

## **MATAJI'S METHODS**



It is both fascinating and enlightening to observe Mataji's innumerable ways of dealing with different individuals and with one and the same person at different times and phases of his growth. The ideal teacher has no method ; he is one with the pupil and with what he teaches and therefore master of every situation. So it is with Sri Ma. One can only marvel at the infinite variety of methods that She seems to command with the most perfect ease.

Mataji never coerces. She allows everyone the utmost freedom to proceed in his own way, as long as his gaze is steadily turned towards God or Truth. "Never be without Him even for a moment, remember Him with every breath." This is Her 'Leit-motive', Her ever recurring theme. But She has a million ways of teaching it. She does not ask anyone to change his *sadhana* , not unless he has gone astray or feels that he cannot possibly proceed. She guides and actively helps everyone along his own line of approach. What matters is not so much the kind of practice, but the sincerity, intensity and whole-heartedness of the aspirant. "Cry your heart out for God", Mataji says, "but never for anything else!"

Sri Ma does not give initiation and She objects to being called a Guru<sup>1</sup>. However, She encourages some, but by no means all, to take initiation from a Guru. Once a Guru has been accepted, he must be obeyed implicitly – unless, of course, he is one of those false Gurus who lead their followers deeper into the mire of delusion instead of to the goal of human existence. In such a case, Her advice is to sever the connection unequivocally and to start afresh.

The way Mataji dissolves conflicts and doubts that trouble many concerning their own Gurus, is truly awe-inspiring. Just as a whole house can be lit up by the mere turning of a switch, so Sri Ma is able to throw, as it were, a flood of light on the disciple's difficulties, so that a new understanding and a new interpretation of his Guru's instructions dawn

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1. For the last few years, since Didima took Mahasamidhi, Mataji did give initiation in Her own peculiar way.

on him, and his peace of mind is restored. Mataji does this either by words or in silence – as the case may necessitate – sometimes in the course of a single interview, and in particularly complicated cases, gradually, by the magic of Her healing and enlightening presence. Those who have experienced or witnessed such instances know in a special way what an immeasurable blessing Sri Ma is. "I have no particular path," She says, "all paths are my paths." This is far beyond what is known as tolerance. It has a tremendous import: In Sri Ma's person we find actively united all creeds, philosophies and schools of thought, all methods of yoga.

Mataji has Her own unique way of replying to questions. Without fail She throws light on each problem from the point of view of the inquirer and usually from many other angles as well. Her replies are sometimes very short and terse, on occasions even perplexing, but always thought-provoking. As one ponders over Her words, a wealth of significance and depth becomes gradually revealed. One gets the impression that She is all at once the problem, the solution, and the Infinity beyond problems and solutions. It occurs time and again that people who do not get an opportunity of voicing their questions and, although even no similar question is asked by others, get their answers, in exactly the way that is needed, merely by attending Mataji's "question and answer hour." Is it surprising if they emerge from the meeting dazed and speechless with amazement and happiness?

Sri Ma defeats time. Thousands look to Her for help and guidance, and I wonder whether She ever disappoints anyone. Not only that: She rarely seems rushed. She discusses and sometimes goes into minute details. She jokes, laughs, sings and listens to *kirtana*, to long discourses and the reading of scriptures. She tells stories of incidents from Her life. On occasions, She instructs how to cook, how to tidy and arrange a room, how to decorate a hall for a function or ceremony, how to receive

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guests in a fitting and courteous manner, how to nurse a patient. She finds time for these and hundreds of other things which are Her countless ways of teaching how to live a dedicated life under all circumstances; and that for every type and temperament an avenue can and must be found that leads to God.

Day and night are alike for Sri Ma. During most of Her hours of so-called 'rest' in the day and during the night She has private interviews, or letters are read out to Her and She dictates replies.

There are those who in dreams get advice and solace from, Mataji regularly at every crucial point of their lives. Instances are known of people, who, when She travels get no chance to approach Her before She leaves their town, or their interview is cut short. Feeling sad and depressed at their bad luck, they go to sleep and that very night have a vivid dream of Sri Ma, which establishes the desired contact and leaves a lasting impression. Some have even received a mantra from Her in a dream, and the mantra, of which they say they have had no previous knowledge, is found to be correct. Mataji does not comment on such happenings as far as I know. But when asked whether *dīkṣā* (initiation) in a dream must be confirmed by *dīkṣā* in the waking-state, She usually replies : "If you have faith in the *dīkṣā* received in your dream, it is enough. Otherwise you will have to go through it again in the waking state. All depends on faith, everything is in the mind."

Mataji does not often give orders, and probably only to those who by intuition, discrimination and experience have established in themselves implicit faith in Her unfailing wisdom. But when She does command, obedience without asking for reasons is the only way. Together with the task She sets, Mataji transmits the power to carry it out. But often it is not easy. It is a common experience that to obey Sri Ma's orders quickens intelligence and develops initiative. It requires great vigilance and concentration – in fact it is as if ingeniously calculated to draw out

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to the utmost one's capacity, courage, forbearance and power of endurance, as well as to bring to the surface one's weaknesses and shortcomings, so that they may be eradicated.

To place one's life in Sri Ma's hands is to become free bit by bit from dependence on people, things and ideas, to be released from all kinds of fear, such as the fear of insecurity, of what people might say, the fear of failure, pain and death. Anything may be lost, Mataji remains.

Sri Ma's love and compassion are far too deep to contain even a tinge of false pity. Mataji does not pamper Her children. To grow, to learn and to be healed entails suffering, which is a necessary part of life. Those who fancy that to be in close contact with Mataji means to sit back comfortably and revel in Her glory or to constantly float in a kind of heaven of peace and joy, oblivious of suffering and impervious to disturbance, are greatly mistaken. Sri Ma can be very firm, nay adamant, and if one did not have the overwhelming experience of Her boundless and unfathomable Love, one might misunderstand as cruelty the masterpieces of surgery She performs. At times, Sri Ma does something that gives a severe blow to a cherished notion, belief or prejudice, and this is certainly very painful. On an occasion of this kind, I heard Her say, "Whatever is necessary I do for myself." (For Her there are no 'others'.) "If you scratch your skin and it bleeds, do you blame your hand? If you cannot bear this much how can you ever know the bliss of the Self?" Looking at Sri Ma's radiant face one realizes that She can never hurt. It is our own error, our own ego that fights for its life, which causes pain, not Mataji.

A well-known Mahatma once said of Sri Ma, "Mataji is the ocean itself. All rivers flow into the sea and yet the sea never becomes full or empty. Likewise, Mataji's state remains ever one, complete, unchanging. There is no question of more or less. This is how I see it. The intellects of ordinary men are the rivers, Mataji's consciousness. is the sea. The Bhagavad Gita is also of the same nature."

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