this Saṁyama Saptaha ! What was our meditation like ? What were our faults and failings ? Please elaborate !

Mataji : Haven't the mahātmās told you ?

Question : But we want to hear it from you !

Mataji : Words do not always come to this body. Neither does it deliver lectures. As you ring the bell so you hear the sound. As you play the instrument so you will hear music.

Question : Have we progressed in our *Sādhana* or not ?
How many marks out of hundred have we secured ?

Mataji : Pitāji, you will yourself be able to say how great was your concentration and to what depths in meditation you have been able to attain.

Question : Ma, you know best. Please tell us !

Mataji : Leave this body out of it ! Whatever you are accomplishing is being accomplished by this body. Whatever I am saying is being said by you. Is there any place here for "you" and "me" ? Say as much as you can ! It is characteristic for the mind to be restless and to roam about. But by effort even the restless mind can be harnessed. The mind is like a child. Just as a child has to be coaxed in order to be taught, so should efforts be made to pacify the mind. As food is necessary to nourish the body, so is spiritual intake imperative to make the mind one-pointed.

Question : What will happen as a result of taking the Lord's name ?

Mataji : By taking God's name, by contemplating His lotusfeet, by meditating on God's glories, the mind will be purified. Try to make yourself pure and holy as you can.

Question : I have not the faintest idea of God's identity. How can I coteemplate Him ?

Mataji : You try again and again to concentrate on God's lotus feet but *dhyāna* (absorption) does not supervene. Your mind continuously escapes towards sense pleasures. Why ? Because this kind of enjoyment has so far sustained your

body and mind. So, when trying to meditate the mind wanders away to sense objects, which are poison.¹ Sense enjoyment is 'slow poison' that by its very nature will lead you to death's door. You are scions of the Immortal, you are Ātmārām, you are the eternal servant, the eternal disciple of God. Having inherited the legacy of Immortality, why journey towards death? With single-mindedness concentrate on the lotusfeet of the Lord. In the Gītā the Lord has said in so many words that by constant practice (*abhyāsa yoga*) the goal will be attained. Those who live for transient pleasures are subjected to the covering screen of the opposites of temporary happiness and sorrow. If anyone wants to get rid of this covering screen, he must live a life of self-restraint. There by the mind is purified. Who am I? Where have I come from? This has to be pondered over. By constantly reflecting on these questions, sense enjoyment will dwindle. Initiation, study, strict observance of Guru's instructions and a disciplined life will lead to the revelation of man's true Self. Just now you have observed *Samyama Vrata* for seven days. Some have declared that they simply loved this week of self-restraint. If it did not belong to them of their own right, they could not have liked it so much. Where "mine" and "yours" has remained there is bound to be sorrow. By a life of self-mastery the road to realization of your true Self will be opened up.

On relative happiness—happiness depending on

1 A pun : *Viśaya* sense object, and *viś* poison, *hai* is.

anything—grief must follow of necessity. So your endeavour should be to become independent of circumstances. By self-control much can be gained. By observing *samyama* you will come to recognize your own short comings, such as that you cannot sit still, that you are unable to concentrate during meditation, and so forth. Only yesterday it was said : “Sit in such a manner, turn your mind in such a direction, eat the type of food that is likely to arouse your nobler qualities (*sāttvic bhāva*). Pursue a line whereby whatever you speak will transform your nature. Select the line that you consider the right one : there are infinite roads leading to God-realization.

Some people say that it is this body (Mataji) who has called into being the yearly *samyama saptāha*. But this is not so. The *samyama saptāha* was started by Yogibhāi.¹

Question : I was present during the *samyama Saptāha* of Vindhyachal. Everybody was immersed in bliss during the meditation there.

Mataji : Those who have performed this *vrata* several times know how to conduct themselves here. Newcomers are unaware. Only after understanding the rules one should sit down for meditation.

Question : Some people maintain that *japa* should be carried out during meditation. How is this possible ?

Mataji : *Japa* is also a kind of meditation. Mantra means that which gives deliverance to the

¹ Mataji had named the late Raja of Solan, Sri Durga Singh, “Jogibhāi”.

mind. The mantra may consist of one single syllable or of more, put together. *Akṣara* (letter) means imperishable. Thus the *akṣara* is God's *vigraha*.¹ Some people cannot visualize God's form unless they perform *japa*. Others resort to *japa* when the mind becomes restless during meditation.

Question : Is there any rule against the performance of *japa* during meditation ?

Mataji : Take a vote on this issue ! Those who want to meditate will do so and those who want to perform *japa* are free to follow their inclination. Some get more *ānanda* while immersed in pure meditation (*dhyāna*), others while absorbed in *japa*. Everyone should do what is most helpful to him or her.

Question : Whom should one contemplate at the time of meditation ?

Mataji : Each one should contemplate his own *Iṣṭa* (Divine Beloved). One should meditate exactly as the Guru has instructed.

Question : And those who have no Guru ?

Mataji : Those who have no Guru should repeat the name of God that appeals to them most and contemplate the Deity whose name they are repeating. Those who do not feel inclined even to take God's name, should sit absolutely still in a solitary place and ponder over "Who am I ?" One must try to know one's true self. Those who have no Guru may take on a Guru.

1 *Vigraha*— concrete External Presence as form.

Question : Some people say, the Guru will seek you out Himself. Is this true ?

Mataji : Your Guru will indeed find you. Be on the look out for Him !

Question : I do not like the idea that the Guru will have to take the trouble of seeking me out.

Mataji : The longing expectation "the Guru will find me" is also a kind of meditation. consulting others will be useless. When you feel deep within yourself that you cannot proceed further without a Guru, when this kind of inner urge makes you desperate, then your Guru will Himself appear before you.

Question : We have all come to you, so we do not need any other Guru.

Mataji : It is no good discussing such things, whatever is necessary for each one will be done.

Question : Will all bad qualities be blotted out ?

Mataji : Do not speculate about what will remain and what will go once God stands revealed. We must try hard for the vision of God. God's ways are mysterious. He is of infinite names, of infinite forms and of infinite manifestation. Just as when someone addresses you as 'father' you respond ; someone else may call you 'uncle' or 'grandfather'—but you are one and the same person. So when the vision of God supervenes, it will be understood that everything is present in God. On obtaining God's uninterrupted vision all defects will be effaced.

(To be continued.)