

CONTENTS

English Section

1. Mātri Vāni	103
2. About Sri Anandamayi Ma			
—Dr. Bithika Mukerji, M.A., D.Phil.		...	105
3. Man and His Goal—The Light of Viveka		...	116
4. In Search of the Mother			
—Swami Bhagavatanand Giri		...	123
5. Nada Yogi Swami Haridas—Saroj		...	130
6. Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu			
and Ladhak—A Devotee			135
7. Matri Lila	144



*Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,
So there is also a door to Knowledge.*

Mātri Vāni

God is complete. Thus for full revelation one has to go to Him. Only because of the notion of God's absence is there sorrow in the world. Where God is manifest there are no 'two'—sorrow has no place.

* * *

Go forth to realize God—try at least. This is the genuine madman.† Madman (*pāgol*) means *pawa gol, peye gele*†† achieved; signifying unlimited enlightenment. When one becomes obsessed by this madness, the madness after the world of duality takes flight. Some people are crazy over another's body. By this sort of insanity, falling a prey to infatuation (*moha*) and delusion (*māyā*), one ruins one's body. Turning into a maniac after God will not spoil one's body.

* * *

If, instead of being consecrated to God's work, divine power is employed for worldly ends, it is wasted. By using spiritual energy for worldly pursuits, the current of this energy will be broken. When by sustained *sādhana* one has been blessed with power, it is not right to squander it.

* * *

† Madman in the sense of otherworldly, visionary, seer. Siva for instance is also called "*Pagla*" (madman).

†† A play upon words that cannot be translated. Being mad after something implies intense concentration and one-pointedness and therefore achievement is bound to follow.

Everything is God's *vibhūti*,† His *māyā*,†† His *līlā*, His very own play. To spend for worldly purposes what one has received spiritually in the course of that play is not correct.

* * *

Mahāmāyā is one thing and *viśaya māyā*, the delusion of sense objects—sense enjoyment—quite another. For you, a pilgrim to the Eternal, it is detrimental not to tread the path to Him. Having left aside sense objects, do not remain entangled in supernormal powers. Supernormal powers are but a stage. They may be beneficial, they may also be harmful. But through them you will not attain to the Supreme, the Ultimate. Having obtained power it must not be dissipated. Aspire to Self-realization. Otherwise there will be obstacles—decline.

* * *

Using power is a very different matter from coming about spontaneously, of its own. If power is used deliberately, the 'I' remains and consequently a downfall may result from it. Whereas in the case of a spontaneous occurrence this is not so.

* * *

Infatuation (*moha*) causes entanglement while the love of God (*prema*) leads to Self-revelation. Having become involved in *moha*, weeping and regret is bound to follow.

* * *

He who is the Supreme Friend never deceives. From the worldly point of view, a son may be disowned, but that Friend can never be given up.

† *Vibhūti* The one Supreme Form revealed in all objects of the senses.

†† The Supreme Divine Power by which the One conceals. Itself and appears as the many.

About Sri Anandamayi Ma*

DR. BITHIKA MUKERJI, M.A., D. PHIL.

June 1966. Satsang Hall of the Sri Anandamayi Ashram in Kishenpur, Dehradun. Kirtan is just over. It is the time for conversation with Mataji. The hall is quite crowded with the inmates of the Ashram, guests from outside who have come to spend some time with Mataji, and visitors from the town. An old gentleman who is occupying a front seat asks permission to put a question to Mataji. She smilingly nods assent.

“What have you achieved by your *sādhana* ?” he asks.

“Here the question of achievement or *sādhana* does not arise. I am what I have always been.”

The gentleman consults a paper and then says :

“What is your message to the world ?”

“What message can one give who has not achieved or learnt anything ?”

The gentleman does not share the general appreciation of this prompt rejoinder. He is in earnest.

“Ma, I have travelled a long distance to see you. When I go back, my friends will ask : ‘What is she like ? What did she say ?’ and then what am I to tell them ? I want to understand your message !”

“Very well, tell them ‘I have a small daughter ; she prattles of whatever occurs to her.’ You said, ‘When others ask’, therefore, I said ‘I am your child’, but actually you and I are one, aren’t we ? There is only one all-pervading *Ātmā*, naught else except the ONE. You yourself are a barrier unto yourself in the form of *samskāras*. The destiny of

* Reprinted from “The Mountain Path,” vol. XI 3, July 1968.

every human being is to destroy the veil that hides his own Self. To realize the Self means to realize God and to realize God is to realize one's Self."

"There are good as well as bad *samskāras*. Do good *samskāras* also act as barriers?"

"The bad-ones do not allow the good-ones to be effective. However, from the ultimate point of view there is no such thing as good and evil."

The gentleman professes himself pleased and satisfied with this answer.

He no doubt would have been extremely surprised to hear Mataji on other occasions advocate the ritualistic worship of deities. She also countenances forms of worship which relegate ritualism to a bare minimum. It cannot be said that Mataji has any religion, doctrine or method of her own because she accepts and approves of all of them. She would in effect say: "How can you impose limitations on the Infinite by declaring: 'This is the only true way'?"

* "Why should there be so many different religions and sects? Because through every one of them He gives Himself to Himself, so that each person may advance according to his individual uniqueness..."

Mataji's teachings are mainly for the individual and as such it would be as futile to enumerate her words of guidance as to pinpoint the radiating flashes of a diamond. To each questioning person she generally replies according to his cultural background, his capacity to understand and also the degree of his conviction. However, some generalizations may be attempted without fear of misrepresentation.

Mataji has been guiding people away from the ways which lead to religious frenzy or extreme rigorisms. Mataji

* "Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma" (Published in 1961 by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi).

never delivers a talk. Neither does she herself perform any ritual whatever. She usually encourages the singing of *Nāma Kirtana* and sometimes takes active part in it. Mataji is easily able to establish rapport between herself and people of all countries, age groups and coming from various walks of life.

Now that she is quite well known, many foreign seekers after Truth, artists, journalists and tourists visiting India make it a point to meet her. Mataji receives them as she receives thousands of others. The writer of this article, as one of the interpreters has had numerous opportunities to watch Mataji with foreigners. She gives them the same individual treatment as to persons well known to her. To superficial questions her answers consist of two or three words and the interview is terminated before it has well begun. To a few she gives detailed instructions about many things.

In a particular case the interpreter had a strong feeling that the translation was superfluous. Mataji hardly waited for it to be over before she would start speaking again. The man, looking at her face, would nod understandingly, as if the meaning, which was already clear to him, was being confirmed by the translator. Indeed, many foreigners have experienced no difficulty in communicating with Mataji although she speaks only Bengali and Hindi.

The variety of the advice she gives would explain to a large extent the difference of opinion amongs her devotees about Mataji's teachings. Some will claim that she upholds orthodoxy: "She told me not to eat food cooked by a non-brahmin." Another will say: "Mataji never believed in the caste system. Did she not have the temple doors in the Ashram at Dacca opened for all, many years before such a movement started elsewhere in India?"

We may hear such contradictory statements as: "She believes in education. She has asked me to study hard and

finish my educational career before I think of doing anything else," and : "Education is not important. She told me : 'This education will help you to earn material wealth only. You must strive for spiritual wealth.'" Or : "Mataji so strongly advises against the breaking up of a home : it is no use arguing that my difficulties can be solved only by going away. She always exhorts me to have patience and forgive again and again." And "She has told me that no duty is binding for one who goes forth in quest of God."

Some will assert that she upholds the ideal of social service, others that she advocates renunciation of the world for the sake of God, and each person will be correct.

It must be understood that all these teachings are the variations of just one theme : The supreme duty of every human being is to strive for the realization of THAT WHICH IS. She knows no compromise in this. All other obligations, namely towards family, country, humanity have their places in the hierarchy of human values but they are all subsumed under the supreme duty towards God :* "To aspire for the realization of Truth is alone worthy of man." "It is man's duty to bear in mind that he exists for God alone—for His service and for the realization of Him."

But it cannot be said that Mataji recommends renunciation of the world. To the oft-repeated question : "Should I renounce the world because this would be helpful to a life of *sādhana*," she has variously replied : "The time has not come for you to do so since the question arises in your mind whether you should or not."

"The call of the Divine must be felt as a compulsion. A man who hears this call leaves all behind even as a dry leaf falls from its branch."

* Quoted from "Matri Vani", a collection of Mataji's replies to letters.

"If renunciation does not purge one clean of every sense of duty and obligation it is merely of a flight into another world."

"A man does not debate whether he should escape from a holocaust."

Mataji generally maintains that so long as duties are meaningful they should be carried out meticulously and as a service to God.

She repeats this again and again to statesmen, businessmen, intellectuals, ignorant, rich, poor, old and young. "The Ashram of the householder is a field of service and every service should be performed as a worship of God".

*"Abide by your duty. To live in the home that he has created for himself is surely fitting for a householder. Do not, however, neglect the search for your real Home. Only when this has been found has one truly come home."

"There are various modes of living : one is the Ashram of the householder; another to do service, regarding whom-ever one serves as a manifestation of the Supreme Being; a third way is to fix Self-realization as the one and only goal and advance towards it with uninterrupted speed and determination. In keeping with his inclination and bent of mind everyone chooses one of these modes of living. God Himself will take care of everything that concerns a man who puts his whole trust in Him."

To children Mataji sometimes says something like this : "You are my friends, aren't you ? Will you do something for this friend of yours ? (1) As soon as you wake up in the morning bow down to God and pray to Him to make you a good boy or girl. Say : 'Lord, I don't know where you are. Grant that I may find you.' At night, do *pranāma* again and if you have done anything wrong, ask God to let you do

better the next day. (2) Try to obey your parents and elders. (3) Study well. (4) Always speak the truth. (5) Laugh and play, run and jump to your heart's content and if you can do the first four things you may be naughty and mischievous as well."

To a busy housewife she said: "You have no time during the day but the nights are your own. It does not matter when or how you remember God. Divine Grace is all-pervasive. Everyone should constantly endeavour to be in readiness to receive this ever-present Grace."

A religious life does not mean a life of idleness. What is required is to live constantly in the presence of God. Nobody need neglect any duty to practise *sādhana*. Admittedly, there are conditions that are not conducive to a religious atmosphere. But Mataji's counsel in general would be to make the best of the existing circumstances. It is only she who can devise ways and means out of seemingly unsurmountable difficulties.

Mataji is rather strict about the quality and purity of food for persons engaged in spiritual discipline. The general rules of orthodoxy are maintained in her ashrams because this seems a desirable arrangement for all concerned. She sometimes says: "You have come here for the purpose of serious *sādhana*. Everyone lives within an aura of his own creation. The comingling of natures is not conducive to progress on this path." Such advice is for the inmates of the ashrams and for other serious minded devotees. She does not seek to change the customs ordinarily followed by people.

*

*

*

*

Mataji was born in 1896 in the village of Kheora, now in East Pakistan. Her parents, devout Brahmins, named her Nirmala Sundari.

By all accounts she was an extremely obedient, helpful and radiantly happy child. Her mother does not recall that Nirmala Sundari ever expressed a wish of her own. From her infancy she exercised unusual attraction on all who met her. For a short time only she was a pupil of the local village school. She was ever ready to help with the chores, not only at home but at all the neighbouring houses. Mataji has always approved of physical work. She herself was untiringly engaged in household work till the years 1923-24. She was able even to combine the life of a hard-working housewife with that of the ascetic engaged in rigorous *sādhana*.

Before completing her thirteenth year, Mataji was married to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti, known as 'Bholanath'. In accordance with village customs, she stayed with husband's family for the first few years after marriage. When she was about 18 years old, she went to keep house for Bholanath at his place of employment.

The question of leading a conventional married life just did not arise for this unusual couple. Mataji has said : "My parents told me that I should respect and obey Bholanath and look upon him as my guardian. Consequently I gave him the respect and obedience due to my father. He was always like a father to me." Bholanath, by all accounts, was a remarkable man himself. When the time came for them to stay together, the young husband found that he had a most extraordinary wife to look after. She was gentle, hard-working and of a joyous nature, but without a trace of worldly feelings and desires. Her innocence and unquestioning trust in him made him the devoted guardian he was to her throughout his life. Mataji has a delightful sense of humour. The anecdotes of her life with her relatives by marriage and also with Bholanath are full of penetrating observations. About her marriage Mataji has once said : "In the beginning Bholanath used to say : 'You are very immature and childlike..... It will be all right when you

grow up.....,' but it seems I never grew up!" More seriously: "Bholanath's restraint and sense of dignity were always exemplary. All the years I was with him I did not have even an inkling of the desires which assail mankind. It is now that I hear unending tales of troubles and transgressions."

Mataji was never taught any spiritual practices, neither did she engage in the accepted sense of the term. However, during the years she spent in Bajitpur and Dacca (roughly from 1918-1926), she spontaneously went not only through the variegated *sādhanas* indicated in the Hindu Scriptures but also those of other faiths. The effects of these practices manifested on her body. She would be in exalted states of *bhāva* or *samādhi* or her body would assume various yogic postures. She has no previous knowledge of such matters. She watched herself go through the innumerable paths of *sādhana* as she watched herself performing household work. She refers to this period as "The play of *sādhana*". She has said....."As a rule there is a veil that separates man from his own self. This veil has to be worn of by practising *sādhana*. But here, there was no veil, it was drawn only in order to be removed again. Therefore, what else should this be called but play?" What she has related about this phase of her life would fill a volume, yet she says that she has not disclosed even one hundredth part of the entire experience. The minutest details of each line of approach were revealed to her in their true significance.

Mataji did not need or ask for publicity. In fact, she tried her best to avoid it. In the beginning a few of Bholanath's friends would come and talk to her about religious topics. All knowledge of rituals, spiritual exercises and also philosophical evaluations of such matters came unhesitatingly, clearly and convincingly from this untutored village maiden. These friends brought others and gradually crowds began to assemble round Mataji's radiant personality,

seeking advice on spiritual things as well as on their own problems.

Mataji herself did not go out of her way to talk to anyone. If Bholanath asked her to speak to people she would do so, not otherwise. Throughout his lifetime Mataji never did anything without his consent. Bholanath occupied a peculiar position. He looked upon Mataji as his guru and spiritual preceptor and also received from her the untiring service of which she alone is capable. After his death in 1938 at the age of 56, other devotees have tried to serve Mataji and make all arrangements for her.

*

*

*

It is difficult, indeed impossible to understand Mataji because her actions and words reveal nothing about her. Usually action gives a clue to the mental make-up of a human being. Mataji's actions arise out of the people around her. For herself no action whatever is necessary. Even bodily requirements such as food, rest, sleep and so forth do not influence her behaviour and may remain suspended for any length of time. During earlier days this was a more frequent phenomenon. Once she did not eat or even drink water for 13 days. On the 14th day, she broke this remarkable spell of abstinence with the remark: "I just wanted to see how it would be to remain without water. I find that even the need for water is becoming extinct. But for the comfort and convenience of people a semblance of normal behaviour must be kept up."

Other similar features make it impossible for ordinary judgement to be meaningful in her case. To the question: "If you have no mission to fulfil or message to give, why do you tell us to worship God?"; Mataji replied: "If you do not ask, I have nothing to say. But if you ask and it is my '*kheyāla*' then I shall certainly tell you about the better way of life."

Mataji herself has had no Guru and she does not give formal initiation to anyone. The hundreds of people flocking round her are not bound to her even by this intangible tie. The secret of her attraction she sometimes explains in this way : "It is natural for people's hearts to go out to a child. My body is aged but actually I am a small child and as such receive affection from all. Although this little girl cannot do anything for anybody, people out of the goodness of their hearts love her nevertheless." or alternatively : "All children and unmarried people are my friends, and married people are my fathers and mothers and so I am dear to all. Is it not natural to love one's friend and child ?"

Mataji has no chosen attendants. Her companions, travels, places of residence are fortuitous. One is as good as the other. One of Mataji's favourite expressions, repeated by her again and again is : "जो हो जाय" (*jo ho jay*) : "Whatever comes to pass is equally welcome". Nobody can presume to say that he or she is indispensable to Mataji or specially favoured by her. Out of the throng that surrounds her, there may be one or two who understand the immeasurability of the personality that gives of herself freely and unstintingly to all who have need of her and yet remains so remote. Her compassion for suffering humanity is unbounded. Her days are more than full with assuaging the sorrows of the bereft, unlucky and afflicted. Mataji has no mission to fulfil in the world because no lack in her requires fulfilment. This self-sufficiency makes her personality absolutely enigmatic. From this point of view her closest companion of over 40 years' standing is as distantly placed as the stranger at the fringe of the crowd. She passes through the multitudes mostly as an on-looker. She has no fault to find with anything or anybody but if approached in perplexity she will give guidance and hope and advice as only she can.

All those who have seen Mataji will however subscribe to one general opinion about her : In Mataji's proximity there is no room for pessimism, despair or depression. The divine presence seem to permeate the atmosphere. The razor's edge path appears easy to traverse. The heart is buoyed on a wave of joyousness unimaginable before. It seems a miracle to be born a human being to whom the Kingdom of Heaven has been promised. Mataji's mere presence awakens in every man, woman and child a sense of destiny which is ANANDA.

"He who makes you turn towards the One Beloved, he, verily, is a real and true friend."

—Mata Anandamayi.

Man and His Goal—The Light of Viveka*

The first question which the seeker must inquire into is what is his ultimate destination, his hidden want; for no traveller can chalk out a plan for his journey unless he knows or believes where he is to go.

Attachment to the changeful objects of desire and yearning for Reality are the two opposite components of a man's being.

As no massing of clouds can obliterate the sun, but can only hide the sun from our eyes for a while, even so no motley of fleeting desires can kill our inherent and real want—they can only cover it up temporarily. Just as the dawn of the sun dissipates the clouds in no time, so does the awakening of the inner want and aspiration of man free him from all fleeting desires.

Man's innermost thirst for Truth or God can never be satisfied with any compound beings, objects or circumstances. The most pleasing set of objects or circumstances by themselves are like a well-decorated house where you may be without a friend, a lonely soul. Devoid of faith in the Divine, man is like a body without soul; an ornamented body a well-decorated house, a beautiful garden, but a lone resident therein.

The Infinite, which is our goal, is the Eternal whose Light and Love give light and life to all passing things.

The very fact that nothing is able to destroy the natural yearning of man for love and joy shows that the Lord of Love and Joy is ever calling man to his hidden heritage.

Before the fulfilment of our inner want, we run after the world but the world eludes us. On the fulfilment of our

* Reprinted from the book : "A Saint's call to Mankind", Published by the Manav Sewa Sangh, Vrindaban.

inner want, the world will run after us but not we after the world.

The realization of one's want enables one to set up one's goal. Thereafter a divine discontent carries one forward.

Man must carefully think over and determine what is his goal. The goal can only be that which is of his inmost nature, and therefore attainable. When the goal is set up the means come of themselves.

Our daily affairs and necessities do not constitute our life; they are merely bubbles in the sea of life. The secret of rising above objects and circumstances is to regard them all as the means to an end and never the end. If our gaze is fixed on the goal, we will make the best use of all these, which will only help us in attaining the goal. We should remember that no one, no object and no circumstance is to be blamed for our helpless state, but that imperfection is the very nature of transitory life, which includes our body and the world. Yearning or our real want is for that which is immutable ; the Divine Eternal.

As the thirsty man drinks water eagerly, so *sādhana* comes naturally to one whose goal is established. When the *sādhaka* has set up his goal once for all and does all work for the sake of the goal, all his work becomes worship. The light of *viveka* (discrimination) illumines his path and indeed *viveka* becomes the captain of his soul until the goal is reached.

Viveka is the light of Wisdom that is rooted in man and marks him out from the sub-human creation. It is not the same thing as the intellect, but is that from which the intellect derives its force. The intellect is a mechanism of nature, whereas *viveka* is the supra-mental light illuminating it. As the sun is the source of the electric or the candle light so is *viveka* the source from which the intellect and the senses derive their light and power. *Viveka* is the light of

Truth whose ray is imbedded in the innermost shrine of the heart of man and which leads pilgrim man to the realization of his being an image of the Divine.

Viveka enlightens us that man is not the human skeleton, but consciousness focussed in the human body. What he is—Consciousness—is the hidden target of discovery for the individual. But it should be discernible to each thinking man that he is not the body, even though normally he may be all too body-conscious. Each man calls the body *his* body, not himself; and there are many men who are ready to lay down their bodies to protect something they value higher—honour of self, family, country, etc.—or who would rather be released from their body if faced with an incurable and agonizing malady in the body. What, then, does man find himself to be? A being or consciousness who is discontented with his incompleteness—reflected in his unceasing desires—and is impelled by an urge for fulfilment, perfection or liberation, being endowed with *viveka* which guides him onward all along, this is what man actually finds himself to be. It follows therefore, that man's life must be a process of *sādhana*: a conscious aspiration and ceaseless effort to emerge from want to fulfilment, from imperfection to perfection, from bondage to liberation. *Sādhana*-less living is living by instinct, the life of the sub-human; or it is the life of the liberated man who has fulfilled himself through the school of human life—not of the normal man. Man as he is, is an entity of conscious *sādhana*. Unconscious gifts one finds even in many trees, but they do not equate with man for they lack the self-awareness of *viveka*. Non-possession is the attribute of many animals, but none calls them *sannyāsis*. So, it is *viveka* or self-awareness which marks out man as the highest of God's creation, verily made in the image of God.

Mystics, saints and sages of all lands and ages have offered their testimony that, eventually, man must inevitably

grow up.....,' but it seems I never grew up !” More seriously : “Bholanath’s restraint and sense of dignity were always exemplary. All the years I was with him I did not have even an inkling of the desires which assail mankind. It is now that I hear unending tales of troubles and transgressions.”

Mataji was never taught any spiritual practices, neither did she engage in the accepted sense of the term. However, during the years she spent in Bajitpur and Dacca (roughly from 1918-1926), she spontaneously went not only through the variegated *sādhana*s indicated in the Hindu Scriptures but also those of other faiths. The effects of these practices manifested on her body. She would be in exalted states of *bhāva* or *samādhi* or her body would assume various yogic postures. She has no previous knowledge of such matters. She watched herself go through the innumerable paths of *sādhana* as she watched herself performing household work. She refers to this period as “The play of *sādhana*”. She has said.....“As a rule there is a veil that separates man from his own self. This veil has to be worn of by practising *sādhana*. But here, there was no veil, it was drawn only in order to be removed again. Therefore, what else should this be called but play ?” What she has related about this phase of her life would fill a volume, yet she says that she has not disclosed even one hundredth part of the entire experience. The minutest details of each line of approach were revealed to her in their true significance.

Mataji did not need or ask for publicity. In fact, she tried her best to avoid it. In the beginning a few of Bholanath’s friends would come and talk to her about religious topics. All knowledge of rituals, spiritual exercises and also philosophical evaluations of such matters came unhesitatingly, clearly and convincingly from this untutored village maiden. These friends brought others and gradually crowds began to assemble round Mataji’s radiant personality,

seeking advice on spiritual things as well as on their own problems.

Mataji herself did not go out of her way to talk to anyone. If Bholanath asked her to speak to people she would do so, not otherwise. Throughout his lifetime Mataji never did anything without his consent. Bholanath occupied a peculiar position. He looked upon Mataji as his guru and spiritual preceptor and also received from her the untiring service of which she alone is capable. After his death in 1938 at the age of 56, other devotees have tried to serve Mataji and make all arrangements for her.

*

*

*

It is difficult, indeed impossible to understand Mataji because her actions and words reveal nothing about her. Usually action gives a clue to the mental make-up of a human being. Mataji's actions arise out of the people around her. For herself no action whatever is necessary. Even bodily requirements such as food, rest, sleep and so forth do not influence her behaviour and may remain suspended for any length of time. During earlier days this was a more frequent phenomenon. Once she did not eat or even drink water for 13 days. On the 14th day, she broke this remarkable spell of abstinence with the remark: "I just wanted to see how it would be to remain without water. I find that even the need for water is becoming extinct. But for the comfort and convenience of people a semblance of normal behaviour must be kept up."

Other similar features make it impossible for ordinary judgement to be meaningful in her case. To the question: "If you have no mission to fulfil or message to give, why do you tell us to worship God?"; Mataji replied: "If you do not ask, I have nothing to say. But if you ask and it is my "*kheyāla*" then I shall certainly tell you about the better way of life."

Mataji herself has had no Guru and she does not give formal initiation to anyone. The hundreds of people flocking round her are not bound to her even by this intangible tie. The secret of her attraction she sometimes explains in this way: "It is natural for people's hearts to go out to a child. My body is aged but actually I am a small child and as such receive affection from all. Although this little girl cannot do anything for anybody, people out of the goodness of their hearts love her nevertheless." or alternatively: "All children and unmarried people are my friends, and married people are my fathers and mothers and so I am dear to all. Is it not natural to love one's friend and child?"

Mataji has no chosen attendants. Her companions, travels, places of residence are fortuitous. One is as good as the other. One of Mataji's favourite expressions, repeated by her again and again is: "जो हो जाय" (*jo ho jay*): "Whatever comes to pass is equally welcome". Nobody can presume to say that he or she is indispensable to Mataji or specially favoured by her. Out of the throng that surrounds her, there may be one or two who understand the immeasurability of the personality that gives of herself freely and unstintingly to all who have need of her and yet remains so remote. Her compassion for suffering humanity is unbounded. Her days are more than full with assuaging the sorrows of the bereft, unlucky and afflicted. Mataji has no mission to fulfil in the world because no lack in her requires fulfilment. This self-sufficiency makes her personality absolutely enigmatic. From this point of view her closest companion of over 40 years' standing is as distantly placed as the stranger at the fringe of the crowd. She passes through the multitudes mostly as an on-looker. She has no fault to find with anything or anybody but if approached in perplexity she will give guidance and hope and advice as only she can.

All those who have seen Mataji will however subscribe to one general opinion about her: In Mataji's proximity there is no room for pessimism, despair or depression. The divine presence seem to permeate the atmosphere. The razor's edge path appears easy to traverse. The heart is buoyed on a wave of joyousness unimaginable before. It seems a miracle to be born a human being to whom the Kingdom of Heaven has been promised. Mataji's mere presence awakens in every man, woman and child a sense of destiny which is ANANDA.

"He who makes you turn towards the One Beloved, he, verily, is a real and true friend."

—Mata Anandamayi.

Man and His Goal—The Light of Viveka*

The first question which the seeker must inquire into is what is his ultimate destination, his hidden want; for no traveller can chalk out a plan for his journey unless he knows or believes where he is to go.

Attachment to the changeful objects of desire and yearning for Reality are the two opposite components of a man's being.

As no massing of clouds can obliterate the sun, but can only hide the sun from our eyes for a while, even so no motley of fleeting desires can kill our inherent and real want—they can only cover it up temporarily. Just as the dawn of the sun dissipates the clouds in no time, so does the awakening of the inner want and aspiration of man free him from all fleeting desires.

Man's innermost thirst for Truth or God can never be satisfied with any compound beings, objects or circumstances. The most pleasing set of objects or circumstances by themselves are like a well-decorated house where you may be without a friend, a lonely soul. Devoid of faith in the Divine, man is like a body without soul; an ornamented body a well-decorated house, a beautiful garden, but a lone resident therein.

The Infinite, which is our goal, is the Eternal whose Light and Love give light and life to all passing things.

The very fact that nothing is able to destroy the natural yearning of man for love and joy shows that the Lord of Love and Joy is ever calling man to his hidden heritage.

Before the fulfilment of our inner want, we run after the world but the world eludes us. On the fulfilment of our

* Reprinted from the book : "A Saint's call to Mankind", Published by the Manav Sewa Sangh, Vrindaban.

inner want, the world will run after us but not we after the world.

The realization of one's want enables one to set up one's goal. Thereafter a divine discontent carries one forward.

Man must carefully think over and determine what is his goal. The goal can only be that which is of his inmost nature, and therefore attainable. When the goal is set up the means come of themselves.

Our daily affairs and necessities do not constitute our life; they are merely bubbles in the sea of life. The secret of rising above objects and circumstances is to regard them all as the means to an end and never the end. If our gaze is fixed on the goal, we will make the best use of all these, which will only help us in attaining the goal. We should remember that no one, no object and no circumstance is to be blamed for our helpless state, but that imperfection is the very nature of transitory life, which includes our body and the world. Yearning for our real want is for that which is immutable : the Divine Eternal.

As the thirsty man drinks water eagerly, so *sādhana* comes naturally to one whose goal is established. When the *sādhaka* has set up his goal once for all and does all work for the sake of the goal, all his work becomes worship. The light of *viveka* (discrimination) illumines his path and indeed *viveka* becomes the captain of his soul until the goal is reached.

Viveka is the light of Wisdom that is rooted in man and marks him out from the sub-human creation. It is not the same thing as the intellect, but is that from which the intellect derives its force. The intellect is a mechanism of nature, whereas *viveka* is the supra-mental light illuminating it. As the sun is the source of the electric or the candle light so is *viveka* the source from which the intellect and the senses derive their light and power. *Viveka* is the light of

Truth whose ray is imbedded in the innermost shrine of the heart of man and which leads pilgrim man to the realization of his being an image of the Divine.

Viveka enlightens us that man is not the human skeleton, but consciousness focussed in the human body. What he is—Consciousness—is the hidden target of discovery for the individual. But it should be discernible to each thinking man that he is not the body, even though normally he may be all too body-conscious. Each man calls the body *his* body, not himself; and there are many men who are ready to lay down their bodies to protect something they value higher—honour of self, family, country, etc.—or who would rather be released from their body if faced with an incurable and agonizing malady in the body. What, then, does man find himself to be? A being or consciousness who is discontented with his incompleteness—reflected in his unceasing desires—and is impelled by an urge for fulfilment, perfection or liberation, being endowed with *viveka* which guides him onward all along, this is what man actually finds himself to be. It follows therefore, that man's life must be a process of *sādhana*: a conscious aspiration and ceaseless effort to emerge from want to fulfilment, from imperfection to perfection, from bondage to liberation. *Sādhana*-less living is living by instinct, the life of the sub-human; or it is the life of the liberated man who has fulfilled himself through the school of human life—not of the normal man. Man as he is, is an entity of conscious *sādhana*. Unconscious gifts one finds even in many trees, but they do not equate with man for they lack the self-awareness of *viveka*. Non-possession is the attribute of many animals, but none calls them *sannyāsis*. So, it is *viveka* or self-awareness which marks out man as the highest of God's creation, verily made in the image of God.

Mystics, saints and sages of all lands and ages have offered their testimony that, eventually, man must inevitably

realize his kinship or unity with the True, the Good and the Beautiful—the Divine, or by whatever name we may call the ultimate Reality. His transitional identification with the outer appearances imposed upon him by age-long habit then disappears. In other words, the manhood of man consists in a process of his integration into completeness which is a mark of divinity.

True integration of man's personality is not possible without control of the senses, transmutation of selfishness into selfless service and of fissiparous thoughts into contemplation of God or yearning for Truth. These are labeled as the paths of *yoga - karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* respectively.

The part enacted by an actor on the stage is not his own true nature. The states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep are the state of the physical, the subtle and the causal bodies of man. The true man is beyond these three states of the object world.

Knowledge is one; but we experience it at different levels—one through the senses, a second through the mind and a third direct by oneself. This threefold knowledge may be considered relatively progressive knowledge. But all these three states of knowledge are illumined by one Supreme Consciousness. As the sun is the sole source of light to the eye and of electricity, so is the Divine the sole repository of all knowledge and consciousness. *Viveka* is the light of the Divine.

As the clouds born of the heat of the sun itself hide the sun for a while, even so the knowledge at the level of the senses beclouds the intellect and the knowledge at the level of the intellect hides true supramental knowledge. *Viveka* pertains to that level of man's consciousness whose light enables him to see the fleeting phenomena of the body, the mind and all things and states as on the screen: the non-Self.

Truth, being self-aware and sure of itself, is infinitely patient. Just as salt does not beat the drum of its own

flavour but brings out goodness in everything that it contacts, so does Truth impart light and life to everything. *Viveka* is the light of Truth.

Man rightly calls his body his body, his mind his mind, and so on. But he does not pause to inquire who *he* is. As soon as he dissociates himself from the body, the mind and their environment, he will stand by himself and know himself. Ask any man if he is the same person who was studying at the same school with another who is now in entirely different circumstances. One might be highly placed, while another might be a beggar. The circumstances of the two are now widely different, but both know themselves to be the same as they were as school-mates. Thus any change in their bodily circumstances and environment does not affect their awareness of what they are. This shows that man by himself is distinct from his surroundings.

The enquiry 'Who am I?' arises in the mind of a man when he finds himself bound in limitations but swelling with an inner urge to cut asunder the bonds of environment and states of mind. The false 'I' is but a yearning for its real content. Put otherwise, it is like a thief who elopes the moment the master 'I' dawns on man's consciousness.

Aham-vritti (false I, egoism) is the disease, while *Aham-sphurati* (emergence of the true I) is its cure. The latter consumes the former and what remains then is effortless awareness, which is Self-realization.

An investigation into the contents of the false 'I' will reveal that the *swarūpa* (real nature) of the real 'I' is the hidden want and aspiration of the ego, even though dissipated in numerous reflections of desire.

The enquiry 'Who am I?' or yearning after God arises in a man only after he has repaid the debts of society by selfless service. Man identified with the body is an embodiment of the calls of society. Deeper down he is a longing for the Divine.

