

WORDS OF SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

***TRANSLATED AND COMPILED
BY ATMANANDA***

SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE SANGHA

Head office

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PREFACE

This book contains a selection from Sri Anandamayi Ma's replies to oral questions, recorded at meetings of large and small groups. They have been arranged, not in chronological order but, as far as possible, according to subjects. The simpler ones have been put first. They deal with meditation, the spiritual path and Self-realisation; with a great variety of problems - practical, philosophical, and metaphysical as encountered by seekers after Truth at various stages of their quest.

In her replies SRI MA responds exactly to the inquirer's capacity to understand, his specific disposition and line of approach. She throws light on every question from many different standpoints. In fact, in her utterances we find united every creed and philosophy, every school of thought and method of *yoga*, -- yet she stands above and beyond them all.

It has been said of her that she has the right word, at the right time, in the right manner, for every seeker after Truth, be he a believer in any faith or an agnostic, an intellectual or an artist, a scholar or an illiterate, a beginner or highly advanced on the path. Just as the earth provides for each plant the substance necessary for its growth, even so does Sri Anandamayi Ma guide every aspirant, according to his uniqueness and his need at any particular moment. Her replies are not mind-made.

She has often declared unequivocally that she does not talk to 'another.' For her, everything is the One Supreme Being, who manifests in infinite diversity, yet at the same time is beyond expression and limitation, formless, immutable, inconceivable. In THAT there is no room for distinctions, although on our level they do exist. Questions are asked from the standpoint of the individual, but the true answer lies beyond the ego-mind where no separation, no divergence of opinion exists, and SRI MA gives it expression.

The recorder of the discussions, Brahmachari Kamal Bhattacharjee, well-known as 'Kamalda' to all devotees and visitors of the *Sri Anandamayi Ashram*, met SRI MA first in Dacca in 1926, and kept in touch with her ever since.

In 1942 he joined the Ashram and he came one of its most devoted and prominent workers. Gifted with a keen intelligence and a great thirst for real Knowledge, he conceived the intense desire to record SRI MA's exact words, since he was convinced that they emerged spontaneously from depths to which ordinary human beings have no access. For his own study and enlightenment, he took it upon himself to note down, whenever he got the opportunity, SRI MA's words as he heard them uttered. Notwithstanding his numerous duties as the Joint Secretary of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, the manager of the Benares Ashram, etc., as soon as he got to know that SRI MA was replying to questions, he would at once leave the work in hand, and hasten to the spot where the discussion took place.

In the stillness of night he used to make fair copies of his records, pondering over the profound significance of what he had heard and written down. Often the dawn would remind him that he had spent the best part of the night in this delightful mediation. In his eagerness to preserve SRI MA's utterances in their original purity and with the greatest possible precision, he soon developed a technique of his own. He might have missed a word here or there, but he never missed the point of what was being said. If, for some reason, he was prevented from recording a part of the conversation, he felt it as an acute personal loss. But on many such occasions, he would later, to his great delight, hear SRI MA explain the same point to someone else, thereby elucidating the part of the conversation he had missed. Not only Kamalda, but many others who have come into contact with SRI MA, have found their questions answered by SRI MA before they were put to her.

SRI MA sometimes says about her own person: "This body is like a musical instrument what you hear depends on how you play." The wonder is that it responds even to silent playing. To mention a striking example: one night at Puri, a discussion occurred on the seashore. To his utter dismay, Kamalda was unable to note down anything, since there was no light. Soon after, however, he found SRI MA covering the entire subject matter in practically the same words, and was able to take down the whole of it. It is one of the most inspiring talks ('TWENTY.FIVE' in this collection), which probably gives a more consummate idea of SRI MA's universality than any other.

Kamalda's diaries comprise several volumes. When, in 1953, he showed one of them to Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, this great savant was deeply impressed with the contents. He suggested

the publication of extracts from those diaries in "*Ananda Varta*" and offered to write commentaries on them. He himself selected the conversations to be published. They appeared in "*Ananda Varta*" from May 1953 to August 1958 under "SRI MA's Amara Vani" in the Bengali original, as well as in Hindi and English translations. The present volume represents a carefully revised version of the English translation of most of these conversations.

SRI MA speaks of that which is beyond the experience of the ordinary individual and can, at best, be only hinted at by words. It is therefore not surprising that her language should not conform to either literary or colloquial Bengali.

She has given new meanings to many familiar expressions and some-times coined new words with an etymology of her own. Her way of expressing is as original as it is relevant, and is intensely alive and plastic, often condensed and pithy; with every unnecessary word left out. In certain cases, when stating very profound truths, her language becomes cryptic. The dissimilarity of the Bengali idiom to that of English is a well-known fact. No adequate words exist in English for many Bengali terms. In some cases two or three Bengali words have had to be rendered by an entire clause or sentence. No pains have been spared to translate as precisely as possible every one of the utterances, as recorded. At the same time, it has been the ambition of the translator to preserve, as far as may be, together with the exact meaning of the words, their rhythm and beauty, the inspiration they carry, the matchless, intangible quality that pervades SRI MA's every expression her words, her songs, her smile and her gestures.

It was the translator's singular good fortune to receive the constant and most generous help and, co-operation of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, D. Litt., one of the greatest living scholars, who combines quite unusually profound learning and spiritual insight, with a thorough acquaintance with SRI MA's universality. Without his assistance at every step this volume could not have been what it is. We are also sincerely grateful to Miss V. Sydney, an English woman of considerable literary experience, widely read in the mystic literature of the world, who gave the finishing touches to the English. Thanks are due to Dr. J. W. Smith of California University, who went through the whole of the manuscript and made many valuable suggestions. We are indebted to Mr. Richard Lannoy, the renowned English photographer, who has most kindly supplied the pictures.

If, in spite of our strenuous efforts, we have not been able to make this volume as perfect as it should have been, we may be permitted to quote here SRI MA's own words: "*Exert yourself to the limit of your power, however small it may be. HE is there to fulfil what has been left undone.*"

We pray that SRI MA may graciously accept this humble offering laid at her holy feet. May her words illumine our path!

*Dedicated at the lotus feet of
Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi on the sacred*

occasion of Centenary Celebrations, 1995-96

*IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER
MAHARANI RALJKUVERBA OF GONDAL*

*SHWRAJ SIAIHJI
Hawa Mahal
Gondal, Gujarat*

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Publishers NOTE

As a part of the celebrations of Sri Ma Anandamayi Centenary year, we have great pleasure In printing some of the books which have been out of print for a long time.

The Words of Ma Anandamayi had been compiled by Atmanandaji with great circumspection and care.

We take the opportunity of expressing our appreciation and gratitude to Atmanandaji for her one-pointed undeviating aim toward publication of Sri Ma's *Lila* and Words.

We hope all devotees will rejoice in the availability of this valuable book.

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ONE

Solan, September 12th, 1948.

From SRI MA one can but rarely get a definite decision on any problem. That is why I wondered of what use it was to write down her utterances? I asked SRI MA about it.

SRI MA: At least you have understood that there is a state, 'where' problems are no longer settled in any particular way. In the course of your life you have after careful consideration come to a decision on many questions, have you not? But now you will have to realize that no solution is ever conclusive; in other words, you will have to go beyond the level where there is certainty and uncertainty. The resolution of a problem arrived at by the mind must of necessity be from a particular point of view; consequently there will be room for contradiction, since your solution represents but one aspect. What then have you actually solved? You will find a complete and final solution of each particular question from its own particular angle of emergence; and you will also find that there is a place where all problems (actual and possible) have but one universal solution, in which there is no longer any room left for contradiction. The question of solution or non-solution will then cease to arise: whether one says 'yes' or 'no', - everything is THAT.

TWO

Solan, September, 1948.

Concerning the value of religious and philosophical discourses, SRI MA said:

By listening repeatedly to discussions and discourses on topics of this kind, the path to first-hand knowledge of what has been heard gradually opens out. You know, it is as when water uninterruptedly dripping on a stone finally makes a hole in it, and then a flood may suddenly surge through which will bring Enlightenment.

Be it the perusal of Sacred Texts, listening to religious discourses, engaging in *kirtan* - God must be the alpha and omega of whatever is done. When reading, read about Him, when talking, talk of Him and when singing, sing His praises. These three practices are intrinsically the same; but because people respond differently, the same is expressed in three different ways to suit each person's temperament and capacity for assimilation. Essentially there is only He and He alone, although everyone has his own individual path that leads to Him. What is the right path for each, depends on his personal predilection, based on the specific character of his inner qualifications.

Take for instance the study of *Vedanta*. Some seekers become completely drowned in it.

Just as others may so lose themselves in *kirtan* as to fall into a trance, a student of *Vedanta* may become wholly absorbed in his texts, even more so than the one who gets carried away by *kirtan*. According to one's specific line of approach, one will be able to achieve full concentration through the study of a particular Scripture, or by some other means.

First comes listening, then reflection, and last of all the translation into action of what has been heard and pondered over. This is why one has first of all to listen, so that later on each may be able to select *Vedanta* or *kirtan* or whatever else be in his own line.

Have you never come across people making light of *kirtan*, saying: "What is there to be gained by it?" Nevertheless, after listening to it for some length of time, they actually develop a liking for it. Therefore one must listen before one can reflect, and then later, what has been heard and reflected upon will take shape in action suited to the person concerned. To listen to discourses on God or Truth is certainly beneficial, provided one does not allow oneself to be moved by a spirit of fault-finding or disparagement, should there be differences of outlook to one's own. To find fault with others creates obstacles for everyone all around : for him who criticises, for him who is blamed, as well as for those who listen to the criticism. Whereas, what is said in a spirit of appreciation is fruitful to everybody. For only where there is no question of regarding anything as inferior or blameworthy (*asat*) can one call it *Satsang* - a play upon words: *Sat* means True Being, the Good; *satsang* the company of the good, and also a religious gathering. *Asat*, the opposite of *sat*, means non-being, wrong, evil. Therefore to find fault (*asat*) in a religious meeting (*saiang*) is a contradiction in terms.)

Who is known as a *Vaishnava*? One who sees *Visnu* everywhere. And as a *Sakta*? One who beholds the Great Mother, and nothing save Her. In truth, all the various ways of thought spring from one common source - who then is to be blamed, who to be reviled or suppressed? All are equal in essence.

Thou art Mother, Thou art Father,
Thou art Friend and Thou art Master,
Truly, Thou art all in all.
Every name is Thy Name,
Every quality Thy Quality,
Every form Thy Form indeed.

Yet He is also where no forms exist, as pure unmanifested Being - all depends on one's avenue of approach.

Is it not said that what is viewed by the *Saivas* as the Supreme (*parama*) *Siva*, and by those who inquire into the Self, as the One Self, is none other than the *Brahman* Itself? In reality there is no contradiction so long as the slightest difference is perceived, even by a hair's breadth - how can one speak of the state of Pure Being?

For this reason, no matter what path anyone may choose, it is **THAT**. *Vedanta** actually means the end of difference and non-difference. (*Vedanta* - end or culmination of Vedic wisdom. SRI MA here plays upon words: *Veda*, and *bheda* difference. In Bengali the letters B and V sound alike. 'Anta' means 'end'.)

While engaging in *sadhana* one must concentrate in a single direction; but after it has been completed, what comes then? The cessation of difference, distinction and disagreement. Differences do indeed exist on the path, but how can there be a difference of Goal?

THREE

Solan, September 16th, 1948.

A member of a well known Indian family, who had distinguished herself by devoting her life to social service, came for SRI MA's darsana and asked: "Does the capacity to meditate come by practice in this life, or is it an aptitude acquired in former births?"

SRI MA: It may be the result of either of the two, or of both combined. Meditation should be practised every day of one's life. Look, what is there in this world? Absolutely nothing that is lasting; therefore direct your longing towards the Eternal. Pray that the work done through you, His instrument, may be pure. In every action remember Him. The purer your thinking, the finer will be your work. In this world you get a thing, and by tomorrow it may be gone. This is why your life should be spent in a spirit of service; feel that the Lord is accepting services from you in whatever you do. If you desire peace you must cherish the thought of Him.

Question: *When will there be peace on earth?*

SRI MA: Well, you know what the present state of affairs is; things are happening as they are destined to be.

Question: *When will this state of unrest come to an end?*

SRI MA: The fact that many of you feel concerned about it and ask: 'When will it end?' is also one of the ways of His Self-manifestation.

Jagat (world) means ceaseless movement, and obviously there can be no rest in movement. How could there be peace in perpetual coming and going? Peace reigns where no coming exists and no going, no melting and no burning. Reverse your course, advance towards Him then there will be hope of peace.

By your *japa* and meditation those who are close to you will also benefit through the helpful influence of your presence. In order to develop a taste for meditation you have to make a deliberate and sustained effort, just as children have to be made to sit and study, be it by persuasion or coercion. By taking medicine or having injections a patient may get well; even if you do not feel inclined to meditate, conquer your reluctance and make an attempt. The habit of countless lives is pulling you in the opposite direction and making it difficult for you - persevere in spite of it! By your tenacity you will gain strength and be moulded; that is

to say, you will develop the capability to do *sadhana*. Make up your mind that however arduous the task, it will have to be accomplished. Recognition and fame last for a short time only, they do not accompany you when you leave this world. If your thought does not naturally flow towards the Eternal, fix it there by an effort of will.

Some severe blow of fate will drive you towards God. This will be but an expression of His Mercy; however painful, it is by such blows that one learns one's lesson.

The obstinacy of the mind must be curbed with resoluteness. Whether the mind co-operates or not, you must be adamant in your determination to do a certain amount of practice without fail - simply because *sadhana* is man's real work. For so long you have been accustomed to perform actions that fetter, therefore from sheer force of habit you feel the urge to bind yourself by activity again and again. But if you try hard for some time, you will be able to see for yourself how you are caught in your work, and that the more you engage in *sadhana* the quicker will be your advance.

As to self-surrender: by constantly endeavouring to live a life of self-dedication, it will come about one day. What does self-surrender mean, if not to surrender to one's very own Self!

Keep in mind what this little daughter* of yours is asking you to do!

FOUR

Solan, September 11th, 1948.

A Government Official and his wife had come for SRI MA's darsana. They were meeting her for the first time. To a question of theirs, SRI MA replied:

If you say you have no faith, you should try to establish yourself in the conviction that you have no faith.

Where 'no' is, 'yes' is potentially there as well. Who can claim to be beyond negation and affirmation? To have faith is imperative. The natural impulse to have faith in something, which is deep-rooted in man, develops into faith in God. This is why human birth is such a great boon. It cannot be said that no one has faith. Everyone surely believes in something or other.

The word '*man(h)us*' (man) is derived from '*man*' (mind) and '*hus*' (conscious), which denotes the mind's awareness and vigilance. This shows that man's natural calling is to attain to Self-knowledge. When children learn to read and write, they have to accept rebuke and censure. God, too, now and again administers to man a mild beating - this is but a token of His Mercy. From the worldly standpoint such blows are considered extremely painful, but actually they bring about a change of heart, and lead to Peace: by disturbing worldly happiness they induce man to seek the path to Supreme Bliss.

It is of course true that the human body lives by breathing, and hence there is suffering. (Human life, in fact animal life in general, depends on breathing, which is a sign of disturbance in the universal equilibrium. The entire creation is characterised by this disturbance. The process of breathing implies a dual movement, inward and outward, and a periodic rest between the two. The state of harmony can be reached by getting rid of this urge for movement, by attaining to repose, calm and peace. This is possible through *yoga*. When one is in a state of perfect poise, there is no longer any need to breathe.)

There are two kinds of pilgrims on life's journey: the one, like a tourist, is keen on sight-seeing, wandering from place to place, flitting from one experience to another for the fun of it.

The other treads the path that is consistent with man's true being and leads to his real home, to Self-knowledge. Sorrow will of a certainty be encountered on the journey undertaken for the sake of sight-seeing and enjoyment. So long as one's real home has not been found, suffering is inevitable. The sense of separateness is the root cause of misery, because it is founded on error, on the conception of duality. This is why the world is called '*du-niya*' (based on duality).

A man's belief is greatly influenced by his environment; therefore he should choose the company of the Holy and Wise. Belief means to believe in one's Self, disbelief to mistake the non-Self for one's Self.

There are instances of Self-realization occurring by the Grace of God, whereas at other times it can be seen that He awakens in some a feverish yearning after Truth. In the first case attainment comes spontaneously, in the second it is brought about by trials. But all is wrought solely by His Mercy.

Man thinks he is the doer of his actions, while actually everything is managed from 'There'; the connection is 'There', as well as the power-house - yet people say: 'I do.'

How wonderful it is !

When in spite of all efforts one fails to catch a train, does this not make it clear from where all one's movements are being directed? Whatever is to happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time, is all fixed by Him; His arrangements are perfect.

An eternal relationship exists between God and man.

But in His Play it is sometimes there and sometimes severed, or rather appears to be severed ; it is not really so, for the relationship is eternal. Again, seen from another side, there is no such thing as relationship. Someone, who came to meet this body, said : "I am a newcomer to you." He got the reply: "Ever new and ever old indeed!"

The light of the world comes and goes, it is unstable. The Light that is eternal can never be extinguished. By this Light you behold the outer light and everything in the universe; it is only because It shines ever within you, that you can perceive the outer light. Whatever appears to you in the universe is due solely to that great Light within you, and only because

the Supreme Knowledge of the essence of things lies hidden in the depths of your being is it possible for you to acquire knowledge of any kind.

The human brain may be compared to the root of a tree; if the root is watered, nourishment spreads to every part of the plant. There are occasions when you say your brain is tired. When does this happen? When you are very busy with outer things. But as soon as you return home and talk to your loved ones, your head feels light and you are full of joy. For this reason it is said, because your brain belongs to yourself, your own work does not produce weariness.

Really speaking, all work is your work - only how can you understand this? Indeed the whole world is yours, of your Self, your very own - but you perceive it as separate, just as you see 'others.'

To know it to be your own gives happiness, but the notion that it is apart from you causes misery.

To perceive duality means pain, conflict, struggle and death.

Pitaji, do take to some kind of *sadhana!*

INQUIRER: *It is all in God's hands.*

SRI MA: Exactly! Always bear this in mind:

Everything is in God's hands, and you are His tool to be used by Him as He pleases. Try to grasp the significance of 'all is His', and you will immediately feel free from all burdens. What will be the result of your surrender to Him? None will seem alien, all will be your very own, your Self.

Either melt by devotion the sense of separateness, or burn it by Knowledge - for what is it that melts or burns? Only that which by its nature can be melted or burnt; namely the idea that something other than your Self exists. What will happen then? You come to know your Self.

By virtue of the *Guru's* power everything becomes possible; therefore seek a *Guru*. Meanwhile, since all names are His Name, all forms His Form, select one of them and keep it with you as your constant companion. At the same time He is also nameless and formless ; for the Supreme it is possible to be everything and yet nothing.

So long as you have not found a *Guru*, adhere to the name or form of Him that appeals to you most, and ceaselessly pray that He may reveal Himself to you as the *Sadguru*.

In very truth the *Guru* dwells within, and unless you discover the inner *Guru*, nothing can be achieved. If you feel no desire to turn to God, bind yourself by a daily routine of *sadhana*, as school children do, whose duty it is to follow a fixed timetable.

When prayer does not spontaneously flow from your heart, ask yourself: "Why do I find pleasure in the fleeting things of this world?" If you crave for some outer thing or feel specially attracted to a person, you should pause and say to yourself: "Look out, you are being fascinated by the glamour of this!" Is there a place where God is not?

Family life, which is the *Ashrama* of the householder, can also take you in His direction, provided it is accepted as an *asrama*. Lived in this spirit, it helps man to progress towards Self-realization. Nevertheless, if you hanker after anything such as name, fame or position, God will bestow it on you, but you will not feel satisfied. The Kingdom of God is a whole, and unless you are admitted to the whole of it you cannot remain content. He grants you just a little, only to keep Your discontent alive, for without discontent there can be no progress. You, a scion of the Immortal, can never become reconciled to the realm of death, neither does God allow you to remain in it. He Himself kindles the sense of want in you by granting you a small thing, only to whet your appetite for a greater one. This is His method by which He urges you on. The traveller on this path finds it difficult and feels troubled, but one who has eyes to see can clearly perceive that the pilgrim is advancing. The distress that is experienced burns to ashes all pleasure derived from worldly things. This is what is called '*tapasya*'. What obstructs one on the spiritual path bears within itself seeds of future suffering. Yet the heartache, the anguish over the effects of these obstructions, are the beginning of an awakening to Consciousness.

FIVE

Solan, September 21st, 1948.

A young girl was talking to SRI MA. She said:

"When I sit down to meditate I do not intend to contemplate any form, but how is it possible to meditate on the formless? I have noticed that at times, when I try to meditate, images of deities come floating before my mind."

SRI MA: Whatever image arises in your mind, that you should contemplate; just observe in what shape God will manifest Himself to you. The same form does not suit every person. For some, *Rama* may be most helpful, for some *Siva*, for others *Parvati*, and again for others the formless.

He certainly is formless ; but at the same time, watch in what particular form He may appear to you in order to show you the way. Consequently, whichever of His forms comes into your mind, that you should contemplate in all its minute details.

Proceed as follows: When sitting down to meditate,
first of all contemplate the form of a deity;
then imagining Him to be enthroned on His seat,
bow down before Him and do *japa*.

When you have concluded the *japa* bow down once more and, having enshrined Him in your heart, leave your seat.

This, in short, may be your practice if you are not able to meditate on the *Brahman*.

Be ever convinced that at all times and without exception He will do and is doing what is best for you. Reflect thus: In order to aid me, He has revealed Himself to me in this particular guise. He is with form as well as without; the entire universe is within Him and pervaded by Him. This is why it is said: "The *Sadguru* is the World-teacher and the World-teacher the *Sadguru*".

The aforesaid is especially meant for you. The same does not apply to every person. The more you contemplate Him, the more rapid will be your progress. If any image arises in your mind, it is He, just as He is also the formless; mark what comes spontaneously.

SIX

Benares. August 18th, 1948.

QUESTION: *How can meditation on a particular part lead to meditation on the whole? One can concentrate completely only upon one aspect. It is said that when one is absorbed in meditation, a gradual expansion of consciousness takes place; and when the mind reaches what is beyond its containing capacity, it spontaneously dissolves (laya). Then there is no more meditation, there is Divine Insight (Jnana). Some hold this theory. How the mind can become all-pervasive by this method, I am unable to grasp.*

SRI MA: When meditation (*dhyana*) occurs spontaneously, then only is it real meditation. It must come of itself, effortlessly. Furthermore, when you say the mind subsides (*laya*), from where does it originate?

INQUIRER: *From the Self (Atma). In the Srutis is said that it has emanated from the Self (Paramatma) like a shadow.*

SRI MA : Where birth is, there must be dissolution (*nasa*); is this what you mean? But if it were so, the mind would emerge again. You say, you cannot grasp the all-pervasiveness of the mind; quite naturally so, because it is not a thing to be grasped it is neither a thing, nor can it be grasped.

You experience the pleasures and pains of the world; again, you enjoy temporary happiness or bliss while in meditation. This also is an experience, is it not? Yet it is of a slightly different nature from the former.

When a man says that he describes or refers to an experience after he comes down from the heights of divine ecstasy (*samadhi*), it implies that ascent and descent still continue to exist for him, otherwise why should he use these expressions? But there is also a state where ascending and descending are out of the question. You may maintain that the mind should be held as existing in *samadhi*, although in an absorbed state; otherwise how can a person, on issuing from *samadhi*, speak of the experience he had in that state?

You may further maintain that his mind is a purified mind.

I am speaking from your standpoint. Experiences occur on the path.

Between the two types of experience that have just been mentioned, there is a difference. Nevertheless, they are both of the mind, though on different levels, even what you call *samadhi*.

However, there is also another state of being where one cannot speak of ascent and descent, and consequently not of a body either.

Should the question of the body or of action, or any question whatever, still arise, it means that this state has not been reached.

When you say the mind dissolves (*laya*), into what does it dissolve ?

INQUIFER : Into the Self, of course.

SRI MA : Just as salt dissolves, so does the mind -is this your idea? From a particular angle of vision it may appear thus. In the case of a dissolution of this kind, a perfect)'ogi can resuscitate the mind again.

INQUIRER : I was thinking of absolute destruction (*nasa*).

SRI MA : Destruction (*nasa*) or dissolution (*laya*)?

***Na Sa* - means 'not He', *na Sva** 'not the Self' - this surely is what is termed destruction ?**

Where destruction is destroyed, there is THAT. Do you call the annihilation of the ego-mind (*manonasa*) its dissolution (*laya*)?

INQUIRER: *How am I to grasp this?*

SRI MA : It is for the *Guru* to point out the method; he will show you the way to understanding and instruct you in your *sadhana*. It is for you to keep on practising it faithfully. But the fruit comes spontaneously in the form of Self-revelation.

The power to make you grasp the Ungraspable duly manifests itself through the *Guru*. Where the question "How am I to proceed?" arises, fulfilment has obviously not yet been reached.

Therefore, never relax your efforts until there is Enlightenment. Let no gaps interrupt your attempt, for a gap will produce an eddy, whereas your striving must be continuous like the flowing of oil, it must be sustained, constant, an unbroken stream.

That you have no control over the body's need of food and sleep does not matter; your aim should be, not to allow any interval in the performance of your *sadhana*. Do you not see that whatever you require in the way of food and sleep, each at its own appointed hour, is without exception an ever recurring need? In exactly the same manner must you aspire at uninterruptedness where the search after Truth is concerned. Once the mind, in the course of its movement, has felt the touch of the Indivisible - if only you can grasp that moment ! - in that Supreme Moment all moments are contained, and when you have captured it, all moments will be yours.

Take, for example, the moments of confluence (*sandhiksana*) at dawn, midday and dusk, in which the power inherent in the contact-point, where coming and going meet, becomes revealed. What you call 'electric discharge' is nothing but the union of two opposites thus does the Supreme Being flash forth at the moment of conjunction. Actually IT is present at

every single moment, but you miss it all the time. Yet this is what you have to seize; it can be done at the point of juncture where the opposites fuse into one.

Nobody is able to predict when for any particular individual this fateful Moment will reveal itself; therefore keep on striving ceaselessly.

Which exactly is that great Moment depends for each one upon his particular line of approach. Does not the moment at which you are born determine and rule the course of your whole life? Similarly, what is important for you is the Moment at which you will enter the current that is the movement of your true being, the Going Forth, in other words, the Great Pilgrimage. Unless this happens, perfection cannot be attained. This is why, for some disciples, the *Guru* fixes special times for *sadhana*, such as dawn, dusk, midday, and midnight; these are the four periods usually prescribed;

It is the duty of the disciple to carry out conscientiously the *Guru's* orders, which vary according to the temperament and predisposition of the aspirant. The same method does not suit everyone. The average person can have no knowledge of the particular combination of factors that are necessary to bring to completion the hitherto neglected facets of his being; for this reason it is essential to obey the *Guru's* instructions. The decisive Moment is bound to manifest as soon as by your attitude of mind, as well as by your actions, you are ready for it. Therefore try to follow closely the path indicated by the *Guru*, and you will see how everything just happens spontaneously.

Within the twenty-four hours of the day, some time must be definitely dedicated to God. Resolve, if possible, to engage regularly in *japa* of a particular Name or *mantra* while sitting in a special posture, and gradually add to the time or the number of repetitions. There is no need for a daily augmentation. Fix the rate and the interval at which you will increase, say fortnightly or weekly. In this way try to bind yourself to the Quest of God; wherever you may be, take *refuge* in Him, let Him be your Goal.

When by virtue of this endeavour you become deeply immersed in that current and devote ever more time to it, you will be transformed and your appetite for sense enjoyment will grow feeble; thus you will reap the fruit of your accumulated efforts. You may also come to feel that the body is liable to depart at any time, that death may arrive at any moment.

Just as there is ever new creation in the universe, so also does your mental and psychological reaction to it undergo constant change. If you proceed in the manner indicated, you will observe that as a result your outer interests will gradually fall away and your vision turn inward.

The more ardent your pursuit, the vaster the possibilities that will open out for you, and in proportion to your advance, suffering will diminish and not increase again. It is also said, is it not, that *karma* is extinguished by *karma* - that is to say, the effects of past actions are neutralized by counter actions.

Indeed, if it be anyone's destiny, this may be achieved in a very short time. Look, even when the body is not given food, it does not stop the assimilation of nourishment; we are told that in such a case it starts consuming its own flesh. Therefore, just as you keep your body well nourished, so must you take equally good care where your spiritual well-being is concerned; then only will you flourish in that respect. Who can tell, at what moment the flame of illumination will blaze forth?

For this reason, continue your efforts steadily without flagging.

Gradually you will get more and more deeply absorbed in Him - He and He alone will preoccupy your thoughts and feelings. For the mind ever seeks that which gives it proper sustenance, and this cannot be provided by anything save the Supreme Being Himself. Then you will be carried away by the current that leads to your Self. You will discover that the more you delight in the inner life, the less you feel drawn to external things.

In consequence the mind becomes so well nourished with the right kind of food, that at any moment the realization of its identity with the Self may occur.

As regards *laya*: if you meant the mind's dissolution into THAT, then what you said was correct.

Jada samadhi is not desirable.

On the contrary, you have to realize what the mind is, *who* it is.

The mind subsides into THAT ' - is this what you intended to express?

Laya may signify either that the mind has nowhere to go to, in other words, can no longer find its way and hence subsides into latency; or else it merges into THAT, which is Self-revelation, and consequently there can be no possibility of a separate existence of the mind. Where Self-revelation is, how can the question as to whether the mind gets dissolved or not, arise at all?

This has been replied to from the standpoint from which you asked.

You began by enquiring how meditation on a particular part can lead to meditation on the whole. Surely, the whole is contained in the part; it is in order to arrive at the realization of this truth that you have to follow the *Guru's* instructions, which are instinct with His power.

The aforesaid gives but a faint idea of only one aspect of the whole matter.

Again, look, there are instances when one loses consciousness while sitting in meditation.

Some people have found themselves swooning away, as it were, intoxicated with joy, remaining in this condition for quite a long time. On emerging they claim to have experienced some sort of divine bliss. But this is certainly not Realization.

A stage does exist in meditation, where intense joy is felt, where one is as if submerged in it.

But what is it that gets submerged? The mind of course.

At a certain level and under certain circumstances this experience may prove an obstacle.

If repeated time and again, one may stagnate at its particular level and thereby be prevented from getting a taste of the Essence of Things.

Once genuine contemplation (*dhyana*) has been established, worldly attractions lose all their appeal. In the event of an experience of anything pertaining to Supreme Reality or to the Self, one does not say:

"Where have I been? I did not know anything for the time being;" there can be no such thing as - 'not knowing'. If it is possible to describe in words the bliss one has experienced, it is still enjoyment and therefore a hindrance. One must be fully conscious, wide awake.

To fall into a stupor or into yogic sleep will not take one anywhere.

After real meditation worldly pleasures become unalluring, dull, entirely savourless.

What does *vairagya* signify? When every single object of the world kindles, as it were, the fire of renunciation, so as to make one recoil as from a shock, then there is inward and outward awakening. *This*, however, does not mean *that* *vairagya* implies aversion or contempt for anything of the world, it simply is unacceptable, the body refuses it.

Neither dislike nor anger will arise.

When *vairagya* becomes a living inspiration, one begins to discriminate as to the true nature of the world, until finally, with the glowing certainty of direct perception the knowledge of its elusiveness arises.

Each and everything belonging to the world seems to burn; one cannot touch it. This also is a state that may ensue at a particular time.

At present, what you enjoy does not impress you as being short-lived, rather does it appear to make you happy.

But to the extent that the spirit of detachment is roused, the relish of such pleasures will die down, for are they not fleeting?

In other words, death will die.

Now that you are advancing towards that which is beyond time, the semblance of happiness brought about by mundane things is being consumed.

As a result, the question - "What actually is this world?" will arise.

So long as the world seems enjoyable to you, such a query does not present itself.

Since you are progressing towards that which transcends time, all that belongs to time will begin to appear to you in its true light.

If after coming down from the state of contemplation you are capable of behaving, as before, you have not been transformed.

When there is real meditation, which evokes indifference to the world, you will begin to pine keenly for the Divine, you will hunger for It and realize that nothing transient can appease this hunger or satisfy you.

How am I to make it clear to you, *Pitajl*?

People come to this body and tell of their sons and daughters having got into a car and driven away, without even looking up to see whether their father and mother were weeping. They are quite unmoved by their parents grief.

You see, this is precisely what it is like at a certain stage on the Path; worldly enjoyment cannot possibly touch you.

You feel: "Those whom I had believed to be my very own, are merely related to me by flesh and blood - what is that to me?"

Nobody deliberately puts his hands into fire or treads on a snake; in exactly the same manner, you just glance at the objects of sense and turn away.

Then you will get into the current that takes you in the opposite direction, and later, when you have become detached even from detachment, there is no problem of detachment or non-detachment - what is, is **THAT** .

Some say, by sustained effort one may attain to Enlightenment. But is it true that effort can bring about Enlightenment? Is Illumination dependant on action? The veil is destroyed, and when this has been accomplished, THAT which IS stands revealed. What is known as the fruit of effort is nothing but the illumination or the particular aspect towards which the effort has been directed.

Unveiled light (*niravaran prakasa*) is He Himself, the Eternal.- The *Guru* knows which is the right line of approach for any individual.

QUESTION. : *At times we feel that sense objects really exist, at other times that they are merely ideas. Why does one and the same thing appear so different on different occasions?*

SRI MA: Because you are in the grip of time.

You have not yet reached the state where everything is perceived as the Self * (*A play upon words: *samaya* and *svamayi* sound alike. *samaya* - time; *svamayi* - 'permeated by Self') alone, have you?

Herein lies the solution of the whole problem.

To feel as you do is good, since your feeling is related to the Supreme Quest; for nothing is ever wasted. What you have realized even for a second will, at some time or other, bear fruit.

Thus, what water, air, the sky, etc. are, and hence what creation is, the knowledge of the real character of each element (*tattva*) will flash into your consciousness one by one-just like buds bursting open.

Flowers and fruit come into existence only because they are potentially contained in the tree. Therefore you should aim at realizing the One Supreme Element (*Tattva*) that will throw light on all elements.

You asked about sense objects: an object of sense *visaya*, (- sense object, vis -poison, ha - 'is') is that which contains poison, is full of harm and drags man towards death. But freedom from the world of sense objects (*nirvisaya*) - where no trace of poison remains - means immortality.

QUESTION: *Still, something of the burning pain of vairagya is left over?*

SRI MA: What is it that produces the sensation of burning?

A sore surely! Because of it there is inflammation ; but whose sore is it? Unless there is a sore, there can be no smarting. Therein lies the deception : so long as Reality is not revealed, the sore will persist. If the inflammation is a healing process, it is of course beneficent. A patient who becomes unconscious is not aware of his agony - you can see how man is drowned in pleasure, loss and affliction - this surely is not what is wanted! This is the way of the world with its never-ending uncertainties*(*Sansara* - world, *sansaya* - uncertainty.)

Can you tell why one feels anguish?

INQUIRER: *One is pulled in two directions, towards God as well as towards sense enjoyment - this causes anguish.*

SRI MA: You have a desire to give up, but you cannot let go; such is your problem. Let that desire awaken in your heart - its stirring signifies that the time is coming when you will be able to give up.

You obtain a coveted object, but still you are dissatisfied ; and if you fail to get it, you are also disappointed.

The disillusionment you experience at the fulfilment of your wish is wholesome; but the torment of the unfulfilled hankering after the things you could not secure, drives you towards which is of death, towards that misery.

INQUIRER: *The hunger of the senses can never be appeased; the more one gets, the more one wants.*

The fulfilment of worldly desire only begets greater longing.

SRI MA: This world is itself but an embodiment of want, and hence the heartache due to the absence of fulfilment must needs endure. This is why it is said that there are two kinds of currents in human life : the one pertaining to the world, in which want follows upon want; the other of one's true Being. It is characteristic of the former that it can never end in fulfilment - on the contrary, the sense of want is perpetually stimulated anew. Whereas by entering the latter man will become established in his true nature and bring to completion the striving which is its expression. Thus, if he endeavours to fulfil himself by entering this current, it will eventually bring him to the perfect poise of his own true Being.

QUESTION : *And the anguish of not having found, the anguish of the absence of God? I have no wish for sense pleasures, but they come to me.*

I am compelled to experience them.

SRI MA: Ah, but the anguish of not having found God is salutary. What you have eaten will leave a taste in your mouth. You wear ornaments because you wish to, and so you have to bear their weight. Yet this weight is fated to fall off, for it is something that cannot last, can it?

QUESTION: *Are there instances when an Enlightened person may be in Ignorance?*

SRI MA: You call a person Enlightened, and in the same breath say he may be subject to ignorance? Such a thing, *Pitaji*, is quite impossible.

There is, however, a state of attainment that is not maintained at all times, where what you suggest may apply; but never in a case of final Realisation. In whatever way you may perceive an Enlightened Being, He remains what He is.

How can there be a possibility of ignorance in what is termed Knowledge Supreme? When you speak of ignorance with reference to a Realised man, it is an example of Supreme Knowledge being mistaken for ignorance. Therefore, you also talk of ascent and descent. Just as there is no question of a body for one who is liberated, so for Him there can be none of rising up and coming down.

Nevertheless, there is a state of achievement in which ascent and descent do exist, really and truly.

SEVEN

Solan, September 19th, 1948.

Someone told SRI MA about a man who, without stirring from his seat, would produce all sorts of articles, like flowers, garlands, sweets, etc. They just appeared in his hands. In this connection SRI MA related an incident that had taken place in Dacca many years ago.

SRI MA: What an incredible number of similar incidents has this body not witnessed! As a rule this body makes no comments upon such things, but on a particular occasion somehow something rather strange took place. When a certain lady came, I felt like lying down across her lap. As I did so, I distinctly noticed that a bundle containing various articles was tied in the lady's sari in the region of her waist. Everyone began to request her to show them some objects that would come to her by supernatural means, since many had seen her do this before. People had heard it said that even the *prasad* from the Kali temple in Dakshineswar would of its own accord appear in her hands.

This body said: "Even before it arrives from there I could disclose it; but would you like me to?"

The lady said : "Yes, of course !" The question was repeated several times, and every time she, as well as her devotees, replied : "Yes, please !"

This is how it all came about.

Even so, this body did. not take anything out with its own hands - only what was fated to happen, happened spontaneously.

Afterwards one of the lady's devotees came to this body and inquired: "*Ma*, you never put anyone to shame, and certainly not in public. Why then did you do so in this case?"

She got the reply: "Yes, as you know, this body does not as a rule interfere with anyone's natural ways. Yet, whether it concerns the most ordinary or the most extraordinary event, - call it as you please - what holds good for this body to this day and has until now been so always, is simply this:

whatever is meant to come about just happens spontaneously.

When that lady arrived, this body welcomed her with great respect, offering her its own a *sana* and putting a garland round her neck. How very pleased everyone felt !

Every form, every expression is He and He alone.

That day this body did not disclose anything.

But the lady of her own free will declared: 'I shall come again tomorrow!' You all heard it, did you not? What occurred then was His way of revealing Himself. Tell me, what is there to do? By whatever method He may choose to teach anyone, at any time - as far as this body is concerned, it has no desire of its own, - whatever comes to pass is all right (*'ja hoye jay'*). *

*'*Ja hoye jay*' This terse phrase is uttered by SRI MA again and again. It is pregnant with meaning; in fact, a whole philosophy of life is implied. It

signifies that whatever happens is according to the Divine Will, and therefore equally welcome to SRI MA. It also expresses the complete absence of personal desire, surrender without reservation to Providence, and the conviction that nothing can come to pass that is not ultimately wrought by the Creator.

When (in the early days) this body used to do *pranam* to every creature, whether an insect, a spider, a dog, or a cat, it did so with the full consciousness of the presence of the Supreme Being in everything.

‘Whatever comes to pass is all right’ - there is something else to be said in this connection. To take recourse to falsehood or deception can never be for one’s good. He who deceives, will himself be deceived. On the other hand, falsehood may also be converted into truth. Someone may deliberately play false, yet through his disciple’s sincerity the truth may actually be brought to light. As a result the disciple excels the *guru*. The resolve to find the truth will inevitably lead to its revelation.

I told that lady’s devotee:

"How many times did I not ask you all ‘shall I disclose it?’ And without exception you kept on begging me to do so. Therefore - what more can be said?" What a great variety of similar incident occur!

Listen to the story of a young woman who, under the slightest provocation, would go into ‘samadhi’ so people believed. She appeared to become lifeless, her hands and feet turning cold. When she came to this body, she also went into this strange state that people mistook for *samadhi*. The girl’s mother was called ‘grandmother’ by this body, both of us being from the same village. She said to me: "Grand-daughter, please try and help this girl!" I quite understood what was the matter with the young woman, so I whispered into her ear :

"You will very soon receive a letter from your husband;" whereupon she recovered in no time. The news of the cure spread far and wide. People felt greatly mystified, wondering at the powerful *mantra* SRI MA had whispered into the girl’s ear. Indeed, under the circumstances it was the appropriate mantra for her. The girl’s condition was solely due to worrying about her husband’s prolonged silence.

Then again there was a young man - into what supernormal states he used to pass, how many kinds of visions he had! He would, for example, do *pranam* and remain in that posture for hours together, without raising his head, tears streaming down his cheeks. He declared that he saw and heard *n Krishna* teaching *Arjuna*, as described in the Gita, and that he used to have many other visions and locutions of the kind.

This body told him that, if a *sadhaka* could not maintain firm control over his mind, he would be liable to see and hear many things, both illusory and genuine, all mixed up. He might even be subjected to the influence of some ‘spirit’ or power.

Such occurrences, far from creating pure divine aspiration, would rather hinder than help. Moreover, to see someone in a vision or to hear him address you, may well become a source of self-satisfaction or egotistic enjoyment.

To lose control over oneself is not desirable.

In the search after Truth one must not allow oneself to be overpowered by anything, but should watch carefully whatever phenomena may supervene, keeping fully conscious, wide awake, in fact retaining complete mastery over oneself.

Loss of consciousness and of self-control are never right.

In the course of the same conversation, SRI MA said:

The Lord Buddha is Himself the essence of Enlightenment.

All partial manifestations of wisdom that come in the course of *sadhana* culminate in Supreme Enlightenment (*Bodha Svarupa*).

In a similar way, Supreme Knowledge (*Jnana Svarupa*) or Supreme Love (*Bhava Svarupa*) may be attained.

As there is a state of Supreme Self-knowledge, likewise is there a state of perfection at the zenith of the path of love. There one finds the nectar of Perfect Love identical with Supreme Knowledge. In this state there is no room for emotional excitement; indeed, that would make it impossible for Supreme Love (*Mahabhava*) to shine forth. Be mindful of one thing: if, when following a particular line of approach, one does not attain to that which is the consummation of all *sadhana*, namely the final Goal, it means that one has not really entered that line.

At the supreme summit of Love, - which is *Mahabhava* - exuberance, excessive emotion and the like cannot possibly occur. Emotional excitement and Supreme Love are in no wise to be compared: they are totally different from one another.

While absorbed in meditation, whether one is conscious of the body or not, whether there be a sense of identification with the physical or not -under all circumstances, it is imperative to remain wide-awake; **unconsciousness must be strictly avoided.**

Some genuine perception must be retained, whether one contemplates the Self as such, or any particular form.

What is the outcome of such meditation?

It opens up one's being to the Light, to that which is eternal.

Suppose the body had been suffering from some pain or stiffness - lo and behold, after meditation it feels perfectly hale and hearty, with not a trace of fatigue or debility. It is as if a long period of time had elapsed in between, as if there had never been a question of any discomfort. This would be a good sign. But if tempted at the first touch of Bliss to allow oneself to be drowned in it, and later to declare : "Where I was, I cannot say, I do not know," - this is not desirable. As one becomes capable of real meditation, and to the extent that one contacts Reality, one discovers the ineffable joy that lies hidden even in all outer objects.

If on the other hand one loses oneself as it were, lapsing into a kind of stupor while engaged in meditation, and afterwards claims to have been steeped in intense bliss, this sort of bliss is a hindrance. If the life-force seems to have been in abeyance -just as one has a sense of great

happiness after sound sleep - it indicates stagnation. It is a sign of attachment, and this attachment stands in the way of true meditation, since one will be apt to revert to this state again and again; although from the standpoint of the world, which is altogether different, it would seem a source of profound inward joy and therefore certainly an indication of spiritual progress.

To be held up at any stage is an obstacle to further progress - it simply means one has stopped advancing.

While engaging in meditation, one should think of oneself as a purely spiritual being (*cinmayi*), as Self-luminous, poised in the Bliss of the Self (*atmarama*), and in accordance with the *Guru's* instructions, try to concentrate on one's *Ista*.

The young man previously mentioned (the one who used to have visions) was intelligent, and therefore able to understand this sort of reasoning. As a result, the spectacular experiences ceased, and he now attends to his meditation and other spiritual exercises in a very quiet, unobtrusive manner.

Later, when the conversation again reverted to dhyana and asana, SRI MA said:

Look, if you spend hour after hour sitting in a certain posture, if you become absorbed while in that pose and are unable to meditate in any other, it shows that you are deriving enjoyment from the posture; this also constitutes an obstacle.

When one first starts practising *japa* and meditation, it is of course right to try and continue in the same position for as long as possible. But as one approaches perfection in these practices, the question as to how long one has remained in one posture does not arise; at any time and in any position - lying, sitting, standing, or leaning over to one side, as the case may be - one can no longer be deterred by any-thing from the contemplation of ones Ideal or the Beloved.

The first sign of progress comes when one feels ill at ease in anything but a meditative pose.

Nothing external interests one; the only thing that seems attractive, is to be seated in one's favourite posture as long as possible and to contemplate the Supreme Object of one's worship, plunged in a deep inner joy.

This marks the beginning of single-mindedness, and hence is a step in the right direction.

Yet, here great prominence is given to posture.

If one stays in that position as long as the inclination lasts - confident that the Beloved can never do one harm - and if one is able to remain fixed in it, then the posture becomes of overwhelming importance.

This only shows that one is nearing perfection in the practice of *asana*. Standing, sitting, walking in fact, any gesture taken up by the body is called an a *sana*. It corresponds to the rhythm and the vibration of body and mind at any particular moment. Some aspirants can meditate only if seated in the pose indicated by the *Guru* or formulated in the *sastras*, and not otherwise.

This is the way to proficiency in meditation. On the other hand, someone may begin his practice while sitting in any ordinary position; nevertheless, as soon as the state of *japa* or *dhyana* has been reached, the body will spontaneously take up the most appropriate position, after the manner that a hiccup happens involuntarily. As one's meditation grows more and more intense, the postures will of themselves correspondingly gain in perfection. When a little air is pumped into a tyre, the tyre will be flabby; but when it is filled to capacity, it remains completely stable in its own natural shape. Likewise, when real meditation has been attained, the body feels light and free, and on rising after meditation there is no fatigue of any kind, no pain, numbness or stiffness in one's limbs.

In true meditation Reality is contacted, and just as the touch of fire leaves an impression, this contact also leaves its mark.

What happens as a result?

Impediments fall away - they are either consumed by *vairagya*, or 'melted' by devotion to the Divine.

Worldly things seem dull and insipid, quite foreign to oneself; worldly talk loses all its appeal, becomes devoid of interest, and at a further stage even painful. When a person's earthly possessions are lost or damaged, the victim feels disturbed, which gives evidence of the stranglehold that sense objects exercise over men's minds. This is what is called *granthi* - the knots constituting the I-ness.

By meditation, *japa* and other spiritual practices, which vary according to each one's individual line of approach, these knots become loosened, discrimination is developed, and one comes to discern the true nature of the world of sense perception. In the beginning, one was enmeshed in it, struggling helplessly in its net. As one becomes disentangled from it, and gradually passes through various stages of opening oneself more and more to the Light, one comes to see that everything is contained in everything, that there is only One Self, the Lord of all, or that all are but the servants of the One Master. The form this realization takes depends upon one's orientation. One knows by direct perception that, as 'one exists, so everyone else exists ; then again, that here is the One and nothing but the One, that nothing comes and goes, yet also does come and go - there is no way of expressing all this in words. To the extent that one becomes estranged from the world of the senses, one draws nearer to God.

When attaining to true meditation, one's chosen posture no longer represents either an obstacle or a source of enjoyment ; in other words, it is quite immaterial in what particular pose one happens to be. Whether one sits straight or crooked, the right posture will form of itself, pulling the body into the proper position. Again, there are occasions when one becomes entirely independent of the physical pose; in whatever attitude the body may happen to be, meditation just comes about effortlessly. Though, without a doubt, there is also a state in which, if one takes up a special pose, such as for instance, *padmasana* (the lotus pose) or *siddhasana* (the perfect pose), no interruption of one's union with the Supreme Being can ever occur.

EIGHT

Benares. August 11th, 1948.

QUESTION: *The other day, when speaking about visions and similar experiences that one has during meditation, you said these were not real visions but mere 'touches'.*

SRI MA : Yes, viewed from the level where one can speak of 'touch', this is so; that is to say, you have not been changed by the experience. Yet it is attractive to you, and you can express the feeling in words, which implies that you still take delight in sense objects. Therefore it is a mere touch. If transformation had ensued, you would be unable to feel worldly enjoyment in this way. How can there be enjoyment or relish in a transformed state of being?

QUESTION: *Atman and Brahman are different only by way of posited limitation. The vision that comes by constant 'meditation on 'I am Saccidananda' is Atma darsana (the vision of the Self). Since there can be no vision of the Brahman, it must therefore be a partial, that is a limited vision of the Brahman. Is this correct?*

SRI MA: If you think there are parts in the *Brahman*, you may say 'partial'. But can there be parts in the Absolute? As you think and feel in parts, you speak of 'touch' - but He is whole, THAT which IS.

QUESTION: *Are there grades (krama) in knowledge?*

SRI MA: No. Where knowledge is of the Self (*Svarupa Jnana*), how can there be various kinds or grades? Knowledge of the Self is one. Proceeding step by step refers to the stage where one has turned away from the pursuit of sense objects and one's gaze is entirely directed towards the Eternal. God has not yet been realized, but the treading of this path has become attractive.

Along this line there are *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*.

The experiences at each of these stages are also infinite. Where the mind is, there is experience. The experiences at different stages are due to various forms of desire for Supreme Knowledge. The mind that has formerly been en-grossed in material things, and arguing that one cannot know whether God exists or not, had come to deny Him, is now turned the other way. Therefore, is it not natural that light should dawn upon it in accordance with the state it has reached? These states are known under various names. When do the visions that one gets in meditation cease? When the Self stands Self-revealed (*Svayam Prakasa*).

QUESTION : *Does the body survive when the egomind has been dissolved (mailond)?*

SRI MA: At times the question is asked: "How does the World-teacher give instruction? From the state of *ajnana*?" If his were so, the mind would not have been dissolved, the threefold differentiation (*triputi*) of the knower, the knowing and the known, could not have been merged. So what would He be able to give you? Where could He lead you? But there is a stage where this question does not arise. Is it the body that is the obstacle to Supreme Knowledge? Is there even a question of whether the body exists or not? At a certain level this question is simply not there. On the plane where this question arises, one is not in the state of Pure Being, and one thinks this question can be raised and also replied to. But the answer lies where there is no such thing as questioning and answering where there are no 'others', no division. And so, how can one possibly approach the Supreme Teacher and receive instruction? Similarly, the teachings of the *sastras* and other Scriptures have then become quite useless. This is one aspect of the matter.

To speak of grades (*krama*) in knowledge, as if one were studying for a university degree, is presenting the matter from the point of view of *sadhana*. Where the Self stands revealed, there can be no question of this. Yet, where there is personal effort, like the practice of meditation or contemplation, it will certainly bear fruit. But in the state of Self-illumination, there can be no such thing as attainment or non-attainment: though being there, it is not; and though it is not, yet it is - just like that.

Some say a last vestige of the mind remains. At a certain level this is so ; however, there is a stage beyond, where the question of whether a trace of the mind remains or not, does not exist. If everything can be burnt up, cannot this last vestige be consumed too? There is no question of either 'yes' or "no": what is, IS. Meditation and contemplation are necessary because one is on the level of acceptance and rejection, and the aim is in fact to go beyond acceptance and rejection. You want a support, do you not?

The support that can take you beyond, to where the question of support or supportlessness no longer exists, that is the supportless support.

What is expressible in words can certainly be attained. But He is THAT which is beyond words.

INQUIRER: *I have read in books that some say, they have to descend in order to act in the world. This seems to imply that although they are established in Pure Being, they have to take the help of the mind when doing work. Just as a king, when acting the role of a sweeper, has for the time being to imagine he is a sweeper.*

SRI MA: In assuming a part, surely, there' is no' question of ascending or descending.

Abiding in His own Essential Being (*Svara*);

He Himself play various parts.

But when you speak of ascending' an descending - where is the state of Pure Being? Can there be duality in that state? *Brahman* is One without a second. Though from your angle of vision, I grant, it does appear as you put it.

INQUIRER: *You have explained this from the level of ajnana.*

Now be pleased to speak from the level of the Enlightened (Jnani)!

SRI MA: (laughing): What you say now, I also accept. Here, (pointing to herself) nothing is rejected. Whether it is the state of Enlightenment or of ignorance - everything is all right. The fact is that you are in doubt. But here there is no question of doubt. Whatever you may say, and from whatever level - is He, and He, and only He.

QUESTION *If this is so, is it of any use to ask you further questions?*

SRI MA: What is, IS.

That doubts should arise is natural.

But the wonder is, where THAT is, there is not even room for different stands to be taken. Problems are discussed, surely, for the purpose of dissolving doubts. Therefore it is useful to discuss. Who can tell when the veil will be lifted from your eyes?

The purpose of discussion is o remove this ordinary sight.

This vision is no vision at all, *for* it is only temporary.

Real vision is that vision where there is no such thing as the seer and' the seen. It is eyeless - not to be beheld with these ordinary eyes, but with the eyes of wisdom. In that vision without eyes there is no room for division?.

Here, (pointing to herself) there is no question of giving and taking, neither of serving.

On your level they exist, from there these topics arise.

This evening the following statement was made "*Through the observance of silence one attains to Supreme Knowledge (Jnana)*".

SRI MA: How is that? Why has the word 'through' been used here?

A DEVOTEE : *Silence is itself wisdom, the means is itself the end.*

SOMEONE ELSE : *By silence we have to understand the stilling of the five senses.*

SRI MA : Yes, but why say 'through'?

A DEVOTEE: *Complete and exclusive concentration on the Self this is the significance of 'through'.*

SRI MA : When speech is suppressed, the activity of the mind still continues. All the same, such silence helps to control the mind. As the mind dives deeper, its activity slackens off, and then one comes to feel that He who provides for everything, will arrange matters. When the mind is agitated by thoughts of worldly things, the benefit that should be gained by abstaining from speech is lost.

One may, for instance, keep silent at the moment of anger, but some time or other it is bound to burst forth. When the mind is centred in God, it keeps on advancing steadily, and along with this emerges purity of body as well as mind. To let thought dwell on the objects of the senses is a waste of energy.

When the mind is thus occupied and silence is not observed, it finds release in speech. Otherwise, this kind of silence might put undue strain on the senses and possibly result in ill-health. But when the mind is turned inward, not only can there be no injury to health, but more than that, by constantly dwelling on the thought of God, all the knots (*granthi*) that make up the ego are unravelled, and thereby that which has to be realized will be realized.

To observe silence means to keep the mind fixed on Him.

At first one feels the impulse to talk, later all inclination and disinclination vanish. It is also like this : just as the bee collects honey, so all that one needs is gathered together naturally. What is necessary becomes available of its own accord -presents itself, as it were - when there is ever closer union with Him.

When one entirely refrains from speaking and even from communicating by signs or gestures (*kasta maunam*), how is the body kept alive?

Everything dovetails, and the silent person just watches as a kind of spectator. In the measure that one progresses towards union, one will notice that obstacles disappear, and whatever is necessary provides itself;

It is one thing if everything happens by itself, and quite another to make arrangements by one's own effort.

Real silence means there is actually nowhere else for the mind to go.

In the end, whether the mind exists or not, whether one speaks or not, makes no difference.

To say "through silence He is realized" is not correct, because Supreme Knowledge does not come "through" anything - Supreme Knowledge reveals Itself.

For destroying the 'veil', there are suitable spiritual disciplines and practices.

QUESTION: *What about the silent sadhu at Navadvip?**

*(Many years ago, when SRI MA went to Navadvip with Bholanath, a *sadhu* there attracted very wide attention. He used to sit all day long in the lotus pose, so perfectly still 'that it was difficult to find out whether he was a living man or a statue. Everyone felt awed and took it for granted that he was a great saint in a state of deep samadhi.

SRI MA, however, made no comment on the matter. Staying next door to the .u, she soon made sure that he bathed, ate and slept secretly during the night. By and by the *sudhu* confided to SRI MA that he was made to assume that pose in order to get money. Through SRI MA's benign influence he gave up this life of deception.)

SRI MA: By practice he had made the body still, but his mind had not been transformed at all; it was a case of mere physical control. If his mind had been stilled, that kind of worldly behaviour would have been impossible. However, even such practice is altogether useless, it does lead to some result.

But That, which is the real need, is not found.

NINE

Benares, September 27th, 1948

QUESTION: *When the mind is immersed in samadhi, does one or does one not experience the supernormal (camatkara)? If so, does this imply that one has deviated from the object of one's contemplation? And what is the real cause of this?*

SRI MA: *Samadhi* means *samadhana* (solution, completion).

INQUIRER: *Solution involves a question, whereas samadhi is a state in itself*

SRI MA: This body does not use the language of the *shastras*; it refers to ordinary things, such as water, earth, air, and so forth, when it speaks. Those who have understanding are able to comprehend this kind of broken and incomplete language. *Samadhana* signifies the perfect resolution of form, formlessness, manifested being, and non-being - of everything. The solution of a problem is one thing; yet there is another kind of resolution where the possibility of problems and their solutions cannot occur; this is called *samadhi*.

INQUIRER: *Quite so; thus there are two kinds of samadhi, namely savikalpa and nirvicalpa.*

SRI MA: The first signifies the resolution of cosmic existence into the One Pure Existence (*Satta*), and as for the second - there, there is even no such thing as 'Existence'.

INQUIRER: *No such thing as 'Existence'? What then is it?*

SRI MA: So long as thoughts and ideas (*sankalpa* and *vikalpa*) persist, not even *Savikalpa samadhi* can occur. *Savikalpa samadhi* signifies Awareness of Existence. But when there is no question of Existence - when there is no possibility of differentiating 'what is' from 'what is not' - can anything be expressed in words, however little?

This is *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

Where is there room for the supernormal here?

INQUIRER: *The supernormal, in other words, matters that are beyond this world (aloukik), are not within the reach of ordinary intelligence; yet they can most certainly be grasped by the mind. If one accepts the mind as a fact, its own creations are themselves the subjects about which it thinks. There is of course something apart from the mind - Cit, which is said to be complete in itself. Anything before the vision of the mind in contemplation, other than THAT, is what is usually called camatkara.*

SRI MA: Who perceives the *camatkara*?

INQUIRER: The mind.

SRI MA: So then, if there is no mind, the super-normal cannot be perceived. Consequently, how can visions be seen in *nirvikalpa samadhi*?

INQUIRER: *My reason tells me that in both types of samadhi the mind must be present. According to the shastras, in Nirbikalpa Samadhi the mind ceases to be. Of course, the gross mind does not persist, yet it will have to be admitted that the subtle mind remains in a state of latency. Otherwise, how could the experience be known afterwards? In other words, is it or is it Not remembered when it is over? If it is, then it will no doubt have to be conceded that the subtle mind still exists.*

SRI MA: Some say that a tiny particle (the technical term is 'avidya lesa' - a small residue of ignorance) of the mind remains; for if it did not, how could there be the manifestation of the body? But this body declares also this: If by the fire of illumination everything can be consumed, should not this tiny fragment be burnt up as well? Where experience occurs, the mind must of course exist; there can be no *camatkara* without the mind.

INQUIRER: *If that small portion of the mind ceases to exist, how can the body continue? In which condition does the last trace of the mind disappear? While the prarabdha is still active, or after it has been exhausted?*

SRI MA: What is your opinion, *Pitaji*? Of course, some maintain that *in samadhi* the ego-mind does not exist. However, this body says that, if by Supreme Knowledge everything is burnt up, should it not have the power to consume the *prarabdha* as well?

INQUIRER: *If the prarabdha has been effaced, how can the body possibly persist?*

SRI MA : Do you mean by this that so long as the body endures, there must of necessity be some *prarabdha* left over, and therefore the mind must also have survived? Well, yes, if you accept as a reality the body in the usually accepted sense of the word, you *will* undoubtedly have to admit the existence of *prarabdha* and, from your point of view, the existence of the mind too. ‘Body’ (Sarira - body, sora - to move away) means perpetual change, that which is ever moving away. **But in the state where death may be said to be dead, can there still be any question of a body?**

INQUIRER: *When one has visions of the supernormal, does it indicate that one has turned aside from the Supreme state, or not?*

SRI MA: When the Ultimate Reality has been attained, there can be no question of either the super of deviating or not deviating from Reality. What is meant by *videha-mukti*?

INQUIRER: *Not to be obliged to assume another body after this one has been left, is called videhamukti.*

SRI MA : Very well; is the body then an obstacle, and does it therefore fall away?

INQUIRER: *No, the objective of nirvikalpa samadhi is to attain to the power of imparting true knowledge to seekers (and for this a body is required).*

SRI MA: *Samadhi* also has to be called a state. Everything is possible according to the particular stage of a person’s development. Everyone will assuredly gain the knowledge pertaining to the state he has reached.

INQUIRER: *This being so, it is obvious that experience of the supernormal indicates a deviation from one’s object of contemplation.*

SRI MA: When one’s object of contemplation has become Self-revealed, that is to say, when there is the revelation of THAT in the form of one’s object of contemplation, how can one deviate from it?

QUESTION: *Has the experience of the supernormal not its root in desire ?*

SRI MA: That only becomes manifest, of which the seed is sown; otherwise, how could it come into being?

QUESTION: *Take the waves of a lake; they do not constitute the nature of the water; they are created by the wind; how is it possible to become desireless?*

SRI MA: So long as the seed has not been sterilised, it is bound to germinate. Now then, what is your opinion, does the body survive or not, when true knowledge of the Self supervenes?

INQUIRER: *I should think it would survive.*

SRI MA: Yes - as some say, supported by the tiny portion of the mind that has been preserved?

QUESTION: *Does a spiritual teacher instruct from the state of or is he still in the state of*

SRI MA: It would certainly not be right to presume the state of ignorance of Reality when the aim of the instruction is Self-realization.

INQUIRER: *This is why I feel that the karma cannot have been completely exhausted.*

SRI MA: Just as an electric fan continues to revolve for a little while after the current has been switched off?

QUESTION: *In this example, the electric current has been cut off completely. Does this then imply that, in a similar way, ignorance has been entirely destroyed?*

SRI MA: The connection is broken. What had already begun and is taking effect is called *prarabdha*.

INQUIRER: *If this be the case, can prarabdha bear fruit or not? I think that its destruction is not in keeping with the facts.*

SRI MA: Does the teaching of the Enlightened Sage (*Jnani*) refer to truth as it reveals itself before His *prarabdha* is exhausted, or does it refer to the truth beyond?

INQUIRER: *No, not to the Truth beyond. Instruction on pure Truth, untouched by prarabdha, is given by an Avatara. The Jnani teaching is limited by his prarabdha.*

SRI MA: Where Knowledge is Self-revealed, does its Self-revelation depend upon karma?

INQUIRER: There are two kinds of knowledge: Svarupa Jnana (Knowledge of Self) and vritti jnana (acquired mental knowledge). The second kind of knowledge, which pertains to the jnani, enables him to reap the fruits of his prarabdha.

SRI MA: Do you mean to suggest that, just as a child gradually increases his knowledge by continuous study, here also there is progressive accumulation of knowledge? But this can not be called the state of Jnani!

INQUIRER: Svarupa Jnana is Self-revealed, whereas vritti jnana is knowledge of objects. Svarupa Jnana does not make a Jnani, He, who posses vritti jnana is called jnani, for knowledge of the Self is common to all.

SRI MA: Does 'Knowledge of the Self' mean that one is established in any particular state?

INQUIRER: *One is established in the Self.*

SRI MA: Quit right, Pitaji. As you say, every-one without exception is rooted in Knowledge of the Self; yes indeed, this is so.

INQUIRER: *Nevertheless, not all are aware of this Knowledge. Those who have gained vritti jnana may alone be styled jnanis, for they will be able to guide an aspirant in keeping with his mental make-up.*

SRI MA: Yes, but what *has this* to do with the state where *the Self* in its Glory stands ever Self revealed?

He who by gradual development has acquired knowledge and been progressively enlightened, he, as you say, is established in *vritti jnana*.

Words, arguments, language, and the like, are of the mind; whereas in the state that has just been referred to, there, language has no place. This body respects whatever anyone may say, because each person's point of view depends on the particular stairway by which he ascends.

Whatever idea may be held - be it on a high or low level - it is all the same, so far as this body is concerned.

For this reason, whether anyone is of the opinion that the body can or cannot exist without or advances a theory from whatever point of view, everything is right on its own plane. Yet, beyond words and all expression, where there is manifestation and non-manifestation, duration and non-duration, space and space-lessness - there, nothing holds good.

Even the essence of the things of this world cannot be spoken about; but the essence of Transcendental Being is something far more remote. Then, there is also what is known as 'merging'. But from that into which one is said to have merged, a *yogi* may be able to extricate one again; this also is a possibility mentioned by you people, is it not? Yet in the state of which this body tells, there it is not so - and 'not so' does not express it either. By reasoning and discrimination, one may arrive at the conclusion that a small portion of the mind remains so long as physical existence continues. But this body speaks of a state where there is not even the possibility of a trace of the mind.

QUESTION: *Does the body then continue to exist or not?*

SRI MA: In this particular state, if the body were an obstacle this state could simply not be. In this condition, the question whether the body is being retained or not, cannot arise.

QUESTION: *Can there be inquiry and response in that state ?*

SRI MA : Yes, there can be - if the idea of the body is there. For those who think there are disciples and Gurus, for them there are questions and answers.

INQUIRER: *But then to speak of Gurus, disciples and so forth, is quite meaningless.*

SRI MA: The progress of the disciple continues up to where the position of a teacher is held. If the teacher is in the state of *ajnana*, and the question is asked by one also in ignorance, how can there be even an expectation of the revelation of real Knowledge?

All the same, a discussion that aims at elucidating Self-realization will naturally be helpful and beneficial.

Very well, *Pitaji*, tell me, in the case of a preceptor who is a World-teacher, is it not natural that there should be questions and answers with a view to the attainment of Self-realization?

It is and will ever be so - surely?

Is this an untruth?

Something else has to be considered: Say, who replies to whom?

That questions are being put and replied to, is merely the idea of the inquirer at his stage. Can you call him who gives answers an individual, just because he responds? To whom does he reply ? Who replies, and what is the reply? Who is who in that state of Pure Being?

The place of *vritti jnana* is, where Self-revelation is not.

This is difficult to accept, while it is still a matter for acceptance or rejection. On the level where the question of acceptance or rejection cannot possibly arise, how can there be talk and conversation?

Pitaji, when you asked: "Tell me your experience," it would imply that the experiencer has still remained.

This cannot be so here;

further more, **the question of transmission of power by the *Guru* to the disciple is equally non-existent.**

If there is no body, this question cannot be there either. There is no question of a physical or any other body. What is beyond even that, cannot be put into words in any language.

Whatever can be expressed in words or speech, is a creation of the mind.

Pitaji, as to the saying "There is only one *Brahman*, without a second" - in the Self there is no possibility at all of a 'second'. The notion of the 'two' has come about through the operating of reason.

Just as you say:

"Without feet He walks and without eyes He sees."

This body maintains that whatever anyone may say from the plane of reason - with the idea that the body exists, from the standpoint of the disciple - can be supported on the level of reasoning.

For one's vision is conditioned by the spectacles one uses. This body declares that, whatever theory anyone may hold is based on reasoning, which presupposes the existence of a residue of the mind and of *prarabdha*.

But where THAT stands revealed, it is quite otherwise: there, to discriminate or speculate is impossible.

Beyond reason, beyond points of view, there is a state where none of these can be.

Pitaji, in very truth, in THAT there is no room for words, language, or discrimination of any kind. Whether one says 'there is not' or 'there is' - these are also merely *words*, words floating on the surface (*Bhasa* - means language and also (spelt differently) "to float". Therefor it said that here words, language, utterances of any type, have no place.

This is the truth, Pitaji, do you understand?

SRI MA added: You will not have received precise replies to your queries. From what has been said, you will have to take what can be grasped by the intellect.

TEN

Benares, August 12th, 1948.

QUESTION: *What are the benefits to be derived from hatha yoga, and what are its drawbacks?*

SRI MA: What does '*hatha*' mean? To do something by force.

'Being' is one thing, and 'doing' quite another.

When there is 'being', there will be the spontaneous manifestation of what is due to be manifested, owing to the *prana* functioning in a particular centre of the body.

On the other hand, if one practises *hatha yoga* merely as a physical exercise, the mind will not be transformed in the very least. By physical exercise bodily fitness is developed. One hears quite often of cases where the giving up of the practice of yogic postures and the like, has resulted in physical disorders. Just as the body grows weak from lack of adequate nourishment, so the mind has need of suitable food. When the mind receives proper sustenance, man moves towards God, whereas by catering to the body, he only increases his worldliness.

Mere gymnastics is nutrition for the body.

Now, as to 'doing' : Sustained effort ends in effortless being; in other words, what has been attained by constant practice is finally transcended.

Then comes spontaneity.

Not until this happens can the utility of *hathayoga* be understood. When the physical fitness resulting from *hathayoga* is used as an aid to spiritual endeavour, it is not wasted.

Otherwise, it is not yoga, but bhoga (enjoyment).

In effortless being lies the path to the Infinite. Unless *hathayoga* aims at the Eternal, it is nothing more than gymnastics. If in the normal course of the practice His touch is not felt, the *yoga* has been fruitless.

One comes across people who, by engaging in all sorts of *yogic* exercises, like *neti*, *dhauti*, and others of the kind, have become seriously ill.

At Nain(dh)al I recently met a young man who had ruined his health completely by practising *hathayoga*. He was suffering from persistent diarrhoea, which simply would not stop. He and some of his friends had decided to become experts in *hadzayoga*, and to start a College, where union with God would be attained through this discipline. But they, one and all, fell ill.

A competent teacher, who understands every change in the movement of the disciple's *prana*, will accordingly either speed up the process or slow it down just as a helmsman steers a boat with the rudder held firmly all the time. Without such direction *hathayoga* is not beneficial. He who would guide, must have first-hand knowledge of everything that may occur at any stage, must see it with the perfect sharpness of direct perception.

For is he not the physician of those on the Path! Without the help of such a doctor, there is danger of injury.

Everything becomes smooth once the blessing of His touch has been felt. It is just as, when bathing in a river, one at first swims by one's own strength; but once caught in the current, whether a good swimmer or not, one is simply carried away. Therefore it is detrimental if this 'touch' is not experienced. One must enter into the rhythm of one's true nature. Its revelation, acting as a flash of lightning, will attract one to it instantaneously, irresistibly ; there comes a point where no further action is needed. So long as this contact has not been established, dedicate to God whatever inclinations or disinclinations you may have, and devote yourself to service, meditation, contemplation - to anything of this kind.

Generally you perform your daily worship in the accustomed manner. If you feel the desire to practise some extra *japa* or meditation, it shows that you have caught a glimpse, however faint, and there is then hope that gradually the rhythm of your true nature may emerge. In this condition, the sense of 'I' (*aham*) still persists, but this I is turned towards the Eternal, intent on union with Him. Whereas, actions done with a view to fame or distinction are of the ego (*ahamkdra*), and therefore obstacles, impediments.

Whether you practise *hathayoga* or *rajayoga*, or any other *yoga*, it can be harmful only if pure spiritual aspiration is lacking.

When doing *asanas* and the like, if you have found access to nature's own rhythm, you will see that everything proceeds smoothly and spontaneously.

**By what signs is this to be recognized?
There is a sense of play, a deep delight,
and the constant remembrance of the One.**

Indeed, this is not the outcome of the practice of worldly observances. What has been referred to here is that which can only become revealed spontaneously - of its own accord. This is why there is constant remembrance of the One: man's true nature flows towards God alone.

Again, sometimes when sitting in meditation you will find that *rechaka*, *puraka*, or *kumbhaka* have come about without effort. When the movement of your true nature sets in, then, because it is directed solely towards God, the knots of the heart will be unravelled.

If during meditation you find perfectly correct *asanas* forming of themselves - the spine becoming erect of its own accord - **then you should know that the current of your *prana* is turned towards the Eternal.**

Otherwise, when you are engaged in *japa*, the right flow will not come, and your back may begin to ache. Still; even this kind' of *japa* is not without its effect, although its specific action is not experienced. In other words, the mind is willing but the body does not respond, and therefore you do not get the exhilaration that comes with the aroma of the Divine Presence.

To let the mind dwell on sense objects, still further increases one's attachment to them. When intense interest in the Supreme Quest awakens, ever more time and attention will be given to religious thought, religious philosophy, the remembrance of God as immanent in all creation, until thereby every single knot is untwisted. One is stirred by a deep yearning: "How can I find Him?" As a result of this, the rhythm of body and mind will grow steady, calm, serene.

Some of you naturally conceive a desire to do *asanas* and the like as spiritual exercises.

If in this no wish to show off is present, it will be easy to enter into the rhythm of your true nature. But if the mind is held captive by the body, these exercises become mere gymnastics. It happens that aspirants are driven in the direction they are meant to go, although at first they are not conscious of this, or even if they be, they are unable to resist.

Suppose some people go to bathe in the sea and make up their minds to swim ahead of everyone else; consequently they will have to look back. But for him, whose one and only goal is the Ocean Itself, no one has remained for whose sake he looks back or is concerned; and then, what is to be, will be.

Give yourself up to the wave, and you will be absorbed by the current; having dived into the sea, you do not return anymore.

The Eternal Himself is the wave that floods the shore, so that you may be carried away.

Those who can surrender themselves to this aim will be accepted by Him.

But if your attention remains directed towards the shore, you cannot proceed - after bathing you will return home. If your aim is the Supreme, the Ultimate, you will be led on by the movement of your true nature. There are waves that carry away, and waves that pull back. Those who can give themselves up, will be taken by Him.

In the guise of the wave He holds out His Hand
and calls you: Come, Come, COME!

QUESTION: *How can we benefit spiritually by action?*

SRI MA: By doing work for its own sake, engaging in *karmayoga*. As long as a desire to (distinguish oneself is lurking, it is *karmabhoga* - working for one's own satisfaction). One does the work and enjoys its fruit, because of the sense of prestige it brings. Whereas, by relinquishing the fruit, it becomes *karmayoga*.

QUESTION: *How is it possible to work without desire?*

SRI MA: By doing service with the feeling that one is serving the Supreme Being in everyone. The desire for God-realization is obviously not a desire in the ordinary sense. "I am Thy instrument; deign to work through this, Thy instrument". .

By regarding all manifestation as the Supreme Being, one attains to communion that leads to liberation. What ever work is undertaken, let it be done with one's whole being and in the spirit: "Thou alone workest," so that there may be no opportunity for affliction, distress or sorrow to creep in.

Another point: If the attitude "through my shortcoming the work has not been done well enough, I should have taken still greater pains over this service," is not persisted in, the work must be considered to have been done carelessly. Therefore, as far as it lies in your power there should be no neglect. Beyond that, feel that whatever happens is in His hands; you are

but the tool. Because' of this, put your body, mind and heart into any service you may do, and for the rest take it that what comes about was destined to be - "Thou has manifested Thyself in this way as was ordained, and so has it been wrought."

QUESTION: *Even when there is spontaneous action, it is still action. Hence, if there is no other Guru, how can our doubts be cleared?*

SRI MA: There are two kinds of action you may say, and an infinite number of kinds.

However, this requires explanation.

When an *asana* begins to form, it speaks just as you - "I do".

In what manner? When the purpose for which the *asana* is done becomes disclosed, when that, which can be attained through any particular *yogic* posture, is accomplished, this may be called as "its language."

When a sick man moves about too much, he overstrains himself and becomes breathless. Naturally everyone's breathing changes its rhythm constantly according to the way one sits or moves, only one is not aware of it. One who has control over his breath can transfer it at will to any level. In the beginning, those of you who practise *yogic* postures do not know which leg to cross first and which after, and whether to inhale or exhale while doing so.

Consequently, what you do is in part incorrect.

Why?

When you want to open something and you do not know how it is done, damage may ensue. When an *asana* forms spontaneously, you will notice that your legs fold and unfold in the correct manner and in harmony with the breath. It is a sign that the *Guru* is - at work, when the *asana* and the breath are in perfect concord.

While before one had no knowledge of the posture, it is now clearly understood.

In terms of the mind: one watches oneself as a witness, like a child as it were; one feels that someone is causing everything to be done, and that at the same time the movement of the mind is being stilled.

When the vibrations of your body and *prana* have reached a stage where there is great skill in every-thing relevant to the Supreme Quest, you will find yourself voicing spiritual truths - this is the spontaneous action at that stage. And when you become established at the level of a *Risi* to whom *mantras* are revealed, that is to say, *when* the vibrations of your body and *prana* have become centred there, words corresponding to this level will issue from your lips.

There is a state in which you may have neither knowledge nor understanding of what is taking place, as for instance, when a *yogic* posture of which you are ignorant forms unawares. Who has brought it about?

The inner *Guru*.

In a similar way, when a *mantra* bursts forth, the solution to your problem and the inner significance (*tattva*) of the *mantra* in its supramental form (*pratyaksa murti*) appear directly before you ; in other words, together with its essence, its subtle form stands revealed. At that moment you come to understand the real nature of the inner *Guru*:

He dwells within and works from there.

Not only have your doubts been dispelled, you have also gained understanding of the *mantra*'s esoteric meaning.

This is real *darsana*.

Here you receive a response without being aware of how it has come about. In another 'variety of experience', the hidden process of what is taking place is uncovered. Here the *mantra*, the *tattva*, the *Guru* and the *Ista* are revealed simultaneously. This is an example of receiving revelation with the full knowledge of all its phases and aspects. Suppose one is engaged in *japa* or meditation. A question arises in the mind.

In a flash the reply is there.

One realises: "The *Guru* has told me this what has come to me is the *Guru*'s own teaching."

There is a line of approach through action, and another through the mind: or to be more precise,

in the first case action predominate,

in the second the mind, although concentration of the mind is necessary for both.

They work together, only there is predominance of the one over the other: when *asanas* are, that means, action prevails, but when *mantras* are used, the mind.

Again, who is it that guides me from outside?

It is also He, for verily, there is no other.

What has just been said are fragments from here and there. They have been given, so that each one may get what is helpful to him, and as much as he is able to grasp.

ELEVEN

Benares, August 13th, 1948.

SRI MA: Pitaji, what do you call '*niskama karma*' (action that is free from desire) ?

A DEVOTEE: *Well it does not seem possible to perform action without desire, that is to say, devoid of attachment for either the work or its fruit, but solely from a sense of duty. According to the shastras, only the man who has achieved perfect fulfilment is capable of such action. So long as one is linked to sense objects, it is impossible. Yet, what is taken up in a spirit of dedication to God may well develop into work done without any desire.*

SRI MA: Whether with or without desire - it is still action. One cannot possibly remain without action until the state of Pure Being comes. Therefore, let this aspect of the matter also be understood.

When you surrender yourself to the *Guru*, you have to obey his orders unconditionally. In this, your sole motive is to carry out the *Guru's* will. Consequently, when going about the task you grow eager to do your utmost, can you call this also a desire in the ordinary sense of the word? To set your heart on being efficient, with the one object of fulfilling the *Guru's* will, is certainly a good desire.

If for any reason there should arise even the least feeling of resentment, the action can no longer be described as being without attachment. Suppose for example, after having accomplished by far the greater part of some work, you have to abandon it, and towards the end someone else takes it up, completes it, and gets the credit for having achieved the whole of the task. If you mind this even in the slightest degree, how can the work have really been done disinterestedly? Obviously it was not quite free from a desire for recognition.

When you have surrendered yourself to the *Guru*, he may do anything, subject you to no matter what trials, yet you still regard yourself as a tool in His hands. You will then have reached a stage, where in spite of all difficulties, you persist with the work, knowing it to be the *Guru's* order. Keep in mind that by this attitude you will grow steadfast in endurance, patience and perseverance, and your energy and capacity will be enhanced.

In action there is bound to be conflict. When can there be freedom from this conflict? When there is no question of feeling hurt. Even in the midst of work, at all times and under all circumstances, one must be prepared to obey any kind of order. Imagine you are hungry, and just as you are raising your hand to put food into your mouth, you are asked to go elsewhere. At that very instant, you should gladly let fall the food you were about to eat, and obey the call. Such an attitude is an indication of one's becoming established in a happiness that is not of this world.

When one is nearing effortless being (*"Sustained effort ends in effortless being - in other words, what has been attained by constant practice is finally transcended. Then comes spontaneity"*), whether one is blamed or not for some short-coming in one's work, leaves one quite indifferent.

Then only does one become an instrument in His hands.

The body moves like a tool, and one watches it in the nature of a spectator. Then one observes what a great variety of work gets done by such a body, and in how very smooth and efficient a manner.

Egoless work is full of beauty, for it is not prompted by a desire for self-gratification. So long as the knots that constitute the ego are not unravelled, even though you intend to act impersonally, you will get hurt, and this will produce a change in the expression of your eyes and face, and be apparent in your whole manner.

To long "let my heart be free from craving for results," is still a desire for a result. Nevertheless, by thus aspiring after selfless action there is hope of its coming to pass.

A knot means resistance.

Hence, so long as the ego persists, there will be clashes at time, even when impersonal work is attempted, because one is bound and therefore pulled in a certain direction.

QUESTION: So, until one has attained to perfect fulfilment, acting without a motive is impossibility?

SRI MA: When impersonal work is being carried out and watched as by a spectator, a deep joy surges up from within. If at that time the body gets hurt, even this becomes a source of happiness. Nevertheless, this welling-up of joy is not identical with Self-realization. The thrill of delight brought about by impersonal work is His delight become one's own, His gladness felt as one's own a stage has been reached where happiness is bound up with Him. In this condition, since one has lost interest in worldly pleasures, a great deal of work can be done in a perfect way; and even if despite one's utmost efforts some task has not succeeded fully, one does not feel disturbed. For everything has its place - here also His Will prevails.

Do you not see what an exquisite path this is!

But the aforesaid holds good only when action is not tainted by a sense of possessiveness. However, even this state is by no means Self-realization. Why not? Whether with or without desire, it is work that is referred to here. Although done impersonally, the action still remains separate from the doer. Whereas, where the Self is and nothing but the Self, there the *Guru*, his instructions, the work, cannot each exist separately. So long as the duality of precept and action persists, one cannot possibly speak of Self-realization. The Play of one who has attained to final Consummation is entirely different from the work that has become selfless by effort. This has been explained here in reply to your question.

Even when the state of *samadhi* has been reached, during which one seems to be wholly absorbed within, this also is still a state. Yet, when by this spontaneous inner process (*antarkriya*) the veil is lifted, then the Vision of Reality may come about. It can never come through outer activity, such as the attempt to efface desire.

Another thing, Pitaji:

There was a time when **this** body tried to carry out to the very letter anything Bholanath asked for. But when he saw that this body became rigid, that it was incapable of performing certain types of worldly actions, unable to bear them, he himself mostly and gladly took back his request. This is how, notwithstanding that some tasks could not be attended to, strict obedience was being observed in one sense.

However, one day the husband of Bholanath's sister, Kushari *Mahaya*, came on a visit. When he saw that this body obeyed Bholanath in all matters, he felt annoyed and exclaimed: "Have you no opinion of your own? Have you to consult your husband about every little detail?"

What a state of affairs!

Suppose he asked you to do something wrong, would you obey then also?"

He got the reply: "Let such an occasion arise and, on setting out to put the order into practice, see what would come to pass."

This answer left him dumbfounded.

Thenceforth he changed his mode of life and remained ever devoted to the Supreme Quest.

There is a state in the spiritual life where unconditioned, self-sprung action is possible, because there are no ties. And where no ties exist, there is no danger and no wrong path - one cannot take a false step.

QUESTION: *Was it not after Self-Realisation that you were in that condition?*

SRI MA: Leave this body out of it!

If you say that this condition only comes after Self-realization, you will have to understand that then it is possible to play anywhere, in any way,

Oneself playing all the parts of Oneself,

of course, which is quite a different matter from what has just been mentioned.

It is a state of Oneness. Even while remaining in division one is undivided, and remains in Oneness though appearing divided: this is THATness Itself (*Tat Sva*).

Here, to obey and to disobey - both are THAT.

There are signs by which actions done as an instrument before Self-realization can be recognized. *At* this stage, the stream of action is directed towards the fulfilment of actual needs. Whereas, in the state of Pure Being it is totally different:

to do or not to do, call it what you will, all is THAT.

Within this sphere everything is possible: not to eat while eating, and to eat though not eating; to walk without feet, to see without eyes, and much more of the kind, as you would put it.

When established in the Self, who obeys whose bidding?

There are no 'others', none are separate.

No longer does one talk to another - how can there still be the relationship, that is based on the sense of separateness?

The level of selfless action is quite different from the state of Self-realization.

So long as the *Guru*, the love of Him; the work, the 'I', are perceived separately, there is no question of Self-realization.

Yet, it must be said that action dedicated to God is not of the same order as work prompted by desire.

The one is for the sake of union, which leads to Enlightenment,
the other for the sake of enjoyment which leads to further worldly experience.

What alone is worthy to be called 'action' is that action by which 'man's eternal union with God becomes revealed; all the rest is useless, unworthy of the name of action, no action at all.

**It is not a new kind of union,
which has to be established, but rather the union that exists throughout
eternity is to be realized.**

Very well, now listen to something else. There is a stage where working is very delightful and gives intense happiness. Here one is quite unconcerned with what may or may not result from one's action; the work is done entirely for its own sake, for the love of it. Neither is there an external Guru in this, nor the love of Him. A state of being of this kind does exist. There is great diversity in the realm of action.

The sense of contentment experienced at the fulfilment of some worldly desire is relative happiness. This desire may be for one's wife, son, a relation, or any other person, and accordingly the fruit inherent in each particular action will be reaped. This is working for the sake of self-satisfaction (*bhoga*), not for the sake of union (*yoga*); it brings sorrow along with joy.

Now to come back to what has just been said about work done for the love of it, not for anybody. Imagine how much at times gets accomplished even while walking in the street, not for anyone's sake, work for the sake of work, work itself being one's only God.

This also is one of the states. But if one goes on performing action of this kind, there comes a day when one is liberated from action. There is such a thing as labouring for the welfare of the world, but here even this purpose is absent. It is a type of work not actuated by desire or craving, one just cannot help doing it. Well then, why is it done? One simply is in love with the work. When God manifests Himself in the form of some work, which therefore exercises intense attraction on a particular person, then, by engaging in this work again and again, one is finally liberated from all action.

QUESTION: *Work only begets more work; how can it come to an end?*

SRI MA: Do you not know this?

If you can become so completely concentrated in any one direction that you cannot help acting along that line, wrong action becomes impossible.

In consequence, action is losing its hold on you and is bound to come to an end. How many states and stages there are!

This is one of them.

Here one has certainly not yet attained to Knowledge of the Self; but one cannot act wrongly.

Neither is there an opportunity for considering whether one should act in accordance with the *shastras* or against them. Nevertheless, in such a state of one-pointedness; wrong action that violates the laws set forth in the *shastras* cannot occur. The human body - the vehicle through which the work is being done - has entered a current of purity, and as a result *satkarma*, action in harmony with the Divine Will, is performed.

It is only on the level of the individual that pleasure and pain exist. In spite of attachment to wife, husband, son or daughter, during spells of severe pain, when one tosses about in burning agony, is there room left for the thought of these loved ones?

Does one not groan in a frenzy of self-pity?

At that moment the delusion of family ties loses its hold, while the delusion of identifying oneself with the body reigns supreme.

Everything exists in one's Self, that is why everything exists.

From here, on this basis arises the alleged coming and going of the individual, its round of births and deaths.

Now you should understand that one who loves God is but out to destroy identification with the body.

When this has come about, there is destruction (*nasa*) of delusion, of bondage, in other words, of desire (*vasana*), of 'not-Self' (*na Sva*).

Your dwelling place (*vasa*) at present is where the Self manifests as 'not-Self' (*na Sva*); when that is destroyed; it is only destruction that is destroyed.

Further-more, what is known as worldly craving, may also be characterized as the activity that takes place because the action of Self-revelation is absent.

HE is not there, this is the crux of the matter, is it not?

This body tells of yet another aspect can you guess what it is?

Just as the Beloved (*Ista*) is the Self (*Svayam*),

so destruction is also He Himself,

and likewise is that which is destroyed.

This is so where the Self is and nothing but the Self. Hence with whom can one associate?

Therefore it is said that He is without another, existing alone.

When speaking of Him as appearing in disguise, what is the disguise?

He Himself, of course.

You speak of the world. *Jagat* (world) means movement and what is bound is *jiva* (the individual).

As the saying goes :

"Wherever a man is, there is *Si va*; and wherever a woman, there is *Gauri*." Where no question of birth and rebirth exists, no question of being bound, this surely, is called eternal.

Now grasp this thoroughly;

how can that, which is perpetual motion be bound?

Does it remain in one place?

Just as it does not remain confined to any place, so it cannot be bound when the mind is dissolved. Therefore, since it never stays bound in any particular spot, can one not call it free?

Well then, what goes and what comes?

Behold, it is movement as that of the ocean (*samudra*), He expressing Himself (*Sva mudra*)*.

The waves are but the rising and the falling, the undulation of the water, and it is water, that forms into waves (*taranga*), limbs of His own body (*Tar anga*)** - water in essence.

What is it that makes the same substance appear in different forms, as water, ice, waves? This again, is asked from a particular plane of consciousness. Reflect, and see how much of it you can grasp! No simile is ever perfect; yet has it not helped you to view the problem with reference to the world? What actually have you realized?

Find out!

Very well you call transient that which never stays fixed anywhere,.
do you not?

But what does not stay?

Who does not stay?

Who comes?

Who goes?

Change, transformation - what are they?

WHO?

Grasp the root of all this! Everything passes away, that is to say, death passes away - death dies.

Who goes and whither?

Who comes and whence?

This ceaseless coming and going - what in essence is it?

WHO?

Again, there is no question of action, no question of coming and going; where does birth me in, where death?

Ponder over this!

Look, this universe, you will say is nothing but the One Self.

As such, every form is He in His very own Form (*Sva akara*); that is, the Self (*Sva*), the Eternal, revealed as Form (*akara*).

What does this imply?

Non-action (*akriya*).

In what sense non-action?

"Action dedicated to God is alone true action; all the rest is useless and therefore no action at all."

This is your idea from the point of view of the world.

But here, this kind of action does not exist.

What then does exist here?

Self-Action (*Sva-Kriya*) - He Himself As Action;

He Himself As Form - for this reason He is called *Sakara* (With-Form; He Himself As Qualities (guna) - therefore, He is called *Saguna* (With-Qualities). Where the

Lord (*Isvara*) or anything pertaining to His Divine Splendour is manifested, He Himself (*Svayam*) appears in action, **yet ever remaining the non-doer.**

He, as such, is the Essence of Absolute Truth.

Non-action (*akriya*), yet form (*akara*)!

Form means embodiment (*murti*), in which there is neither action nor one who acts. Of what can He become the doer, and who is to be the doer, and where? In what you see as bondage by action, He is not revealed. He Himself is action (*kriya*), He, the Eternal that can never be destroyed. Destroyed (*nasta*)* means 'not-the Beloved' (*na-Ista*), not He, who can never be undesired (*anista*); for He is the one and only thing desired by all creation, the All-Beloved.

Therefore you should grasp that the One who is 'Without Form' (*Nirakara*), 'Without Qualities' (*Nirgua*), is also "With Form' and 'With Qualities".

Water and ice - what in essence is the difference between the two?

Can you tell? Hence He alone IS, and nothing but He. The One who is Pure Consciousness and Pure Intelligence has many shapes and forms, and at the same time He is formless.

For this reason, call it worldly action or the action of the seeker, both are THAT.

Every action is free, in other words, there is no question at all of action.

That is why, you know, it is like this:

There is only One Eternal Reality (*Nitya Vastu*), but since you are limited by your diverse angles of vision, you speak of the non-eternal and hold to the idea that the result of action cannot endure, that change is its very nature.

Where does ceaseless change of the ever-changing world lead to?

Action in which there is no possibility of bondage is indeed 'being'.

'*Jagat*' (world) signifies the movement which is a constant dying, in other words, perpetual change is its innate character. On the plane of the individual and therefore of bondage, all change pertains exclusively to movement of this kind. Facing towards THAT (*Tat mukti*), many are striving, each in his own particular way; effort of this kind is certainly everyone's duty. In order to divert the course of his life into this direction, the average person must occupy himself with actions aiming at THAT (*Tat karma*).

But now, think carefully and realize you are eternally free, because action is ever free, it cannot remain bound. Do you not know that the rope with which you tie anything in this world must rot or wear out?

And though you use iron chains, or even golden, whatever binds will one day break or be shattered.

Do any worldly fetters exist that can never be broken, never destroyed? It is solely the cry of lament over temporary ties that alone fashions the bondage of the mind - the mind that can not be confined to any place.

Like a restless child, unconcerned with good or bad, it seeks Supreme Bliss; never satisfied with momentary happiness and herefore ever wandering. But how can it possibly be at rest until it has discovered a way to the Supreme Reality, until it has become wholly absorbed in its source, reposing in its own Self?

In your innermost heart you know that you are free; that is why it is your nature to yearn for freedom. Likewise, when by some good fortune He becomes revealed as action, action will stop of itself.

Stagnation is death; solely to give up this blocking of the movement, man resorts to countless devices. Only what falls away of its own accord is to be given up.

You go on insisting that the mind must be dissolved. But do not forget, it is this very mind which is the *mahayogi*, yes indeed, the sublime *yogi*. Your scriptures describe such a *yogi* as behaving like a mischievous child, or as being oblivious of cleanliness, decency, and propriety; also as a lunatic, or again as one seeming inert and unfeeling. That which resembles complete indifference and inactivity, you regard as very exalted, and moreover you say: "What is contained in this microcosm is in the macrocosm."

A Divine Incarnation (*Avatara*) playing as a child - how lovely it is, how enchanting!

When ordinary people read or hear about the childhood of Sri *Krishna* or see it enacted, they interpret it in the light of the behaviour of their own children, for this is what they are familiar with. From where would they get the capacity to grasp its inner significance? When you witness a dramatic representation of the love play for *Radha* and *Krishna* in the *Rasalila*, or a performance of the *Ramalila*; you do not see the real *Lila*; which is entirely spiritual, supernatural (*aprakrta*), transcendental. Where there is actual experience of it, it is due to the functioning of spiritual vision.

QUESTION *When there is spiritual experience, how is it interpreted in terms of worldly occurrence ?*

SRI MA: As one is released from bondage, the destructible destroyed and the Beloved alone shines forth - say, what can one behold? When ties are being broken, it is the breakable only that breaks. But the bond of the love of God is not that kind of bond - it is an 'unbinding'. Further, where the Knowledge of the Absolute (*Brahmajnana*) is, there the ordinary function of understanding ('standing under') no longer exists. For to understand means to throw off one load, only to stand under a new one; where as the Knowledge of the Supreme Reality is beyond thought and speech.

When the average person sees a performance of the *Rasalila* or *Ramalila*; what can he possibly grasp of its significance that will not be coloured by his worldliness? Where is the capacity to experience anything beyond it? Nevertheless, since it is God's Divine Play that lie is taking in through his ears and eyes, there is hope that the capacity may come.

It is the nature of the mind to accept the many. All that is needed is to focus this acceptance on one particular thing, with or without form, which, when accepted, leaves no further

choice between acceptance and non-acceptance. This One Thing altogether excludes the possibility of duality. This is why one becomes one-pointed. The mind points to the many. Amidst the cross-currents of the divergent mind, one has to become firmly concentrated on one goal.

Think of a tree.

The boughs and branches that spread out from every side yield the same kind of seed as that from which the tree originated. This is how one single seed potentially contains innumerable trees, innumerable boughs, branches, leaves and so on.

There is infinite becoming and infinite being, infinite manifestation and infinite potentiality, - the seed grows into a tree, the tree brings forth seed. Therefore when one becomes wholly concentrated on any one thing, why should not the One be revealed?

There is endlessness in the One, and end in the endless;
but where the Infinite ONE is, there the question of finiteness and infinity cannot arise.

What is, IS - this is what is wanted.

Where you perceive an end, there is actually no end; for verily, He is infinite. In all forms and in the formless is He, and He alone.

This much about attachment to work (*karma*).

Again, there is attachment to *bhava* (**Bhava* means inner disposition; it reveals itself as *karma*. *Bhava* is latent *karma*, where as *karma* is *bhava* actualised .).

Bhava also belongs to the realm of action, only there is predominance, sometimes of action, at other times of *bhava*. This is all very difficult to understand. Someone has asked the question: "What is attachment to *bhava*?"

Here is one example: When one practises *yogic* postures and breathing exercises, ritual worship, the repetition of God's name, meditation, contemplation - any of these - for the sake of getting into a particular *bhava*, and having reached one wishes to remain in this state all the time. So long as it lasts, or rather, so long as this condition predominates, one is steeped in bliss. But in this one has not yet attained to Enlightenment, one is only on the way to it. This is a pure kind of attachment and therefore one may progress beyond it.

Since one delights in lingering on the level of this *bhava*, one could possibly indulge in it day after day or even for the rest of one's life. Although remaining in this state for a great length of time does induce transformation to a certain degree, yet there can be no special progress. But if by some ineffable touch this *bhava* could find its consummation, one would be able to proceed further.

There are states where one soars up and glides down again. But to become established in perfect poise, where ascent and descent are out of the question - surely this is what is wanted. Not until both *karma* and *bhava* are brought to completion, can one go beyond them.

TWELVE

In reply to a question, SRI MA said.:

Give in charity, engage yourself in service, do obeisance *pranam* ("To do *pranam* means to pour oneself out at His Feet, to become closely bound to Them and thereby united to Him, to become His who alone Is."), and you will yourself come to understand in what spirit these acts are being performed by you. Feel convinced that, no matter what the state or condition you may be In, Out of that very state Enlightenment may come.

Never harbour the idea that you are involved in sin and evil deeds, and can therefore not get anywhere. At all times and under all circumstances you must keep yourself in readiness to tread the path to the Supreme.

Who can tell at what moment your giving, serving, or obeisance will become an act of consecration to the One?

Everything is possible.

Concerning diksha (initiation):

He, from whom one receives initiation, will bring one in touch with the levels up to where he himself has reached. Just as when one listens to a religious discourse, the speaker will communicate to the audience as much as lies in his power. In this there are two factors: the effect inherent in words of Truth, and the power of the speaker. Both are received, and if the recipient has outstanding capacity, Supreme Knowledge will dawn on him at the very instant he receives the instruction.

There are various kinds of initiation: by *mantra*, by touch, by a look, by instruction. Contact with a Great One does bear fruit. Everyone will benefit in proportion to his own receptivity and sincerity. There is also such a thing as special Grace, by which unusual power to progress will be gained. On the other hand, there are cases where, in spite of actual contact, no infusion of power has taken place; one who commands power is able to control it giving and taking depend on his will. When instruction frees a man from the knots that constitute the ego, this is called initiation by instruction. In this case, the instruction has fulfilled its purpose instantaneously.

When *mantra* diksha is given, the *mantra* is whispered into the initiate's ear, and the initiator will confer as much power as he himself wields. If he is all-powerful he will, by his very touch or gaze, take the disciple to his final goal. But if he is not endowed with such Supreme Power, he can transmit to the initiate only whatever power he commands and guide him as far as he himself has reached. It is obvious that the guru can pass on only as much wealth as he possesses. If the person who has given the *mantra* has not reached the final goal and hence is still on the way, the disciple can not progress any further unless the guru does. This is why the disciple has to wait on the path, so long as the guru does not advance.

Anyone aspiring to Self-Realization, who starts giving initiation 'while he is still on the way, will remain stationary at the stage at which he has arrived.

However, the possibility of the disciple surpassing the *guru* exists; namely, when someone is initiated on the basis of his inner capacities and predispositions brought over from former births, his power to progress may thereby be stimulated to such an extent that he will be able to advance beyond the achievement of his *guru*. Here the initiate needed only just the amount of power conferred by the *diksha* to take him to his goal. If a disciple has to rely entirely on the resources of his particular *guru*, he will have to move side by side with him.

Furthermore, in the state in which one realises that one's *Guru* is the World-teacher and the World-teacher is one's *Guru* (world meaning movement, while the individual is that which is bound - the *Guru* delivers from individuality as well as from the relation with the world).

Then one comes to know oneself as His servant, or as His very own Self, or as part of Him - any of these, depending on one's line of approach.

How is it that my *Guru* may be said to be the World-teacher? For the simple reason that this is the status of a *Guru*. Who for instance is a cook? The word 'cook' surely does not denote the name of anyone in particular; it means one who can prepare food. Likewise, when the status of a *Guru* becomes revealed, one understands that it has nothing to do with any person; the *Guru* is none other than the World-teacher.

If the power of the *Guru* can become effective, there will be the realisation of 'Who am I?'

He who is able to bestow that power, is indeed a World-teacher. A *Guru* is called He who, out of deep darkness, can reveal the hidden Truth. My *Guru* exists in many forms as the *Guru* of each and everyone, and everyone else's *Guru* is in fact my *Guru*. Now you see how the *Guru* has become one.

A person who performs rites and spiritual exercises of any kind is on the path and not established in the Self, for he is still, making effort. How can he be a *Guru*, since he has not transcended action? One speaks of brothers in spirit: the Lord who is adored by the whole world is my Lord, and my Lord is the Lord of the world.

A *Guru* is not an ordinary preceptor, a *Guru* is He, who has the capacity to deliver man from the sea of becoming (*bhava sagara*).

Suppose an aspirant has been initiated by someone who does not command Supreme Power: he can progress only up to his *Guru*'s stage, and then will have to wait. Yet, by some favourable conjunction - be it through his own overwhelming desire for Self-realization, or through faculties developed in former lives, or even without these or similar causes, simply through the intervention of Divine Grace he may by instruction, contact, a look, or a *mantra*, receive an influx of power that will enable him to proceed further. When a flood comes, it does not make distinctions, as for instance: "this tree will have to be saved and that one uprooted", but carries away with it everything indiscriminately. Likewise, there is no such thing as choice in the realm of the spirit, for here the Self is contained within Itself.

Then again there is yet another possibility: without instruction, without a look, touch, or *mantra*, power may be conferred, whether the recipient becomes aware of it at the very moment it occurs, or only very much later. The One who has bestowed this power carries

along with Him everything, just as the flood does. It is His very nature to bring round within Himself everything and make it His own. Therefore it will not do to say in a particular case that initiation has been received from someone else and not from this source for is not everything His, nay indeed, He Himself? So then, just as the flood carries everything along in complete equality, so that Great Being quite naturally and spontaneously makes His own what was wrongly believed to be alien. Here 'mine' and 'thine' do not exist - only the Self stands Self-revealed, THAT, and THAT alone. A mother does not keep an account of what she does for her children - for are they not her own? Likewise, here also there' is no accounting of how much power has been communicated.

A certain person took initiation from some *guru*. Later that person met a *Mahatma* and began to seek his company frequently, since he felt benefited by his contact. On hearing about this, the *guru* became irritated, saying : "I have cultivated the garden and you are giving its fruit away to someone else?" The disciple replied : "Not so ; my contact with the *Mahatma* has strengthened my faith in my *Guru*." But the *guru* was unable to understand this. For the *Mahatma* in question, the world and what is beyond, was all the same. For Him there was complete equality, since he saw only the all-pervading Self. Whether one goes near such a One or not, He will take along with Him everyone alike. Therefore it may be said It is not that the man had another *guru*, for the conferring of power happens on the level where all are one. Moreover, it cannot either be said that so and so much power was communicated to such and such a person, just as burning fire does not discriminate and dry up one object, while leaving another wet, Spontaneously occur the instruction, touch, look, or giving of *mantra* that constitute the *diksha*;

Here, there is no distinction between 'mine' and 'thine'.

There are two ways : the power can either be controlled, or else bestowed universally in perfect equality.

It is all in His Hands.

THIRTEEN

Benares, March 27th, 1949.

SRI MA: Someone received a *mantra* in a dream. He had a vision of some great Being who gave him a *mantra*, or rather, he had a vision of the *mantra*. On waking, the experience of the *mantra* remained with him pure and simple; in fact, in the waking-state too he continued to be under the influence of his vision. With what consequence? A dilemma of many days' standing was resolved. He became free from conflict and began to live in a transformed state of mind. He had no more wish to take initiation.

Is it necessary, even for a person in this condition, to accept initiation again in the physical?

A DEVOTEE: *It may or may not be necessary, depending on the aspirant's capacity and his inner qualifications.*

SRI MA: That is to say, not everything is the same for everybody. Let me relate someone's story:

I shall not disclose his name.

He had taken *sannyasa* according to the proper rites (*viraja homa*), as prescribed by the *shastras*, and had adopted the staff of the homeless wanderer. But no realization or spiritual experience of any kind was vouchsafed to him. In his intense despair he finally gave up his pilgrim's staff and turned into a sceptic as it were. He was so profoundly depressed, he had no desire even to move his limbs. Then suddenly, one day, he had an experience.

He realized: "all is contained within myself." His despondency vanished together with his suffering. When, after having abandoned the order of *sannyasa* and all his spiritual practices, he had a realization of such a high order, should it still have been necessary for him to take initiation again?

It does of course happen that someone, even after receiving a *mantra* in a dream, takes initiation once more in the waking-state.

Many come to this body, saying : "Whether I take *diksha* depends on what you advise. If you tell me to take initiation, I am willing to do so but if you say 'do not', I shall also obey."

This is how they put it, is it not ?

Not all can be given the same reply; some may perhaps have been told: "So long as you do not feel the urge from within, do not take initiation. Just continue to practise the *mantra* received in your dream." To others, on the contrary, it may have been suggested that they should take initiation once more, from someone in whom they had faith.

QUESTION : *Initiation occurs on subtler levels ; it is not merely achieved by pronouncing a mantra. Similarly, initiation received in the dream-state takes place on subtler planes beyond the senses. Therefore, in such a case, should the necessity to take diksha in the physical still exist ?*

SRI MA : The action of initiation is instantaneous, outwardly as well as inwardly. Everything is already contained within you. Solely in order that this fact may be revealed, in order that the outer and the inner may merge into one, someone has perhaps given his blessing in the physical. After initiation, some may, by practising *sadhana* attain to perfection, while others may not seem to reach anywhere and die.

From the standpoint of the world, of the waking state, it can be said that, just as a sense of fulfilment is experienced when receiving initiation in the physical, it may be quite similar if it happens in a dream. If this feeling of satisfaction is there, one will say : "There is no need for me to take initiation again." Thus initiation may have the same result if it has occurred in the dream-state, as it would if received in the physical. Why then should, in such a case, the necessity for initiation in the physical still exist ?

QUESTION: *In other words, one's own feeling of satisfaction signifies that the initiation has really taken place?*

SRI MA : No, it is not merely a matter of satisfaction. Deep within, a 'touch' is felt that makes one understand that there is no further need for initiation. At this stage, if there be any special person whom one wishes to consult, one may then be made to understand. Needless to say, this person must be quite impartial and able to explain the real import of one's experience.

It is of course difficult to judge of anyone's capacity to do so.

Generally speaking, one may find that in some cases people only outwardly occupy elevated spiritual positions. However, if the aspirant is completely sincere and has become pure as gold, he will himself come to understand in time (whether his experience has been genuine).

Transmission of power constitutes initiation. It is this imparting of the Guru's power that is the important factor, whether it occurs in a dream or in the waking-state. If the manifestation of power has actually taken place within, then the need for an external giving does not exist anymore.

QUESTION : *What is the sign of this?*

SRI MA : Having been blessed with this power inwardly, even if to begin with, a sense of its lack is still felt, this feeling will disappear as one progresses. It depends on various factors working together. In some cases, for instance, the power may not at first have been felt inwardly; only later one becomes aware of it. Or else, the realisation of it may grow little by little, gradually, - this also is a possibility. Then again, the result of the initiation may not be felt either at once or even at the close of a long life. On the other hand, one may find someone transformed immediately by virtue of the initiation ; its action has in this case borne fruit instantly. If this be so, there will of course be no problem. But even where no effect of the initiation is noticeable for a very long time, even then the power is undoubtedly acting within.

Concerning the dedication of one's *japa* to one's *Ista* or *Guru*,

SRI MA said:

After doing *japa* one should dedicate it to the Object of one's worship.

If this is not done and it is stored by oneself; there is fear of its being lost, since one is not aware of the great value of what is in one's keeping. Just as when a priceless jewel is left in a small child's custody, he may throw the treasure away, not understanding how precious it is. Nevertheless, even by keeping the *japa* stored by oneself, one will gain something, but the full benefit of its accumulation will not be reaped.

The whole and entire fruit of the *japa*, obtained by dedicating it to the Supreme Object of one's devotion, can not be had if it is kept by oneself.

For this reason *japa* should be offered to one's *Ista* or *Guru*.

When a child receives something, he brings it to his mother, for he does not know the value of what he has got. No sooner does the mother see it than she realizes how precious it is. She therefor takes it at once from the child's hand and puts it safely away. But when the boy has

grown up and learnt to understand, then. his mother returns the invaluable object to him, saying: "I have preserved your treasure for you; now take it back."

When one has acquired the necessary capacity (*adhikara*), that which could not be understood formerly, is completely grasped. With age and wisdom, understanding comes in its fullness.

By regularly offering one's *japa* to the *Ista*, one slowly and gradually comes to realize what the Name is and He Whose Name one repeats; who one is; what Self-realization signifies. When all this is revealed, then the purpose of one's *japa* has been wholly fulfilled.

Nobody can foretell at what particular instant this may occur; therefore, ever continue with your *sadhana*.

Infinite are the *sadhanas*, infinite the spiritual experiences, infinite is manifestation - and yet He is unmanifest.

The nature of one's *japa* depends on one's particular line of approach.

Why did I use the term 'infinite'?

The leaves of a tree are infinite in number, and although they are all of the same general pattern, yet there are countless variations within that pattern.

Viewed from this angle also, diversity is infinite. Finally, when Enlightenment occurs, this will be the end, and at that very instant He will be revealed in the midst of endless variety. The seed as such remains what it is, and so do the boughs and branches ; yet there is infinity in each of them. Similarly, in the field of *sddhana* also everything is infinite.

As one goes on practising a prescribed amount of *japa* - at some moment or other, the fire will be set ablaze.

Fire exists everywhere, only one does not know, at what instant the friction will suffice to kindle a flame. Therefore, be ever prepared !

Of course, some *yogi* may be able to foretell after how many repetitions of a name or *mantra* Light will come.

For this reason persevere in the practice of *japa*. It will be carefully stored for you, as if kept safely by your mother. The moment may come at any time, when you will realize the many in the One and the One in the many. When will the number of repetitions be completed, and what will then be found? That the Name and the One whose Name it is are indivisible; thus, what you have offered will come back to you.

QUESTION: *Suppose japa is not dedicated to the Guru but kept by oneself; will its fruit be lost?*

SRI MA : If it is the *Guru's* instruction not to dedicate the *japa*, it will be in His Hands even so for, did one not act according to his command? He may bring it to fulfilment either by preserving it Himself, or by leaving it to the disciple. He alone knows how it will be brought to completion. Moreover, nothing whatsoever is altogether lost. If *japa* has been practised continuously, it is bound to bear fruit some day. Nevertheless, it may also be fruitless if; for instance, the *mantra* is incorrect, or the *japa* is not done according to its inherent rules -no possibility can be entirely excluded.

It may be found that someone practises *japa* and austerities with faith and regularity, and yet there is no response. In deep despair he drops all his practices. The agony of his suffering will not let him either sleep or eat.

Here his eagerness is so great, although he has abandoned all effort.

If he is completely single-minded in his thirst for Enlightenment, it *must* come then and there.

FOURTEEN

Raipur, Dehradun, December 3rd, 1948

Question : *Is Self-realization subject to the power of the Guru or does it occur independently?*

SRI MA : First of all, it must be made clear that it is the action of the *Guru's* power which induces the functioning of will-power; in other words, this will-power may be said to derive from the power of the *Guru*. Thus it is but the One Himself who manifests in both, the *Guru's* power and will-power. Who or what is that One Self? All that is manifest is He, and no other. Why then should the path of self-dependence, (*puruskara*) be classed separately? Of course it may be differentiated from the rest, but one must understand that it is based on the working of the inner *Guru*. There are seekers after Truth who are bent upon proceeding without a *Guru*, because along their line of approach emphasis is laid on self-dependency on reliance on one's own effort. If one goes to the root of the matter, it will be seen that, in the case of a person who does *sadhana*, prompted by intense aspiration and relying on his own strength, the Supreme Being reveals Himself in a special way through the intensity of that self-exertion. This being so, is there any justification, from any point of view, for the raising of objections against such self-reliance ? All that can be said or questioned in this respect lies within the confines of human thinking, which is limited. Yet, a state exists where everything is possible.

Thus the line of approach through dependence on one's own strength and capacity is, like all other approaches, but a functioning of the One Power. Without doubt, this *Guru*-power can operate in a special way through self-reliance, so that there will be no need for any outer teaching. While some aspirants may depend on outer teaching, why should not others be

able to receive guidance from within, without the aid of the spoken word? Why should not this be possible, since even the dense veil of human ignorance can be destroyed?

In such cases the *Guru's* teaching has done its work from within.

In ordinary life, when children are taught, it can be noticed that, with the average pupil, the teacher has to repeat the same thing over and over again; but there are those who remember and grasp whatever they have been told once only. Moreover, have you never come across certain pupils who need not even be taught all about a subject, but who in the course of their study awaken to such an understanding of it that the whole subject becomes clear to them? Intelligent students of the kind do exist, as you well know.

Similarly, it sometimes happens that a number of persons receive initiation together and practise *sadhana*. But it is only very rarely that one or two initiates, realizing the Oneness of all, make such outstanding progress as to advance to the status of a World-teacher. This may be attributed to the effect of teaching received in former lives that has come into fruition during the present one. On the other hand, may it not in some instances be due simply to the Great Moment, which brings Illumination? How can one tell who may become Enlightened, and at 'what moment'?

One meets some very keen seekers after Truth. The union of the individual with the All eternally exists; is not the eagerness to become aware of this union due to the fact that the One will reveal Himself?

How many students attend college, but how few of them stand first, although they are all taught by the same professors.

None can foretell at what particular time circumstances will co-operate to bring about that Great Moment for anyone. There may be failure to begin with, but what counts is final success. An aspirant cannot be judged by preliminary results. In the spiritual field, final success means success right from the beginning.

What indeed is a *mantra*? While one is bound by the idea of 'I' and 'you', and identifies oneself with the ego, the *mantra* represents the Supreme Being Himself in the guise of sound.

Do you not see how beautifully certain syllables have been joined together in the *mahavakyas*? You think you are wholly bound, but this is only what your mind believes. That is why true Knowledge can supervene at the very utterance of a word of power, which is composed merely of a few ordinary letters joined together. How mysterious and intimate is the relation between those words and the immutable *Brahman*!

Take for example, the *Sabda Brahman*: merely by the *Sabda* one becomes established in the Self. Look, the ocean is contained in the drop, and the drop in the ocean. What else is the spark, if not a particle of fire - of Him, who is Supreme Knowledge Itself.

It is the notion of 'you' and 'I' by which your mind has been held captive all along; you should understand that the combination of sounds which has the power to free you from this

bondage is the one to be used. Verily, it is through sound that one penetrates into Silence ; for He is manifest in all forms without exception.

Indeed, everything is possible in the state that is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

So long as you are not finally established in that Supreme Knowledge, you all dwell in the realm of waves and sound. There are sounds that cause the mind to turn outwards, and others that draw it within. But the sounds that tend outwards are also connected with those that lead inwards. Therefore, because of their: interrelation, there may, at some auspicious moment occur that perfect union, which is followed by the great Illumination, the revelation of What IS. Why should not this be possible, since He is ever Self-revealed? Further, since He reveals Himself, why should one object to admitting that there may be instances of Enlightenment without the aid of the outer word?

In some cases there is reliance on the outer word, in others there is not. However, in the world of men as they are, there usually is such dependence. Where this is not so, it will be due to instructions and tendencies dating back to former births. This also may certainly occur. Further, is it not justifiable to imagine that Enlightenment may come about even without having in previous lives received teaching and developed a bent in that direction?

He, being Self-effulgent, how can any possibility be excluded ?

Diversity is our own diversity, everyone sees and speaks according to his light.

FIFTEEN

In the train to Benares, December 5th, 1948.

QUESTION: In 'Vicar Sagara' we read of a certain Raji's minister, named Bharju, who in spite of having gained Knowledge of Truth, was still not free of illusion.

Similarly, that even though someone has, through the Mahavakyas, attained to the Realization of the Brahman, this would not bring about his liberation, should uncertainty and erroneous notions still persist.

I do not understand how, when a thing has become revealed, the question of its obscuration can still arise.

Further, in such a case, where does the need of instruction come in?

SRI MA: One thing is the full and final Realization of Unveiled Light; but quite another is a realization due to some cause, in which the possibility of its being obscured again, still exists. At the time when the play of *sadhana* was being manifested through this body, it could clearly perceive these various possibilities.

You should understand that if a veil of ignorance has been burnt or dissolved, as it were, the seeker will, for a certain period of time, have unobstructed vision. Afterwards it becomes blurred again. All the same - what will be the result of such a glimpse?

Ignorance will have become less dense, and true Knowledge gained greater prominence; in other words, by the momentary lifting of the veil, the individual's bonds will have been loosened. In this condition, there is a semblance of the attainment of real Knowledge; in fact, it is also a state of achievement, although quite different from the state of final Self-realization. By the power of the *Guru* the veil has here been suddenly dissolved or consumed - just as in the story of the ten men, when the *Mahatma* said "You are yourself the tenth!"* -

- *(SRI MA refers here to the following well known *Vedantic* parable: Ten men had to ford a river by swimming. To make certain that they had all safely reached the opposite bank, one of them counted the lot and, to his consternation, counted only nine. To make sure that he had not been mistaken, another one of them counted the men, with a similar result. Each one of them counted in turn, confirming that there were only nine left, although they could not make out which of them was missing.

A man passed by and they told him what had happened. He made them stand in a line, hit each one with his staff and asked them to count as he hit. To their joy and amazement, they at once realized that none of them had been drowned. "Each one of you forgot to include himself," explained the Mahatma .)

But there is a Realization, after which the possibility of its being obscured again by a reappearance of the veil of ignorance, simply cannot occur: this is true and final Self-realization.

Lightning comes in a flash, but the light of day continues steadily.

QUESTION: *How can anything occur that is not mentioned in the shastras ?*

SRI MA: To expound reincarnation, *karma* and similar doctrines, is mainly the work of the *shastras*. Whether anything may occur that is not mentioned in them - just remember that He is infinite!

Out of your union with this infinity spring your actions, feelings and thoughts, at the present time or in the future, in whatever form He may be pleased to assume. This you may not be able to learn from *shastras*.

Nevertheless, the *shastras* are also infinite.

Oh, how beautiful is the law of God's creation!

Do you not know the feeling of delight, of deep bliss, when in a new way you experience a glimpse of Him, the eternally new!

Just consider : The Infinite is contained in the finite, and the finite in the Infinite ; the Whole in the part and the part in the Whole. This is so, when one has entered the Great Stream. He who attains and that which is attained are one and the same. It is not merely a matter of imagination through ever fresh channels He is perceived in ever new forms.

Having entered that unbroken Stream, it is only natural that *yoga*, the hidden union of the individual with the All, should become *mahayoga*.

Look, everything is contained in the *shastras*, and yet not everything. Imagine that you are travelling by train to Dehradun. On your journey you will pass through large stations, through towns and villages. Every one of these has been indicated in the guide-book. But what is seen between the different stations, can it all be described in full detail? The trees and plants, the animals and birds, the tiny little ants that are met with on the way, could all these be delineated?

Looked at from this point of view, not everything has been written down in the *shastras*. Infinite is the diversity of creation, infinite are its modes of being, its changing movements and static states, revealed at every single instant. Besides, it is impossible to put into writing all that a seeker after Truth experiences.

Furthermore, it is quite certain that Reality is beyond speech and thought. Only that which can be expressed in words is being said.

But what cannot be put into language, is indeed That which IS.

When at certain stages you have realizations, these will of course be within the confines of your own particular line of approach. In the event of complete Realization, can such a thought as, "it has not been mentioned in the *shastras*," have any meaning? The main stages on the path, which you think can be elaborated exhaustively, are no doubt discussed in the *shastras*; but the numerous things that you imagine not to be set forth there, are also included. In accord with the progress of the *sadhaka*, spiritual experiences will occur of themselves.

However, where Enlightenment is complete, there is no more questions of important or unimportant experiences.

On reaching the end of one's journey, full Enlightenment is bound to take place. If someone has a doubt about something because it is not contained in the *shastras*, can he have attained to the goal of his pilgrimage?

Affirmation and negation are of significance only while one is yet on the way, for there are paths without number, and they cannot be limited to what has been laid down in the *shastras*. Where the Infinite is in question, the diversity of approaches is equally infinite, and likewise are the revelations along these paths, of endless variety.

Is it not said: "There are as many doctrines as there are sages"?

Unless one has a point of view of one's own, one will not be classed among the sages.

Very well, this is one aspect of the matter. Now to another: On the level from which it can be said that everything is possible, it would be quite sense-less to declare that, because something is not to be found in the *shastras* or in any of the Scriptures, it therefore does not and never will occur. Surely all this eager searching has for its aim only the revelation of

That, which is already Self-revealed. Could there be such ardent yearning and pining for something that is not, that never can or will be?

Later someone declared:

Repetition of the names of Rama, Krishna, Siva, Durga or any other name, is quite useless, with the one exception of the name 'Ma', and only while thinking of, not any Ma; but solely the special a that a particular group of people is worshipping.

SOMEONE ELSE : *Self-realization cannot be attained by the repetition of any name whatsoever, but only by understanding the processes of the mind.*

Every problem that arises in the mind has to be thought out and understood in all its implications, and in this way solved.

If a person be incapable of doing this himself, he may seek the help of someone else, no matter whom. However, by this, the relationship that is considered permanent between Guru and disciple will not be established.

Who essentially is the Guru, since all are one!

SRI MA : *Pitaji, when this teaching is given, do not those who are trying to put it into practice, automatically accept him who expounds it as their Guru?*

THE PERSON ADDRESSED: *No, for when their problems have been solved, all are again on an equal footing.*

SRI MA: Quite so.

Thus we are also told that after the *Guru* has given *sannyasa*, he prostrates himself at full length before the disciple, in order to demonstrate that there is no difference between *Guru* and disciple; for both are indeed one.

There is a stage where one cannot possibly regard oneself as a *Guru*, nor accept anyone else as a *Guru*. Another stage exists, at which there is no way of thinking of *Guru* and disciple as separate from one another. There is yet another stage, where it appears as follows: Everyone who gives teaching or instruction in this world is regarded in the light of a *Guru*. There are innumerable methods and sacred syllables, devised for the purpose of helping man towards Self-realization ; by using any one of them, he may advance towards the Goal.

By concentrating on the problems that arise in the mind, it may be possible to undo the knots that constitute the ego.

For this reason the above method is not in contradiction to any other. What has been said about being on an equal footing is also right, for in this world people have to assist and teach one another in many walks of life; therefore it can be truly said that everybody is a *guru*. From one point of view one may call one's *guru* every person from whom one has learnt something, no matter how little. But the real *Guru* is He whose teaching helps one towards Self-realization.

Suppose a person is walking in the dark and a dog suddenly starts barking furiously quite close to him. What can be the matter? The man switches on his torch and finds himself confronted with a big poisonous snake. By taking great care he is now able to elude the venomous fangs. Will the dog in this case have to be called his *Guru* or not? One may certainly object to it, for the dog did not bark for the purpose of making the man aware.

But He who bestows awareness may appear in the guise of a dog.

SIXTEEN

Benares, August 17th, 1948.

QUESTION : *According to the shastras one may after Self-Realisation either live in the world as a householder or remain aloof as a spectator. Which alternative should be followed?*

SRI MA : I see you are alluding to the story of *Chudala* and *Sikhidvaja*. Do you mean to imply that worldly life is possible after Self-realization?

FROM THE AUDIENCE: *No, in the case referred to here, a trace of ignorance still persisted. It was but a stage; at that time Chudala was not yet fully Enlightened.*

SRI MA: For a Self-realized Being, neither the world with its pairs of opposites exists, nor does the body. If there is no world, there can obviously be no body either

QUESTION *But the body, surely, does exist?*

SRI MA : Who says, the body exists?

There is no question at all of name and form.

To wonder whether a realized Being sees anything outside of Himself, is also beside the point. Who is there to whom he can say 'Give, give !'*(A play upon words: deo - give, and deho - body.)

Yet this state of wanting is precisely the reason for one's belief in the reality of the body. Therefore, since there is no world and no body, there can be no action either; this stands to reason. To make it quite clear : after Self-realization there is no body, no world, and no

action - not even the faintest possibility of these -, nor is there such an idea as 'there is not'. To use words is exactly the same as not to speak; to keep silent or not, is identical - all is THAT alone. There simply can be no question of talking or not talking. Please try to understand this! What actually is it that appears to you to be worldly life after Self-realization ?

Yes, of course, what is expounded in the *Bhagavad Gita*, is all true. Yet here the aforesaid holds good, for this body responds strictly to the line of thought and to the spirit in which a question is asked. Consequently, what is the opinion of this body and what is not ? If there is a line of approach, there must be a goal to which it leads; and beyond it is the unattainable. But where the distinction between the attainable and the unattainable does not arise, is THAT Itself.

What you hear depends on how you play the instrument. For this body the problem of difference of opinion in no wise exists.

QUESTION : *Does SRI MA then give out sound like a musical instrument ? (Laughter).*

SRI MA: According to your ear.

Whether the sounds* (• A play upon words: *Baje* means the sounding of a musical instrument, as well as 'useless' or 'senseless'.) you hear her utter make sense or not, is for you to judge. Here, (with SRI MA) the question of striking a chord or not does not arise. *You* will have to decide whether your SRI MA is good for nothing or useful, because she is your daughter as well as your mother. Whether she is worthless or of any service, father will be able to tell. (Laughter).

FM THE AUDIENCE: *If father knew, would there be any escape for her?*

SRI MA: This was said merely for the sake of argument. But it is not like this either, and the word 'not' is also incorrect. Now where will you proceed?

Moreover, where is 'where'?

SEVENTEEN

Benares, August 14th, 1948.

QUESTION : *Since physical existence is the result of one's actions in former lives (prarabdha), must there not be at least a trace of ignorance left over, so long as one continues in the body?*

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

QUESTION : *It is said, a Realised Being continues to be in the body due to the prarabdha of others, in response to their desires for His presence.*

SRI MA: One's own desire, another's desire and indifference - these terms certainly indicate the various kinds of bondage due to desire. If, although one seems established in one's True Being (*Svarupa*), one can be touched by desire or its opposite, it is a sign that dependence in one direction or another still continues. You should understand that He who is in the state of *videha** (*freedom from all body consciousness.*) appears embodied to those who have body consciousness. If you say, after Enlightenment the body will not survive, is embodiment then an obstacle to Supreme Knowledge? Where the Self is revealed, there the problem of the body simply does not arise, for in that state there is no question of anyone or anything in particular.

INQUIRER: *Since Illumination can consume every-thing, it is only logical that the physical body should be consumed too; some hold this theory.*

SRI MA: Most certainly, the body will be consumed; 'body' means what is subject to change, and therefore it will be burnt up. It is as you say. When you hold a theory, you thereby assume a certain position, and you will be committed to it. But where Self-revelation is, the problem of whether the body survives or not, cannot possibly arise.

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

SRI MA : What do you understand by 'nitya' (eternal)?

FROM THE AUDIENCE: *That which cannot be affected by the states of waking, dreaming, or sleep, is called 'nitya'; this is how I have heard it explained.*

Someone Else: *Duality (dvaita) and non-duality (advaita) are both eternal; it is merely a matter of divergent angles of vision. When one allows for different points of view, then amidst this diversity of outlook, one may also speak of the non-eternal.*

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

FROM THE AUDIENCE : *Ice is not mere water; it is necessary to mix something else with water to obtain ice**

(This was said by a dweller of the Indian plains, where the temperature never sinks to freezing point. He therefore was ignorant of the fact that ice is nothing but water below a certain temperature.).

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

A state exists where the distinction between duality and non-duality has no place. He who is bound by a particular angle of vision, will speak from the standpoint that happens to be his at the time.

But where the *Brahman* is, the One-without-a-second, nothing else can possibly exist.

You separate duality from non-duality because you are identified with the body, which means you are in a condition of constant wanting.

Besides, it has to be pointed out that if, through sense-perception of any kind, anything arises which is not THAT, and THAT alone, then this is due to *avidya*.

If you say: "there is only One Visnu" - when you do not behold Him everywhere - what have you accomplished?

Again, whether you say *Sabda Brahman* and therefore *Brahma*, or whether you call it *Visnu* or *Siva* - these are only various manifestations, necessary along different lines of approach. Thus all names are His names, all forms His forms, all qualities His qualities.

The nameless and formless is also He alone.

A state of being exists where it is immaterial whether He assumes a form or not - what is, is THAT.

In this case, what is there to express in words ? Furthermore, at a certain level the Self may reveal Itself to Itself.

At the same time, He does not reveal Himself at all: to whom is He to reveal Himself?

Where there are neither form nor attributes, what is to be put into language?

Where nothing is excluded, how can Oneness be obstructed?

In this state of complete poise nothing at all is any longer apart from Him; what is, IS.

So, what can be said or left unsaid, since It is entirely beyond words!

Obviously, each one speaks from the level at which he finds himself: yet whatever is uttered are His words; His song, addressed to Him.

In the Supreme state nothing whatsoever can possibly be an obstacle: if it is, then ignorance has survived. In reality there is only He - He alone, and nothing but He.

Suppose you have modelled a doll in butter; whichever aspect of it you may survey - its shape, peculiarity, or appearance - butter it remains, and nothing but butter.

As butter, it is one indivisible substance.

By division, its integrity would be lost; thus, division is impossible.

What is called '*Nitya Lila*' means God's Play, He Himself acting all the parts. Where God is - His Play can never be transient.*

*(The actual Eternal *Lila* exists on the plane of Pure Consciousness.).

He, the Almighty, stages His infinite *Lila*, His endless Play.

Within the Infinite lies the finite, and in the finite Infinity. He Himself, the One who is the Self, stages a play with Himself: this is called '*Nitya Lila*;'

On that plane different appearances befitting different occasions and places are present; for is it not the sphere of Pure Consciousness! Here even division partakes of the nature of Pure Consciousness, since it is transcendental (*aprakrt*).

When you speak of non-duality, is not the idea of duality implied?

But in the realm of Pure Consciousness, if you say "*Maya* exists", so it does ; and if you say "there is no such thing as *Maya*", it is equally correct; for nothing can be excluded.

Non-duality, which cannot be conceived of, is as true as that which one is capable of conceiving. For all is THAT, and where THAT is, there is no contradiction. The false as such must vanish. How can one speak of *advaita* and include individuals, the world? Since there is non-duality, can there still be individuals, can there still be the world?

In that state, where do these find a place?

Where exclusively Oneness is, how can there be room left for 'two'? Furthermore, is it not said : "Wherever a man is, there is *Siva*, and wherever a woman, there is *Gawri**."

From this point of view you should now try to ponder over all this.

Nevertheless, whatever anyone may say from any standpoint, everything is right, nothing can be outside of THAT. Whether you say there is or there is not the appearance of *Maya* - actually speech cannot express it.

Using words or not, seeing or failing to see, is merely a matter of angles of vision.

On the other hand, where THAT is, there can be no angles of vision. Problems are born through want of knowledge, due to the veil of ignorance. Until one is established in one's own Essential Being (*Svarupa*), it is natural that queries should arise.

In the realm of phenomena there is much differentiation, such as 'above' and 'below'. But There - what is and what is not?

Where ascent and descent can still be spoken of, what will you call such a state? Must you not admit that various directions have remained? If you speak of descent and ascent, it is implied that there must be a place to descend to; but whither can He descend?

To Himself alone of course.

Ascending and descending are one and the same thing, and He who ascends, is He who descends, and the acts of ascending and descending are also He.

Although *you* speak of Divine Descent (*Avataran*), *He* surely does not become divided. You see fire flare up here and there, but this does not affect its unity: fire as fire is eternal. This is how you should understand it.

No simile is ever complete.

He who descends, whence He descends, and whither - all are one.

There is nothing whatsoever outside of THAT.

A QUESTION : *If the Real remains what it is, what then do ascent and descent mean ?*

SRI MA : What you say represents a particular viewpoint of the world. Where the Ultimate, the Supreme is, the question you ask is impossible. On a certain plane, descent and ascent exist. It is you who say: "God descends". On the other hand, there is no such thing as descent : where He is, there He remains, and all possibilities are contained in Him. To understand*

*(A play upon words: *bhoja* means 'to understand', as well a 'burden'.)

intellectually - which means to 'stand under', in other words, to be burdened by mental conceptions - prevents one from grasping the Truth.

Again, to what can you attain? It is already present here itself! Anything found will be lost again. To prepare oneself for the revelation of That which eternally IS, there are injunctions, numerous paths.

But do you not see, every path must come to an end; in other words, you should concentrate upon that imagination which will sweep away all other imaginations and having gone beyond all imagination, there is the revelation of THAT, which you really are.

The beauty of it is that man's very nature is to long for Reality, Supreme Wisdom, Divine Joy; as it is his nature to return home when the Play is over. The stage of the Play is His, the Play His as well, and so are those who take part in it, friends and fellow-beings - everything is He alone.

Surely, ignorance is not what one seeks. To aspire to Immortality is man's true nature - or is death desirable? **The world is concerned with the knowledge that is ignorance.** Although it is true, even here one can observe how man builds a solid house in order that it may last for a long time, because he wants stability.

At times one may tell a lie under some uncontrollable impulse, yet one feels uneasy about it.

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

EIGHTEEN

HE alone IS - so there is no question of acceptance or denial.

Did He ever come into being that there could be a possibility of accepting or denying Him? HE was never born. According to one angle of vision, it is true that this world does not exist, that Truth is found by eliminating name and form; on the other hand, name and form are made up of the *aksara*,*

(*The word '*aksara*' means 'indestructible', and also 'letters of the alphabet'.)

of that which is indestructible. But in essence, THAT is Truth.

The appearance of the phenomenal world (due to erroneous perception) and its disappearance (due to right Knowledge) are ultimately one and the same thing: both are He. Then again there is no question of clearing up error, for there is only He, the One Ground of all.

With Him as one's goal, the error that there is such a thing as error has to be uprooted. Talk of this kind is all-just by way of helping one to understand.

The study of Scriptures and similar texts - provided it does not become an obsession - can be an aid towards the grasping of Truth. So long as what has been read has not become one's

own experience, that is to say, has not been assimilated into one's own being, it has not fulfilled its purpose.

A seed that is merely held in the hand cannot germinate: it must develop into a plant and bear fruit in order to reveal its full possibilities.

Nevertheless, in the state where one can neither speak of revelation nor of concealment, there, what appears and becomes, is also ever present. At a certain level one sees glimpses, sparks, as it were, of Reality - this also is one of the states. One cannot understand what one perceives and therefore is bewildered. There are indeed states and stages without number. The power of fire to burn is one and undivided; but how can there possibly be wholeness and completeness in the so-called glimpses or sparks that one gets?

Only where that wholeness is, there, the question of division does not arise.

What is wanted is genuine awakening, an awakening after which nothing remains to be attained. The world of sense objects may or may not be perceived - it makes no difference.

A state does exist in which this is so.

Whatever anyone does, belongs to the realm of death, of ceaseless change. Nothing can be excluded. In the shape of death art Thou, and in the form of desire; Thou art becoming and Thou art being, differentiation as well as identity - for Thou art infinite, without end.

Thou it is who roamest in the disguise of nature.

From whatever standpoint a assertion may be made, I never object to it. For that is to say, has not been assimilated into one's own being, it has not fulfilled its purpose.

A seed that is merely held in the hand cannot germinate: it must develop into a plant *and* bear fruit in order to reveal its full possibilities. Nevertheless, in the state where one can neither speak of revelation nor of concealment, there, what appears and becomes, is also ever present.

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From whatever standpoint an assertion may be made, I never object to it.

For He is all in all, He alone is - the One with form and without form.

In your present condition your divine essence cannot be revealed.

When a roof is being built, it is a law that whatever materials are hammered into it, must remain there. No matter how much time it may require, the roof must be made solid.

Likewise, (no simile is ever complete) you identify yourself with any line of work in which you are expert, believing it to be your real nature. So far so good; but where is the whole of your being, which is with form as well as formless?

Therefore you should reflect: What is it that has to be attained?

You will have to become conscious of your Self in its entirety. Nay, to become fully conscious is not enough; you will have to rise beyond consciousness and unconsciousness. The revelation of THAT is what is wanted.

You will have to go on discriminating and make a sustained effort to convince your mind of the fact that *japa*, meditation and all other spiritual exercises, have for purpose your Awakening.

On this pilgrimage one must never slacken: effort is what counts! Thus one should try ever to remain engrossed in this endeavour - it must be woven into one's very being, one has to be fused with one's Self.

It is Thou that crying out helplessly in distress, and it is Thou Thyself that art the Way and the Goal. In order that this may be revealed, man must employ his intelligence vigorously and unceasingly.

A tree is watered at its roots.

Man's root is the brain, where his reasoning power, his intellect is constantly at work. Through *japa*, meditation, the perusal of Scriptures, and similar practices, one progresses towards the Goal. Hence man should bind himself and, fixing his gaze on the One, advance along the path.

Whatever ties, bonds or restraints he imposes upon himself, should have for aim the Supreme Goal of life.

With untrammelled energy one must forge ahead towards the discovery of one's own Self.

Whether one takes the path of devotion, where the 'I' is lost in the 'Thou,' or the path of Self-inquiry, in search of the true 'I' - it is He' alone who is found in the 'Thou' as well as in the 'I'.

Why should one's gaze be fixed, while treading the path? The gaze is He and the 'why' is He also.

Whatever is revealed or hidden anywhere, in any way, is 'Thou', is 'I'. Negation, just as affirmation, are equally 'Thou' - the One. You will be able to grasp this fully only when you find everything within yourself; in other words, in the state where there is nothing but the Self. This is why you should direct your gaze towards the Eternal while on the way. Where you see limitation, even this is a manifestation of the Limitness, the Infinite. In essence it is none other than your own Self. So long as this fact has not been revealed, how can one speak of full Realization - complete, perfect, all-comprehensive - call it what you will! Then again, how can the question of perfection or imperfection, of completeness or incompleteness, still arise in such a state of Fulfilment?

NINETEEN

Raipur, Dehradun, September 6th, 1948

QUESTION: *You say all moments are combined in the One Supreme Moment. I cannot understand this.*

SRI MA: The moment of one's birth conditions the experience of life; but the Supreme Moment that is, revealed in the course of *sadhana*, leads to the completion of action, and therefore of one's karma.

You should understand, that one who is engaged in action is subject to nature - *prakrti*. The constitutive elements of nature are called *guna* (*A play upon words: the word '*guna*' means 'to multiply' as well as 'quality'.), because they multiply themselves; for this world is not of the eternal.

The perception of the world that consists of the three *gunas*, is in time and transitory. Looked at from this point of view the world will be recognized as perishable. *Vairagya* can consume and *bhava*, *bhakti* melt what is impermanent in human nature. But the moment in which burning and melting are impossible - that Moment is eternal.

To try and seize that Moment is all you have to do.

In reality this is THAT - everything perceived is THAT - how can THAT be apart from anything? This is so when one has entered the Stream; for such a one, how can there still be the division of present, past, and future? A *yogi* can get something that is on the other side of a wall merely by stretching out his hand. When this is possible, the wall is not there although it exists, and even if no wall exists, yet it may function as an existing wall. Behind the veil lies the thing, but before you is the veil. The veil was not there previously, nor will it be in future; hence it does not really exist now. From a certain standpoint it is like this.

You should understand that the *yogic* process, due to which the veil has no power to hamper the free activity of a *yogi*, is analogous to the method by which he perceives an ordinarily invisible object. Furthermore, motion and rest, although each remaining what it is, lose their distinction for him who can see. In that state there are unlimited possibilities.

But this body does not always have the *kheyala* to tell everything.

All this belongs to the realm of the marvellous (*camatkara*).

To return to the 'moment': the moment that you experience is distorted, whereas the Supreme Moment contains being, becoming - everything. Yet nothing is there, although everything is there. Then again, there can be no question of either the Supreme moment or the moment. that is a particle of flowing time.

Later the topic of the 'moment' was again raised.

SRI MA: Moment means time, but not what *you* call time.

Time (*samaya*) means *Sva-mayi*,*

*A play upon words: *samaya* and *svamayi* sound alike. *Samaya* - time: *svamayi* 'permeated by Self.'

the state where everything is seen as the Self alone, where nothing whatsoever can exist beside the Self.

QUESTION : *You say there is rest (sthit) in movement (gati), and movement in rest. What does this mean?*

SRI MA: When the *seed* becomes united with the earth, when the two have mingled, at that moment there is rest; but the process of germination sets in immediately, and this surely implies movement. To move means, not to remain in one place.

Nevertheless, it was in one and the same place - why was? - it still is! Each stage in the growth of a tree represents a point of rest, yet is also a passing one. Again, the leaves grow and then fall off, which marks a change of condition; it does and it does not, for after all it belongs to one tree. The tree potentially contains the fruit: this is why it will yield it - 'will' means 'does'.

(No simile is ever perfect in all respects).

Then again SRI MA said:

In reality, there is nothing but the One Moment all along. Just as one single tree contains numberless trees, innumerable leaves, infinite movement and untold static states, so does one moment contain an infinite number of moments, and within all these countless moments lies the One Single Moment. Look, there is motion as well as rest in that Supreme Moment.

Why then should the revelation of the Moment be spoken of?

Because, misled by your perception of differences, you think of yourself and of each and every creature or object in the world as being apart from one another. This is why, for you, separateness exists. The sense of separateness in which you are caught, that is to say, the moment of your birth, has determined your nature, your desires and their fulfilment, your development, your spiritual search - everything. Consequently, the moment of your birth is unique, the moment of your mother's birth is also unique, and so is that of your father's and the nature and temperament of each of the three is unique.

In accordance with your own particular line of approach, each one of you must seize the time, the moment that will reveal to you the eternal relationship, by which, you are united to the Infinite, - this is the revelation of *Mahayoga*, Supreme Union.

Supreme Union signifies that the whole universe is within you, and you are in it; and further, there will be no occasion to speak of a universe. Whether you say it exists or does not exist, or that it can neither be said to exist or not to exist, or even beyond that - as you please. What matters is that He should stand revealed, be it in whatever form.

At that 'Moment', at that point of time - when it is found - you will know your Self. To know your Self implies the revelation (at that very same instant) of what your father and mother in reality are, and not only your father and mother, but the entire universe. It is that Moment which links up the whole of creation. For to know yourself does not mean to know your body only; it signifies the full revelation of That which eternally IS - the Supreme Father, Mother, Beloved, Lord and Master - the Self. At the moment of your birth, you did not know that you came into being. But when you have caught the Supreme Moment, you suddenly come to know - Who you really are. At that instant, when you have found your Self, the whole universe will have become yours. Just as by receiving one seed, you have potentially received an infinite number of trees, so must you capture the One Supreme Moment, the realization of which will leave nothing unrealized.

The sense of want, of emptiness (*abhava*), and one's true being (*svabhava*), are in exactly the same place - in fact, they are THAT, and THAT alone. What is this 'sense of want', and what 'true being' ?

He, nothing but He.

For the simple reason that there is one single seed, which is the tree as well as the seed and all its various processes of transformation - truly the One alone.

You attempt to appease want by want; hence want does not disappear, and neither does the sense of want. When man awakens to the acute consciousness of this sense of want, then only does spiritual inquiry become genuine. You must bear in mind that when the sense of want becomes the sense of the want of Self-knowledge, then only the real Quest begins. Whether you call it the One, the Two, or the Infinite, whatever anyone may say, everything is all right.

TWENTY

Benares, October 26th, 1948

Today, SRI MA left for Jhusi. At the Benares railway station a conversation. took place:

QUESTION: *I have heard it said that a yogi can, by the power of his yoga, lengthen a man's life to the extent of one or two months at most. The average yogi's power cannot achieve more in this respect.*

SRI MA: Yes, at a particular stage this is so. But the fact that human life has been lengthened, even by a month or two, only shows that a further increase might but be a question of greater *yogic* power.

One method of increasing the duration of one man's life is to take a period from another's. Then, there is. also a method by which the prolongation of a man's span of life can be effected without deducting the period from someone else's. *Yogis* who are able to use their powers in this way do exist. But where Creative Power is unobstructed - this is quite a different matter.

QUESTION: *Does it then follow that the physical body can be immortalised?*

INQUIRER: *Without a doubt; if He is conceived as being omniscient and omnipotent, how can anything be impossible for Him? Nevertheless, not a single example of the immortalization of a physical body is to be found in the Shastras.*

Hanuman and some others are said to be immortal, but we are told they also have to change their bodies from time to time with the help of their yogic powers.

SRI MA : In the Supreme State everything is possible, as well as impossible. To say "this or that has never happened", is merely to speak from the worldly point of view of the individual. If the body has to be retained in one and the same condition, this too can be and is being done. Consider the matter now from another standpoint: bodies give rise to bodies, trees to trees, and so forth. In a certain state there is being and non-being. Where all that has just been discussed exists, is manifested, and will continue to be manifested, there - what is, and what is not? Besides, when you say that no example can be found in the *shastras*, the reason for this is, that where Truth stands revealed - to the extent at least to which it is revealed - those things are known by direct perception.

QUESTION: *I have heard you say that one individual may have many bodies. If this be so, a man may simultaneously practise yoga with one body and experience the pleasures and pains of life with another. For a yogi this may be practicable; but how can this happen in the case of an ordinary person, who is still in ignorance?*

SRI MA: Yes, quite so. This can be done by means of *yogic* powers; for the ordinary person it seems impossible.

Look! When you see the bud of a flower, you perceive the bud only; whereas actually the full-blown flower, the fruit, the seed, and the whole plant, are contained in that little bud. Manifestation is universal and unlimited, but your vision of it is partial, from one angle, dependent upon what, at a certain time, appears before your eyes. Look with an all-round, comprehensive vision and try to find out who a particular *yogi*, a particular individual, in reality is!

Your body was first a child's body, then became a young man's, and later will grow aged. Childhood, youth, and old age, are contained within you. If it were otherwise, from where could they arise? You hear people say that as a child your face was such and such. This proves that your face as a child is present at this moment as well ; otherwise, how could it be thus described? In a similar manner, your body in every one of its phases is always present : as it was in the past, is now, and will be in future. This is so where past, present and future are experienced as being ever-present.

Time devours ceaselessly. No sooner is childhood over than youth takes its place; the one swallows up the other. This cannot be grasped by ordinary perception. Change is observed only to a very slight degree. Actually appearance, continuance, and disappearance occur simultaneously in one Place. Every-thing is infinite - infinity and finiteness are indeed the same. In a garland the thread is one, but there are gaps between the flowers. It is the gaps that cause want and sorrow. To fill them is to be free from want.

TWENTY-ONE

Benares, March 21st. 1949.

Someone declared that *Vedanta* and *bhakti* were two entirely different doctrines or lines of approach.

SRI MA: Where doctrines are, there "all-inclusiveness" cannot be. (*A play upon words: *Vada* means doctrine in Sanskrit. The Bengali word 'bada', means exclusion. The letters 'V' and 'b' sound alike in Bengali).)

What is emphasised from one point of view will be rejected from another. But where is the state in which *bhedabheda*, difference and non-difference, have ceased to exist? Some maintain that the conception of *Radha-Krishna* is completely *vedantic*, for *Krishna* cannot be without *Radha*; nor *Radha* without *Krishna* - they are two in one and one in two.

INQUIRER: *It is said that God's Eternal Lila is based on duality.*

SRI MA: The assumption of duality is also within Oneness; some advocate this opinion.

QUESTION : *What is the actual significance of the terms dharma, lila, parikara?*

SRI MA: They say that even in the midst of this *Lila*, Oneness remains unimpaired. What is enjoyed in *Lila* is *rasa*, which is unique; and in *Vedanta* too, duality is out of the question. Although duality appears to manifest itself before the eyes of the *bhakta*, nevertheless, here also there is nothing but oneness. If one does not view things through the spectacles of the *bhakta*, this cannot be grasped. Seen from his angle of vision, it appears thus.

Suppose when giving initiation the *Guru* instructs the disciple to practise the formal worship of *Radha-Krishna*, and to regard himself as the servant, and *Radha-Krishna* as his Master. By regularly engaging in worship and service of this kind, the following development may take place:

First of all one feels that the room in which the worship is being performed has to be consecrated to the Deity, and He has to be worshipped with lights, incense, etc. (*arati*). As one continues day after day to carry out these acts of worship, one begins to question : "Is my Lord as small as this little image? Does He dwell only in my shrine-room and nowhere else ?" By performing His service one gradually comes to feel that all is His. This feeling grips one and spreads like an infectious disease. Someone once said: "Do not venture near Anandamayi Ma, there are small-pox germs around her." (Laughter.) Single-minded devotion engenders deep thought, which expresses itself in action. The Lord's Light descends on the devotee, His Power awakens in him and, as a result, profound inner inquiry blossoms forth. Then follows a stage, where it happens that one may have a vision of the Beloved - for instance, while scrubbing the vessels used for *puja*, or one may lie asleep and see Him standing near one's bed. Look, at first one believed the Lord to be present in one's prayer-room, but by and by one is able to perceive Him here and there. At a further stage, not anymore in particular places, but wherever one turns one's eyes : He is seen sitting in trees, standing in water; He is perceived within animals and birds. However, even here one's vision of Him is not uninterrupted.

Then comes a time when the Beloved does not leave one anymore; wherever one may go, He is ever by one's side and His Presence constantly felt.

What, now, is the next stage like? The form, variety, appearance of the tree - all is the Lord. At an earlier stage one perceived Him within all objects; but now He is not seen *within* the objects anymore, for there is nothing but He alone. Trees, flowers, the water and the land - everything is the Beloved, and only He. Every form, every mode of being, every expression - whatever exists is He, there is none beside Him. It may occur that a *sadhaka* continues in this state for the rest of his life.

If everything is the Lord and nothing but He, then one's body must also be He - the One Existence. In this state, when one is deeply absorbed in *dhyana*, no physical activity - be it the performance of ritual or acts of service - is possible. For He alone IS. One no longer exists apart from Him.

What would the *Vedantists* say?

"There is only one *Brahman* without a second."

Nevertheless, for some who have attained to this condition, the relationship between the Lord and His servant remains and is felt thus "He is the Whole and I am part of Him, and yet there is only the One Self (*Ek Atma*)." If the *Brahman* is described as the splendour of *Krishna's* body - why should one object? Verily, everything is identical, undivided. To realize this means to be immersed completely into the Ocean of Oneness.

After this has been accomplished, one can again do *paja* and service, for the relationship between Master and servant persists. *Mahabir* said "He and I are one; yet He is the Whole and I am part of Him ; He is the Master, I am His servant." One experiences Wholeness as well as the status of the Lord's servant. If, after the One Self has been realized, the relationship of a servant to his Master still continues, why should anyone object? At first this was the path to one's Goal. After Realization it is He, the One, who serves. This is real service - call it *Mukti*, call it *Parashakti*, call it what you will.

The spiritual Teacher gives instruction. For Him doing or not doing *japa* is exactly the same. It does not involve a contradiction.

Calling Him 'World teacher', how one still find fault with Him?

QUESTION: *After having realized the Oneness of all, due to what need or imperfection does it become necessary again to worship a particular deity?*

SRI MA: In that state there is no need or imperfection.

INQUIRER: *But then it cannot be service or worship, as we understand them!*

SRI MA: You may call it anything.

The point is this: *Sukadeva* was a liberated Being; why then did he relate the *Srimad Bhagavata*?

What reply have you to this? The need or imperfection that prompted one to serve and worship at the initial stage has no place here.

The *Vedantists* discard one thing after another, saying '*neti, neti*' ('not this, not this'). Indeed, you see a beautiful flower, and a few days later it has been reduced to dust; therefore what they say is perfectly true. What is subject to change will most certainly change. On the other hand, expressed in the terms of those who believe in the reality of name and form, one may say: "All names are Thy Name, all forms Thy. Form." Here name and form are also real. Again, it may be argued: "What is bound by change is the world. By persevering in the practice of discrimination, one finally becomes established in the One Reality."

When there is only the One Ocean - nothing but water - one cannot see oneself as separate from the All.

This is full immersion.

Nevertheless, if outwardly or inwardly, even so much as a hair has remained dry, it signifies that complete immersion has not yet occurred. When a seed has been fried it can never sprout again. Just so, after realizing Oneness, you may do anything - it no longer contains the seed of *karma*. Where this is not present, there, all form and variety are but THAT. Look, by intense devotion as well as by *Vedantic* discrimination one has arrived at the One Essence. Does then 'to merge into IT' mean to become stone-like? Not so, indeed!

For form, variety, manifestation, are nothing but THAT.

The characteristic features of each person's particular path will of course be preserved; yet, what is attained is the One, in which no doubt, no uncertainty can survive. In fact, what is there to be attained? We *are* THAT - eternal Truth. Because we imagine that it has to be experienced, realized, it remains apart from us. On some levels this point of view is valid, but on others it is not. The Eternal ever IS. What is styled 'the veil of ignorance' signifies continual motion. Motion means change, incessant transformation. Yet again, no change takes place where there is non-action in action. For such a one duality does not exist; who then eats, and what can he eat? In this state, how can there be theories or disputes?

If someone argues that, since a certain person speaks, he cannot have attained to this State, - what does he speak and to whom?

Who is the one to whom he speaks?

This is so when full Realization has come about.

When trying to explain this to others, one comes to see that they have not understood it.

Does realizing that someone has not understood, imply that one has oneself reverted to ignorance?

One has realised both: being able to understand and being unable to understand. He who is limited by the point of view of the world is in bondage. But where the vision of THAT is, there, the knowledge of ignorance and the knowledge of Knowledge stand revealed in their fullness. There, the question of viewing knowledge and ignorance separately can simply not arise. Actions such as eating, and so forth, has now become action *in* inaction. Whether one still performs ceremonies or not, what difference does it make? Knowing and not-knowing in their entirety are now contained within oneself. But to understand this state is difficult indeed It is easy to comprehend a particular line of approach or level. But here, there is no question of attainment or non-attainment, and therefore, even non-attainment is no shortcoming either.

However, if the very slightest attachment has survived, it signifies that this Sublime State has not yet been reached.

By selling imitation goods people may become rich.

Why are imitation goods purchased at all? Because they resemble the genuine ones; this is the wonder of it!

But by using them the deception will come to light, and then one will again search for the genuine article.

Having realized the One Self, and that there is nothing outside of It, one knows that the image one has worshipped is THAT in a particular form.

Having found Reality, one perceives it in this particular guise:

the deity I adored is none other than the One Self,
the *Brahman* - there is no second.

Thus, the One is the Lord I worshipped.

When one has dived into the depth of the sea, water is known to be He in one form. The aspirant who advances along the path of *bhakti* will, when he has attained to the vision of his Master, become a true servant. The methods of 'not this, not this' and 'this is Thou, this is Thou' lead to the One Goal.

By proceeding in one direction It is reached, and by taking the other direction, one also arrives at the very same Goal.

Those who follow the path of surrender to *Shakti*, the Divine Energy, and those who worship the image of *Siva*, both must finally attain to the one *Shakti*, the one *Siva*.

Those who advance along the line of *Vedanta* will find that ice is water, that there is no form, but only the formless ; whereas the *bhakta* comes to realize that his Beloved is but the *Brahman* - everyone has his own method of approach.

Equality, Oneness must come and become permanent state. Having achieved it, if someone says : "I am renouncing liberation", or "I am giving up the worship of my Ista" - even though he may give it up, nothing will be lost; for in this condition there is neither renouncing nor retaining.

It may be asked, why there cannot be one and the same path for all?

Because He reveals Himself in infinite ways and forms - verily, the One is all of them.

In that State there is no 'why'.

Quarrels and disputes exist merely on the way.

With whom is one to quarrel? Only while still on the way is it possible to have disputes and differences of opinion.

TWENTY TWO

QUESTION: *Are there as many names of God as there are creeds, or is there in reality only one creed and one Name?*

SRI MA: What is your own opinion, *Pitaji*?

Someone else: *There are many creeds and many paths, but as a matter of fact, all roads lead to one and the same goal.*

SRI MA: Discussion and controversy belong to the path, but actually everyone is in his own home. The same path is not for everyone. Brothers of the same family will each have their different inclinations and likings. *Vedanta* may appeal to some, *Vaishnava* to others, and the cult of *Shakti* to yet others. Therefore it cannot be said that there is only one path. In fact, seekers after Truth are moulded each in a unique way, different from others as well as from one another; but they all will have to pass through the gate of Truth.

QUESTION: *Then, are the creeds really different from one another?*

SRI MA : You can *see* for yourself that one *Guru* has any number of disciples. Are you trying to convert every one of them to the same creed? In spite of this, how many sects have not been founded, just as people have abandoned their own. What you said, *Pitaji* is very true indeed - but where?

In that, which emerges when everything is given up.

What then emerges? He Himself - THAT.

INQUIRER: *My opinion is a borrowed one, derived from what I have heard various people say.*

SRI MA: Why have you adopted this particular point of view? This body presents the matter from the standpoint of the *is* and *Munis*, from the line of approach that they have indicated.

Countless opinions and schools of thought exist in the world, but these will not serve the purpose of a seeker. The method that the *Guru* prescribes for him is the one to be adopted: by following that current he will be carried towards the Ocean.

QUESTION: *Ultimately, when the process of time comes to an end, will all have to merge in that Ocean? But how can it be that those whose aims are so entirely different, as for instance the *Vaishnavas* with their "salokya", "samzpya" etc. and the *Vedantists* with their 'Self-poised state', should end up by merging in the one Ocean?*

From the AUDIENCE: *Puffed rice and 'murmura' are names for one and the same thing!*

SRI MA: If puffed rice and *murmura* are the same, why should they be called by two different names? There must be some element of variation in the two - although essentially both are just rice.

The sense of 'mine' and 'thine' has remained.

What do you say, *Pitaji*? (Laughter). When discussing creeds and paths, remember: it is only while on the path that one speaks of paths.

INQUIRER: *When one has reached beyond the level where every creed represents a different line of approach, there is no more talk and controversy.*

SRI MA : In 'there is - not', 'there is' is also implied - for without it, how could the 'is not' have arisen at all? People claim to belong to a particular sect. But where there is no question of any doctrine, nor of controversy, there is He at the root - He who is present in all these innumerable forms.

Whether you speak of the many or of the One, it is a matter of outlook. One seed is sown, and a tree grows with countless flowers and leaves, displaying infinite ways of becoming and numberless stages of rest; yet essentially it is one.

Every creed, every school of thought has its particular method of approach. So long as you advance along one special path, there is, for that period, only one path for you. Very well, let us leave this point now.

You asked, did you not, *Pitaji*, how those who aim at entirely different goals, can ultimately, - when the process of time comes to an end merge in the one Ocean? When you speak of an 'end', this is within the limits of time; yet where time is, there is also something beyond it. But where the question of 'end' or 'time' can no more arise, There, all will be united.

QUESTION : *So long as one speaks and discusses, does it mean that some sort of imperfection still persists?*

SRI MA: Yes; he who is still within the domain of speech, that is to say, worldly talk on worldly matters, is in the boundary' of time. But 'There', the question of speaking does not arise. This is why the aforesaid does not apply to a real World-teacher. What a World-teacher says is not like the speech of this world.

QUESTION: *Please explain the nature of worldly and divine happiness.*

SRI MA : Divine Happiness - that which you call *parama sukhadam* - is pure, unalloyed bliss, happiness in its own right.

QUESTION : *But surely, there is happiness in the world too*

SRI MA: Then why do you make this remark?

QUESTION : *Why do people run after material happiness?*

SRI MA : You know this happiness from experience, and hence your question. But God is gracious and makes you see that this so-called happiness is not happiness. He kindles discontent and anguish in you, which is due to the want of communion with the Divine. Worldly happiness is derived from the countless manifestations of God. People talk and marvel about those who renounce the world, but in actual fact? it is you yourself Who have renounced everything.

What is this 'everything'?

God!

Leaving Him aside, everyone is literally practising supreme renunciation. (Laughter). It is only natural that the sense of want should awaken. Even in the midst of comforts and pleasures, one feels homesick in a foreign land. There is distress even in happiness, one's possessions are not really one's own - this is what He causes man to feel. It is said, is it not, that on being hit one recovers one's senses, one learns by receiving blows.

When He manifests Himself as worldly happiness, one does not feel contented, for along with it He appears as the sense of want.

But divine happiness, even the tiniest particle of a grain of it, never leaves one again; and when one attains to the Essence of Things and finds one's Self - this is Supreme Happiness.

When it is found, nothing else remains to be found; the sense of want will not awaken anymore, and the heart's torment be stilled for ever. Do not be satisfied with fragmentary happiness, which is invariably interrupted by shocks and blows of fate; but become complete, and having attained to perfection, be YOURSELF.



TWENTY THREE

QUESTION : *Why does one not remember one's former lives?*

SRI MA: Through ignorance; there is no knowledge, due to the veil that hides it.

QUESTION : *But why should there be a veil? After the body dies, the mind continues; for one's samskaras live on. Since these samskaras persist, and also because one is able to remember what has happened today and yesterday, why should the events of one's past lives be forgotten ?*

SRI MA: Having entered the kingdom of forgetting, everything is forgotten; this world is the abode of non-remembrance.

QUESTION: *Why should so very much be forgotten? A small portion might at least be remembered!*

SRI MA : You say, do you not, that the Lord Buddha talked about the events of five hundred of his previous lives. Can you recall everything that you experienced in your present birth, from your childhood until now? You die at every instant without being aware of it. At present, you are neither an infant, nor a child, nor a youth. No sooner is a baby born than he starts of his own accord to drink his mother's milk, and when he has drunk, he feels happy and satisfied; by this he has already given full testimony of former births.

Now also, whenever your hunger has been appeased, you experience a similar sense of well-being and contentment as you did in your early childhood, although you do not recollect what you felt at that time.

QUESTION: *How is it that samskaras persist?*

SRI MA : Through the force of sustained practice (*abhyasa yoga*). Direct your efforts towards God-realization, and His remembrance will come to you automatically at the moment of death. The individual is that which is bound, and the world perpetual motion. Whatever appears in this world of creatures is the manifestation of the One.

The fact that you die at every moment, in other words, that *Brahma; Visnu*, and Siva are ever at work, becomes evident when the body expires.

So long as you wander about in the world of forgetting, you must of necessity forget.

Now what is a *samskara*? Take for instance the *samskara* of a temple ; that is to say, what had already existed becomes revealed. Then again, whatever you do, consciously or unconsciously, leaves an impression on your mind, whether you are aware of it or not.

This is styled *samskara*.

He who has the capacity to see, will be able to discern these imprints or *samskaras* pertain to previous births. A yogi can perceive the impressions of a great

number of past lives. One may see the events of thousands of one's former births, but when the realization has come of what creation with its ascending and descending currents in reality is, what will he see then?

He will see, and also not see: and neither will he not see, nor see.

Where everything that exists is revealed in its fullness - this is called Self-revelation, THAT Itself, the Self-luminous One - call it what you will.

All that exists anywhere in the world, be it trees and plants, insects, reptiles, or any other living thing - their birth is indeed your birth, and their death your death.

On the level where everything is contained within you and you are present in everything, there is only the One, and He alone.

Suppose you are able to visualise a few of your previous lives: your vision is limited by number. If you recollect the history of your former births, it means that you know only the course of your own individual lives, in their own particular times and places. But you are not aware of your various movements and static states in the whole universe. You see 'the many'; how will you go beyond this multiplicity? By finding your Self in the many.

Who is that Self?

HE, and none but He.

So long as He, the Self, has not been revealed, you are imprisoned within the boundary; boundary means ignorance, and therefore there is forgetting.

QUESTION: *Are you suggesting that we must reach the state of Divinity (Isvarakoti)?*

SRI MA: The question of reaching that state does not arise at all so long as the veil of ignorance persists.

Whether what has been said refers to *Isvarakoti* or *Sadhakakoti*, you yourself must ascertain!

QUESTION: *Surely, one who has become established in the Self will naturally forget the world?*

SRI MA: In the kingdom of forgetting one forgets. So long as you are identified with the body (*deho*), it is your very nature to call out: 'give, give!' (*'deo, deo!'*).

You say 'give!' because you are in want.

Where want exists, there must needs be error and ignorance; and where error and ignorance abide, there will most certainly be forgetting.

When in the mid of all this you practise *sadhana* in order to realize your Self, or rather, when by God's Grace *sadhana* comes about, - for to be able to engage in *sadhana* is itself the Grace of God - then, after having worked through layers and layers of ignorance, you discover: "I am in fact the whole".

I am - this is why there are trees and plants, and everything that exists, however manifold.

Every single form is in fact "I".

Where I am conscious of separateness, my natural expression is to want.

Even in this condition, I am infinite.

In the very form of the human body lie moods of endless variety and numberless modes of expression. Indeed, all existing forms are infinite, and I am likewise infinite.

All forms and distinctive marks I see to be myself; eternally, therefore, I exist. So then I have discovered this, and that I am of many forms - infinite forms indeed, with infinite modes of appearance. They exist within me in ways of infinite diversity, and yet I myself am all of these. Within me exist the separate modes of display - in endless variation none are excluded. When the like is directly perceived and all manifold aspects are recognized as a whole, then the One will certainly be revealed. How can the One be distinct from the infinite multiplicity? The many exist in the One and the One in the many.

This is why, when you can visualise five hundred of your former births, you are still limited by number; for there is so very much more than this!

When you have discovered yourself in all the untold forms, you realize that the Lord is present in everyone of them.

When the essential nature of infinity and finiteness becomes fully revealed, you see that there is finiteness in infinity and infinity in the finite. Now you are in a position to resolve the polarity of *Sakara* (God-with-form), and *Nirakara* (God-without-form).

Look, if there - were no veil of ignorance for the individual, how could God's *Lila* be carried on? When acting a part one must forget oneself; the *Lila* could not proceed without the covering veil of ignorance.

Consequently it is but natural that the veil should be there. So, the world is the perception by the senses of what is projected, *Srsti-drsti*.

To be a separate individual means to be bound, and that which binds is the veil of ignorance : here is the clue to the forgetting about which you asked.

When you speak of previous births you intuitively feel: "Was there ever a time when I was not?"

It is you who speak in terms of 'before' and 'after', since you are confined within the realm of time. But really there is no question of 'in time' and 'out of time'; nor of day and night, 'before' and 'after'. So long as one remains enslaved by time, there will be birth and death. Actually, there is no such thing as rebirth. Still, at some stage the memory of previous lives will most certainly occur, but what is the significance of 'before' and 'after', since I exist throughout eternity?

QUESTION: *If someone advances along the path of advaita, will he acquire vibhutis (supernormal powers)?*

SRI MA: If you speak of a *sadhaka* who aspires to the state of unqualified Oneness (*advaita sthiti*), then, even if supernormal powers come to him, he will not accept them.

Whereas the aspirant who worships God with form and attributes, will accept whatever psychic or super-psychic powers are granted to him, regarding them as manifestations of the One.

Such powers are bound to be developed in the course of *sadhana*, since they represent the fruit of one's efforts.

The word 'vibhuti' signifies the various manifestations of the All-Pervading (Vibhu). For this reason it is only natural and certain that vibhutis should come. The aspirant must however take care not to be possessed by these powers, because his progress would then be arrested at that stage.

The seeker following the path of *advaita* will not accept duality.

On the other hand, one who contemplates God-with-form will not accept non-duality, yet, in the course of his practice will arrive at the understanding that the One Supreme Form is revealed in all forms.

What is termed *Nirguna*, the Attributeless, must also become fully revealed. Thus the resolution of the apparent discrepancy between *Sakara* and *Nirakara* must come.

When, on attaining to a certain state, multiplicity disappears, this must not be mistaken for Self-realization. To those who advance by the method of *advaita*, the realization of the One Self must come through *viveka* and *vairgya*.

When all differences have been burnt up and everything has merged into the One, this marks a state of achievement that some may call *advaita sthiti* (the state of unqualified Oneness).

The ever-changing world, with its varying movements and states of rest, and all diversity, have completely vanished; only the One remains. Here the 'many' are simply non-existent; there is only One Supreme Reality (*Brahman*), One Self (*Atman*). This is styled the state of *advaita*.

Expressed from a different point of view, all is Pure Consciousness (*cinmayi*) and nothing but that: *nama, dhama* - everything; form, diversity, appearance are actually Consciousness and in fact non-material (*aprakrta*).

In that state there are no 'others', only He alone exists as the One Supreme Form. Diversity, as perceived from the worldly point of view, has no place here. The word '*vibhuti*' consists of '*vibhu*' (He alone as the One Form), and '*ti*', which stands for '*Tini*' (He), and signifies that the Almighty reveals Himself in the many as the One Supreme Form -just as there is ice in water and water in ice.

If there were no water, out of what could ice have formed?

If it did not lie in the nature of water to become solid under certain conditions, how could ice come into being? In other words; all is in Him and He in all.

This is expressed by '*Sarvang khalvidam Brahman*' (all this is *Brahman*). When the seeker realizes himself as the eternal servant, this is a state of non-duality. 'Eternal servant' denotes that there is nothing transient in this relationship. THAT manifests as forms and modes of being.

If someone who aspires at the Formless realizes Him as the One-without-a second, but fails to realize Him in the field of His Divine Play, his realization is not complete, for he has not resolved the problem of duality.

Different methods of approach have been described here. But Realization must *be* all-comprehensive, all-embracing, and one must recognise one's Self in everything.

The tree yields a shoot, and out of this shoot grows a tree. A spreading tree is potentially contained in the small shoot. But as one gets new shoots from this tree, It has again come back to itself. (No simile is perfect; one has to choose those aspects of it which are applicable.)

That the One is in all, and that all abide in the One, have to be revealed simultaneously.

It is and it is not, yet neither is it not, nor is it, - how can this be?

When looking at a seed one sees only the seed, but not the plant, or anything else; but when the tree has developed, it bears leaves, flowers, fruit, there is then an endless variety of growth. In the seed as such nothing else exists ; therefore one may say 'it is not'. Yet again, when it is a tree, everything exists. To say 'what does not exist now, did not exist in the past' is also correct. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that it does not exist, for what has once appeared, is.

Then also, it is not, because it was not.

How can all this be possible?

THAT manifests in an infinite diversity of ways and also as one integral Whole. Where is the language to express all this?

It is said that there is Being, there is Non-being, and yet neither Being nor Non-being.

The same inexpressible Truth is experienced in two ways: as Self-luminous Silence, or as the Eternal Play of the One.

He Himself playing all the parts. In the aforesaid a state has been described where everything is burnt and transformed into the One, so that no trace of it can be found in spite of all searching. To say that everything has been transformed into the One, means that here an element of obscurity has still remained ; for this, surely, is not Self-realization - the Kingdom of Pure Consciousness has not yet come. There is no knowing when one may emerge from this 'state of obscurity'.

When the kingdom of Pure Consciousness has been attained, Form is revealed as the Essence Itself. What was sorrow from the worldly point of view is now *v iraha*, separation from THAT, in other words, the agony of existing in a particular form. This 'separation is

without end, and manifests in ever new ways. By a mere stroke of God's imagination this vast universe comes into being. What actually is this creation? He Himself, the One.

Why then are there distinctions, why should there be 'others'?

There are no 'others'. The ocean is contained in the drop.

How can this be?

When the One reveals Himself as a form (*vigraha*) - say for instance, as Radha- Krishna - this *vigraha* exists eternally.

Where? In *Vrindavana*.

For him, whose knots of the heart have been undone, only *Vrindavana* exists, and nothing else. What you have thus realized as *Lila* is infinite ; and how will this infinity be known? By discarding the world and all that belongs to it? Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said; "The Great Mother dances." Who is a *Vaishnava*? One who sees *Vishnu* every-where. The idea that the world has a boundary is delusive; consequently, the conception of many different powers is also an illusion. It is you who have created the distinction between the natural and the supernatural; as a matter of fact all and every-thing is but His *Lila*; In the All He has to be found. The supernatural is not apart from the rest. If one remains confined within the boundary, one's heart cannot become *Vrindavana*.

When Realization has occurred, there is nothing but *Vrindavana*, nothing but *va*, complete non-duality. Then only can it be said that the entire universe is His Divine Play.

Prakrti, which prompts one to distinguish between 'this' and 'that', is also His.

In the state of Pure Being, the distinction between the natural and super-natural ceases to exist. When Consciousness is being revealed in its undivided Oneness, some find themselves in a pure Self-conscious Silence (*advaita*), while It presents itself to others as His Divine Play. He is Form (*vigraha*), and at the same time He is not. The word *samagra* (whole, complete) denotes that *sama* (equality) comes first and foremost (*agra*). If it is not realized that equality comes first of all, it means that one will still observe from the viewpoint of the world, which is not *advaita*.

Whereas, when *advaita* has been attained, this signifies the recovery of one's original state. In worldly life one had been drowned in sorrow and affliction - drowned means obscured (by the veil) - all this has now been left behind and there is only THAT. His Presence has revealed itself in everything; one realizes that it is He alone who appears as being and also as becoming. Who is the *pratibimba* (reflection) of Reality?

Also He alone.

In this condition - who can cause one pain or trouble? Your whole Being is now in a state of complete integration. The grief that made you miserable today has become the separation from the One. Worldly sorrow comes through the sense of want, but to pine for God is man's true nature.

What are the experiences of a seeker who contemplates God with form and attributes? At first he is engrossed solely in the particular deity (*murti*) he adores. Then, as he progresses,

he begins to question: "Is my Beloved as small as that? No, indeed He dwells in *Rama, Krishna, Siva, Durga*, and in all other deities. My Lord has many faces." At a later stage he comes to realize that his Beloved abides in every creature, and every creature in Him. On this pilgrimage there are many lines of approach, and along' each of them there are many states and stages. The development along one particular line is described in the following: To begin with, one is convinced that none can be likened to one's own chosen deity. If this attitude does not prevail at the start, deep devotion cannot be developed. However, by and by, as one's faith and adoration grow, one comes to feel that one's Beloved is no other than the One. One's intense love and veneration will not allow one any longer to hold a petty conception of Him.

The *sadhaka's* humility and devotion increase; at last he realizes that ultimately the One is in everything and everything in Him. In the One he has now rediscovered the form of his own Beloved. From the seed the tree has grown, and the tree has again yielded the same kind of seed.

"Devo bhutva devam yajet". ("Only by becoming identified with the Lord, can one worship Him.")

If, after Self-realization, after one's essential Being has revealed Itself, one still performs the worship of one's particular deity, it means engaging in one's own worship. This is *Lila*.

QUESTION: *Whose Lila?*

SRI MA: There is only God's *Lila*. Whose could it possibly be?

TWENTY-FOUR

Benares, March 20th, 1949.

QUESTION: *If God is not different from the world, why should so much stress be laid on maintaining it ?*

SRI MA : *No stress at all is laid on this; whether the world exists or not, the question does not even arise.*

INQUIRER : *Some hold the opinion that the vision of the Munis and is who attained to the Brahman was incomplete, because they lost the world. They further contend that the world will remain as it is in name and form. This seems as impossible as for a stone cup to be described as golden.*

SRI MA : Those who hold these opinions have not attained to Oneness. They have kept themselves aloof from the world and yet speak of saving it. Although they do not know what the existing world is actually like, they want to establish a new kingdom. By realizing that the whole universe is THAT, and nothing but THAT, it is transformed; this much may be said.

To declare that the world ever remains what it is now, means that the world as such is still perceived. Moreover, what have I gained or lost by discussing the world? There is no question of denying the existence of the world by declaring that it is alien from God; and there is no question either of whether it exists or not.

It is said that He is in diversity as well as in oneness - just like water and ice. Where water is called ice, that is to say, where space and form appear, there form is also He. Why do you not grasp this?

Vapour as vapour will never become water as such.

INQUIRER: *So far as the theory of evolution holds good, there is diversity as well as identity.*

Someone else: *Worldly knowledge is of the many, and the Knowledge of Reality (Brahmajnam) is of Oneness; how can both exist together in the same place ?*

INQUIRER: *The oneness of Reality is not in contradiction to multiplicity. Generally speaking one can distinguish four planes:*

(1) The world alone appears, in other words, diversity; this is the plane of ignorance.

(2) At times the world or the many appear and at other times Oneness, which is Reality; this is the plane of nirvikalpa samadhi in yoga.

(3) The world appears, reposing within the Brahman.

SRI MA: Yet there is still 'appearance!'

INQUIRER: *There is no world! This is how it appears. When light removes darkness, how can darkness be still perceived? The Brahman is everyone's fulfilment and nobody's obstacle. That which is Caitanya (Pure Consciousness) is Itself this and that object. But according to the people mentioned above, there are two: form, as well as Pure Consciousness. However, I should say, what appears as form is nothing but Pure Consciousness.*

SRI MA: Even so, you have to speak of form?

INQUIRER: *Yes, I speak of form, because I see its essence. My son is acting the part of Rama, yet I know that he is my son. If the knowledge of the world does not persist when the Brahman is realised, the possibility of Jivanmukti (which is a fact) cannot be established, for the simple reason that for such a one, contact with the world is impossible.*

For him fire and water are both expressions of the one Brahman; consequently he might swallow fire instead of drinking water.

According to some doctrines, perfection has not been attained so long as 'this' (the world) is perceived. There is a stage beyond it where there is no more duality, and one becomes established on the plane of Oneness. This should be understood to represent the fourth of the four planes previously mentioned. (These planes are different from the seven planes spoken of in yoga.)

I consider the third plane the highest; namely the play of duality rooted in Oneness. In other words, on this plane there is oneness in duality and duality in oneness.

He who is liberated, may nevertheless come out into the world and seem to act like an ordinary man, while his Realisation remains perfectly intact.

'Sarvang kalvidam Brahman' ('All this is Brahman'), and 'neti, neti' ('not this, not this') are not contradictory in the least.

On this plane, the whole and the part exist in the same place; although there is a difference between the two, namely, the whole and the parts : flowers and leaves are different, yet they belong to the same tree. This is why I will not acknowledge the difference of one part from the other, nor of the parts from the whole. Am I wrong when I understand it in this way?

SRI MA : Whatever is said is correct from the standpoint from which it is said. In *dhyana* or *samadhi* there comes a stage where there is no possibility even of perceiving a second besides the One.

There, the behaviour that arises out of duality can-not occur. What is referred to here, is a state in which there is no movement, although there appears to be. How can movement be possible here? When such a person is seen acting, someone may perhaps remark: "He has descended in order to do some particular work." When an M. A. reads the a b c does he thereby lose his status as an M. A.? There is a state, where nothing can possibly appear as a 'second'.

Having dived into the Ganges, one is bound to be wholly drenched.

When established in Pure Being, one does not stray from it anymore. However, before one's status has ripened to perfect maturity, one may have occasional lapses; but what has once been realized will, as it were, draw one back to itself. At this stage there is oscillation between two directions; yet it is a marvellous state, not one of ignorance. The next stage is *bhava*; one enters and leaves it alternately, becoming immersed, and then floating once more on the surface. Going still further, even this state passes, and one becomes absolutely inert like a stone. If one has not arrived at this rock-like inertness, and is still experiencing ecstatic fervour with its ups and downs, - this is not a perfect, although a supernormal state. It is like being alternately in a cool room and going outside into the heat. Then comes Perfection, complete and final immersion. When this has taken place, He who has achieved it, is still seen to move and act as you do, but actually He neither goes anywhere, nor eats, nor does he perceive anything.

INQUIRER: *This sounds like a contradiction in terms he eats, yet does not eat; he goes, yet does not go-how can this be?*

SRI MA : Once immersed, one will have to be stabilised in that condition, where the inner and the outer have fused into one. I eat as you do, go about the same as you do. If one feels that the statement "he eats and yet does not eat" is self-contradictory, then one's 'realization' of the *Brahman* is of a piecemeal variety.

There is no ground for contradiction.

How can Oneness be limited? By limitation it would be broken up. This is why it was said that there is no question of eating or not eating, and so on. However, it is difficult to understand, even in part, whether someone is asleep or in *samadhi* : gold and brass look more or less alike. But when gold has been touched, one is transformed into it.

How can one who lives on the plane of the *Brahman* see petty differences?

Due to your partial vision you perceive incongruity. There is in fact no question of having realized or being in ignorance.

If someone calls himself a 'man of Realization', he thereby assumes a certain position.

What does Self-realization signify? Knowledge, all comprehensive and unlimited in every respect. What you have been, nay, what you are in reality, becomes revealed. From whatever line of approach or attitude of mind anyone may hold any view, everything is right. Just as you say: 'He walks without feet, He sees without eyes.' If limited by any place or qualification, by any form or mode, be it through inclusion or exclusion - the Realization is not full, not complete. What is expressed from any standpoint, is seen from that particular angle, in a particular way; for space and time have remained. This body does not falsify matters, it speaks the exact truth. Everything is correct from the point of view from which it is said.

INQUIRER: *If as you declare, everything is correct, then suppose someone, wishing to have darshana of Visvanatha goes to a Durga temple and says "This is Yisvanatha," is this also correct?*

SRI MA : At a certain level one may rightly say :

"Yes, this is *Visvanatha*", because at that moment, it will be *Visvanatha*. The *Visvanatha* now thought of in his mind will reveal Himself exactly the same as the *Visvanatha* limited by time and space; for everything is contained in everything. But it may also be said that *Vishvanatha* is not in a temple of *Durga*; Truth can be expressed in many ways. All kinds of replies may be given.

INQUIRER: *If whatever anyone says is correct, why then did Sri ankaracarya, who was a man of Realization (Brahmajnani), refute the arguments of his opponents?*

SRI MA: Whenever it is necessary that anything should be done, it will be done without fail. The top of the tree contains its root, because the seeds are everywhere present ; there is no contradiction.

TWENTY FIVE

SRI MA: You want to know whether Grace (*ahetuka krpa*) is without cause or reason?

Certainly; for Grace is by its very nature beyond cause or reason.

When working, one reaps the fruit of one's actions.

If, for instance, you serve your father and he, being pleased with your service, gives you a present, this would be called the fruit of action. One does something and receives something in return. But the eternal relationship that by nature exists between father and son, does surely not depend on any action.

The Supreme Father, Mother and Friend - verily, God is all of these. Consequently, how can there be a cause or reason for His Grace? You are His, and in whatever way He may draw you to Him, it is for the sake of revealing Himself to you. The desire to find Him that awakens in man - who has instilled it into you? Who is it that makes you work for its fulfilment?

Thus you should try to arrive at the understanding that everything originates from Him. Whatever power, whatever skill you possess, - why, even you yourself - from where does everything arise? And does it not all have for purpose the finding of Him, the destroying of the veil of ignorance?

Whatever exists has its origin in Him alone.

So then, you must try to realize yourself.

Are you master even of a single breath? To whatever small degree He makes you feel that you have freedom of action, if you understand that this freedom has to be used to aspire after the realization of Him, it will be for your good.

But if you regard yourself as the doer, and God as being far away, and if, owing to His apparent remoteness, you work for the gratification of your desires, it is wrong action.

You should look upon all things as manifestations of Him.

When you recognize the existence of God, He will reveal Himself to you as compassionate, or gracious, or merciful, in accordance with your attitude towards Him at the time.

Just as, for example, to the humble He becomes the Lord of the Humble.

If you say "He is immutable, yet He also acts" you call Him the doer, when in reality He is action-less.

Since your ego sees itself as the doer, you think of Him as equally performing action.

Of course, He is whatever you take Him to be.

On the other hand, where THAT is just think - who is to become the doer of what action, and upon what is he to act? He walks without feet, He sees without eyes, He hears without ears, and eats without a mouth - in whatever way you may describe Him, so He is.

When a *sadhaka* starts worshipping a *vigraha* of his Beloved, he will in the course of his practice attain to a condition in which the form of his Beloved is beheld, wherever his eyes may fall.

Next he comes to realize : "All other deities are contained in my Beloved."

He sees that everyone's Lord, in fact all things, are contained in his own *Ista*, and that his *Ista* also dwells in all deities, as indeed, in everything.

The *sadhaka* comes to feel: "As my Lord resides within me, so He, who is present within everyone else, is truly the same Lord. In water and on land, in trees, shrubs and creepers - everywhere in the whole universe abides my Beloved. Further, all the various forms and modes of being that we behold, are they not expressions of my Beloved? For there is none save Him.

He is smaller than the smallest, and grater than the greatest."

Actuated by your various inborn tendencies, you each worship a different deity. The true progress in one's spiritual experience depends on the sincerity and intensity of one's aspiration. The measure of a person's spiritual advance will be reflected in the manifestations that are vouchsafed to him of his *Ista*, who will by no means remain inaccessible or separate from His devotee, but let Himself be contacted in an infinite variety of ways.

Conditioned though you be, you will find the All within you and on the other hand, be able to grasp that your Own innate tendencies are also part of this All. What has been said here, represents one point of view.

You cannot dissociate yourself from the Whole.

The multifarious kinds of beasts, birds, men and so forth - what are they all? What are these varieties of shapes, of modes of being, what is the essence within them? What really are these ever-changing forms?

Gradually, slowly, because you are rapt in the contemplation of your Beloved, He becomes revealed to you in every one of them; not even a grain of sand is excluded. You realise that

water, earth, plants, animals, birds, human beings, are nothing but forms of your Beloved. Some experience it in this manner-realization does not come to everyone in the same way. There are infinite possibilities.

Consequently, the specific path along which - for any particular person the Universal will reveal itself in its boundlessness, remains concealed from the average individual.

What you have just heard in the discourse on the *Shrimad Bhagavata* about the universal body of the Lord, which comprises all things - trees, flowers, leaves, hills, mountains, rivers, oceans, and so forth, a time will come, must come, when one actually perceives this all-pervading Universal Form of the One. The variety of His shapes and guises is infinite, uncountable, without end.

"He who is multi-shaped, who constantly creates and destroys these His forms, He is the One whom I adore."

To the degree that you grow in the ever fuller and wider recognition of this truth, you will realise your oneness with each of these numberless forms.

In this immensity there are diverse shapes, diverse modes, manifested in diverse ways, without end, without number - and yet there is end and number. When a *sadhaka* enters this state, he becomes conscious of the perpetual transformation of all forms and moods. He awakens to true understanding, that is to say, he comes to realize that the Supreme Himself manifests as the power of understanding. When the current of one's thinking that was directed towards worldly matters, is reversed and turned inwards, the One Himself becomes revealed as the 'secret skill': Look at the ever-changing world, where what exists at one moment is non-existent the next, where being is continually entering into non-being - who then is this non-being? Even the non-existent exists.

In this connection it must be said that, if one wants to find Truth, everything will have to be realized as it is in its own place, without choosing one thing rather than another. It is a Kingdom without end, in which even, what is discerned as non-existence is equally an expression of the One.

In *Cinmayi*, the purely spiritual world, all forms - whatever they be - are ever eternal. Therefore, simultaneously and in the same place, there is non-existence as well as existence, and also neither non-existence, nor existence - and more of the kind if you can proceed further!

Very well, just as ice is nothing but water, so the Beloved is without form, without quality, and the question of manifestation does not arise.

When this is realized, one has realized one's Self.

For, to find the Beloved is to find my Self to discover that God is my very own, wholly identical with myself, my innermost Self, the Self of my Self.

Then, according to the exigency of time and circumstance, various possibilities may take effect; as for example, the revelation of *mantras* and even of the entire *Vedas* by the ancient *Risis*, who were seers of *mantras*. All this will occur in consonance with the individual karma and inner disposition of the person concerned.

When a *sadhaka* realizes what form and formlessness essentially are, it is indeed a consummate Realization.

He comes to know what *bhava* is, the inner relation of form to the *Sabda Brahman*, numerous types of language - endless in variety - and he also realizes language as *Sabda Brahman*. Sounds, numberless in kind, manifest themselves before him, each in its own characteristic visual shape; this is so where all forms become visible. All the same, form is really void; one sees that freedom from form means the realization that form itself is the void. In this way the world reveals itself as void, before merging into the Great Void (*Mahasunya*). The void that is perceived within the world is a part of *prakrti*, and therefore still form. From this void one will have to proceed to the Great Void.

It is the perception of the world, based upon the identification of yourself with body and mind, that has all along been the source of your bondage.

A time will come, when this kind of perception will give way before the awakening of universal consciousness, which will reveal itself as an aspect of Supreme Knowledge.

When this Knowledge of the Essence of Things has come, what happens to the Essence Itself?

Ponder over this !

When insight into form and the formless dawns in its boundlessness, everything will be uprooted. On transcending the level where form, diversity, manifestation exist, one enters into a state of formlessness.

What can this be called?

Godhead, the *ParamAtma* Himself.

As the individual self becomes gradually freed from all fetters, which are nothing but the veil of ignorance, it realises its oneness with the Supreme Spirit (*ParamAtma*) and becomes established in its own Essential Being.

Now to another aspect of the matter.

Everyone has his own path. Some, advancing along the line of *Vedanta*, find, as they progress, the path of *Risi* opening out for them.

To others also, whose spiritual practices, worship, or yoga, proceed with the help of images and other intermediary aids, the same path of a *Risi* may become disclosed.

Yet others, guided by voices and locutions from the unseen, at first hear these voices as audible sounds, but gradually hear them in perfect language, conveying the full significance of what is expressed. By and by it becomes evident that these voices arise from one's own Self, and that they are He Himself, manifesting in that particular way.

No matter what be anyone's line of approach, in due course the path of a *Risi* or a similar path may open out for him in one manner or another. But at what time this will occur and to whom, is beyond the ken of the ordinary person's understanding.

Well, now suppose a man follows his own specific path, which happens to be the worship of a deity.

Who actually is present as that particular deity?

Certainly the One, who is the formless Self!

Consequently, just as the formless Self is He, so is the concrete object of worship. One who, by the method of *Veddi*, has become fully established in the Self, may also find the Supreme Reality in the *vigraha*, just as water is contained in ice.

He will then come to see that all *vigrahas* are really spiritual forms of the One.

For what is hidden in ice?

Water of course.

Where He is present as the All, in that ice there are stages of melting, like slid and semi-solid ice.

But in the pure Self, the question of stages cannot arise.

Although ice may be melting, yet it had become ice, and the possibility of its existing as such again is there.

Consequently, for Him who Himself manifests in the form of ice, there can be no question of the eternal or the non-eternal.

Hence one speaks of *dvaita-dvaita*, signifying that dualism and non-dualism are both facts - just as you are father and son all at once.

How can there be a son without a father, or a father without a son?

In this way one sees that neither of the two is less important than the other and that here, there can be no distinction between higher and lower; there is only equality, sameness.

However, there is a place where one can actually speak of higher and lower states. Each of the two stand-points is complete in itself. (No simile can be applicable in every detail, therefore take note only of that much for which it is intended.)

Thus: both water and ice partake of the nature of eternity.

Likewise, He is as indubitably with form as He is without.

When with form - which is compared to ice - He appears in the guise of countless shapes and modes, each one of them His own Spiritual Form (*Cinmayi Vighraha*). Depending on one's avenue of approach, prominence is given to one particular form.

Why should there be so many different religious sects and sub-sects?

Through every one of them He gives Himself to Himself, so that each person may advance according to his individual uniqueness.

He alone is water as well as ice.

What is there in ice?

Nothing but water.

According to *dvaita-dvaita*, duality and non-duality are both facts; expressed from this position, there is form as well as freedom from form. Again, when saying there are both duality and non-duality, where does this kind of statement hold good? There is certainly a level where difference and non-difference are perceived simultaneously.

In very truth, He is as much in difference as He is in non-difference.

Look, from the worldly point of view, one quite obviously assumes that there are differences. The very fact that you are endeavouring to find your Self, shows, that you accept difference, that, in the manner of the world, you think of yourself as separate.

From this standpoint difference undoubtedly exists.

But then the world is inevitably heading towards destruction (*nasa*), since it is not the Self (*na Sva*), not He (*na a*).

It cannot last for ever.

Yet, who is it that appears even in the guise of the ephemeral? Ponder over this! Well then, what goes and what comes?

Behold, it is movement as that of the sea (*samudra*), He expressing Himself (*Sva mudra*).

The waves are but the rising and the falling, the undulation of the water, and it is water that forms into waves (*taranga*) - limbs of His own body (*tar anga*) - water in essence. What is it that makes the same substance appear in different forms, as water, ice, waves? This again is asked from a particular plane of consciousness.

Reflect and see how much of it you can grasp!

No simile is ever valid in all respects.

What lesson have you actually derived from it?

Find out!

What you thought of as with-form you have understood to be formless.

However, the realization of Truth cannot come through this process of speculation - this also you will certainly come to see.

The aforesaid implies that He eternally manifests, displaying form and quality, and yet is without form and quality; and still further, that the question of attributes and attributelessness cannot arise since there is solely the One-without-a-second.

You speak of the Absolute as Truth, Knowledge, Infinity.

In pure *advaita* no question of form, quality, or predication-be it affirmative or negative - can possibly arise.

When you say : "This indeed is He and that also is He", you have limited yourself by the word 'also', and as a result assume the separateness of the thing referred to. In the One there can be no 'also'. The state of Supreme Oneness cannot be described as 'THAT, and also something other than THAT'. In the attributeless *Brahman* there can be no such thing as quality or absence of quality; there is only the Self alone.

Suppose you hold that He is with quality, embodied.

When you become wholly centred in the particular form you adore, then formlessness does not exist for you -this is one state (*sthiti*). There is another state where He appears with attributes as well as without. There is yet another state where difference as well as non-difference exist - both being inconceivable - where He is quite beyond thought.

Besides, one can take the stand of the *Vedic Karmakanda*.

This and all that has been said above, is within the Supreme State, of which it is said that, even though the Whole is taken from the Whole, the Whole remains unimpaired. There can be no additions and no subtractions; the wholeness of the Whole remains unaltered. Whatever line you may follow represents a particular aspect of it. Each method has its own *mantras*, its own methods, its beliefs and disbelief - to what purpose?

To realize Him, your own Self.

Who or what is this Self?

Depending on your orientation, you find Him, who is your own Self, in the relation of a perfect servant to his Master, of a part to the Whole, or simply as the One Self (*Atma*).

Look, if one believes in *Svayam Bhagavan*, His Divine Power (*Sakti*) is already taken for granted. Here you distinguish between *Bhagavan* and *Bhagavati*, between God as male and His Power as female.

Yet from one standpoint there is no question of male or female, while from another the Divinity is conceived as divided into these two aspects. The Eternal Virgin (*Kumari*) does not depend on anyone, She is the One Itself as POWER.

Where the Supreme Reality is conceived as *Shakti*; It is recognized as Pure Existence (*Sattva*) - with form or without form,- Power alone constituting Its Essence.

This represents yet another standpoint.

When *bhava* (the mood to create) manifests as *kriya* (action), then only can form emerge.

This also is a way of seeing it.

Further, if you think of *Bhagavat* Herself as *Sakti*, there are untold manifestations of Her Infinite Power.

Again, *Mahashakti* is the root-cause of everything - of creation, preservation, dissolution. Just as in the case of a tree, boughs and branches spring forth from its root, so all kinds and orders of deities, angels, archangels, and so forth, come into being as the manifestations of that Power.

The specific character of *Siva* is a transcendence of all change and mutation, symbolized by a *sava* - (corpse), which signifies that in the death of death lies Immortality, namely *Sva*.

Where creation, preservation and dissolution occur, He is present as becoming and He Himself preserves the universe as what is called: *Mahavishnu*.

As regards the various cosmic positions, He is indeed in all of them, manifesting Himself in diverse ways, and as the formless. In each of them all the rest are contained, and in this multi-formity behold the One!

When you gaze at one form you cannot see any other, but in each of them the All is present, and every form reveals the One.

In the void there is fullness, and in fullness the void.

There are possibilities of every kind and description, but the root is the One, the Great Light. He is infinite.

Even when speaking merely of one path - how can the' end of it be found? Yet, when the individual is unable to proceed any further, then there seems to be an end.

What is Pure Existence (*Sattva*)? The Self, the Supreme Spirit, call it what you will. That which you variously name God (*Bhagavan*), Divine Majesty, Glory or Splendour,- is only He, the One.

Very well, God is immutable, the non-doer (*akarta*), since He does not act. Only one who engages in action may be described as the doer of that action. Since He Himself is present in all causes and effects, how can one speak of Him as controlling or not controlling them?

Thus, here He is actionless.

But where His *maya* is, where the display of His Divine Power and Majesty is perceived, and where nature function according to fixed laws, who manifests there?

The One of course.

Mutable and immutable - these one-sided views of yours, belong to the veil of ignorance. You speak of Him as the doer or non-doer, trying to limit Him to the one or the other. From your angle of vision it is but natural to perceive differences. He is whatever you take Him to be; you see Him according to your way of thinking, and as you portray Him, so He is.

As long as the curtain, the veil of ignorance exists, one is bound to see and hear in this restricted way. Until the obscuration is removed, how can one expect the revelation of Truth to occur in its entirety? When the veil is rent asunder, the fact will be disclosed that even the rending of the veil, in fact all that exists or occurs anywhere, is but He Himself.

Very well, the many creeds and sects serve the purpose that He may bestow Himself on Himself along various channels - each has its own beauty - and that He may be discovered as immanent, revealing Himself in countless ways, in all shapes, and in the formless.

As the Path, He attracts each person to a particular line, in harmony with his inner dispositions and tendencies.

The One is present in each sect, even though in some cases there appears to be conflict among them, due to the limitations of the ego. This body however, does not exclude anything. He, who follows one particular creed or sect, will have to proceed right up to the point where he knows all that it stands for in its entirety. When advancing along one line, in other words, when adhering to one particular religion, faith or creed-which you conceive as distinct and as conflicting with all the others - you will, first of all, have to realize the perfection to which its Founder points and then, what is beyond, will of itself become revealed to you. What has just been explained is applicable in the case of each of the various sects; yet it is of course true that, if one remains satisfied with whatever can be achieved by following one line, the Goal of human life has not been attained. What is required is a Realization that will uproot conflict and divergence of opinion, which is complete and free from inherent antagonism.

If it be anything less than that, it means that one's experience is partial, incomplete. In the event of true Realization, one can have no quarrel with anyone - one is fully enlightened as to all faiths and doctrines, and sees all paths as equally good. This is absolute and perfect Realization. So long as there is dissension, one cannot speak of attainment. Nevertheless, one should undoubtedly have firm faith in! one's *Ista* and pursue one's chosen path with constancy and single-mindedness.

As to the fruit of action. Just consider, where along whatever line of approach-effort is sustained without a break and with undivided concentration on the one Goal, who will thus be revealed?

He, the Indivisible One!

But even in action as such, the Perfect One stands Self-revealed. This is the real significance of each action, of the striving, which is the innate characteristic of the individual. Man's true nature prompts him to do actions that give it expression, his true nature awakens in him the urge to perform actions of this type. Man's true nature, *Sva*, *Svayam*, *Atma* - call it by any name - it is the Supreme, I Myself.