



M., the Apostle and the Evangelist

- A continuation of M's
Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna -

by Swami Nityatmananda

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Sources of Biographical Information about M.

1. **Chetanananda, Swami. Ramakrishna As We Saw Him. Chapter 18. M. (Mahendra Nath Gupta). St.Louis: Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 1990.**

M. was the pen name of Mahendra Nath Gupta (1854-1932), the headmaster of Vidyasagar's High School in Calcutta. M. met Sri Ramakrishna in 1882 and recorded in his diary many of the Master's conversations and teachings until the latter's passing away in 1886. Excerpts from this diary were first published in Bengali in five volumes under the title Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita. In 1942 Swami Nikhilananda translated this into English and combined the five volumes into one, entitled The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. In his later life M. was surrounded by devotees, and his conversations with them about Sri Ramakrishna and spiritual life were recorded by Swami Nityatmananda from 1923 to 1932. These conversations were published in Bengali in sixteen volumes under the title Srīma Darshan [page 289].

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8. **Prabhananda, Swami. First meetings with Sri Ramakrishna. Chapter on Mahendranath Gupta, 26 Feb '82. (pp. 200-209). Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1987.**

9. **Vividishananda, Swami. A Man of God (Glimpses into the life and work of Swami Shivananda, a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna). Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1957.**

Mahendra Nath Gupta, better known as M, author of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, left his mortal body on Saturday, June 4, 1932.

[Shivananda Vani, II] He was seventy-eight years old when he died. The news moved Mahapurushji [Swami Shivananda] very much and he sat silent for a while. Unable to control his feelings any longer he then gently remarked to those who were close by: " The Master placed me in such a position that I could not even go and see M (when he was sick). One by one the Master is taking away his devotees . . . Ah! M lived in Calcutta, illumining the entire city, as it were. How many devotees visited him and heard from him the Master's words and thus were filled with peace! This loss will never be made good. M had nothing else to discuss but the words of Sri Ramakrishna; his life was filled with the Master. How dearly the Master loved him!

"At one time M spent many days in succession at Dakshineswar. He was very simple as regards his food, living mostly on milk and rice. The Master himself arranged for a pint of good milk that he needed every day. M had a very strong body, that's why he could do so much of the Master's work. Whatever he heard from the Master he would note down in his diary after going home. From those notes he wrote that wonderful Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. He had a prodigious memory. He merely jotted down meagre notes, and from those notes, by exercising his memory through meditation, he compiled the Gospel. He belonged to the group of Sri Ramakrishna's intimate disciples. The Master, as it were, brought M with him for that particular work. M was accustomed to visit the Master every Saturday or Sunday or on any holiday. He also saw him when the Master came to Calcutta or wherever else he might be visiting. On such occasions, interesting subjects were sure to be discussed, with a big crowd present. All of a sudden Sri Ramakrishna would turn to M and ask: ' M, did you understand? Note that point well.' Sometimes the Master would repeat certain points. We did not realize then why he spoke to M in that way.

"The Master's words were so impressive and instructive that I too felt tempted to make notes. One day at Dakshineswar I was listening to him, looking intently at his face. He was explaining many beautiful things. Noticing my keen interest, suddenly the Master said: 'Look here! Why are you listening so attentively?' I was taken by surprise. . He then added: 'You don't have to do that. Your life is different.' I felt as if the Master had divined my intention to keep notes and did not approve of it, and that was why he had spoken in that way. From that time on I gave up the idea of making notes of his conversations, and whatever notes I already had I threw into Ganga."

The next morning some devotees who had associated with and served him devotedly for a long time came to the monastery from Calcutta. They seemed to be grief-stricken over M's passing away. Upon hearing from them the details of M's death, Mahapurushji affectionately said: " Ah! It is a great blow to you. This bereavement is fresh; words will not assuage this grief What is to be done? No one has any control over this. Sri Ramakrishna himself is taking away his devotees. But we know that the relationship of M with us and with the Master is eternal. Never think for a moment that M passed away for good and that there has been an

end of everything."

Talking in this vein, Mahapurushji tried to console the devotees, and while bidding them good-bye said: " What is there to fear, my children? The Master is living (in a spiritual sense)! We are still in the flesh. Whenever you find time, come to the monastery ".

When the devotees had left, Mahapurushji said, " Ah! M was like a refuge to the devotees-a haven of peace. Particularly after Swami Saradananda's death many devotees used to go to M, and he would gladden their hearts by speaking to them about the Master. This loss cannot be replaced! He was indeed a holy soul. What great work of the Master he accomplished! Even if he had written only one volume of the Gospel (there are five such volumes in Bengali), it would have immortalized him. His work is imperishable." [pages 318-321]

10. **Yogananda, Paramahansa. Autobiography of a Yogi. Chapter 9. "The blissful devotee and his cosmic romance (Master Mahasaya)." Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship, 1946.**





SWAMI NITYATMANANDA was a learned sannyasin-bhakta of Sri Ramakrishna. He served the Ramakrishna Maths and Missions at Calcutta, Madras and Deogarh Vidyapeeth.

Since his early youth, he had the privilege of sitting at the feet of M. for several years. During that period, he recorded the talks of M. [Mahendranath Gupta], an intimate house-holder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the renowned writer of the 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.'

M. heard these readings from his diary in Bengali and made corrections at places. SRI MA DARSHAN, is a compilation of these diaries, which comprises 16 volumes. This work is the result of twenty years of hard and incessant work and tapasya, on the banks of the Ganga in Rishikesh, in the Himalayas.

Says Swami Shraddhananda, Head Monk of the Vedanta Society of Sacramento U.S.A: *"It was my great good fortune to know Swami Nityatmananda even when he was Jagabandhu Babu. How he served the venerable sage day after day! He seemed to be a constant shadow by the side of M."* It was during that period that Swami Nityatmananda recorded the talks of M.

Adds Swami Shraddhananda, *"One wonders at the unusual capacity of Swami Nityatmananda in recording these day to day conversations of this Vyasadeva of our time - M. - and later developing his notes into his masterly work. One cannot fail to discover the special training he received from M. himself in this direction while he was serving as a teacher in M.'s school and living with him for years."*

Swami Nityatmananda was born May 29, 1893. He quit his mortal frame on July 12, 1975.



M. - The Apostle and the Evangelist:

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- [Chapter 24](#) Sri Ramakrishna's Catholic words -- The Holy Formula for World-Unity

Publisher's Note

By the grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva, the first edition of volume I of 'M, the Apostle & the Evangelist' appeared in print in 1967 in spite of many an obstacle & difficulty.

In this book are recorded-in the form of a diary-the conversations of 'M' (Professor Mahendranath Gupta), an erudite scholar and direct and intimate house-holder-disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, with the devotees of Thakur and with the author himself.

These conversations and teachings were originally penned in more than seven thousand pages of the Bengali work entitled 'Sri Ma Darshan', by the spiritual child and sevak of 'M', Swami Nityatmananda.

About 2500 pages of this work have already appeared in print-some even in reprint-in seven volumes in Bengali.

The publication of the entire series of Sri Ma Darshan is being undertaken initially in three languages-Bengali, Hindi and English.

The main theme of this work is: How to make it possible to live the divine life of joy and peace, described in the Vedas though living in household. the home of pleasure and pain.

Srimati Ishwar Devi Gupta discovered the fountain of this divine joy and peace in the holy conversation of 'M' recorded in Sri Ma Darshan. Inspired by this long cherished discovery. she at once began to translate it as a prayerful offering in Hindi for her own sake and also for the Hindi knowing brothers and sisters.

Subsequently it was translated into English at the wish of the English knowing bhaktas and others educated in the western way. The English language which is the meeting ground of the eastern and western cultures is the finest medium for carrying Sri Ramakrishna's word of hope and cheer far and wide into the world. This is how 'M, the Apostle and the Evangelist' came into being. by the grace of Swamiji Maharaj and the love and blessing of other bhaktas and tyagis.

This very love and blessing helped to popularize the first volume so much that its second edition became necessary in a very short time. Along with it grew a demand for the other volumes of this work.

It is to meet this demand that the present volume II is seeing the light of print.

The Revered Swami Nityatmanandaji has graciously given his consent to Sri Ma Trust to undertake the publishing of the entire series of 'Sri Ma Darshan' and has blessed the project, in deference to the wishes of his bhaktas.

The bhaktas in general and the Trust in particular are grateful to him.

The Trust also offers its sincere thanks to all those friends who have helped-and are helping-in any way, in the production, publication and distribution of 'Sri Ma Darshan'.

It is the heartfelt prayer of these humble sevaks at the lotus feet of the Omniscient Lord that all brothers and sisters may gain faith in and devotion to Bhagavan and attain supreme bliss and peace through a deep and reverent study, along with practice, of this scriptural record.

ISHWAR DEVI GUPTA

Publisher

Sri Ma Trust - Sri Ramakrishna Sri Ma Prakashan Trust

Birth-Day of the Holy Mother, 1970.

Introduction

By the grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva, the second part of Sri Ma Darshan is being published. Like the first part, the second part also contains some new talks of Paramahansa Deva and the Holy Mother and also those of Swami Vivekananda and other intimate disciples of the Master, and, it is a commentary of the 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' by the writer of the Gospel. Besides, it is a commentary of the Upanishad, the Gita, the Bhagavata, the Purana, the Bible and other scriptures in the light of the life of Sri Ramakrishna.

The scene of the First Part is laid in the Forest of Mihijam. Like the lion in a forest, free from all obstacles - it is the picture of M there. Full of joy, he roams freely in the regions of his noble and lofty ideas. Sometimes even while coming down to the worldly plain, he engages his intellect and mind to commenting upon the Gita, the Upanishad and other holy books.

Establishing the life of the sadhus and brahmacharis on a firm footing formed also another function of M at Mihijam. That is why M's image in Mihijam is that of a teacher-full of bliss, vigour and robust holy optimism.

On the other hand, the stage of action of Part II is the great city of Calcutta. Here M is surrounded by all kinds of devotees. The mind of the devotees is restless due to the undulations of pleasures and pains. Identifying himself with their feelings, M is self-surrendering and prayerful-like the maid in a big house-hold. By showering the 'Kathamrita'-the Nectar of the Gospel, day and night, he is infusing life into the minds of the lifeless devotees. Breaking the fiery nest of despair, he is leading them on to the happy abode of joy and peace.

ii. M says. "Sri Ramakrishna is God incarnated in a human body.' Assuring fearlessness to the devotees fallen into the burning fire of the world, Sri

Ramakrishna says, "Hold on to me. meditate on me and me alone and that will do." And again he declares in a loud voice his promise, "Verily, verily, I swear unto you, whosoever will think on me shall inherit my wealth even as a son does inherit his father's wealth, and my wealth consists of , jnana-bhakti, viveka-vairajya, shanti-sukha, prema-snadhi, (knowledge and devotion, discrimination and dispassion, peace and happiness, deep love and realisation of God.)

M shows the path to the bhaktas and promising hope says: Sri Bhagavan came down in a human body only the other day. What fear ? Establish a relationship of love with Him and live in the world. Decide by imagination one suitable relationship-such as father, mother, friend, the lord and the like - and begin the work. Later on this very relationship of imagination will assume the form of reality which will take possession of the mind and the heart of the devotee. Then the devotee will have two personalities-one the worldly man and the other the illumined man of God. When this man of the world, falling into the various whirlpools of pleasure and pain, will get drowned, his divine counterpart, the illumined man in him being awakened will transform this drowning weakling into a mighty hero.

In spite of the repeated entreaties of M, Sri Ramakrishna, the avatara of this age at the instance of the Mother of the Universe, had commanded M to live in the household and teach the 'Bhagavata' to the humanity, afflicted with the fire of the world. Like Prahlada, Janak and others having attained perfect sannyasa within, M distributed day and night the Bhagavata, the nectar of the words of Sri Ramakrishna. the dispeller of worldly troubles and tribulations. for a long time, close upon half a century.

For God' s work, even though unable to embrace the Vedantic Sannyasa, M was blessed with the Tantric Sannyasa by Sri Ramakrishna. M said, "Thakur endowed Baburam and myself with Tantric Sannyasa on the same day."

The desire for Vedantic Sannyasa kept itself awake in the mind of M throughout his life. Thus we see that M. four or five times during his active life, having renounced all work, like a sannyasi, spent time in practising tapasya now in Kamarpukur and Jayrambati, now in Puri and Kashi and now in Haridwar and Rishikesh. The forest-stay of M in Mihijam is also the result of his secret inner urge for the Vedantic Sannyasa .

It is Sri Ramakrishna as God who has dispensed sorrow and pain in the world. It is again He as God incarnate who shows the path to the Life Eternal. Reading this book and accepting the dispensation of Sri Ramakrishna, may the Humanity, broken down by worldly pains, attain the illumined state-the children of Immortal Bliss-is the prayer of the author of this book.

May Sri Sri Thakur bless those whose help has made it possible for the book to be published-this too is the hearty prayer of the author.

Swami Nityatmananda
Sri Ramakrishna Math,
(Tulsi Math), Rishikesh.
Akshay Tritiya 1370 (Bengali Year) 1962 A.D.

Vol. 2 - Chapter 1

M. in Calcutta

Morton School, 50 Amherst Street; room near the staircase of the first floor. M. is seated on a mat on the floor facing the east; the bhaktas are in front. By

living at a health resort for several months the health of M. has undergone sufficient improvement. Wearing a shirt of long-cloth and a smiling face he is discoursing upon matters spiritual with Dr. Bakshi, Advocate Lalit, Lalit of Bhatpara, the younger Jiten and others. Arrive in turn the elder Amulya, Ramani and Manoranjan. The room is packed with many other devotees. Vinay has gone to the Math.

This morning, M. has returned from Mihijam after seven or eight months. Throughout the day, sadhus and bhaktas have been paying visits. Endless is the joy of the bhaktas at the holy darshan of the beloved. The residence of M. has, as it were changed today into [Triveni](#) -- by the meeting of M., sadhus and bhaktas.

Now the evening sets in. Shukalal, Brahmachari Ramesh and Mohan enter the room. Having exchanged how-do-you-do with Shukalal M. says, Well, where is he? Not being able to notice Mohan in darkness he has made this enquiry. Coming forward, Mohan answers humbly, Here I am, Sir, here.

M. (to Mohan, pointing at Lalit) -- Just see. He practises law. There is no harm in the study of laws but for the sake of money it is not right to turn truth into lies. Study is all right but not its practice. If you say that law is untruth, what use studying it? The answer to it: Is non-studying of it truth? This too is false. Brahman is truth, the world false -- this pertains to a stage -- the last word. Till that stage is reached one should live with these things. There are comparatives and superlatives. Studies and the like are helpful. When God is realised all these are no longer needed. Till then holding on to all these is worthwhile.

M. (with a smile) -- To Hari Maharaj came a person to embrace sannyasa. On enquiry, it was found that he had a wife, son, daughter -- all. Hari Maharaj said, 'Why do you want to come here leaving them in difficulties?' The person replied, 'Sir, all these, wife and son, are false.' And many long talks did he indulge in. Hearing all this, said he, 'Well, this too is false -- you have married, you have children, coming here leaving them behind! What do you say, is it truth not to look after them? It is different with those who have not married. Even so, as long as the parents are alive one should serve them.'

The evening-lamp is brought in. M. salutes with folded hands. And with soft clapping of hands he repeats the mantra, Hari bol, Hari bol (chant Lord's name). Then all meditate for a while.

Now, the elder Jiten arrives accompanied by Kaviraj Virinchi. The elder Jiten has passed law and is a bench-clerk in the High Court -- a very devoted and noble soul. The usual welfare enquiries with M. being over, the younger Jiten asks the elder Jiten, Brother Jit, have you changed residence? The elder Jiten replies, Yes brother. Twenty years have gone by in Brindaban Mullick lane but I feel it was just the other day. Hearing this M. immediately turns the topic of the conversation and says, It's no credit to you. He kept you, so you lived. Your brother has passed away. But then God himself will make an alternative provision.

M. (to the bhaktas) -- Various are the temperaments. Some live in the world like the leech and sink lower and lower. Sattva, rajas, tamas, mixture of these three qualities has given rise to so many different natures. To conquer this nature is the problem of life.

The stream of nature flows in one direction. Another stream coming from the opposite direction can alone overcome it. The opposite stream flows in when one takes refuge in Him. Poison and its antidote, both He has created. The

antidote is the company of sadhus, living in solitude, pilgrimage, prayer to Him and all that.

M. (to Kartik) -- Yes Doctor, which verse of the Gita?

Kartik --

(Gita VII : 14)

M. also began to repeat with him. The Doctor knows the whole Gita by heart.

M (to the bhaktas) -- Just see. The Lord says: My maya is uncrossable, that is, it is almost impossible to cross over. But then by taking refuge in Me alone it is possible to go beyond maya, that is to conquer the world, to subjugate nature. This is only possible by His grace. Impossible otherwise. Entrapped by the five elements, Brahman weeps and laments.

Taking up a body, the internal lust, anger and greed, and external grief, suffering and poverty -- all are inevitable. Prakriti must play its role. Thakur suffered from cancer for ten months. Ah! what a tribulation! Why this suffering? To teach humanity; to take a body is to entail all this. Once, under the bakul tree he felt the sex urge. So he said to the Mother, 'If this happens Ma, I shall pass the knife over my throat.' Just see, even such an avatara, even he feels lustful, suffers from disease. One day, Thakur said, 'I saw the flower of pumpkin in a dream.' A bhakta said, 'May I bring it for you to eat?' He answered, 'No. So much worthless trash do I see in dream.' Just see, taking up a body, even the avatara does everything just like a human-being -- sees pumpkin and gourd in dream. This is what is called: 'Entrapped by the five elements, Brahman weeps and laments.' But even then God has to be sought after.

``Human nature He has created and it is He who helps conquer it. Sattva, rajas and tamas -- these three gunas are the constituents of prakriti. Their function is to bind man to the world. The way to freedom from their clutches has also been shown by Him. Says He, 'O man! surrender thyself to Me. Then only wilt thou be able to set thyself free from the clutches of the uncrossable maya.' No other path, this is the only path, to surrender.

``Tapasya, what does it mean? -- The effort to overcome prakriti is called tapasya -- the company of sadhus, living in solitude, praying to Him, weeping secretly in solitude while doing all this, if His grace dawns, prakriti is overcome. To overcome prakriti is to realize God.

M -- It's good to retire into solitude at times. That's why Thakur prescribed it. Living in solitude is better than the hustle and bustle of the towns. He used to say, 'In that country (meaning Kamarpukur) a hole is made in the earthen pot containing molasses and an earthen basin is below it. After six months, the molasses in the pot are turned into sugar-candy.' The whole of the liquid is drained off. Let there be nocturnal discharge as happens with many. But that does not mean that cohabitation has to be indulged in. No it wouldn't matter. That which is left after that (natural) discharge will turn into candy.

``That is why, withdrawing the mind from this phenomenal world -- sight, taste, smell, speech and touch, one has to retire into solitude for sometime. Living amidst them day and night one sinks low. Sights and scenery give rise to all sorts of desires for enjoyment. Thakur used to say, 'There are two pits in the open. The water of one of them has dried up, that of the other remains.' Why, what does it mean? -- simply this : where water remains there flows

perhaps a stream close by. From it water percolates -- one of them has a feeder, some stream or the like; the other hasn't. That is why water has dried up. Living amidst sense objects is just like this. Sense objects are the feeders. The mind gets drowned in them. Sense objects are called maya. That's why he advised solitude. Living away from sense objects, the inside dries up -- all dross falls off, the mind gets crystallized and in the crystallized mind He is seen.

``Thakur used to say: `A sadhu, a sannyasi shall not even look at the picture of a woman. He shall not live with householders.' Sights and scenery provoke a desire for creature comfort in the mind -- this is the reason. He who desires God, such a sadhu lives alone, not with anybody.

``Sitting on the same bed with a house-holder, sleeping under the same mosquito-net is not proper. This drags the mind down. The sadhus of the western India do not let householders sit on the same asana, lest as a result of their company, the mind should get polluted; that's why. In this they are not at fault. This rule is for the good of both.

``They who are beginners have to live with great discrimination. One has to live through everything saying, `not this, not this.' In the beginning total renunciation. After God has been realized, one may enjoy. But at first complete renunciation. For beginners, uncompromising renunciation. Nachiketa did not accept anything. Yama said, `Have a kingdom.' -- `No, sir,' -- `wife, son, long life?' Even to this the same reply, `No sir. I want nothing. Only the knowledge of the Self, just this I want.'

``Shreya and preya are two things. Shreya alone is to be sought. Shreya means God; preya, sense enjoyments. That is why Nachiketa asked for shreya, not preya.

``Who can enjoy? He who has completely renounced all, and who has seen God. Before this, all has to be renounced. In the `Yoga-Vasishtha' it is said: Kach was plunged into the nirvikalpa samadhi for a long time. Then he brought his mind down. He was asked, `What do you see?' -- `He resides in everything like warp and woof,' this was his reply. All is He. Thakur also said: `After this stage there is no harm in enjoyment. Then enjoyment is no longer enjoyment.'

``In the Panchavati, a dog came to Thakur. Immediately he thought: Mother might speak something through its mouth. Mother in all.

``After a lot of trouble if one climbs up the terrace one can then tell what is going on below. At first one has to take the trouble. After samadhi, all is He -- this knowledge dawns.

M (to the bhaktas) -- According to the Hegelian philosophy it is He who pervades all. This is certainly borrowed from the translations of our Veda and Vedanta. It has exponents in America too. They take it to mean: Since God pervades all, enjoy the world as much as you can. (Everybody laughs). They, of course, do not know how this truth was discovered. To them all this is a borrowed idea. In the beginning how much of renunciation had to be practised. It was only then that the rishis of this country said this after realising God. -- through renunciation alone God, the Image of the Life Everlasting can be realised. If renunciation is not complete He cannot be attained. Sadhus and beginners have to renounce all. Complete renunciation and surrender unto Him.

``Thakur used to say: There are three kinds of men in this world. One type,

those who ask for nothing at all -- only God they want, only yoga. They are first class -- for example Shukadeva. The other type, those who want yoga and bhoga both. They are also good. Many great bhaktas belong to this class, for example, the Pandavas. There is yet another group wanting bhoga only. They do not want God. This group predominates. There (at Mihijam), during my stay of a few months I noticed that animals have but one desire, that of enjoyment. Cow and buffalo, dog and cat -- all these are busy with food day and night. Their only activity is eating, sleeping and procreation. Between this group of men and animals there is but little difference. In human body only can one meditate on God if one chooses -- there is this little difference only.

``Under a canister, lives a frog. No sooner do I lift the tin than one of its two young ones escapes. Lest I should kill the other, the mother frog jumped over it. (Stretching his hand) In this, it is His hand I noticed. It is He who protects them stretching His hand. One day, I lift the kid of a goat up in my lap. The mother comes bemoaning, and stands close by. At any other time make a sound and she would run away. Today, she stands close by -- neither moving nor fearing. All these precious things I saw there this time. Unless one goes to such places, these things cannot be understood. These Vedas and Shastras, have they been written sitting in a place like this? No, they were written in solitary plains and forests like that (Mihijam). Aushadhi, banaspati -- herbs and trees and the like that find mention in the holy books do not grow in cities. His hand is there on all -- this I have seen this time. Those who yearn for God live in solitude in those places. They are a different class by themselves -- just like the honey-bee which sits only on flowers. The common-fly sits on festering wounds, excreta and so on. Those who only want Him are honey-bees.

``Thakur used to say, `Even when gram falls on excreta, only a gram-plant grows from that and its gram is used in the worship of God.' It means that a man acts only according to his nature. A devotee, whatever his birth, will engage himself in the service of God. In the realisation of God, birth and good conduct are of no account. There is no distinction between the rich and the poor, the ruler and the ruled, the learned and the ignorant, the brahmin and the chandala -- no such distinctions. No high or low there. Thakur used to say, `As the moon is the common uncle of all children, just so God is our very own. He who wants gets.' "

Calcutta

10th May, 1923 A.D., 27th Vaishakha, 1330 (Bengali Year),
Thursday, the 10th day of the Dark Fortnight.

Vol. 2 - Chapter 14

The Means : Company and Service of Sadhus and Prayer

1.

M. is seated in the room on the first floor. It is seven in the evening. Bhaktas surround him: Shukalal, Doctor, Vinay and Jagabandhu. In the meanwhile, enter the elder Jiten, Virinchi, the younger Jiten and Sukhendu. Within a few moments, Rakhal, Yogen, Manoranjana, the younger Nalini and others also reach. The two brothers of Doctor Indu Madhava Mullick of Bhavanipur also come. One of them is the father-in-law of M.'s son, Prabhas Babu. After the initial greetings and welcome, M. talks with them about God.

M. (to Mullick Mahashay) -- The Paramahansa Deva used to say: If by listening and meditating upon the name of God, the hair of a person stand on

end and he begins to shed tears of love, one should infer that he is about to shed off his karmas. In other words, he has already attained nearness to God. Just as after the dawn there is not much delay in sunrise, similarly at the appearance of these sattvic signs in the body upon the mention of God's name, one should know that He is soon going to reveal Himself. The rishis said during the yajna of Bali, in Dwarpar age: `Well, why does the hair stand on end on the body in this way? Does it mean the coming of the Yajnaeshwara (Master of the yajna) Himself?' Coming of the Yajnaeshwara means close contact with God, we should so understand it. God was present at the place of the yajna in the form of Vamana. But this was not known to all. The rishis could guess from the physical changes on their bodies that God was very near.

``The scriptures sanction initiation from the mother who has given birth. You are very fortunate. You have received all these instructions from your mother. Now have faith and take to work."

Mullick Mahashay -- What cannot be achieved by faith? I have heard that at Manikarnika Ghat of Kashi, Mother Annapurna in the guise of a prostitute, requested everybody for help for cremating her dead son. There was but one condition: Only he who is sinless will touch the dead body. And lo! nobody came forward. A drunkard used to come daily for a bath in the Ganga. This day also he had taken his bath. Seeing the dead body, he came forward to perform the funeral rites. The goddess said: `You are a drunkard. Your breathing emits foul smell of the wine. Don't touch the body.' He replied: `What are you saying, mother? I have just had a dip in the Ganga. All my sins have been washed away. I am purified.'

M. -- Thakur also used to tell a story. There was a bhakta called Krishna Kishore in Dakshineswar - full of faith, belonging to a high Brahmin family. He went to Vrindaban. One day he felt very thirsty. People were drawing water out of a deep well. He asked for water. One of them said, `Pundit ji, how can we give you water, we the cobblers?' Krishan Kishore said, `So, do one thing. Say: Shiva, Shiva.' The fellow repeating the name of Shiva, gave water and he drank. Such a faith! If one has faith, know that much has been achieved.

``And there is another. A sadhu has come to the ghat of Endedaha. Everybody goes to pay him a visit. Haladhari, an elder cousin of Thakur, used to practise the path of knowledge. Says he, `A cage of bones and flesh! What do you go to see, you people?' Thakur told how angry Krishna Kishore was on hearing it. He said, `What! The body by which God is worshipped, the body of him who has renounced his all for the sake of God, you call that body a cage of bones and flesh? The body of a bhakta is the symbol of divinity.' What an anger! He stopped talking to Haladhari. He would come to the Kali Bari to pluck flowers but he would not even turn to Haladhari to look at him. Such a faith, such a belief!

`` `I, a sinner,' `I, a mean fellow' - this sentiment of the Vaishnavas Thakur did not like. He used to say: If they say so what is the power of the Divine name? A little fire on a big heap of cotton burns it out completely. The same with the Name. Repeat the Name but once, all sins are destroyed. To Vijay Krishan Goswami also he said the same, one day, in the Brahmo Samaj: `Why do you people say so much, `I am a sinner, I am a sinner.' Rather say, `I have uttered His name. How can I have sin then?' "

Mullick Mahashay -- The prayer that is read in the Christian Church does not, however, mention anything like sin.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil For Thine is the kingdom, And the power, and the glory, forever. (St. Matthew 6: 9 to 13)

M. -- ``Yes, it does not mention that. Paramahansa Deva also taught us a Lord's prayer:

I don't wish for body-comfort, Ma.

I don't wish for name and fame, Ma.

I don't wish for the eight siddhis *, Ma.

I don't wish for a hundred siddhis Ma.

Give me pure devotion at Your lotus feet.

And do this much that I may not be charmed

By Your world-bewitching maya.'

``Worldly fame - a little of which makes one's mouth water; the eight occult powers - wading the river on foot, curing diseases and so on. Sri Krishna said to Arjuna: `With these you can rise high in the world but you will not realize God.' Arjuna, therefore, did not accept occult powers. Thakur said something else too:

Ma, I am the instrument, You are the engineer.

I am the dwelling, You are the dweller.

I am the body, You are the occupier.

I am the chariot, You are its charioteer.

As you make me move, so I move.

As you make me speak, so I speak.

As you make me do, so I do.

Ma! My refuge! My refuge! My refuge!

Mullick Mahashay -- Well, is it possible without His grace?

M. -- But does grace come by itself? There has to be a channel - dhyana, japa, tapasya. Grace dawns even by repeating His name. Christian devotees recite: Paternoster, Maria, these holy names on the rosary.

Mullick Mahashay -- Well, if all the people were to pray in this way, how will the world go on?

M. -- No, why so? It is not for everybody. In the school, there are first, second, third, so many different classes. Does everybody study in the first class? Those who want God are a class apart. Thakur used to say: Men are of three classes - the yogi who is like the bee. It would not sit except on a flower. For example

Narada, Shukadeva. Second, yogi cum bhogi - this also is a class as that of the Pandavas. On the one hand they marry the daughters of Devas and Nagas, on the other God accompanies them always. And the last - those who are in bhoga alone.

Mullick Mahashay -- Everybody will have to go to the first class, one day.

M. -- Yes, the Gita says: (6 : 45) (Perfected through many births reaches then the Supreme Goal). It may not happen in one birth alone. Why, should one therefore give up spiritual practices? Like a true farmer he will go on trying whether he succeeds or not.

Mullick Mahashay bade good-bye.

2.

Yogen tells the Doctor about his personal problems in a soft voice. The Doctor advises him to bring it to the knowledge of M.

Yogen (humbly to M) -- Sir, do me a little favour. Even now, my mind becomes restless on seeing women. Outwardly, I may be shedding tears but the inside is dry. I have no tears for Thakur. Through your kindness, the problem of board and lodging at Dakshineswar is solved. A little more of your kindness will take me through.

M. (laughing loudly after a momentary silence) -- That's why Thakur used to say: 'The disease is there, always.' If that is so, we shall have to take his prescription. He said: Always keep the company of the holy. That's what we should do. And we should sit with those who weep sincerely (for God). Then one would also feel like weeping. What have we done sincerely for Him? Nothing anywhere. Could one succeed just like that? One may read a thousand books, pass the law, all this in vain. If you wish to be a good lawyer you have to be articulated to a top class lawyer. You will have to serve this lawyer. Thakur used to say: Just as by looking at a lawyer one is reminded of a judge and his court, similarly by looking at a sadhu one is reminded of God. Keeping the company of the holy, serving them, living in solitude - all these should be practised. You have done nothing, you have been nowhere near it. Will it happen in a trice? No, that's not possible.

M. began to narrate how he served sadhus in the Panchavati.

''One day, a number of sadhus arrived. I was asked to arrange for flour, clarified butter and so on. And he said: 'It is good to serve sadhus. What do you say?' Then he began to recount a tale. 'A sadhu was taking his bath. His loin-cloth was swept away by the current. Draupadi noticed it and tearing half a piece of her own cloth gave it to the sadhu. In the court of the Kauravas, when Draupadi was being stripped of her clothes, she wept and wept and prayed: Lord! save my modesty. Bhagavan appeared and asked her: 'Did you ever give away any cloth to a sadhu?' Draupadi then narrated the above incident. Consoling her, Bhagavan said: 'No fear then.' The more her cloth was pulled the longer it became - His maya.

''After narrating this story, he said: 'Do say what I told you.' Thus, he impressed its import at once on my mind. And he made me repeat it too.

''When flour and clarified butter had been fetched, the sadhus themselves cooked their meals. They ate, so did Thakur in their company. A little was kept for me too."

M. (to Yogen) -- This is the disease. We do everything but while giving something to a sadhu all calculations come in. After weighing fully a little is spared. For the sake of their wives, sons, sons-in-law, men spend with both hands. Whatever the expense, there is no 'no'. This time in Mihijam I had a talk with a Brahmin cook. An old individual, he had served in several big homes. He told a story about an England-returned fellow. His sons and daughters had each a car. Each one had half a dozen servants and maids. And their meals were cooked in different kitchens. In one, Bengali meals - sukta-tukta; in another pulao and kalia and in a third English style meals. Besides, there was preserved meat - a slice of it would be served to each. The ladies would take only this. As for marketing, all purchases are being made to one's fancy. Piles of clothes, each one is purchasing to his own choice. In this way, thousands of rupees are being spent. But not a mention of service to God, service to sadhus. I come to know that when in mourning they would roll on the ground and beat and shriek just like our women. Then there is no aristocratic style. I have heard of so many 'M'ams'. They also roll on the ground in extreme grief. This is what Thakur called the world of avidya. No service to sadhus, bhaktas or the poor, only service to one's own kith and kin. Fie! it will not do to call this love or affection. The love that leads to the path of God, I call that only true love. What is this? Earning money by the sweat of one's brow and spending it all on eating! What kind of living is this? Animals do the same. What is the difference?

3.

M. (to the bhaktas) -- In the home of the bhakta, there is daily talk of God. If the head of the family cannot do it himself he engages a pundit to recite scriptures: the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata, the Padma Purana, the Brahmavaivart Purana - all these. Always His name. Festivals, such as the Durga Puja, should be celebrated if one can afford. And service of the sadhus and the poor - the head of the family should try to do all these. The responsibility of the members of the family becoming a different sort rests on his head. He himself had given the latitude. Now he himself has to make an effort to uplift them. If even after the effort one fails to turn the household Godwards, one should stand aside at a distance. What else to do? Should one stick like a leech to them throughout the life? Why? No obligation whatsoever. The clan of the Yadus is going to destruction and Sri Krishna stands unmoved like a statue. Who can check human nature? Irresistible!

M. (to Shukalal) -- A fellow asked Thakur in Sinthi: How long should one look after one's children? He replied, 'Till they are fit to earn, and girls, till they are married. Thereafter, let them work and eat.' Thakur was beyond the three gunas. Grieved at the sorrows of the jiva, he was always thinking of their welfare, always thinking how they can get leisure and call upon Him. These are his dicta, not ours. What do we know, what can we say? Just make an effort. If you cannot make a vidya-sansara (spiritually based family), there is nothing else you can do. Making provision for the family, you should stand apart at a distance. Then meditate on God.

M. (to a bhakta) -- By serving sadhus lust is automatically suppressed. And how easy Thakur has made it! There you have all renouncing sadhus and the steamer to reach them. His sadhus live there in the Belur Math. Where else will you find such as these? He has not only taught to seek the company of sadhus, he has created them too, excellent sadhus all. One must daily keep the company of the holy. But beware! Let there be no trouble to the ashrama. One should go there only with the idea to carry out tapasya - to serve and not to be served. Even when scolded, not a word to be uttered. One should stand with

folded hands. What a great ashrama it is! isn't it the sannyasa ashrama? Being oneself in the department of bhoga, one has to be patient with all this.

Shukalal -- Should not one complain even when scolded? Doesn't one feel hurt?

M. -- Let it be. You will have to put up with it. We have given ourselves up to bhoga. This is the reason. Can we afford to judge? He for whom they have renounced everything will do it. What a great ashrama! Chaitanya Deva, seeing the ochre clothes on the back of a donkey, lay prostrate before it. And here, you have all the sadhus in flesh and blood. What facilities the Math has provided! Daily, I get information. If one is meditating, the other is in the library, in deep study and yet another in the store cutting vegetables or praying. All this is service to Thakur. What noble persons you find there! And so many of them are B.A.'s and M.A.'s.

``The Gita says that one should minutely observe the behaviour of the Sthita-prajna (a man of steady wisdom). Then only one will try to emulate him. Are they not ideal? Knowing that one can compare oneself with them, 'I am down below,' with this awareness, one would feel the desire to raise oneself. I am an old man. I cannot go there. Sitting here, I get all information. What they do and what I do - this should be compared daily. Then alone one would wake up. Those who are educated and well informed, by living for only two years in the Math are rising so quickly. On seeing them I feel so happy. And why should they not rise? On the one hand, they are observing brahmacharya, on the other they are trying to call on Him with their heart and soul. And they have sufficient leisure.

``And what do worldly people do? Entangled in different worldly matters, they have no time to call. Even if one sits (for meditation) for a while, one dozes off in no time. The body is tired. One sits down to melt gold, it is about to reach its melting point. Suddenly, orders are received from home: there is no rice in the house. He gets up to bring it. He sits down again and there is a message: the daughter is ill. He immediately starts for the doctor. So the gold never gets melted, the fire burns out. If one leads a worldly life after melting gold, one does not feel so much of pain and misery. Melting gold, that is to say, to gain jnana and bhakti. The sadhus are always attempting it, all the twenty four hours.

M. (to the householder bhaktas) -- Thakur would sometimes say: You are married, let it be. It is better to discharge a seer or two of semen, but let there be no children. With children, how would you get leisure - with the upbringing, education and illness of the son and the marriage of the daughter? Prahlad said to the Daitya children: Look here, don't marry. If you do, you will not get any leisure. You will have to think of your daughter's family. There was a certain Mahendra Mukherjee. He had many occupations. He would often visit Thakur, and say: I am now thinking of leaving everything to my son and retire. He would bring two of his sons with him. Thakur would listen and say: 'Yes, but how is it coming about?' People get always entangled with one thing or the other. They think: Let me put this matter on firmer grounds. And the days pass off in this manner. The Captain also said the same but could not do it. One should live in solitude for sometime, then one realizes what is the duty and what is not. Not world first God next, but God first world next."

It is evening now. M. is meditating in the company of the bhaktas. After the meditation one of the bhaktas sings: 'Mother I am so frightened.' Now the Bhagavata is being read. Engaged in tapasya Shukadeva listens to a divine voice: 'I exist becoming everything.'

M. (to the bhaktas) -- This is a great mantra. If one were to live just with this, one would perfect oneself. Thakur also used to recite a mantra daily after the sunset: `Brahman, maya, jiva, jagat.' Taking up this for japa, one can also perfect oneself, that is to say, realize God. He used to say: These are highly esoteric mantras, that is to say they are all in the books and can be read there. But if they have to be spoken it should only be to bhaktas, not to others. `Brahman, maya, jiva, jagat' - this oft-repeated great saying has, as if, assumed a new living form today.

Calcutta,
30th May, 1923 A.D.,
16th Jaishtha, 1330 (Bengali Year),
Wednesday, the 1st day of the Dark Fortnight.

Vol. 2 - Chapter 19

Alexander, Napoleon and Christ

1. The office room of the Morton School. M. is seated on a chair, close to him is a devotee-teacher. It is 9.45. There is nobody else in the room. Yesterday was the Naga-Panchami day. On this date was born M. The bhaktas celebrated it in the house of the Doctor in Cossipore. M. asked, `Who has spent on yesterday's festivities? Was it Doctor Babu? And who were the workers?' Before the bhakta had replied, other teachers came in. M. asked the bhakta to take a chair very close to him, and began to talk in a soft voice.

M. (to the teacher) -- Thakur used to say: The ritualistic path is very difficult -- it throws one in difficulties. The mind remains engaged in rituals day and night. That's why he dissuaded one from taking this path. Some people do like this -- they give money in the Math or buy offerings and give them there. What a useful purpose is served thereby! At first these are offered to Thakur and then all the sadhus share the prasad. If the bhaktas also take it along with them it is still better. Many people do this on Thakur's birthday celebrations, I have seen. In this way, there is no botheration to oneself. They themselves do everything. Some people go by themselves to assist them. Somebody goes and brings prasad for the bhaktas. Bhaktas, that is, those who live in the house. Thus they can cope with all this work. They have many men and an organisation. But for those who do not have these facilities, it is very difficult indeed. They themselves have to do all. Just take Doctor Babu. He works hard the whole day. First of all a body (showing a finger) like this, on the top of it, so much of work. Having offered it to Thakur, the sadhus take prasad, how nice it is! What do you say? Offer money in the Math, for the service of Thakur, that's all. It is being done every day; let it be a little more today. And what is the need of mentioning the purpose of the offering and all that? If it is used in the service of Thakur or sadhus, the object is achieved.

Now it is half past three. Handing out a big bottle of high grade cow's ghee to a bhakta-teacher, M. says, ``Hemant Babu is not well. Please deliver this to him." This ghee was the gift of Shukalal to M. He says again as the bhakta is about to leave, ``God-in-the-poor is served in the Math. Please deliver it to the same God-in-the-poor." Previously too, he had sent dal, rice, sago, sugar-candy and such other things, one day. Hemant is a teacher of the Morton School.

At half past five, M. is repairing with his own hands a crack in the roof on the 3rd floor with cement. Seeing ants coming out of the crack in the roof, M. says to a bhakta, ``No, we shall not apply it here. If we do so the ants will not be able to come out." Is it seeing God in every created thing?

It is evening now. The daily-visiting bhaktas are all there. There are some new bhaktas too -- Doctor's uncle, Lalit the musician and Nayab have also come. Meditation over, one of the new bhaktas asks --

The new bhakta (to M.) -- Sir, what are the signs that one is attaining belief in God?

M. -- The company of sadhus. Such a man will seek the company of sadhus. This is the beginning of the religious life. Jesus said to a rich man: If you want my company you will have to give up all -- 'Give (your all) to the poor, . . . and follow me.' But he could not do so. He who sincerely seeks the company of sadhus, it is to be understood, has taken God as the essence. A man is known by the company he keeps and the ideal he worships. If the ideal of a person is some congressman, it is to be understood, that there is patriotism in him, that he likes politics. If a person keeps the company of Vidya Sagar Mahashaya, you will know that a little of philanthropy is in him, he has compassion. And if a person comes to a sadhu, you are to understand that he is not interested in any of these. He has understood that God is real and the world is transitory. That is why he pines for the Eternal Life, and how to attain it.

The new bhakta -- What is the difference between the markat renunciation and the real one?

M. -- In the markat vairagya -- say, having been burnt by the fire of the world and adopting the gerua, one goes to live in Kashi. After two months, he wires home, 'I have found a job. I am returning home soon.' He had no work, so he renounced. In the real renunciation, the world looks like a death-well, and the kith and kin like venomous serpents, Thakur used to say this. A person, having lived at Kashi for eight years, threw away the gerua and returned home. Food was served late so he was angry with his wife and had renounced. Such a renunciation cannot stand the test. But when one loves God sincerely, one feels a distaste for the world.

The second bhakta -- Sir, why do people tell a lie unnecessarily?

M. -- We shall talk about it some other day.

By this time Shukalal, Doctor, Vinay, Manoranjan and the elder Jiten have arrived. Also the younger Amulya, Viren, Sudhir, Suren Ganguli, Gadai and others.

M. (to the bhaktas) -- Such is also heard as with Nag Mahashay. Having married he has a young wife at home but he would not accept her. They live in the same house but he does not take her. Such things happen with perfected men, great men. He married for the first time -- the wife was sixteen, and he did not live with her. A second time he would not marry. The mother is dead; the father is keen on the marriage of the son. On coming to know of this he says to the father that he will marry. He marries, but the same as before -- there is no physical relationship. Except for the great, who can get rid of the temptation in this way? That is why Jesus said: Who are married, let them live as if they were not married. There is wife in the house but they don't accept her -- what a strength of mind!

M. (to Viren) -- A rishi came to Dashratha. He said, 'Sire, you have, no doubt, conquered many kingdoms but there is one which still remains.' Dashratha said, 'Which is that?' The rishi said, 'Have you conquered lust?' Dashratha replied, 'No.' The rishi said, 'If that remains, what is your achievement? Of what avail your conquering so many kingdoms? He who has subdued lust is a

real conqueror.'

M. (to Mohan) -- Napoleon said the same in St. Helena during his last days: 'Caesar, Alexander and I, what have we achieved? These conquests lasted but two days, but the conquest of Jesus will last forever. He said, 'Our kingdom breaks even while we are living, but his (Christ's) kingdom begins at his death, and extends forever. Behold the destiny of him who has been called the great Napoleon? What an abyss between my deep misery and eternal religion of Christ?' And he also said: 'There exists an Infinite Being. Compared with Him, I, Napoleon, with all my genius, am truly nothing, a pure nothing.'

M. (to the bhaktas) -- Christ had fully conquered lust, anger and the rest. Only after this one attains eternal joy and peace. That's why his gospel is true for all times to come. There is no end to his spiritual kingdom.

''What does a worldly man live with? His environments are a different type. He has adapted himself to them. That's why he says, 'I am all right.' The avatara comes only to break this inertia. It is only when he comes and infuses strength that this inertia breaks up. The source of strength is the avatara. But even so, do people wake up? He came just a short while ago. How many people are waking up? That's why Chaitanya Deva said to his mother, 'You ask me to stay at home, that I shall do. But the body cannot survive in this fire.' The mother heard this and said, 'Go where you can preserve your body.' So he embraced sannayasa. 'The world, a burning fire,' said Thakur. Thakur also said crying to the Mother of the Universe: 'Mother, I am burning in the fire of 'woman and gold'. The body will not last!''

M. (to the Doctor) -- How easy these days! How near is the Math! And then Thakur has provided steamers. So many good men are there in the Math! So many of them are B.A.'s and M.A.'s. How to realize God, this is what they pine for. They do whatever they are asked, now they meditate, now they are shopping. And then, when there are floods, they go to render help. They are anxious like 'Brahma-jnani' mothers. These 'Brahma-jnani' mothers do not believe in gods and goddesses. They say 'I kick gods and goddesses.' They may not physically kick but at least they say so. But no sooner does the son fall ill, and the doctor, the kaviraja, feels helpless, than the old women of the neighbourhood suggest to take a vow in the Taraknath Temple. What else can she do? At last, she takes a vow, now that she is anxious for the son. So are the sadhus of the Math for God. Are the sadhus of the Math equipped only with learning? They have unbroken brahmacharya also. That is why their knowledge is so great. Whatever they read or hear, sticks in their mind -- they observe brahmacharya, you see. They have encyclopaedic knowledge. Thakur used to say, 'Pour as much water as you like in a pot with a hole, it will not stay there.' Similarly, if there is no brahmacharya, nothing is retained. Having read a few pages, one may pass an examination but soon every thing is forgotten. Reason? There is no brahmacharya. Chaitanya Deva is sitting with bhaktas in Puri. Some person asks: 'Why is it that spiritual matters do not stay in the mind of the worldly people?' Chaitanya Deva replies, 'Because they have contact with woman.' Thakur also used to say the same.

Now Lalit sings three songs at the behest of M. He has a very sweet voice and has not married. Lastly he sings --

*Will such a day come, O Mother Tara!
When two streams of tears
Will flow down from both eyes*

*As I repeat: Tara, Tara!
The lotus of the heart will open
And the darkness of the mind dispelled,
I shall roll on the ground and
Shouting `Tara', become perfect.*

The song is over. Everybody is charmed. Is it therefore that M. is presenting him with the best of gifts? M. says, ``Do you understand, Lalit Babu? Seeing all this in the world, some do not want to take a wife at all. Why should they get entangled in this labyrinth?" It is 9.30 in the evening. August 2, 1923.

2.

Class six in the verandah of the second floor of the Morton School. Entering this class, M. says to the students,

``Look here, now I am myself going to apply plaster of lime and brick-dust to the roof on the 3rd floor, where there is a leakage."

On hearing this, some boys gaze in wonder at M. Some say in spite of themselves,

``What, you yourself, Mr. Rector?"

M. says, ``Yes, my dear boys, I myself."

Some again begin to laugh. The school is over. M. is himself repairing the roof of the 3rd floor. A bhakta is helping him. M. says to the bhakta, The boys began laughing on hearing that I would do the work myself. But now they will remember this all their life. If one does not do one's own work, who else will?"

In the afternoon, he sent a bhakta to the Vedanta Society of Swami Abhedananda. The Vedanta Society has recently been started in the Central Avenue but today there has been no lecture. At the return of the bhakta he says, `Vedanta, that is revelation. God speaks through so many mouths. Does He only speak through the mouth of the avataras? A dog entered the Panchavati. What did Thakur say, `Let me go. Perhaps Ma will say something through the mouth of this dog.'

3rd August, 1923.

3.

Today, from 7.00 to 8.30 in the morning M. was in the Satprasanga Sabha. It was the Sunday assembly of the students and teachers of the Morton School, started by M. It starts with a prayer followed by the opening song. Then reading from the Gita and the Bhagavata. Thereafter religious discussion -- generally it is a discussion on the life story of some great man. The subject of discussion is decided upon beforehand. When the meeting is over M. sends Antevasi to Dakshineswar. He returns in the evening at 7 o' clock. M. asks him all about Dakshineswar -- the Panchavati, the Bel-tree spot, the shrine of Thakur, the Hanspukur (pond of swans), Nahabat (the drum-room), the Bakul spot, Mother Kali, Radha-Kanta, the twelve temples of Shiva, the courtyard (chandani), the ghat under the Bakul, the Nat Mandir and so on -- about all these he makes enquiries as devotedly as one does about a most respected living being. Today, it is Sunday. How many persons visited it? How many boats were anchored at the ghat -- all these he asked. It appeared as if he was enquiring about his Guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna -- with the same reverence and lively thoughts. Having heard all M. says, ``A good day's work.

At that place, Thakur lived for full thirty years. The whole atmosphere of the place is surcharged with spirituality."

M. is seated in the room to the left of the staircase of the first floor. The evening dhyān et. al. are over. On the floor of the room are seated the bhaktas. Both the Jitens, the Doctor, Vinay and the younger Amulya have arrived. Durgapada of the Healing-Balm fame has also come after many days. Shachi, Amrit, Viren, Gadai, Manoranjan and the younger Nalini are also there, besides some others.

M. (to Mohan) -- What was talked about in the Vedanta Samiti?

Mohan -- Abhedananda Maharaj said, 'The soul is not subject to pleasure or pain, nor to gain or loss. Religion has two parts: One the essential, the other the non-essential.' And he said, 'To unite the partial consciousness of the jiva with the universal consciousness, this is the problem of life.'

M. -- But Thakur used to say, tapasya is needed. One may read a thousand books, one may do anything, till one takes to tapasya in solitude, one can understand nothing. The people of India are blessed for having been born here. For them, mere learning does not serve any purpose. That (mere learning) is in that country (the West). For this country the maxim is 'perform tapasya'. Keshab Sen used to deliver beautiful speeches. I was then at school in class II. [1] I could not understand English well. Even so, when the lecture was to be delivered in the evening, I would go and take my seat at three in the afternoon. What a flow of English! On his way back everybody would talk about it: 'We have not understood a word but how well he spoke!' (Everybody laughs). The speech was all dry stuff. O Ma! when later on I went to Thakur, I saw that every word of his was steeped in syrup -- on hearing it, a refreshed feeling would descend on every nerve.

M. (to the bhaktas) -- The study of the scriptures has its own dangers too. Thakur used to say: The holy books have sugar mixed with sand. Who is going to sift sugar for you? If you take it whole, it will result in disease. The avatars come to interpret the scriptures. Study them by comparing with what they say. Accept what tallies and leave out what doesn't. But those who have to teach man had better know a little of everything. All this would serve as a shield and sword, to be used for 'killing' others. For oneself, even one great saying of Thakur is sufficient.

M. (to Durgapada) -- The unripe mind is beset with many dangers. Taking to unselfish work, one meets with a number of obstacles. The path of action is difficult. I hear that many persons in the Math crave for the moment when they will find leisure to call upon Him. So busy they are. Many a time, he who goes to arrange a marriage ends up by marrying himself. Arranging somebody's marriage, that is doing good to others. In doing this one gets bound. How great the danger from an unripe mind! That's why I see that those in the Math, the moment they get some leisure, free themselves and escape. One person has gone towards Dehradun to call upon Him in solitude.

'' 'Only by going into solitude,' said Thakur, 'one's mind remains healthy.' And he also said, 'His grace dawning the Veda, the Vedanta are automatically understood. Ma has shown them all to me.' If there is no facility at all one should call upon Him, remaining in the state in which he finds himself. A person is working in an office. He thinks that his job is to keep the family members satisfied and that on their being satisfied he would get the time to call on Him with his whole heart -- doing with this idea is also karma yoga. The aim should be God-realisation. As soon as one gets an opportunity one should

go into solitude and call upon Him. If there is work in one's nature will one like to go? The guru wants that you attain Him by that path. How very eligible was Arjuna! Even he had to perform work. He was given the clue: 'Act for Me. In this way, you will not be bound.' But tapasya is needed. It is proper to retire to a solitary place in-between."

All the bhaktas bade good-bye. Only the Doctor, Viren and some others are left behind. It is 9.30 p.m. Standing in the verandah, M. says to the Doctor, "While living in the household, one should consider the pet animals as one's own children. The horse has died tragically. Thereby the sin is attached to his master. Is householder's life so easy? How can one afford to be unsystematic? One had better give up the household life."

Viren -- Are we fit for a worldly life?

M. -- You are right. 'When you have become an expert, you may live the worldly life,' used to say Thakur. He saw a circus show, in the Calcutta-Maidan, seated with the bhaktas on an eight anna seat. On coming out he said: Just see, the lady was able to stand on one leg on a running horse only after so much of practice. If one is such an expert one may live in the world. Without it one will be shattered into pieces.

5th August, 1923.

4.

M. is talking to the bhaktas in the room on the first floor. The evening is past now. With a plan in his hand, a bhakta enters the room. It is the plan of a house. They discuss adopting it for the Morton School. The bhakta had prepared the plan at M.'s desire. M. says --

M. (to the bhaktas) -- Thakur used to say, 'Ma had kept me in such a state that unless some persons had offered me worship I felt uneasy.' He used to see Ma within himself, isn't it? That's why such was his condition. And he used to say, 'Sometimes She kept (me) in such a state that I might start cleaning privies.'

M. (to the elder Jiten) -- Ma had kept Nag Mahashaya as an example of an ideal householder. Those who are kept for teaching man do not have to engage themselves in multifarious activities, sometimes picking up this, sometimes giving up that. One gets crystallised in one thing. Nag Mahashaya has shown by his life what is service. Guests have arrived. He looks upon them as God personified. He would feed them and refresh them with a smoke, arrange for their rest and then take meals himself. He looked at all living beings with an equal eye. He would see God in all, so he worshipped all. This is not compassion. Charity, compassion, service -- each greater in succession. In compassion, one has the pride that one is great. Service destroys it. He would always see God and serve Him. He would humble himself before Him. That is why those who serve are the greatest of all for Him. The Chandi says the same. Those who are small before the Lord are the refuge of the world, the best of all. How one can attain perfect sannyasa while living in the household is illustrated by Nag Mahashaya. Were they small men? Thakur is an avatara -- those with him are but his own parts. Nag Mahashaya got crystallised through service. You see, God comes sometimes to carry out an inspection, together with his intimate ones. We then call Him an avatara.

M. (to the bhaktas) -- Chaitanya Deva, having embraced sannyasa, himself took his abode in Puri. He sent away Nitai so that he may marry and live as a householder. What a renunciation! A sannyasi since childhood became a

householder. The reason? For the teaching of householders; to demonstrate how to call on God while living in the household. Nityananda became a householder. Thakur used to call the household 'the house of soot'. When one lives here, one becomes a bit different. There is a world of difference between the free life of a sannyasi and the life of a householder. Once Nitai went to Puri but he did not call on Chaitanya Deva -- he was feeling ashamed. All the bhaktas met him. Not seeing Nitai he said, 'Where is my Nitai?' The bhaktas said, 'He is on the bank of the Narendra Sarovar.' He himself immediately ran to meet him and said to everybody, 'He who takes the Charanamrita of Nitai will realise God.' Why this honour? Such a great renunciation for the good of the world! He had given up sannyasa at the bidding of the Lord. He humbled himself before Him, but became great before the world. Nitai is the refuge of the bhaktas.

The elder Jiten -- Has this way of showing honour any other significance?

M. -- Why not? The Lord cannot forsake anybody. He equally loves all. Even if we are oblivious of Him, He looks after us just the same. That is how the worldly people will muster courage. This being so they will not completely drown themselves into worldliness. They will feel, the Lord does not forsake us even when we forget Him -- just as He did not forsake Nitai. That's why Christ said: '. . . for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good,' (St. Matthew 5: 45).

M. (to the bhaktas) -- Sri Ramachandra is seated in his royal court. Narada comes in. Rama and Sita quickly descend from the throne and prostrate themselves before him. Having adored him they speak thus: 'O Master, you are the world-teacher sannyasi. You give darshan to householders for teaching them.' Narada replied, 'Rama, you can't hide from me. I know who you are. You are Brahman Absolute, Brahman the Saviour. You have come now in a human body -- to destroy Ravana.' Rama began to smile. Why did Mahaprabhu show that respect to Nitai and why did Rama also prostrate himself before Narada? The reason-- since they did so, others will do it too. When others do it they will be redeemed. 'Himself following the path of dharma, He teaches humanity.' That is why it is proper for us to act on what He says and does. He thinks more for us -- we are in His hands.

Ramani begins to sing,

*O the easily pleased One,
O Shiva Shankar, O Bhola!
With the half-moon in Thy crest,
The skull as Thy earring, poison in the throat, The king of snakes
swinging over Thee!
The ash your ornament,
The best bull Thy mount,
The hide of the tiger round Thy waist
And playing on the damaru!
Ba-ba-bum Ba-ba-bum
Is swelling forth incessantly
And the Ganga flowing kal-kal, khal-khal.*

Calcutta,
August 6, 1923 A.D.,
21st Shravana, 1330 (Bengali Year),
Monday, Shukla Dashami.

Vol. 2 - Chapter 24

Sri Ramakrishna's Catholic Words --

The Holy Formula for World-Unity

Morton School. The western room on the first floor. Autumn. M. is seated with the bhaktas, in a chair, facing the east. The bhaktas are on the benches. It is 8.15 p.m. Shukalal, the younger Jiten, Mani, Manindra, Yogen and the child Khoka are seated. The Doctor, Vinay, Viren, Ramani and Manoranjan have also come. There are many other bhaktas too. Shachi and Jagabandhu have returned from the Vedanta Society. Manindra is singing one or two snatches of songs. The idea: Without subjugating lust and anger it is impossible to realize God. Moreover, without realizing God, it is not possible to completely overcome them. If you wish to realize Him, seek refuge in Him.

The elder Jiten and Virinchi Kaviraj enter.

M. (to the elder Jiten) -- But Thakur spoke about this lust to a bhakta: 'On taking up a body, a little bit of lust remains. No harm in it.' The bhakta submitted to him, 'No Sir, I want that by which it goes off completely.' Thakur replied, 'Is that possible? Even so, it is possible when God has been seen.' One's own effort is also necessary. One should practise as he has advised. As for example he has said, 'On marrying when a child or two have been born one should not sleep in the same bed with the wife, nor should the body touch her body. And those who have not married should not marry at all. One should try to give the whole of the mind to Him. Nothing is possible in a day. Keep on trying.' Making Him your refuge it comes about. He wants us to make effort. When He sees us making effort His grace dawns. He comes personally and lifts, holding one's hand, just as the mother lifts when the child has fallen down and is crying. This is what He likes to see -- that the bhaktas are making effort. Say to Him weeping, 'Father, I am unable to do any more. Please hold my hand.' When you ask Him with a yearning in your heart, He does it. Sometimes He does so even unasked. Such is a very exceptional case. Ordinarily, He wants effort. Hence it is said in the Gita, go on practising. Practice and dispassion. Dispassion, that is love for God, seeking refuge in Him, weeping and praying. This is the positive meaning of dispassion. He most surely does it when He is asked with a yearning heart. He did it in the case of that bhakta.

Now the notes from the lecture of Abhedananda are being read. Jagabandhu is reading -- Kali Maharaj (Swami Abhedananda) said today:

A famous western professor of psychology has said, 'Every sensation keeps an impression in the mind in sub-conscious regions.' The same is the belief of Sir Walter Hamilton. The yogis say that our desires are a reflection of those accumulated impressions. These impressions acted upon produce an action. Each desire for worldly pleasure leaves an impression on the mind stuff. Together they form sanskaras. A desire rises, it is satisfied. This brings peace for a while. Then arises another desire, it is also satisfied and then again comes peace. This process goes on uninterrupted from birth to birth. After God, the Image of Peace, has been seen this process comes to an end. Then there is nothing but peace. The peace that is found in the fulfillment of desires has its reverse as tension. In the eyes of the yogis, therefore, both are tensions. To them God is the only substratum of peace. The yogi, that is one who has attained self-control, whose mind is his slave. The worldly is he who has not achieved this, he who is the slave of his mind. Sadhana, that is to repeatedly fix the mind on one thing. By practice, gradually the mind is subjugated.

Some persons have their minds drawn towards God from their very childhood - for example, the Paramahansa Deva, Vivekananda, we. We are born with the good sanskaras of our previous births, that is the reason. You yourself and your father and mother, all of you have been thinking since your childhood: We shall get married, have children, run a home, win name and fame. You have grown with these sentiments. Even now you are thinking the same; in the next life you will do the same. Give up this thinking. Learn to think differently from now. Start practice -- in this very life or in the next you will succeed. Always think over this: Every enjoyment leaves an impression in the mind. The collection of such impressions is called sanskara. This sanskara repeats itself again and again and at last forms our habits. These habits again will go with us after death and are the cause of our cycles of deaths and births. This goes on increasing, it never ends. If you think over this daily, the mind will become alert. This done you will no longer be able to do the work which brings bondage.

The westerners do not accept this. They do not believe in previous births -- that is why they don't accept the fruit of action. The Sufis accept it, also the Theosophists. The Neo-science has also started accepting it. A father has five sons -- one of them is a sadhu. How can this be explained without accepting the theory of transmigration? If you say, it is God's will then why did it not happen in the case of another. His will, His grace, these are like the light of the sun -- it falls equally, both on the sadhu and the murderer. By accepting the fruit of action, you get its explanation. The Englishmen say, Luther also says so: 'Man is a beast of burden. Sometimes God drives him, sometimes Satan. They explain errors, sin and the rest through Satan.' Our doctrine is more rational and scientific than this one. Many Englishmen and Americans have now started accepting our theory. As Christianity is unable to explain all these basic problems, many are giving up this faith. They say: 'Good was created by God, evil by Satan.'

Sin, illusion, the snare of fascination -- they are all due to previous practice. These faults are self-made -- think over this. Don't lay the blame on mother, father or God. By taking them upon oneself the effort to get rid of them soon begins. The Shastra says this -- You yourself are responsible for yourself. Take the responsibility of sin and virtue upon your own self.

Some again argue to explain the varieties of nature of men -- good and evil, by heredity or environments or both. But the same objection comes again. If it is true, then why do the five sons of the same parents born, brought up and educated under the same conditions and environments differ in their characters? So this explanation is unsatisfactory. Therefore, the law of karma is the best instrument to explain it.

There is a theory, it goes to explain the varieties of the good and evil human character with reference to heredity and environments. Then the old objection rises -- that if the good and bad qualities of family and environment have such a power why then the five children of the same parents are so different from each other. They have all had their birth, bringing up and education through the same parents, under the same conditions and environment. That is why their theory is not tenable, and so the theory of karma or that of transmigration is acceptable. The doctrine of sanskaras is capable of dispelling this doubt easily.

If suffering is to be got rid of, birth and death will have to be done away with. If that is to be achieved, self-restraint and character-building are necessary. For that, sense enjoyment has to be given up. You may derive satisfaction from bhoga -- from the external objects -- but it is short-lived. After a while pain

will reappear. The peace derived from sense enjoyment is called tamasic. The rishis, the yogis say for these very reasons that there is no cessation to bhoga. The more ghee you pour on the fire the more it will burn.

If you want peace, make an effort and call on Him, you will surely get it. Without his own effort, nobody gets peace. Deliberate and act. We are always discriminating -- God is real, world unreal, sense enjoyment unreal. Sitting in the solitude of the forest and again sitting in the midst of people we are thinking the same. This is the only path to peace. Vivekananda, the Paramahansa Deva, Gauranga, Jesus, Buddha, all deliberated over this. They all arrived at the same conclusion.

The education you are getting, who gives that? Those who have never been in the vicinity of peace. If you do not wish to marry, the doctor would advise marriage. The parents would insist too. They only know this ashrama, have no idea of the higher ones. Even a eunuch would say, 'Marry'. Marrying, producing children, earning money -- there is no peace in these. You see their result before your very eyes.

Whatever you do, friend, do it taking refuge in the Lord. Otherwise there is no peace of mind. Wife, son or daughter, wealth and possessions, name and fame, nothing can give you peace. The wealthy has no peace. Wealth increases sense enjoyments. The ideal is God -- holding fast to Him live in the world, earn money, you will not be bound by it. The poison that kills will bestow life. Gradually you will be able to gain supreme peace.

The Paramahansa Deva was called mad by the people as he had married but never had sex relation with his wife. Vivekananda was advised by the doctor, 'Marry or you will lose your head.' They called us mad too. The doctors say, 'Without marriage there will be disease and the life will be spent all alone in silence and go waste.' Such are these doctors! These people are your advisers. They are incapable of seeing beyond this body. This body will not last -- this they have forgotten. The yogis, on the other hand, see two more bodies within this outer one -- the subtle and the causal. By following the advice of such advisers what will be the condition, do you know?

(the blind leading the blind and both falling into the well) -- this will be the condition. The blind man and his leader will both lose their lives by falling into a well. The university, too, cannot impart the right education. Gathering some information is not called education. This does not build the character. The education for building up character will be practical. The head and hand will work together. Then only education will be life-giving.

Say such spiritual matters to an unrestrained, lustful, pleasure-hungry individual, he would say, you have gone mad. He has no idea that above sense enjoyment also there is something good. He has never heard of the eternal peace and the supreme bliss. So he says, 'mad.' The thirst for pleasure leads to lust, anger, greed, brings about a desire for name and fame, gives birth to honour and dishonour, jealousy for others' fortune, envy and hatred. Analyse the mind and see, which feelings are uppermost. Sitting in solitude try to subjugate them, practise. Worldly people can also attain jnana by this sort of deliberation and practice and turn this world into a house of happiness. Is the world without God? Fix your mind on God and do your worldly duties.

I have seen -- whether you are sitting in a cave, in a jungle, in a forest or again you are in a kingly palace, there is peace everywhere. Going to Tibet I noticed the same peace, the same by living in America, Canada and Europe. Everywhere there is peace. So the Paramahansa Deva said: 'He who has it here

has it also there. He who has not here has not there.' He said: 'Going to Vrindaban I saw the same tamarind trees, the same everything, so my Dakshineswar is preferable.' Thereafter he did not go anywhere. When peace is established within, there is peace wherever you may live. That I have come here and living now in this country after such a long time, there is peace in it too. I have gone round the whole world and seen the same peace everywhere.

You will also get the same peace. Try to conquer your mind. Engage yourself in work. Gradually special instruction will be given. Let me see, you practise half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening. At bed-time at night, think over all these matters and sleep. The mind is so restless. To subjugate it you have to labour hard. Sri Krishna said this to Arjuna: Subjugate the mind by practice and renunciation. Doing a little every day, you will see at the end that much has been done. Persevere -- don't talk, and take to work -- practice and prayer. Go into solitude at times and sit alone. Daily, at the time of practice, sit alone. Sitting in the company of persons you will be coloured by them. The Hindus in the past used to impart this education of practice from the very childhood. The small boy used to be initiated to the gayatri -- a child of five or seven. They would make him sit and practise thrice a day. Now they have forgotten it; who would get it done? The father does not know, he has given up the practice. The school and college do not give this instruction either. So you should sit down and start practice again. Company is colour. Sadhu, thief, drunkard, in whichever company you live, all the tendencies will penetrate into you. The Paramahansa Deva used to say: The mind is, as it were, a laundered cloth -- red, black, white, yellow, in whichever colour you dye it, it will be that. Sleep alone, then try to subjugate the mind. Mend your mind. Do not be a cheat. Let your mouth and mind be one. You want self-rule, it will also come. Attainment of self-rule is the last thing. First prepare your mind. Character is the fundamental thing. Only this will go with you from life to life. Name and fame, wife and son, money and wealth will be left behind. Build character -- this precious thing.

2. Question -- Why did God create vice and virtue?

Answer -- He did not. We have done it. We Hindus are the creators of vice and virtue. This is my personal belief. It is by one's own sanskaras, good and bad that vice and virtue come into being. The work done in ignorance, that which keeps away from God, is sin. That which brings God near is virtue.

According to the Evolution Theory, the first stage is that of minerals, then of trees, animals, men, successively. The man has first ignorance, thereafter he gets knowledge. Ultimately divinity, man-God. What was the Buddha in his previous births, all this is found in the Jataka tales. Animal, bird and any number of other states he went through before he became the Enlightened one. Sri Krishna has said, 'I am born many a time.' Similarly, as one goes on birth after birth, in the end one becomes a paramahansa deva. On becoming a paramahansa one has touched 'the target in the game of hide and seek'. His play can no longer go on. His work is finished, now he is god himself. Dog, cat, all living beings will have to attain godhood one day in this way. This is called mukti, this is what is named attainment of self-rule."

M. -- In today's talk, he has nicely dwelt upon practice. Practice means to think of the same one thing again and again. This very thing is called tapasya. The mind is drawn towards worldly pleasures and enjoyments like a restless child. To bring it back home and settle it down, sometimes by love, sometimes by teaching, sometimes by beating, the way mothers do to the children. Home, that means His lotus feet. This is beautiful indeed! And prayer too. Both of these are also high concepts. By practising them, one will be saved. One should

pray: God, grant me right thinking, keep the mind at Thy lotus feet. Thakur used to say, 'Don't enchant me with your world-bewitching maya.' And the company of the holy too. Practice, prayer and holy company -- these are priceless words. Company colours the man, so the need of holy company. By bad company, how low Bharat had gone down! It is rising again.

M. (to all) -- Before the coming of Thakur how 'lower' our ideal had become! Everybody had begun to think that to be westernized was the aim of life. What a great man was Vidyasagar! Even he fell into bad company. But then it was not his fault. Company must have its effect -- the company, the environment he lived in, it was its fault. The Europeans had then newly arrived in India. Everybody presumed that their everything was good. Well, what a downfall the country had! Now again it is rising. The 'Charitavali' and the 'Akhyamanjari' of Vidyasagar are full of these very ideas. Lives of the Englishmen have been translated into Bengali in that book. What does it contain? This, isn't it, so and so was very poor. He studied with great hardships, then he became famous and was remembered by all. There is the Rover's life. He was very poor. He had no money for his education. He went to the forest and began killing squirrels. So much bloodshed, then taking the hide of these squirrels, selling them in the bazaar, he began to pay for his education with that money. Pooh! What an ideal these stories hold, these extremely relentless stories! And what did Thakur say? 'I beat the worldly honours with a broom.' They are after name and fame -- this, their ideal. But he beats them with a broom. 'Mean things they are all', said he. The ideal is God-realization.

''What else have the westerners to give by way of an ideal? The ambition of their lives is socialism or politics. Cinema, theatre, novel, dinner, dress, toilet -- they are living with these things. And sitting with girls, singing and playing -- the girls whose contact turns a person worldly, conversing, singing and playing with such girls. This is what is their ideal. The lads of our country have also begun doing the same. Seeing and hearing such things result in whetting the desire for worldly life. The higher ambition -- that is God-realization they are forgetting. The science of their country, it is good, but not knowing its application it is turning them into bhogis. And by its use they exploit other people, the weaker ones. But the aim of knowledge gradually and ultimately is to realize God, the Essence of knowledge. But where is it being practised? We are going in the opposite direction. If a blind man leads a blind man, it is the ruin of both. The rishis knew that God-realization is the aim of life. That is why, they have built this country with that aim in view. India had fallen, it is rising again. None will be able to stop it. It will win an unrivaled place in the world. Thakur has come just for this. That's why he said: Faith in the word of the guru. Guru, that is God, avatara, rishi -- his word. On listening to the word of the guru, this fall will also cease, fear will also vanish.

M. is silent. After sometime he resumes.

M. (to Viren) -- What are the worldly living with? 'Feeders', objects of enjoyment all around. Even if the mind is quieted for a while with difficulty, it is immediately assailed by stimuli from all sides. Thakur therefore said: That which contains water, near to it must be flowing a stream or the like. From there, water keeps oozing into it. Of the two pits in the field one contains water, the other does not. Seeing this, he had said this. This is the condition of the worldly. Immediately, it dries a little, worldly desires flow in. And they (the senses) have their feed along with it. So one should first 'make butter', by going into solitude. By performing tapasya, by understanding the aim -- the aim of life is God-realization -- live in the household. Thus, it will not entail much harm.

M. (to Virinchi) -- Do we have an easy awakening? Just see, what a catastrophe has befallen Japan. Five lacs of people have lost their lives outright. Why does He get these things done? For our teaching. How much does the worldly man sorrow for a son, but here so many persons have died together. It is much bigger a catastrophe than that of the orphanage. There forty three children lost their lives. In Japan, what a big calamity compared to this! He is warning us that there is a volcano below. People do not accept, so destruction takes place. How many times has it happened in Japan in the same manner! Even so, do people listen? Do they ever realize? Adhar Sen was warned against riding a horse by Thakur, when for the first time he fell from the horse, but he did not listen. He fell a second time and died. Thakur said then: 'Mother does not say again and again.' At times she warns. Unless one wakes up, death is sure.

Calcutta, 5th September, 1923 A.D.,
19th of Bhadra, 1330 (Bengali Year),
Wednesday.

3. The Morton School. The western room of the first floor. Autumn, 7.30 in the evening. M. is seated with the bhaktas. The evening meditation followed by songs is over. M. is now reading out the picturesque account of the lila of Thakur from the Kathamrita to the devotees.

M. reads --

Sri Ramakrishna, after the mid-day meals, is resting in the room with the bhaktas in Dakshineswar. Then comes Gian Babu. He is an M.A., employed in Government service. He is thinking whether to marry a second time or not, his first wife is dead.

``Ramakrishna (seeing Gian) -- Hello, what a sudden awakening of jnana . . . ! (Laughing) you being Jnana, how is it that you are ajnana (ignorant)? O, I understand, where there is jnana, there is also ajnana. Vashishtha Deva, though such a jnani, also wept at the death of his son. You go beyond jnana and ajnana . . . I saw (Pandit Shashadhar) -- dogmatic, only dry intellectual knowledge he had . . . Only dry knowledge -- It is like the fountain of fireworks, rising up with a sudden hiss sparkling for a moment and dropping down in the twinkling of an eye."

M. (to the bhaktas) -- This is the fourth picture. The other three have gone before this. Thakur says, You being Jnana, how is it that you are ajnana? That is, on marrying once you have seen that there is more pain in it than pleasure. You are sad at the passing away of your first wife, yet knowingly you are trying to enter it (household) again. That is why Thakur said this, suggesting indirectly that he should not marry again. The mind which is to be given to His lotus feet will be spent on other matters. He is encouraging him, at the same time he is exposing his defects. His encouragement was -- he has good sanskaras, otherwise he could not have Thakur's darshan. So, he is saying: You are Jnana. And also 'ajnana' -- meaning thereby that he is entering the household again by remarrying. Sanskaras are very powerful, dragging him. And bookish knowledge, intellectual knowledge -- this is weak; this also he is telling referring to Shashadhar. The fountain of fireworks with a sudden hiss means that there is not much strength within. The flow of knowledge is not uniform. Reason? This knowledge is derived from books. The knowledge which comes from God is that which He Himself supplies constantly. That's why it is not dry -- unending. It is, as if it were, a long sparkling fountain -- it does not hiss or die down -- it does not go off the beat in talks or in behaviour. It is well reinforced. That is why it is continuous jnana. This is called the state

of a vijñani -- it is attained after the supreme realization of Brahman. Chaitanya Deva and Thakur had this very state.

M. (to a bhakta) -- Describe briefly the first three scenes please.

The bhakta -- The first scene: The shrine of Thakur in Dakshineswar. After the evening prayers, he says, he who thinks constantly on God does not need any prayer. In Rishikesh, a sadhu would stand near a spring and repeat the whole day, 'Ah, well done!'

``The second picture: Thakur is returning to his room from the Panchavati. New clouds rising in the sky behind Thakur -- their reflection falling in the Ganga -- the clouds are, as if, the background.

``The third: The sitting room of Balaram. He is saying to Balaram's father, 'He who has brought about a synthesis is the real man'.

M. (to the bhaktas) -- There are three types of meditations -- concentrating over the form, on the lila and on a great saying. These scenes constitute concentration on the lila accompanied by form as well as saying. It is easy this way. (Laughing) The Vaishnavas, they say, are dogmatic. So he says to Balaram Babu's father, 'Most people are dogmatic'. Thakur did not like it. He has come to unite the people of the world. How then could he like dogmatism? Unlettered and yet how large-hearted! Hindus, Muslims, Christians -- men of different faiths come to him. He accepts them all. His practising of different religions was to this very purpose -- he knew the world will become like one family. Due to the influence of science, communication is becoming easy. Now there is no place for dogmatism. How long before he could foresee the world coming together. This broadmindedness of his is going to unite all. Already it is being noticed how many people are accepting his way of thinking.

After a few moments, reading from the Bhagavata starts; Jagabandhu is reading --

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: 'O the son of Kunti, kill the wretched brahmin who murders the sleeping innocent children at night. To pardon such a person is not lawful. He who knows the rules of war will never kill the dead-drunk, the uncautious, those frenzied due to natural calamity, asleep, children, women, the unprepared, the surrendering, the mountless and the frightened enemy. Those who are cruel, wily, who by taking away the life of others fortify their own life -- punishing them by death will be to their own benefit. The reason -- if wrongs are not checked by punishment or expiation, the downfall of the sinner continues. Therefore, kill this sinful relative--murderer.

M. -- Formerly, all these rules of war were observed. Now it is not so. Even a hospital may be bombed. They are observed in a society which has God-realization as its ideal. Bharatvarsh is such a country. It has fallen and is rising again. It will rise very high. Thakur's advent, just for this reason.

The reader --

Ashwatthama was bound and brought before Dropadi. Seeing his condition, Dropadi said, 'Free him at once . . . The guru's family to which all reverence is due, will be drowned in the ocean of sorrow -- this will be wrong. I am crying, shedding incessant tears all the time at the shocking loss of my sons. Let not his mother Gautami also have to shed tears in the same way.'

M. -- Just see. She lost five sons, so much sorrow for her, but even then she did not give up her duty. This is possible only in India. She has lost everything

herself -- but she doesn't pay much heed to that, her object of attention is Gautami. Lest she should have to fall in this fire of grief, this is her only thought. This is what is called divine disposition. What a heroism in spite of her being a woman. Where others' interest comes first and one's own interest comes later, there resides this divine disposition. In other words, the abode of God. When the opposite is the case it is animal disposition, human disposition. Sri Krishna was with them, you see. That is why such a high ideal. Such a thing is rare in the world. Hearing these great words of Dropadi, Sri Krishna said, 'Yes, the guru's son cannot be killed.' The murderer can be killed but as the guru's son he cannot be. Even so, to save both sides the guilty should be punished and yet his life saved. On Sri Krishna's advice Arjuna, having pierced a hole in the jewel of his fore-head, exiled Ashwatthama. May be the jewel was tied to his top tuft of hair that was cut. This is a death like insult. It is for this reason, I believe, that the people of the west (to the west of Bengal) don't let anybody touch the top tuft of hair.

M. (to Amrit) -- Ahalya, Dropadi, Kunti, Tara, Mandodari -- they all had more than one husband, even so they deserve to be remembered every morning. Why so? I have asked a sadhu who told me, 'For the reason that they are bhaktas.'

Jagabandhu -- Were there no other bhaktas that only they should be remembered? Were they bhaktas and polyandrous at the same time or did they become bhaktas later on?

M. -- There is no other case like theirs, you see -- a bhakta as well as polyandrous. Only she is a sati (chaste) who has one husband. They had bhakti and attraction for more than one man simultaneously. It is said that Dropadi also desired Karana secretly. Mary, the disciple of Jesus, was a prostitute. She was turned into a saint by his contact. After the crucifixion, she was the first to whom Jesus gave darshan. Mary had cried a potful of tears for God. God judges the mind. They who cry for Him a potful of tears, them He lifts in His lap. Genuine tears for Him are needed.

M. -- The War of Kurukshetra was over. Dhritarashtra, Kunti and the Pandavas are sitting together. Gandhari is smitten by grief. Sri Krishna consoling her, says, 'Devi give up your grief. Death will carry away all, sooner or later. Engage your mind in the meditation of the Self.'

In Kurukshetra, perhaps some twenty lakhs of people were killed. It happened in the distant past, so it does not touch the mind so much. But very recently, five lakhs of people died in Japan. In one stroke five lakhs! What a terrible thing for that country! Such a catastrophe had no parallel in the world. They know they have a volcano below. If they still choose to live there, they have to die.

If we had the sight to see from here, if we could see all, what a terrible shock it would have been. That He has not given. Man while living in this world giving his mind to enjoyments has grown powerless. To add to it, if he could see all this external distress, he would have no way out. 'Uncle look after yourself.' That is why God did not grant us the sight to see distant things. But He can do anything. What would have been our condition, just imagine, on seeing the people of the earth smitten by grief at the loss of their children? Besides, there is grief of many kinds. Seeing them all what would have been our condition? Think only of your own affairs. They are quite enough.

``Thakur had said, 'One day, I saw in dhyana a Himalayan high tower of dead bodies, and I was sitting in the midst of them.' In other words, the whole world

is a cremation ground. Everybody has the impress of death fixed on his face.
So the tower of death. If somebody were to think on just this picture and
perform japa, he would attain perfection. But who has the awakening?

Calcutta,
September 6, 1923 (A.D.),
20th of Bhadra, 1330 (Bengali Year),
Thursday.



M. - The Apostle and the Evangelist: Volume V

Chapter 8

M. with Dr. Hummel of America-I

1.

Morton School. It is 5 p.m.; the sitting room on the second level. M. is seated in the centre, facing east. Dr. E.M. Hummel (M.D.) is before him, seated on a chair facing southwest. A devotee attendant is standing behind M. This gentleman has come from Los Angeles, a city in the State of California in USA. A man of heavybuilt, he is about 50, and a bachelor. He practises spiritual disciplines. His family members say that he is crazy. He has come for M.'s darshana. Once before, he had come in the morning at about 1130 for a little while. He has read the English version of the first part of the Kathamrita (M.'s English Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) times without number. He knows the book by heart. His book is marked with a variety of coloured pencils, almost the same way as children do while reading their textbooks. With what attention he has read the book! Even the difficult words occurring in the songs have been marked by him with the intention of asking M. to explain their meaning. Such devotees of foreign lands are rare indeed—so peaceful, so thoughtful, so full of faith! Some kind enquiries and the conversation begins.

Dr. Hummel (to M.)—When I set out for India, I made up my mind to see you. I have read your book. A good many people in America have benefited highly by reading it.

M. - It is a matter of great pleasure. Well, have you been to the Belur Math?

The Doctor - Yes sir. I have been there and also to Dakshineswar. A young man has shown me all the holy places. I have some questions to ask. May I?

M. - Yes, please do.

The Doctor—What are the signs of Godvision?

M. He who has seen God becomes like a child of five. He is always in communion with God. Sometimes he laughs, sometimes cries, sometimes he behaves like mad.

The Doctor—Why did you not write particularly about the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna?

M. - That was too tragic an event. I didn't like to write about it.

The Doctor—How many more records relating to him have you?

M. - Four parts of 'Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita' have already been published in Bengali.[*]: I have written only one part of it in English. Besides there are some more records.

The Doctor—Aren't you thinking of publishing the rest in English? Or

perhaps you do not wish to give it to the West.

M. No, no, I am unable to do so because of weak physical health. If the Lord gives me strength, then alone it may be possible .

The Doctor - Swami Abhedananda's book is different from yours.

M. Yes; he has published it after adding his own reminiscences.

The Doctor-Is there no criterion of jnana, spiritual knowledge?

M. No. He used to say so. He used to say) that it is transformation of states-Now it's one state, now it changes! That's why there is no criterion

The Doctor ~ ' Renounce Kamini-kanchan', this is his advice.

What exactly did he try to make people understand by giving this

[*]M.. wrote Part V later on.

advice? Did he mean to say: Give up their enjoyment-give up lust and greed? Or was it something else?

M. (remaining silent for a while)-'...Mary hath chosen that good part (love of God), which shall not be taken away from her.' (St. Luke 10:42)

The Doctor-Did you hear from his lips that there lived somebody like us by the name of Christ?

M. - Yes, he did say that one day Christ had merged into his body in the garden-house of Yadu Mullick.

The Doctor-Were you present there at that time? M. - No, he told us later on.

The Doctor-Did you hear it yourself from his lips? M. - Yes, I did hear it from his lips.

The Doctor-Since you say so I believe it.

2.

M. (after a brief silence) - Thakur repeated Allah, the name of God, on a string of beads continuously for three days. At that time, he offered namaz five times a day like the Muslims.

"He said: 'I incarnated myself as Christ before.' We are fortunate that we saw him. That's why we have some intimation of Christ. Generally the Christians have not been able to understand him."

The Doctor-For many it is just fashionable-they have not understood him. If they hear the words of Sri Ramakrishna, they will understand Christ better. You are blessed, for you have had the good fortune of his company.

M. - Yes, the shastras say that it's by virtue of one's good deeds of previous lives that man has the good fortune of the darshana of the avatara and his company.

The Doctor - How many of those who sat at his feet were able to have atma-darshana (self-realisation)?

M. - It is so difficult to give a definite answer to this question.

The Doctor-Well, what is avesha?

M. - Christ said to the Samaritan woman: 'Give me water from this well and save me; in return, I will give you water that will give you eternal life, amritatva.' + This is an example of avesha-to get immersed in divine emotion-to be transformed into a godman in a moment.

The Doctor-Did he tell you of his passing away beforehand?

M. - Yes, he said that he wished to live in the body a little longer. Thereby some more persons would be illumined. But it could not be helped. The Mother was calling. So he had to go.

The Doctor-Were you present at the time of his passing away? Did he quit the body in samadhi?

M. - 'Ma, Ma Kali': he uttered these words and immediately his whole body got horripilated. The body was preserved in that state for eight hours. Bhaktas from Calcutta started coming for his darshana. The Captain, the representative of the Nepal Government, also came along with others. The Captain had knowledge of these matters. He declared, "Now the body can be taken away and the funeral rites performed."

The Doctor-Do you have a copy of your photograph?

M. - Yes. (To the devotee attendant) Please bring that group photograph of ours. (Girish, Daben, Gopal, Latu, M. and others are there. M. shows them in the photograph to the Doctor.) All others have departed; I alone am here.

The Doctor-Would you kindly give me a copy of your photograph?

M. (pointing to his son Prabhasa Babu) - You may please ask him if there is one. Another photograph was taken about fifteen years ago. (To himself) They are gone to the bourn from where no traveler returns!

The Doctor-Have you read Shakespeare?

M. (most humbly, in spite of being so learned) - A little bit.

The Doctor-There were so many young men like Vivekananda

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[+] Compare St. John 4:14

and others, but none of them kept a record of his (Thakur's) words. How did you?

M. (politely) - Not I, he made me keep it. (To the Doctor) After your safe arrival in America, do kindly write to us. I shall be very happy.

The Doctor-I am not sure whether I shall go back or not. My parents are not alive and I am a bachelor. So there is no attraction for me to go.

M. (joyfully) - Oh! I see you are a sannyasin, a great bhakta ' A tree is known by its fruit.

The Doctor (humbly) - I don't yet have the qualities of a sannyasin. The highest ideal of my life is sannyasa. Sir, I have another question to ask you. What is samadhi?

M. - In samadhi, the external-consciousness is lost - one becomes one with Ishwara. So, nobody can tell what one's internal state becomes then. A saltdoll had gone to measure the ocean, but got dissolved and itself became the ocean. So who would then come back to report? The mind is uplifted completely from this external world of ruparasa (form and taste). He who reaches that state only knows what happens-it is not possible to make others understand that state fully. That state is beyond senses, beyond knowledge-it's the state of being beyond mind and speech. Someone has seen the sea. He tries to explain it to another who has not seen it. Just as this attempt is incomplete and hazy so is that. Samadhi cannot be described correctly. It is not possible to explain it by words of mouth. After the samadhi, one feels a continuous flow of a particular ananda a never ending joy lingers-and there is peace within. 'I am the Self of the Eternal Bliss' - this jnana, this realisation, never disappears. Only a man of samadhi lives alive and awakened in this mortal world, He lives in the world but is not of the world-he is a jivan-mukta.

(After a momentary silence) 'Various are the states of jnana. In a particular state, Thakur used to say: "The plants and trees, the fruits and flowers, the gardener and the entire garden, so to say, appear to be made of wax-all made of Satchidananda." This state is called visishtadvaitavad - qualified nondualism."

Dr. Hummel takes leave. He says he will come again tomorrow.

3.

It is terribly hot in Calcutta today, as if a fire is raging The mercury has touched 111° C today. Such extreme heat is a rare phenomenon here. M. feels very uncomfortable in heat- old as he is. But while engaged in divine talk with that earnest bhakta, he had lost body-consciousness, as it were, so far. It is now 6.30 p.m. M. is pacing up and down on the roof; the devotee attendant is with him. They are conversing.

M. (to the devotee attendant)- These persons are really sincere. Just see from where he comes-from across so many seas. Thakur said: "One who is sincere will have to come here." How can they (the westerners, understand this country? If one wishes to understand Christ, one will have to understand Thakur first. Dr. Hummel too said the same thing today: that they have not understood anything. So much glory of Thakur is now spreading. The Christians, the Mohammedans, the Parsees, the Jews, the Hindus-all these people accept it.

"We did not offer him (Dr. Hummel) anything to eat: I feel so sorry for it. One should sincerely entertain such persons. However, the book (The Gospel, Part I) has been given to him. We will entertain him tomorrow. He asked for a photograph. What is the need of it-when this body will not last? It is different that Thakur let his photograph be made. It was because it would do good to people. So many people are now being benefited by looking at him in the state of samadhi. In foreign countries, they take the photographs of those whom they love. Dr. Hummel will come tomorrow at 5.30 p.m. He said he would bring Thakur's photograph which he has got made nicely."

Sadananda comes and salutes M. The young men, Sadananda and Lakshmana, are from Orissa. They are in service here. They are bhaktas. Lakshmana has a job in the Advaita Ashrama. Recently a branch of that Ashrama has been opened in Shankar Ghose Lane.

M. (to Sadananda) - Please tell him (Lakshmana) that people; want to remain at such places without any monetary consideration. Some remuneration however is accepted for helping the parents at home. However, he does not want to stay on at such a place.

Sadananda-He says he longs to come to Master Mahashaya (M.) but gets no time.

M. - If he comes to the Master Mahashaya, he will ask him, to do the same-to be in the company of sadhus and serve them. (After a pause, to Jagabandhu) There is no way other than holy company and serving sadhus. But strange are the ways of Mahamaya! She tries to lead astray. For (ordinary) people that's a centre of attraction where the sadhus are vilified. So amusing it is! A certain monk was speaking ill of two sadhus of the Math. I called a babu and asked him to take him away to the terrace. If someone speaks to me such things it is different. But if others are told these things, where will they stand? When great men (Mahapurushas) are vilified, people are all attention to it. Men is made of both good and evil. > On assuming a body, all this will be there."

It is dusk. M. is seated on the terrace. Part I of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna: 'Thakur at the Cossipore Garden House' is being read. The Younger Amulya., Shachi, the Elder Jiten, Shanti, Jagabandhu and others are present. The devotee attendant reads; while absorbed in meditation, M. listens with his eyes closed. Nobody utters a word. After a hot spell, a little cool breeze is blowing, dark clouds overcast the sky. The city is flooded with light. The reading is in progress in the Eight of a hurricane lamp-only the voice of the reader and the account of Thakur's divine play are audible. Everybody is silent as though absorbed in meditation. The reading is now over. M. has, as if, lost outward awareness-he remains sitting in this way for a long time. None of the bhaktas dares to break this pensive concentration. After a long time M., with his eyes closed, says in an undertone: "I see-I realise-that all things, every conceivable thing, comes out of this." (Now he opens his eyes.) That is, I am the cause of the creation, preservation and destruction of this world-(that I) have now descended in the human form. Thakur said it so clearly, yet do people believe even then? Such is His Maya. If one pays heed to some of these words, one's whole life will be so happy-all problems of life will be solved- the man will become a god."

- Calcutta, 31 March 1924

- 17th of Chaitra 1330 (Bengali Year), Monday.

Chapter 9

M. with Dr. Hummel of America-II

1.

It is 5 p.m. Dr. E. M. Hummel, an M. D. of America, has come again today. Yesterday too he had come. M. and Dr. Hummel are seated on

chairs in the sitting room on the second level-M. is facing east, and the guest (Dr. Hummel) south. Mani, the Younger Amulya and Jagabandhu are also present. Prabhasa Babu and his sons also come in sometimes. Dr. Hummel takes out of his pocket a new watch named 'Yankee Radio Light'. He has brought it from America. Then he takes out two pictures of Thakur from his pocket. He has got these two pictures made to his own liking. They are in a good colour combination-they look beautiful. Holding the watch and the pictures in both hands, he humbly presents them to M. with great reverence. He says, I shall feel obliged if you kindly accept them. I have some more pictures. And please accept this also-a copy of the 'Gospel' printed in America."

M.-Many thanks! I already have some copies of this book. They sent me fifty copies from the San Francisco Ashrama -that's how I have them. You may please keep the copy.

The Doctor-By looking at this photograph, we doctors can tell that there was an apprehension of cancer (in Thakur). The sight is affected. That's why he looks in this way.

M.-Is it so?

The Doctor - Do you know which of Thakur's parables is my favorite? The Parable of the Dyer. 'A customer comes - he dyes his cloth yellow, another's cloth red and yet another's black. No one returns without his cloth being dyed.' I like this parable very much.

M.-That's good! This parable explains the state of the Supreme Brahman with form and attributes. Ishwara is without form and without attributes. He is also with form and with attributes. He is only in His state of 'form and attributes' that He assumes different names and forms-avataara and others included therein. Whichever be the faith that a man practises, he has a place here. A Christian has a place here, a Mohammedan also has a place here-all faiths have a place in him. This is the moral of this parable. There are no bounds here-no room for dogmatism-no rejection, all acceptance.

M. opens Part I of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, in English, printed in San Francisco, and shows a group photograph to the Doctor. There are twelve devotees in that group. M. names them one by one. The Doctor now discusses the photographs of Thakur.

The Doctor-How many authentic photographs of Thakur .are there?

M. - Three-we have so far three different photographs of Thakur.

(Showing one) This one was taken at the residence of Keshab Sen - Hriday, the devotee attendant, is holding him. This, in his standing posture, was taken between 1870 and 1875. His mind had then risen to a very high state, beyond the range of the senses. (Showing another photograph) And this one too is his standing posture. Thakur has one of his hands resting on a pedestal. This is also suggestive of a very lofty state. It was taken in a studio in Radhabazar in 1881. Thakur had come to Sri R. Mitra's residence in Jhamapukur close by, on that day. (Showing another photograph) This one is worshipped in all the Maths. Pointing to this photograph, Thakur had said one day: "Hereafter this photograph will be worshipped in every house." In this one, his mind is completely absorbed in the Supreme

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Brahman-the knowledge of the external world totally erased- e his mind meeting the ocean of Satchidananda and completely merged with the Supreme Being- one with God-in total samadhi. This one was taken sometimes between 1882 and 1885. Thakur was seated on the steps of the Shiva Mandir in Mother Kali's Temple. A bhakta, Bhavanath, had brought a photographer who took the photograph.

The Doctor-If anyone in the West calls on God, everybody says he has gone mad. When a relative or a friend dies, they put on (a black band) as a sign of mourning for a week. Anyone not putting on this sign of mourning is also called mad. All of them have lost themselves in Kamini-Kanchana.

M. - Christianity has come to be regarded as a fashion. The main concern of this country is God; in the West, it is matter- the world. That is why this country is called theistic, and that one materialistic.

2.

M. has been feeling sad that the Doctor was not served any~~ refreshments yesterday. They have been arranged for him today in advance. M. treats the Doctor to Indian food. Putting the plate on a high bench, the Doctor is eating with his fingers like an Indian. The ladies of the house have prepared luchis, fried parawal (a vegetable), milk, chutni with raisins and cheese payas. The famous sweets of Bengal- sandes and rasogolla-are also served. Prabhas attends. M. is helping the Doctor, saying, "Please take this first and then that"-like this. He himself puts two more fried parawals on his plate, also a little more of chutni, and then oranges. The Doctor sips iced water in between. Last of all, before drinking the green coconut water, he takes out a glass pipe from his pocket, puts it into the green coconut and starts drinking the water. While drinking the green coconut water, he says, "I had heard a lot about this drink. So, in India I have always been taking the green

coconut water using this pipe. I do not drink any other water. This, indeed, is very invigorating, refreshing and delicious."

Eating over, the Doctor is still seated. It is a little dark inside the room. In spite of it, M. opens Part I of the 'Gospel' and reads out to him the last chapter: Thakur in the Cossipore Garden House.'

M. is reading: '...Thakur says, "Amongst them (different avatars) I behold also this (his own) form. The Lord has manifested Himself in this body too."

M.-This 'form' means his own body. This is an absolutely clear declaration that he was an avatara. There can be no doubt about it.

"He had a great desire to illumine some more persons by opening their spiritual eye. But the Divine Mother willed that he returned. Granting liberation is the greatest gift of God-lest out of compassion, he should have granted it to all and sundry, the Lord called him back. See, Thakur himself said: "Had this body stayed on in this world a little longer, some more people would have been illumined." Later, a young devotee sits dejected beside Thakur's bed. Thakur encourages him saying: "Why, why, are you so depressed? Shake this dejection off. Rejoice." The Bible also says so: When the bridegroom comes, the whole family rejoices. Can those who accompany the bridegroom ever be grief stricken so long as they are with the bridegroom?"

"Thakur says: 'Within this body, there are two persons. One is the Divine Mother, the other is Her bhakta. It is the second person who has been taken ill.'" In these words also he hints that the Lord has manifested Himself in this human form."

M. (remaining silent for a while)-Thakur now says that one can have His darshana by following any one of the paths of jnana or bhakti. How? Because, as he also says, shuddha jnana and shuddha bhakti are one and the same. Brahman is without form and without attributes. Even after darshana, some retain devotion for Him in His manifestation with form and with attributes. Thakur says so.

(To the Doctor) "Now listen, Thakur is saying, 'I see, I clearly understand, that the whole world, every visible thing in this

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world, comes out of this (he points to his body).' These great words from his mouth are another indubitable declaration and a clear announcement."

3.

When he has finished his reading, M. becomes pensive for awhile. He resumes.

M. (to the devotees)-Do you know the story of two friends in a mango orchard? Directly upon entering the orchard, one of them begins to eat mangoes. The other, however, begins counting the number of trees, their varieties, their branches and the millions of their leaves. When the time is over, the gardener drives both of them out. One of them is full of joy, the other who could not eat mangoes very sad.

"The moral of this parable is: O Jiva, forsaking all other things, proceed towards the goal of life: How to see Him first. No one knows when death will come-everything will then be over in a moment. As soon as the bell rings, one will have to come out of the orchard-it won't be possible for one to tarry for a moment. Before this great journey we should keep ourselves in readiness. Eating mangoes means attaining jnana and bhakti by means of constant prayer-this effort."

The Doctor-This is indeed a fine parable.

M.-Thakur said to his bhaktas: "You will not have to do much. Who I am and who you are, knowing this will do." That is to say, "I am Bhagavan, manifesting Myself in a human form, and all of you My children. " This knowledge is enough. This is the essence of what we have read so far in the Gospel. He who believes in this great saying of Thakur, will certainly be saved.

The Doctor-I express my heartfelt thanks to you. I have another special question to ask. One finds in the Gospel that women are placed differently from men in the field of religion. What does it imply? Where does a woman stand in the field of religion?

M.-Thakur used to say: "There are two classes of women, one vidyashakti and the other avidyashakti. Vidyashakti helps in God-realisation and avidyashakti takes one away from God, binds one in sensory pleasures." Rare indeed are women with vidyashakti-they can be counted on finger tips. Thakur said: "Even if a woman rolls on the ground with bhakti, a male aspirant must not mix with her." Women cannot live without men. Perhaps this is the reason why they are called abala (weak).

The Doctor-There is no distinction between man and woman in the west-both have equal rights. Many women have asked me whether they have no right to Godrealisation.

M.-They certainly have - if they are vidyashaktis. Let them love Him, they will have His darshana.

The Doctor-Here is a song, I have a question to ask.

Dr. Hummel opens the 'Gospel', at the chapter entitled, "Steamer trip with Keshabchandra Sen" and reads the song: "Come, o my mind, let us go out for a walk. Let us gather the four fruits * at the foot of the Kali, the Kalpa Tree." Its third line reads, 'O when shalt thou lie down in the abode of the Blessed with Shuchi (purity), and Ashuchi (impurity) both by thy side.

The Doctor (to M.)-The feeling of purity and impurity no longer survives after Godrealisation. Is this the meaning of this line?

M.-Yes. In a certain state, it happens like this. Then the mind feels that everything is pervaded by Brahman. So the question of purity and impurity does not arise then.

The Doctor - Did you ever see Thakur in that state?

M.-Yes, at times all such distinctions disappeared in him?

The Doctor - Thakur used to say: "One should weep and

* 'The four fruits are Dharma (good action), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), Moksha (liberation of the soul).

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earnestly call on Him secretly in solitude. But how is this to be done by one who has to work for his livelihood?

M. - No, this is not enjoined upon all for all times. Retire into solitude now and then-this is what he said to all people.

The Doctor - People in the West love to work for money. What is the way for them to realize God?

M. - There certainly is a way, provided they do everything as service to God, that is to say, without any selfish motive. It is their nature to work-they work because they can't help it. If one works for one's bodily comforts or the enjoyment of sensory pleasures, it won't do

The Doctor (sadly) - I think it's education that colours the mind differently. Thakur was not educated to earn money. I would be saved if I could forget all I have learnt.

M. - 'Is not this the carpenter's son...?' (Matthew 13: 55)- Christ never had any education. But what a wonder-never did any one speak such words of wisdom! * After Godrealisation there is no dearth of knowledge. 'The Mother pushes forth heaps :(of knowledge)', Thakur used to say.

The Doctor-While studying medical science, I had also to read a little of psychology. Afterwards when I read the teachings of Thakur that Shuddha-jnana and Shuddha-bhakti are one and the same-I was so amazed-a super psychological statement this. It conforms to Plutarch and some other authors of Greek Philosophy.

M.-Yes, but Thakur did not say so after deliberation as the pandits do. He had direct vision of it-the Mother showed it to him in a flash. Where he reached by the path of jnana, there too, he reached by the path of bhakti. After it, he said these great words. This is an eternal truth. It was clearly revealed to him-it was not the result of deep meditation.

"Thakur said: "Verily, verily I swear unto you that whosoever will think on me shall inherit my wealth, even as a son does

. * Compare St. Mark 6:2&3

inherit his father's wealth. And my wealth consists of jnana-bhakti, viveka-vairagya, shanti-sukha, and prema-samadhi."

Dr. Hummel asks for leave to depart. Lovingly M. accompanies him downstairs and walks with him along the Amherst Street. Entering the Machhua Bazar, when M. is in front of the Nabavidhan Mandir, he stops and says to the Doctor, "Look at this. This is Keshab Babu's Brahmo Samaj. Thakur visited this place." When asked by the Doctor whether everyone could enter it, M. says, "Yes." Saluting M., the Doctor departs. Before leaving, however, he leaves his address with the devotee attendant and takes M.'s address. M. looks compassionately at the departing devotee and utters, "Durga, Durga, Sri Durga!"

5.

The Morton School terrace on the fourth level. It is the dark fortnight, about 9 p.m. Countless stars are shining like gems on the bright dark sky. The terrace is somewhat lighted by their glow. Down below innumerable strings of electric lights can be seen in the great city of Calcutta. The flash of these lights is also reflected on the terrace. M. paces up and down, in long strides northsouth, on the terrace. Dr. E. M. Hummel of America has left only a short while ago. Some of the bhaktas are with M., while the others are seated on the southern side of the terrace. It appears from the face of M., in the thin glow of the light, that he is wonderstruck by some extraordinary scene. After some time, he talks to himself as he paces.

M. (to himself, wonderingly)-Where does this kartagiri, (that I am the doer) come from? Just as the fish cannot live without water- and if one keeps it out of water it tosses about- Similarly we cannot also live without air. Where is kartagiri (doership) in this? Don't you see Mr. Dunn is gone?

"The child drinks the mother's milk. So it lives. We also do the same. The Big Mother's milk (Jagadamba's) we are always drinking. Air, water, food- everything is Her milk. During

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the winter, She is Herself on the body, in the form of cotton and wool, protecting the body. That's also drinking Her milk."

M. sits down on the north side of the terrace. Overwhelmed with emotion he sings:-

You are Tara. Though you have assumed the three gunas,. You are even beyond the limitless. I know You, merciful Mother! You are the one to free me from all trials and tribulations. You live on sea, You live on land and you are at the root of the Beginning. You live in bodies, in all hearts, both with form and without form. You are Sandhya, you are Gayatri. You are the nurse of the Universe, O Mother! You enable one to cross the ocean of the world, You, the Ever-Beloved of Shiva.

O Ma, the Controller of the hearts! You are ever awake within. Night and day I live in your lap. Why have you so much. . affection, love for this mean child? You are, as though mad in Your Love. Sometimes lovingly, sometimes with all Your force, You make me drink Your nectar and tell me sweet tales. How You love me! It cannot be calculated. Again and again You redeem me, You the Redeemer of the fallen,! Oh! I have found the secret now: Ma is mine and I Hers. I must walk the path of virtue, listen to You. Sucking at your breast I must be strong and brave, And sing joyfully, "Victory to You, Mother Eternal!"

M. remains silent for a while. He resumes his talk.

M.-It's just like a puppet dance. The wire drops, immediately it's the end.

M. again sings a song:

Song 3

Ever blissful Kali, the Charmer of the mighty Mahakala. You dance alone, You sing alone clapping Your hands. O Mother! You are the First Cause Eternal, of the form of the Void, wearing the moon on Your forehead. When the universe did

not exist, where did you find your string of severed human heads? You alone are the Mover in every body; we move as you move us. We dance as you make us dance; we speak as You make us speak. But the restless Kamalakant calling You names says: 'Ma, the Destroyer of all, holding Your sword now, You have eaten up both virtue and vice!'

M.-That is why the rishis, in their search for the Real found Him alone-[Sanskrit] | Thakur also said: "What more shall I think of? I see, that the Mother alone pervades all."

"It is like the pulling of the string of the handpulled ceiling fan through a hole-a man sitting outside pulls at its string, but as the puller is not visible one may say there is nobody. Likewise, people say that the creation is automatic. They cannot see its predisposition. That's why they say that God does not exist."

While talking, M. moves to his usual place to the south and takes his seat on a chair facing north.

6.

M. (to the bhaktas)-Has none of you brought water of Varuni? [+] Its anniversary was celebrated on this day at the Cossipore Garden. Thakur had Varuni water brought and asked everybody to take it. Today I saw water being carried by people, on the main road of the Cornwallis Street. People also wore a mark on their foreheads. They had a dhoti on-a wet one. It was so hot that it dried up in the sun.

"There are three bodies within. The gross, the subtle and the causal. Thakur used to refer to the causal body as Bhagavati Tanu (the spiritual body). The food for the gross body is all this: eatables, drinks and so on; the subtle body comprises the mind and the intellect-which also need food. And the causal body-

[+] Varuni is a bathing festival held on the eve of the 14th lunar day of the dark fortnight of the month of Chaitra.

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its food is the effort to attain God. It also needs food. That's why people were carrying water in search of that food.

"It was that body which was asking for food. So they were going in search of it."

M. is silent. He resumes his talk.

M.-A man chooses association according to what he is. Thakur cherished the desire to see some bhaktas sitting together and doing japa. Noting that Latu had woken up late in the morning, Thakur reprimanded him one day and said that if he was not well he could get up, repeat the name of God for a while, after washing his hands and mouth, and lie down again.

"Wayward people could not stay with him. Those who stayed with him had always to engage themselves in some godly pursuit such as japa etc."

Dharmapada Babu (to M.)-Can one remain without meditation on God (which is the food for the causal body)? One should meditate on God.

M.-Where is the question here of what one can do or cannot, what one should do or should not? It is He who makes us do. Do people act after thinking? He makes us do, there is no way out. It's prakriti, one's nature-there s no question of 'should' - it does not arise at all.

Dharamapada Chattopadhyaya is a teacher in the Morton School.

M. sings a song:

Song 1

Blessed by Thy vision, when, O Lord Hari, the embodiment of Love, the wave of blissful knowledge will swell up in my heart? (When will that day dawn on me?) When will the body be thrilled and the mind and soul enthralled, with tears of joy flowing down the two eyes (beholding Thy enchanting beauty)? When shall I see from the depth of my heart (drowned deep in emotion) thy loving face aglow with purity and light divine? When shall I fulfill my heart's cherished desire and have Thy touch of embrace?

Song 2

Thou hast removed all my sorrows and charmed my mind with Thy vision. Having Thee, the woes of the seven worlds are forgotten. What of me, so very mean and unworthy?

M.-Vivekananda sang these songs at the Cossipore Garden after he heard Thakur say: "But I feel very clearly that there is the One within." Thakur had also said, "So long as there is 'I', the master-and-servant relationship is only good." Vivekananda was full of these feelings. Coming down he, therefore, sang these songs.

M. again sings a song.

Song 3

O mind, you do not know how to farm. Fallow lies the rare field of man's life. Had you cultivated it well it would have yielded gold. Hedge it with the name of Kali; no harm would come to the harvest. The hedge of Goddess Kali with flowing hair is the stoutest of all- Death does not come near it. Now or a hundred years later, you have to forfeit this land. Concentrate, O mind! do your utmost to reap a rich harvest. Sow the seed your Guru has given you and irrigate it with the water of love. And if you cannot do it alone, O mind, take Ramprasad with you for help.

After singing this song, M. sits in silence for a long time. Now he resumes his talk.

M. (to the bhaktas)-We are drinking milk from Her breast, through different channels, day and night. At the Goldighi, we saw birds taking a bath in the water, one after the other. On seeing it, it came to my mind: Lo! for them also He has provided water beforehand.

(To Gadadhar) "One should, therefore, practise tapasya in solitude-and constantly pray to Thakur: 'Lord, reveal Thyself, reveal Thyself, reveal Thyself! "

M. (in a musical tone)-O Mother, seeing Your strange antics, O the Playful One, I am struck dumb.

"Why, see Christ was crucified. Rama was drowned in the River Sarayu. Krishna cast off his body when an arrow from a fowler's bow hit him. According to one version Chaitanya Deva was drowned in the sea. Ramakrishna Deva suffered from cancer for a year.

"Why this suffering even in the case of the avatara? So that people may have hope and courage.

"Again, see Shankaracharya had anal fistula, the Buddha colic pain. The latter was very old. It was as if a cart with a broken wheel was being dragged along, its body being immobile.

' Why did such a thing happen to Thakur? So that, 'Seeing me, the bhaktas may have hope and courage.'

"The Buddha sent for Ananda and told him this z 'The cart is without one wheel. This body is pulling along like this;' "

M. is looking upwards. He sings this tune of the song: 'O Mother, seeing your strange antics, O the Playful One, I am struck dumb.

M. (to the bhaktas)-Only to bring courage to man-lest one should forget Him in suffering-He who is the giver of the body. Said Thakur: "Look, I am also suffering. It has to be so, as long as the body lasts."

"Chaitanya Deva was drowned in water. The first time, the fishermen picked him up. The second time, no news of him. This appears to be the most reliable version of his passing away." [+]

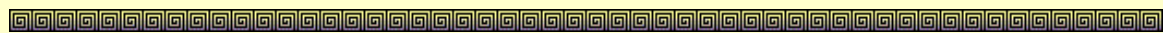
M. is standing on the terrace. All bhaktas have left. It is 4 p.m. M. is pensive as before. He sends for Jagabandhu, Vinay and the Younger Jiten and converses with them on the terrace standing near the tank.

M.-That makes it clear: that one-what is it called?- that which rolls along above the train-that which conducts the electric current?

[+] Dr. Dineshchandra Sen has recorded in the Brihat Banga that Chaitanya Deva was suffering from septic fever and quit his body in Goondicha Mandir at the time of the Rath Festival.

Vinay-The trolley.

M.-Please find out what it is technically called. Just as the tram-car is moved by it so does our life go on, joined on to Him through these things. See, the air I breathe. It stops and everything stops just as the tramcar would. This illustration does make it clear. We are always in communion with Him. So this is a very apt illustration. All people are just like marionettes in His hand. There's no place for 'I am the doer.) [Sanskrit] (Gita 18.62)-Seek refuge in Him alone with your heart, O Arjuna. Live under His shelter - there is no other way.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When Revered Swami Nityatmananda was deeply involved in composing Bengali Sri Ma Darshan from his daily diaries, at that time Revered Swami Sardeshananda was also living at the Tulsi Math in the holy land of Rishikesh. Swami Sardeshananda, the privileged tapasvi blessed with the service of the Holy Mother helped Swami Nityatmananda in many ways for accomplishing this great and noble resolve. The sevakas of Sri Ma Trust and Swami Nityatmananda are ever grateful to him for this unrepayable debt.

Publisher's Note

Another offering of the flower of this volume eight in the garland of M., the Apostle & the Evangelist series is ready for Sri Thakur, who came to this earth for a very special purpose. Says M. in Chapter 15 of this book, "He (Sri Ramakrishna) came only to place the highest ideal before us. He did it so quickly and only to a few, and departed. The way to get rid of sorrow and misfortune is either to see God or gain the knowledge of the Self. Man is the child of the ever-blissful Mother. Once you know this, all sorrows vanish. There are not many sorrows to which the body is prone but the pain of the cycle of birth and death never ends. It was to show the path – how to get rid of this great pain – that he came. He showed it and left . . . the main purpose for which Thakur came was to dispel the everlasting pain and to substitute it with peace and joy. So he pushed the bhaktas out of their worldliness, and showing them his real nature, made teachers of them, made heroes of them and then departed in the twinkling of an eye. These persons have realised that *God comes first and the world next.*"

These lines, nay the life of M. personifying everlasting peace and joy was discovered by Smt. Ishwar Devi Gupta in the Bengali Sri Ma Darshan in 1958. Thereafter began a yeoman service of translating them into Hindi and subsequently into English for the benefit of the whole world.

Our sincere thanks to all those who have helped and are helping in any way in publication, financing, production and distribution of these volumes. Special mention may be made of Sangeeta Kapoor, Parveen Sapra, Vandana Mehta, Dr. Kamal Gupta. May we gain dedication, determination and faith in whatever we do through study and practice of M., the Apostle & the Evangelist, to strengthen our spiritual life.

The Kathamrita Day, Publisher

Thursday, 26th of February, 1998

INTRODUCTION

The harmony of religions - this was the greatest contribution of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. His teaching that all religions lead to the same God, he imparted to all - the inner, the outer, the casual circles of his devotees and to all others who went to him. This liberal teaching of the oneness of all religions, he did not proclaim after studying the texts nor did he do so on hearsay. He proclaimed it, on the other hand, after experiencing it himself, after practising the principal religions of the world and realising their truth in his life.

Why did he proclaim this harmony of religions through his life in this age? What was the need? The answer is only this: During the present age the whole world has become one under the influence of science. The distance of time and space has almost disappeared. The whole world has become as if it were one family. He realised that if the different countries, different communities, different languages, dresses, food and thoughts of the world were not tied together by the same thread, controversies and counter-controversies would assume frightful proportions.

He discovered that this thread would have to be that of religion. The principal religions of the world proclaim: The aim of human life is riddance from the sorrow; in other words attainment of happiness. Only human beings seek happiness. The source of all happiness is the Great Truth behind the (phenomenal) world. And this great Truth is the Self of human beings - *sa ya eshah anima etada atmyam idam sarvam tat satyam sa atma, tat tvam asi shwetaketo*. The rishis also knew that only a drop of happiness from this Self of happiness is the basis of all sense enjoyments. The great truth behind the world is otherwise known as *ananda-swarupa* (the Self of happiness), the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

If the peoples of different countries are tied together by this ananda-swarupa in the thread of brotherhood - that the whole creation is born in the same womb and that all are therefore the children of the same father - all controversy, disputes, restlessness and distrust would vanish.

The Rigveda, the oldest scripture of the world says: *Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti* - There is but one Self or Truth, the Self of Happiness - Satchidananda is one. The devotees call it by different names.

With this aim in view, Sri Ramakrishna practised different religions and having attained perfection, having realised the complete truth of this ancient great saying, proclaimed to the world in a loud voice that all religions are true, that all religions are but different paths; that one can approach God, the Self of man, by any of these paths: *Yato mata tato path, mata path*.

A pond has many bathing points. Coming from one point, the Hindu says: I have brought *jala*; the Mohammedan comes from a different point and calls it *pani*; the Christian brings the same thing from another point and names it *water*. It is the same water called by so many names.

Because of difference in time, place and persons, God has given us so many religions. All faiths are paths but these faiths are not God. The same Supreme Being has been variously described as Ishwar, God or Allah by His devotees, in the manner they have understood Him.

Fish has been brought to the household. The mother of the family has five children. She cooks it in different way for each child and serves it as gravy or dry-spiced roast or roast-in-rice or fried fish, according to the taste of each child.

While practising different religions to realise their oneness, he (Thakur) first of all took to the *Shakta* creed of Hindus. Gradually he practised the *Vaishnava* path, the *Puranic* path, the *Tantric* and the *Vedantic* paths, one by one and arrived at the

same great Truth. Then he practised two principal religions of the modern age, Christianity and Islam and again arrived at the same Truth. Buddhism he accepted only as different form of Hinduism, that's why he didn't practice it separately as a different discipline.

M., an intimate devotee of the inner circle of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples is the immortal writer of the Kathamrita. He was also the chief person appointed by Sri Ramakrishna to spread his words. Having been blessed with one *kala* (one-sixteenth) of Her power by the Mother of the Universe, and at Her command, M. lived in his family as a sannyasi-in-the-household to educate humanity, as a teacher of the Bhagavata at the desire of Sri Ramakrishna.

Initiated by Sri Ramakrishna, M. was an outstanding teacher of Brahman-jnana. Many devotees took their lesson in Brahman-jnana from him before they embraced sannyasa. He is the great model, the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna's conception of a true householder. Whatever was laid by Sri Ramakrishna as the way for a householder blossomed perfectly in M.'s life.

It was for this reason that Sri Ramakrishna repeatedly taught M. the above mentioned liberal precept of oneness of religions, namely, 'As many religions so many paths.' How M. followed his Master's teachings and exhortation in his own life and imparted it to the devotees may now be presented to the readers by the following illustrations.

Not only did M. visit the temples of all the Hindu creeds, accompanied by the devotees he would also regularly go to all the three centres of the Brahmo Samaj - the Adi, the Sadharana and the Navavidhan. Likewise he would also visit the church, the mosque, the Buddha-vihara, the Jain temple, the Arya Samaj and the Gurudwara.

In 1924, during Christmas he went with the devotees to the Church of Mr. Long, the Saint Paul Cathedral situated close to his residence in the Amherst Street. Besides he visited the Methodist Church and some others in Dharmatala area in the same period. To his evening congregation he said: Did I possess this liberal insight - thinking of all belonging to us? No, it was Thakur's kind gift. Thakur told us: Christ, Gauranga and I are one and the same. That's why all Christian devotees appear as one's own dear ones.

And then the same year he went with monks and devotees, on the birth anniversary of Bhagavan Buddha, to the Buddha Vihara of Kapalitola and the College Square on the thrice-blessed day of Vaishakha Purnima, the day of the full moon.

In 1922, in the month of January, he took part along with devotees in the prayer meeting of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. On coming out he said, "It was at this spot that Thakur had seen Keshab Sen in meditation for the first time. He (Keshab) was then twenty-seven. Thakur said: 'The float of the fishing line of this lad has gone deep into the water; the fish is nibbling at the bait of the hook.' The Adi Samaj has another attraction: the recitation of the Veda in the Vedic intonation and singing of the songs composed in Vedic phrases."

He would often go to the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and would say, "Thakur came here too. Songs that are sung here are also inspiring. On seeing so many devotees calling on God together one is reminded of God's words."

The sight of ten thousand devotees offering *namaz* together in the Jama Masjid in Delhi in 1913 made him very happy.

In 1925, on the 1st and 3rd of January he visited the four Sikh Gurudwaras of the Mechhua Bazar, Harrison Road, Cross Street and the Cotton Street. Coming out of the Gurudwara at the Mechhua Bazar, he stood near the foot of the staircase and whispered into the ears of Antevasi: O! Thakur has given such an impetus that one

visits all these places as one's own. The impetus is that one can attain Him by all these paths. In the Cross Street, he sat with the huge congregation and heard the recitation of the Sukhamani:

Sadh ki mahima barne kaun prani,

Nanak sadh ki mahima prabh mahin samani.

Sadh ki shobha sadh ban aaye,

Nanak sadh prabh bhed na pai;

Sadh ki mahima ved na janhi,

Jeta sunhe teta bakhani.

[No human being can describe the glory of a sadhu. For the glory of the sadhu, says Nanak, is a part of God Himself. The glory of a sadhu is unique to him, Nanak does not see the sadhu and God as different. Even the Vedas do not know the glory of the sadhu, they say what they have heard.]

M. also said in the same evening congregation: 'We visited four Gurudwaras yesterday. The birthday of Guru Gobind Singh is being celebrated. O, how beautiful was the decoration! We saw a spot superbly decorated with flowers. Such a thing can be done only when there is devotion and faith. It was indeed a Gurudwara, the abode of the Guru - Guru, that is God. When there is devotion for the Guru, it means one has imbibed devotion to God. There is no difference between the Guru and the chosen ideal.

"Thakur is taking us to so many places. Why? To make us realise that God Himself resides in all these forms. Thakur said: 'I see that its the Mother everywhere.' He put such glasses on our eyes that I see nothing but red. All appear to be my own. When I went to the Gurudwara yesterday I felt I had reached Amritsar. In the Darbar Sahib (the Golden Temple) there are festivities day and night. How intoxicated they are with the jnana and bhakti He has bestowed on them! Night and day nothing but worship, recitation and singing of hymns. And then distribution of the *karah* (flour pudding) prasad.

"The jiva remains bound by the five elements and through them only it gets freed. This is done by turning towards Him. One worships Him with the five senses: the sight, the taste, the smell, the speech and the touch. O what a superb decoration done with different flowers we saw! One has to offer Him what one likes the best. If we take anything as prasad, after offering it to Him we gradually attain liberation. But if we take it for self-satisfaction it only tightens our bonds."

On the 13th of August 1924, at 8 p.m. on the 14th day of the bright fortnight, M. said to the bhaktas in the staircase room of the Morton School, "We have received an invitation from the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj for the festival of Bhadra. It will start tomorrow. You should participate in it. Thakur's divine touch is there. How often he visited it! It has become a place of pilgrimage. By seeing one gets inspired. How much did Thakur love Keshab Babu! He had injected in him his high liberal values. That's why the devotees of Navavidhan worship the formless Para-Brahman utering Ma-Ma. By your participation, you the bhaktas of Thakur, that very bhava will be revived further."

When the Elder Jiten expressed his disinclination to go there, M. was unhappy with him. Said he, "Thakur said to Ram Babu that the devotee should visit any place where there was a talk of God or a festical celebrated in His name, even if he did not receive any invitation. And then it has been said: *Na aham vaikunthe tishthami yoginam hridaye na cha; yatra mad bhaktah gayanti tatra tishthami*

narada."

The Elder Jiten said, "I don't like what they say. They don't say the right things." Raising his voice M. said, "Who can rightly talk about Him? I challenge it. Can anyone do so? Only He can describe Himself correctly, none else can do so in the three worlds. 'Brahman has never been defiled by the touch of human tongue,' so said Thakur to Vidyasagar.

"The live sparks of Thakur had entered into Keshab. From him they have reached his disciples. May be they are dim now but still they remain particles of the same nectar."

M. was keen to see for himself at one time what the devotees of different creeds were doing in Calcutta. But this was not possible. So he formed a group of devotees to act as his agents. They would attend the prayers of different creeds and later describe it to him.

The eighth part of M., the Apostle and the Evangelist narrates this very nectar-like liberal teaching: 'the oneness of all religions' of Thakur, through the medium of the life, work and words of M. The whole world - this country, foreign countries, society and the individual - can all gain happiness and peace by imbibing this liberal teaching. Our offering this time is this liberal nectar-like teaching of religions.

Humbly,

The author

CIRCUMAMBULATION

1.

Gadadhar Ashrama, Bhowanipur, *Brahma-muhurta* (the hour before the dawn). It is 4 a.m. The Mangal arati (morning worship with lamps) is over. Thakur's photo, half covered with a woollen cloth has been placed on the altar facing south. The seat of the priest is towards the east. In the room a small electric lamp is shedding bluish light. All the four directions are filled with the fragrance of the incense stick. Many sadhus and bhaktas are absorbed in meditation - some of them in the shrine, others in the meditation room. The meditation room is the southern part of the shrine divided by a railing. In the shrine reigns a deep peaceful atmosphere. M. comes out of his personal room closeby, towards the north and pays his obeisance by lying prostrate in the Thakur's shrine. He follows it up by folding his hands and offering his pranam individually to all the persons meditating there. Then he returns to his room.

It is quarter past six. The sadhus and the bhaktas enter M.'s room one by one and offer him their pranam. It is the first day of the month of Paush today. It has been raining since late night. Though Bengalis are in a majority, men and women from all Indian provinces are there taking their dip in the primordial river Ganga - they are drenched in rain. *Ganga Mai ki jai* (Victory to Mother Ganga) - the whole atmosphere resounds again and again with this holy slogan.

M. stands in the verandah facing west and witnesses this divine scene with wonder. In front of him flows the Ganga. M.'s face is bright, his two eyes steady and fixed within.

M. sees groups of persons arriving and leaving (after a dip). It continues raining. The path and the bathing point are wet, some spots are muddy. However none is bothered about the rain.

M. calls for the sadhus and the bhaktas in a sweet voice and shows them this holy scene. Full of joy, says he, 'Just see, how Dharma is manifesting itself today! None has any thought of his body, absorbed as they are in a divine mood.'

Now he says in a voice full of compassion, 'How much trouble they take so gladly for the sake of Dharma, for the sake of God! It is cold yet they take a bath in the Ganga in the morning. And on the top of it they are constantly getting drenched in rain! Suppose they were to fall ill!'

Both joy and fear are playing together on M.'s face. He is happy to witness their devotion to Dharma and is fearful because of the possibility of illness.

The sky is over cast, spreading darkness all around. M. is pacing the floor of the room, east to west. Then he says slowly to a bhakta: 'The mind is so full of Dakshineswar yet I dare not because of the (inclement) weather. Who knows if one will have such a luck?'

The eastern sky is gradually becoming clear - the clouds are spreading over the western sky. M. can no longer stay in the room. Taking an attendant with him he comes out. It is no longer raining, it is about 8 o'clock. Both of them are proceeding towards the tram stand. A piece of cloud is again covering the sun. Pointing to it, he says to the attendant, 'Just see, how much more powerful is the cloud than the sun. See how it has covered the

sun. It is the same with maya. Avidya maya covers man's intellect in the same way. If the wind of His grace blows away the cloud of maya one can then see the sun - the sun, that is God.'

Having proceeded a little he says to the attendant, 'Please meet me at the stand near the temple. I am coming by tram.' M. goes by tram. The attendant proceeds toward the temple at a fast pace.

Having alighted from the tram, M. takes the path along the bank of the Ganga towards the temple to south. Casting his glance on the shops on both sides of the road moving to and fro M. walks on with a steady gait. The attendant remaining behind notices M.'s movement from a distance without his knowledge. He feels as if it is a child walking joyfully along. On his face play curiosity and wonder. Is he seeing the *Lilamaya* (the master of all divine sport) in all things?

M. glances over the children's toy shop on the right side and then the snack shop full of variety of sweets on the left. Then he sees the cloth shop of varied colours and then that of *papar-pakor*s and then the shop of clay idols, Shiva and Radhakrishana and other deities. Does he see different shops selling different things, all men-shopkeepers, visitors, the cow, the dog and other animals on the path - different articles, different directions, the atmosphere, the Sun and so on, all containing the Lilamaya with in? That which resides in all - the Atman?

M. sees the attendant. And suddenly his child-like happy mood disappears. He proceeds towards the Mother's temple like a simple devotee. He asks the attendant how long has he been there. For quite sometime, replies the attendant. 'Did you see me?' asks M. 'Yes sir,' answers the attendant. The mark of embarrassment that gets imprinted on the face when one is seen doing something stealthily, is visible on M.'s face - but still it is full of joy.

The Kali Ghat. M. is standing outside the wall of Mother Kali's temple, near the north-eastern corner on the bank of the pond. The attendant brings some water from the pond at M.'s instance. M. touches the water and sprinkles it on his mouth and over his forehead.

M. enters the temple courtyard by the north-eastern gate. With the temple to his right, he makes a circumambulation. There is an unimaginable crowd at the eastern entrance gate of the temple, it being the *Makar Sankranti* (the passage of the sun into the sign capricornus). M. tries to take a glimpse of the Mother as he stands in the street between the southern gate of the temple and the Nat-mandir, but doesn't succeed. That's why coming out of the street, he takes a round with the Nat-mandir on his right. He offers his obeisance by touching the floor of the newly built southern temple of Shiva with his forehead. Then touching the sacrificial wooden frame with his right hand he brings it to touch his forehead. M. is full of joy, but solemn.

Now M. comes and stands to west of the Nat-Mandir. He decides to go the Adi-Ganga. He proceeds on the same path. The Govindji's temple stands in the courtyard to the right of the path. He comes and stands here to take a holy glimpse. A devotee-advocate comes and pays him his pranam. He is Nirmal Chandra Chattopadhyaya and lives at 29, Nakuleshwartala. He earnestly invites M. to visit his house on his way back.

Returning after the darshan of Govindji, M. sends the attendant away. Later on his return both of them go towards the Ganga. As soon as he goes beyond the crossing, M. sees a big crowd in front of the house to the left and stops there. He guesses that a big crowd is there, perhaps because of the shrine of some deity there. A young man of 18-19 comes up and asks M. what he wants. M. replies with the question: Is there a Thakur (deity) here? The young man says, 'Yes Sir, people of Thakur class (pandas, men of priestly class) live here.' M. says, 'No, no, I mean the god-thakur, the deity.' The

young man understands, smiles and says, 'No Sir, no deity here. It is there in front.'

M. goes towards the Ganga. Pointing to the next house he says, 'When the Holy Mother used to come, she would stay here.' M. joins both of his hands to offer obeisance.

2.

There is a huge crowd on the bathing point of the Ganga. People are taking a dip. M. comes down to the bathing point by northern steps. From the tenth step, he bends to touch the water. He then sits for meditation closing his eyes. For about half an hour, the attendant stands at the bank to guard M.'s shoes. Then M. comes up the steps to the bank. The attendant also touches the Ganga water and wonders what use it is to do so. I have been doing so on seeing others do it, says he to himself, I do it only because I have been asked to do so by a direct disciple of an avatara himself. There must be some physical value or some divine force in it. Otherwise why should M. do it and also ask me to do it. The attendant further reflects in his mind: a short while ago I saw M. sprinkling some pond water on his forehead before he went to the temple-courtyard. Does he consider the water of the pond and that of the Ganga the same?

M. enters the *dharmashala* (rest-house for pilgrims) situated to the south above the ghat (bathing point) of the river. Seeing the room to the extreme south of the ladies' quarters, he offers his pranam. Says he to the attendant, 'The Holy Mother also used to stay here.' Coming out of the dharmashala M. proceeds some distance on the southern way. Seeing a young girl of sixteen he immediately returns.

A seventy years old saint as he is, what is he afraid of; perhaps it is for the instruction of the attendant with him that he acted in this way. He always instructs the devotees by concrete examples. Young brahmacharis should not look at women - is this the silent message of M.?

M. goes towards the east in front of the dharmashala. A beggar is standing in front in the north-western corner of the dharmashala. M. asks the attendant to give him a pice.

Considering it an opportune moment, the attendant conveys a message to M.: The devotees will perhaps have a picnic in the Kali Temple at Dakshineswar. They want you there. M. replies, 'Why, this *perhaps*?' The attendant says, 'It is in fact so because of the rain at night, there is some doubt it may or may not be held.' M. says reprovingly, 'Then you should have told me earlier. You had better told me yesterday.' The attendant submits humbly, 'It is winter. Seeing that it was raining last night I did not muster courage to tell you lest you fell ill later on. Now I see that it is clearing up, I see the sun. So I can tell you confidently.'

M. comes to the temple from the ghat of the Adi- Ganga. Reaching the house to the right of the crossing where the Holy Mother used to stay, he says like a child, 'Where is *Beguni-Phuluri*?' (Beguni is a fried sandwich, like Indian snack made of brinjal; Phuluri is another fried Indian snack made of minced pulses). Pointing to the shop to the right, the attendant says, 'Here, Sir.' 'Bring it worth two pice,' Says M. 'They are cold, not hot' says the attendant. M. replies, 'Never mind, they are fresh of today any way. Isn't it?' 'Yes Sir, of today only,' the young shopkeeper tells. Then they buy two pice worth of Beguni and Phuluri.

Thakur used to say to the bhaktas: 'When you go to a fair or to a place of pilgrimage you should eat Beguni- Phuluri.' M. literally obeys the Master's words to this day.

M. proceeds towards east. After going beyond the crossing the attendant says, 'By this road to the left, one can catch the tram quickly.' 'No, no, let's go this way through the temple. I have come to see the Mother. This way is better,' saying so M. enters the courtyard of the temple. The attendant realises that M. will not leave without seeing the Mother. As he has not been able to see Her because of the crowd, he is going to make another attempt. A firm resolve is bound to be fulfilled.

Going up the temple, M. stands on south-western step. Now the crowd has thinned out. He says to the attendant, 'Please stand here below. Here are the shoes. Let me go up to make a round of the temple.' The attendant says, 'Such a big crowd there is above giving so much push and pull, it will be very troublesome to make a circumambulation.' 'So let me take a round below,' saying so, M. begins to walk alone. The temple is to his right.

Seeing that the crowd has thinned at the eastern entrance, M. pays two pice as entrance fee and enters the Temple. Standing near the railing, he folds his hands, pays his obeisance and prays to the Mother. He comes out to the street between the Natmandir and the Mother's Temple. He stands and pays his obeisance touching with his forehead the temple wall. However, he is not happy at not being able to pay his obeisance by lying prostrate on the ground - because of the crowd it is not possible to do so inside the temple or in the verandah. That's why M. has made that resolve outside the temple.

Standing near M.'s shoes, Antevasi witnesses all these scenes and thinks: 'Thakur himself is Brahman. He himself is Shakti. He also is the Mother installed in the Temple and M. is a beloved child of that very Brahman-Shakti, a chosen disciple, a pandit of His holy word bearing His stamp. How can the Mother disregard the earnest desire of Her child? That's why she has taken him inside the Temple in the milling crowd to gratify him by giving him Her darshan. We are forcibly made to see such impossible incidents, yet we do not attain firm faith. We have faith and then we lose it, it doesn't stay permanently with us. It is difficult to bar human nature.

Now M. says to the attendant, 'Please go and have darshan.' Full of fun, making sweet movements, he says to the attendant, 'One cannot have the darshan of the Mother for nothing. You have to spend two pice and accept jostling into the bargain - without these you cannot have the darshan of the Mother.' The attendant asks where should he stand to have darshan of the Mother - whether to stand near the railing or go inside it and stand before the Mother. 'No, have a glimpse by standing near the railing and paying two pice. One has to pay six pice as offering when you go inside railing,' says M. The attendant returns within ten minutes after having the darshan of the Mother and offering pranam. There is a whole heap of garlands of hibiscus flowers today around the Mother's neck; on Her forehead She has a shining crown of gold.

M. sits down in the Natamandir and meditates in front of the Mother. After a few moments he prostrates on the ground to offer pranam, then rising, he goes towards the Mother again. Standing near the eastern arch next to the northern part of the Natamandir where devotees stand and have Mother's darshan he again joins his hands and offers pranam.

Seeing this child-like restless behaviour of M., his companion attendant is full of wonder. He says to himself, 'Is this the mark of prema-bhakti? People offer pranam only once in this 'darshan-business.' But the desire of this fulfilled old saint for darshan, it appears, is never-ending. The intimate children of the Mother do not get satisfied even after seeing her all their lives. That is why perhaps M. does not feel satisfied by seeing the Mother in the human form of the avatara.

Now M. climbs down the western steps of the Natamandir, holding on to the

shoulder of the attendant.

M. is now standing in south-eastern corner of the holy temple. With him is his attendant. He intends to go out of the courtyard of the Temple after taking another half a round. So, facing north at the entrance to the street, M. proceeds along with the attendant. The attendant goes ahead of him so that M. may not be jostled in the crowd - his whole mind is concentrated on M. behind. He and M. walk slowly with utmost care through the crowd. Suddenly M. pulls the attendant and embraces him tightly placing his face on his chest for two minutes. The attendant is amazed.

When he frees himself from the embrace, the attendant sees four or five young unmarried girls near the Natamandir running breathlessly behind the rich traders, in greed for money. The young girls are running in the opposite direction of the *parikrama* (circumambulation) path. The way is narrow and they come running from the opposite direction! Lest the young girls should bump on to the attendant, perhaps that's why M.'s conduct is so strange! The attendant is a young brahmachari.

Example is better than precept - this ancient rule of conduct M. has been following throughout his life unwearingly. He has inherited this very priceless wealth from his guru Bhagvan Sri Ramakrishna. That is why M. always says: what cannot be achieved by a thousand lectures is attained by a single silent action. A concrete example helps a hundred thousand times more. That is why today he has imparted instruction of excellent behaviour by a silent deep meaningful action. The mother-bird protects its offsprings with the inside of its wings.

3.

Having taken half a round of the temple, M. goes out by the gate by which he had entered. It has been raining the whole night. All around there is slush, so the steps of the entrance are also muddy. Taking a little mud in his right hand M. makes a holy mark with it on his forehead. The attendant follows without a thought.

The mind of an ordinary person keeps on swinging in the hammock of doubts. That's why his mind remains overwhelmed by the storm of worries in different ways. When he sees the silent conduct of an extra-mundane great man, he imitates his divine conduct because of the unknown effects of the good actions of his past lives, spellbound, overwhelmed.

The Nakuleshwara temple. M. is standing facing the west on the southern main road close to it. He says to the attendant, 'Neither you have a pice nor have I - we have only rupees. How to have darshan of Shiva now? Without a pice they do not perhaps let you go in,' saying so M. proceeds on the main road towards the tram's stand to go to Calcutta. The attendant walks behind. M. walks with a slow pace thinking something. Having taken some fifty steps he says to the attendant, 'We have not had the darshan of Shiva.' The attendant says, 'The pandas may have change. We can get small change from them.' Both of them return.

Three pandas are standing at the entrance. They are fifteen, twenty and thirty years old. M. asks, 'How much will it cost for both of us?' 'Four pice for two persons as the gate-fee,' say the pandas. The attendant takes out a five rupee note. Hearing that he can not get it changed he takes out a rupee from his pocket. The panda says, 'We don't even have change of this.' What to do then? 'So let us offer our pranam from here before leaving,' says M. Hearing this the oldest panda says to his companion, 'Let us not charge these two men. Go in please and have darshan.'

M. turns towards south, he has darshan, touches the deity and sits down on

the floor and recites the holy name, his eyes shut. After fifteen minutes he rings the bell and comes back.

Both of them proceed facing north again on the main road, M. says to the attendant, 'We owe a debt of four pice to the Mother. Please come again another day and pay two pice and I will also come and pay. This is how She makes one act. Otherwise we will not come again. She makes us do forcibly through this clever trick.'

29, Nakuleshwaratala Road. Nirmal Chandra Chatterji's house. M. enters the drawing room, with him is his attendant. A girl of fourteen and a boy of twelve are sitting on the floor. They are brother sister, children of Nirmal Babu. M. is tired, so he sits down on the floor and asks the girl, 'Is the master of the house in?' 'Yes, Sir,' says the girl. She rises, brings a chair requests M. to take it and herself goes inside the house. Nirmal Chatterji, master of the house, is full of joy as he welcomes M. and offers M. his pranam full of reverence. This morning at the Kali Ghat temple he had humbly requested M. to visit his house. M. has come to comply with that request. Nirmal Babu takes the guests to the Thakur shrine and gives prasad. Then he takes M. inside the house. The attendant keeps sitting in the drawing room on the floor.

The housewife offers her pranam to M. and again gives him prasad. She is a devotee of Thakur. Having exchanged a few words with her M. returns to the drawing room and takes the chair. The boy and the girl come and pay their obeisance to M. by lying prostrate on the ground. M. says, 'Blissful Mother, Blissful Mother!' Generally M. doesn't let everybody touch his feet, but today he is carried away by the devotion of whole of the family. That is why he does not stop them from touching his feet. Says he to the master of the house, 'Your daughter has quite grown up.' He again utters, 'Mother Blissful, Mother Blissful.' Having prayed and blessed this way, M. rises.

It is ten to ten. M. says full of joy, 'We are to go to Dakshineswar, it is quite far.' Having said this, he smiles and sings the snatch of a song: 'Move on, O wayfarer, tie up your bundle, you have to go far.' Nirmal Babu wants to hear this line again. M. sings again and takes his leave.

Both of them proceed towards the tram stand. M. asks the attendant full of joy, 'Let me see. Tell me, who has given us prasad.' The attendant keeps quiet. M. himself answers it, 'The Mother has given the prasad through their hands. How restless was the mind at not receiving the prasad? That is why the Mother sent us the prasad.'



Gadadhar Ashrama, Bhowanipur, Calcutta,
Monday, the 14th January 1924,
Makar Sankranti, Paush 1330 (B.Y.)

ANOTHER VANABHOJAN* IN DAKSHINESWAR, THE PENANCE-GROVE

1.

M. has had the darshan of Mother Kali this morning. It is 10.30. He sets out for Dakshineswar accompanied by the attendant. He reaches the esplanade by tram from Kalighat. It is winter, the Sankranti of the month of Paush. It has rained heavily last night and this morning. M. is staying these days at the Gadadhar Ashrama in Bhowanipur.

M. has a woollen sweater on his body. Over it he wears a Bengali shirt of ash-coloured 'war flannel'. On his feet he has his usual varnished slippers. He wears a white-bordered dhoti and a chadar of raw silk on the shoulders. On his head he has a muffler. In the pocket he has a hand cloth.

The tram starts. M. and the attendant are sitting inside. M. says to the attendant, 'Please ask for small change of a rupee while buying a ticket. I shall do the same. We shall then have change of two rupees. This will be useful.' And this is what happens.

While coming to the tram station from the Kalighat, M. has dropped his hand cloth without him or the attendant noticing it. A group of Oriya pilgrims are on their way for the darshan of the Mother Kali. One of them shouts a number of times: Babu, you have dropped your cloth. His last words reach the attendant's ear. The attendant runs and picks up the hand cloth. M. says: 'Just see, Thakur himself came here in the guise of a pilgrim and left after saying these words. Didn't he often say: It is very wrong to loose a hand cloth.'

M. is standing at the esplanade. The Bagbazar tram is not leaving and the time is passing. The clock of the White tower shows that it is 10.40. M. is restless. Says he, 'It will be noon by the time we reach Dakshineswar. You may go there if you like and tell them about me. I may, if possible, go there in the evening after some rest. I have very little hope of going there and even if I go now, can I have darshan of the Mother's bath?' The attendant says, 'Today is the day of Paush-parvana. There is a possibility of seeing the Mother's bath.' Both of them are talking seated in the Bagbazar tram. Suddenly the tram starts but it stops near the siding and doesn't move farther!

M. decides to return to the Gadadhar Ashrama. Closeby there is the tram for Kalighat. As soon as he sees it, it starts. M. boards it quickly in a second class compartment. He asks the attendant to go to Dakshineswar and tell the devotees that if possible he will try to go there in the evening.

Just then starts the tram for Bagbazar. How strange is this play! Within a minute M. and the attendant are moving in two different directions. Sad at heart the attendant boards a bus to Alambazar on reaching Bagbazar. There the horse-driven cab of the doctor is waiting for M. Riding it the attendant reaches the Dakshineswar temple. Not seeing M. all the devotees feel disheartened. The 'central jewel' of today's festivity is M. This arrangement is in his honour. A plenty of arrangements have been made but in the absence of M. they may all go in vain.

It was decided before hand that the attendant would bring M. by 8 o' clock. This has not been possible because of the morning rain and M.'s darshan of the Mother at Kalighat. Seeing the delay devotees became impatient. They

had sent the Younger Amulaya to Bhowanipur at 9 o'clock. He is awaiting M. at the Gadadhar Ashrama. On the other hand, hearing from the attendant what M. said, a gloom spreads over the devotees. So, they send Sukhendu at half past one. But before Sukhendu reaches Bhowanipur, M. comes to Dakshineswar along with the Younger Amulaya. The devotees are full of joy on having M. with them. The lotus of their heart blooms forth as also the lotus of their faces - like the lotus flower opening at sunrise.

The coach stops on the northern bank of the Hansapukur. M. proceeds towards the Panchavati going through the Vilvatala with the devotees. On the way he meets a bhakta and asks him affectionately, 'Have you had your food?' 'Yes Sir. In the morning Thakur was offered the bhoga of *halva*. All of us have had the same prasad,' says the bhakta.

Food is being cooked under the banyan tree of Thakur's spot of tapasya. To the north of the altar there is a mango tree, to its north there is a row of crotons. This is the kitchen for today's festivity. The bhaktas were very keen that they should offer bhoga to Thakur at this holy spot of Panchavati, but Ghoshal, the treasurer of the temple had objected to it. The devotees would also not yield. The Younger Jiten went to Bagbazar and brought permission from Kiran Dutta, the manager of the temple. Ramlal Dada also approved of it.

M. goes round the Panchavati after seeing the kitchen and the food being prepared. First he goes to the spot of the sadhana of Thakur - he goes round the spot of realization, the banyan altar. Then he goes round the Panchavati planted by Thakur himself and the hut of his sadhana. Standing at the foot of the Panchavati, facing north, M. lies prostrate on the ground. Now he touches the Madhavi creeper planted by the blessed hands of Thakur, embraces it and offers it pranam. It has now grown very big. Thakur had got it from Vrindaban and planted it here. The Madhavi has a strong trunk. Climbing up, it tightly embraces with its two arms the Siddha-banyan tree and the Ashwattha tree of the Panchavati. Under the sacred Madhavi, Paramhansa Swami Totapuri, the image of jnana had established his seat after eleven month long *dhuni* (sacred fire) burning there. Thakur used to go there daily to have his darshan and offer him his pranam. And he spent a long time there discussing the Vedanta, singing bhajans and losing himself in samadhi.

M. touches the door of the hut for sadhana with folded hands and bringing to his forehead near the door, offers his pranam. It was in this sadhana-hut that Sri Totapuri had helped Thakur attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the ultimate goal of Vedanta. Seeing Thakur in the state of Nirvikalpa with ordinary effort he had been amazed to his bones. He said, 'What is this? Who is he?' The samadhi he had attained after forty long years of practice this young man achieved in a moment. For three days, this young man remained immersed in the ocean of Brahman. Who is this youngman?

M. tells us that earlier this hut was made of mud. It was then that Thakur went into Nirvikalpa samadhi in it. Later on, it was built in bricks. At that time there was nothing in this room. Now an idol of Shiva has been installed there. How much will happen here in future, how much will it be associated with the name of Thakur! Such things happen everywhere. The purity does not last, it gets mixed with baser material. M. takes a glimpse of inside the hut through the southern window, standing on a step.

M. now stands on the platform of the southern ghat of Hansapukur, with folded hands. He sees and offers his pranam to the water of the pond, the steps, the platform and the clump of trees nearby with half closed eyes - as if he is looking for something in the interior of his memory. It looks as if he is drawing pictures from his sweet memories. As one stands there, one has the Ganga and the Panchavati to his left, in front the Vilvatala and behind the

Kuthi. All these are witnesses to Bhagvan Sri Ramakrishna's lila. With a sign of his eyes he asks a devotee to bring water from the pond. The devotee brings a palmful of water. M. sprinkles the water on his forehead with his right hand and takes a few drops.

Bhagvan Sri Ramakrishna used to come to this point of the pond to fetch water daily for thirty years. The same water he used for toilet etc. 'Gangavari Brahmanvari'- the water of the Ganga is Brahman itself. One should not use this water for toilet. Standing on this platform one day he said to Narendra Nath, 'You should come more frequently. Haven't you seen what man and woman do in their first days of love? It thickens one's love, it become deeper.'

Yat yat acharati shreshthah tat tat eva itrah janah,

sah yat pranamam kurute lokah tat anuvartate.

[What a great man does, others follow; people go by the example he sets; Gita 3:21]

Imitating M. the bhaktas also wet their foreheads with that holy water and drink a little of it.

M. stands facing south on the roof of the Kuthi climbing up the southern steps of the southern verandah. To his right is the Holy Mother's living room - the Nahabat, the bathing point of Bakultala and the Ganga. To his left is the previous living room of Sri Ramakrishna. It was in this room that he used to live with his mother. His nephew Akshay died in this room. In his sorrow mother Chandra Devi gave up this room and they began to live in the present famous room of Thakur. He lived for sixteen years in the Kuthi and fourteen years in this room. In this room he enacted his avatara lila with the inner circle of his devotees and Keshab and others of the outer circle.

The devotees open the door of the living room of the Kuthi and also the windows. M. along with the bhaktas offer pranam lying prostrate on the ground and take a glimpse of the Ganga with folded hands. Now M. comes out by the way to the north of Thakur's room. He offers pranam placing his forehead in north-eastern corner of the adjacent verandah to north. It was at this spot that Thakur used to stand and say goodbye to the bhaktas.

M. offers pranam in the Holy Mother's room in the Nahabat, placing his forehead on the steps. At a sign from him, Antevasi opens the door of this room. M. peeps in to have darshan. Now M. walks towards the west on the southern embankment on the Bakultala ghat. To his right, to south flows the Ganga and in front of him is the Belur Math. Having gone some distance M. returns by the same way, and stands at the junction of the north and the west. This is the time of ebb in the Ganga. One can see the clay bed of the Ganga. Receiving a signal from M.'s eye, the Younger Jiten brings a little clay. M. makes a holy mark with it on his forehead. The devotees do likewise. It is on this very embankment that Thakur used to stroll and hear the Anahat sound deep at night.

Now it's Thakur's room. M. himself opens the western door to have darshan of the Ganga. A particular bhakta also opens the door to the north. M. takes a seat on the floor with the Ganga in front of him. To his right are seated Ramani, the Younger Amulaya and Yogen; the Elder Amulaya, a little away. Behind sits advocate Lalit Banerji. To the left are seated Gadadhar, the Doctor and Jagabandhu. The room is full with three devotees from Srihutt and other devotees from elsewhere. Now it is quarter to four. Says M., 'Why? Where are the singers?' Jagabandhu points at Ramani But M. finds out Lalit and says to him, 'Please sing that song of Shiva.' Lalit sings:

Mahadeva, the great Yogin plunged in the joy eternal . . .

Ramani is educated, quiet and is sweet throated. Now he sings drenching everybody in sweetness (of the song):

*So it is Mother that
Shiva is so completely absorbed.
Otherwise, why would
Trilochan bear your foot so earnestly on his heart . . .
When the song ends, M. says, 'Please sing that one: O Mother, who knows
what is your hue?' Ramani sings:
O Mother Shyama ! You are like the waves of nectar,
Who knows what is Your hue and when?
O Mother Begetter ! even the attack of Kamadeva is
fully blunted by the charm of Your movements.
O Mother with sword in hand, by your lightening dance,
the earth rumbles and tumbles.
O the Terrible One!
You are endowed with the three gunas,
You are the creator of the three cities,
Tara, the Terrible consort of Kala.
O Mother, assuming so many forms,
You fulfill the desires of Your devotees.
O, the Eternal Perfect Brahman Ma!
Sometimes You dance in
the lotus of the heart of Kamalakant.
Mother, lost in the ecstasy of joy
in the company of Shiva . . .
The bee of my mind drinks deep
at the blue lotus feet of Mother Shyama.
Can everybody get the treasure of Shyama?
Is Kali's treasure for all ?
This foolish mind does not know
What this treasure is, what a pity!
Even with all his mind absorbed in Mother Shyama's
crimson feet, this treasure is rare for Shiva.
To him who meditates on Her
the riches of heaven are poor indeed;
If only Shyama casts Her glance on him,
he swims in the Eternal Bliss.
Her feet, whom the prince of yogis,
the king of the gods, can't meditate upon
Yet worthless Kamalakant yearns for
the Mother's those blessed feet!*

This last song is sung by everybody, M. himself singing in between. The song ends. M. is about to come out by the eastern door, he sees two devotees humming a tune. Says M., 'Why don't you sing?' M. sits down. All the devotees sing:

*O Ramakrishna, the dispeller of the fear of the world,
Victory to you! Victory !
Victory ! Victory to you,
O Para-Brahman in human form!
This earth is enveloped in the
darkness of woman and gold,
So the sun of Ramakrishna
has appeared with infinite power.
Bringing with you the great harmony of religions,
You come from age to age.
The men and women of the world,
are calling you yearningly.
Having heard your fear-dispelling words,*

*O the wish-fulfilling gem of the world,
This desolate beggar has come to your door,
burnt with the woes of the world.*

2.

M. is standing in the south-eastern verandah. A mat still marks the spot that used to be occupied by Hazara Mahashaya. It is sometimes occupied when the bhaktas are there; formerly Sriyukta Ramlal Dada and Shivaram Dada used to sit on it, now their sons Nakul and others also sit here.

Today a robust middle-aged devotee is sitting there. He is a brahmin and a fellow full of joy. Seeing M. he at once stands up and with folded hands greets him, and lying prostrate on the ground offers him pranam. With folded hands he says, 'Today I have had the darshan of the all-knowing Mahrishi Vedavyasa. I am indeed blessed. I tried earlier too but could not have your darshan.' M. replies smilingly, 'It is good you have had the darshana at an auspicious place.'

M. now offers his pranam to the steps leading to the six Shiva temples in the north. One day Thakur was seated on these very steps in a deep samadhi. He was photographed in that very state. This photograph is now worshipped everywhere.

M. offers his pranam right in the middle of the step leading to Vishnu Mandir from the courtyard. Thakur used to offer his pranam exactly like this facing north, when Keshab Sen and others used to visit him. Modern educated devotees do not know how to offer pranam by lying on the ground. That's why Thakur and M. did so for the instruction of the devotees. Even those who know how to do it feel shy of offering pranam in this way. That's why this conduct. Later on Keshab Sen and others also began to offer pranam by lying prostrate on the ground. Putting the cloth round his neck, M. offers a rupee to Radha-Krishna with pranam and climbs down after taking the holy water. Antevasi takes a little Ganga water from the tub and gives it on M.'s palm.

M. stands at the feet of Bhavatarini with folded hands. Then with the Goddess to his right, he sits down on the floor. Having received the Mother's consent, he puts the cloth round his neck and offers pranam to the Mother again and again by lying prostrate on the ground in an unsteady manner. M. is inebriated with bhava - a soft sweet light of joy plays on his face.

In his early youth, M. had requested Sri Ramakrishna for sannyasa. Thakur said, 'The Mother of the Universe has told me that you have to do a bit of Her work living as a householder - you will have to teach the Bhagavata to people.' Even when M. insisted again and again, he said indistinctly one evening on coming out of the state of samadhi: 'Let nobody think that without him the work of the Mother will stop. The Mother creates great teachers just with a piece of straw.' Since that day M. resolved to work in obedience to Thakur's command.

Thakur dedicated M. at the feet of the Mother with the song: 'I have taken Your name, You save all from birth and death, You who dispel fear.' And then he asked for one kala (1/16th) of power from the Mother and gave it to M. Said he to the Mother, 'You have given him just a kala of power? Well, this is enough for Your work.' Thakur had wished for more. This incident took place on 22nd July 1883.

And again Thakur prayed to the Mother, 'Mother, don't make him renounce all. If You keep him in the household give him Your darshan sometimes otherwise what will he live with?' Like a devotee-son of his father, a devoted-disciple of his master, M. has been acting on that command with

determination for forty years like an obedient child. He is now old. That's why today M. is so full of joy seated near the Mother - in the joy of fulfilling the difficult vow of teaching the mankind. And he also has the joy of a son at this nearness to the feet of the Mother.

M. is seated in front of the Mother in dhyana. Nakul, the son of Thakur's niece comes and says, 'Uncle, here are the charanamrita (holy water) and vermilion of the Mother.' M. offers a rupee as pranami and goes back into dhyana. Today is the Sankranti of the month of Paush. So there is a big crowd - the temple has remained open for the whole day. Even so the guards keep the visitors under control lest they should obstruct M.'s dhyana. After a considerable time, M. again offers pranam and gets up. His face is shining bright with a joyous sweetness, in the love for the Mother.

M. is seated at the Bara ghat of the Ganga. The river is in low tide today. It is winter, so the level of the Ganga has gone down considerably. M. comes to the steps offers his pranam first facing south, later facing north. What is the significance of his offering two pranam twice in both the directions - does pranam to south signify to the Belur Math and that towards north signify to the Panchavati, Nahabat, Thakur's room and Mother Kali? The primary aim is to offer pranam to the Ganga and the secondary to the holy places. Mother Ganga is indeed the conjunction of all the holy places. The devotees always follow and imitate M.'s conduct. M. is absorbed in dhyana with the bhaktas. Vinay and the Younger Amulaya are busy cooking. Now they come and partake in dhyana. The doctor, the Elder Amulaya and the Younger Amulaya go to the Panchavati for serving food.

M. stands at the ghat of the Ganga facing north and then proceeds towards the Panchavati followed by the bhaktas. First he passes by Thakur's room to his right and then the Mother's Nahabat. To his left towards the Ganga, there is high bench made of bricks. Thakur used to sit on it at times. M. touches it with his hands and brings them to his forehead. Wherever Thakur stood and wherever he sat, all such spots are the holiest of the holy places for M. - modern places of pilgrimage for modern India.

The Panchavati. The old altar under the banyan, to north of it there is a huge mango tree. It is under this tree that the participants are seated. Sadhus and bhaktas with M. are seated in two rows facing each other.

M. is seated on a blanket seat facing Panchavati. Seated with him are Banku Babu and Lal Bihari Babu. There are thirty sadhus and bhaktas - the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Amulaya, the Younger Nalini, Ramani, the Elder Nalini, Yogen and his son Khoka, the three devotees of Srihutt, the Elder Amulaya, the Younger Jiten, Sukhendu, Jagabandhu and others.

The cooks, the service men, the partakers of the holy food and the work assistants are all bhaktas.

Various kinds of eatables have been prepared as offering - rice cum pulse (khichri), potatoes, spiced ragout of cauliflower, plum chutney, fried papars, fried brinjals and so on. Add to it ghee, curd, sandesh, balls of thickened milk, rasogullas - these all constitute the offering.

M. says, 'It would have been better, if you had not sent away Sukhendu Babu. He has not been able to partake in today's festivity.' Before he has finished, Sukhendu returns. M. says, 'Give, Please gave him everything of the prasad.'

At this very spot, the bhaktas have been holding picnics and cooking themselves during Thakur's time as well. One remembers how once only two rupees had been collected. But even that was enough to enjoy thoroughly.

This is a very sacred spot Thakur used to lie here wailing for the Mother's

darshan for the whole night and day. Every particle of dust bears his touch.

One must remind oneself of his divine play while partaking in such festivity.
And then alone the joy becomes a living joy and gains depth.

M. rises at quarter past five. Having offered his pranam in the Thakur's room, he gets into the horse driven-coach. With him are the Doctor, Banku Babu and Lal Bihari Babu.

The bhaktas after attending the arati service of the Mother return to Alambazar on foot and set out for Calcutta in a bus all for themselves. They all sing hymns on the way:

*What need of Ganga, Prabhas,
Kashi, Kanchi or such places,
If the lips can utter, Kali, Kali, Kali,
when the life ebbs out? . .
O, the insane!
You will not be able to attain the Insane Ma
Unless you behave like a really insane person.
Behaving insane hypocritically
With a bundle under your armpit
will be of no avail. . .*



50, Amherst Street, Calcutta.

Monday, 14 January, 1924.

29th day of Paush, 1330 (B.Y.)

ONE IS SAVED A GREAT DEAL BY KEEPING THE COMPANY OF AN ALL-RENOUNCING SADHU

1.

The fourth level roof at the Morton School. 5 p.m., the month of Jaishtha (May-June). M. is seated on a chair facing west. In front of him is Antevasi's cabin. Hemendra Maharaj has arrived and having offered his pranam to M., is seated in front of him. He is the president of the Vidyapith. He has prepared the annual report of the Vidyapith and shows its manuscript to M. It is now under print. Swami is holding its press proof. M. has asked Antevasi to revise it. Gradually the bhaktas come in one by one like a peacock looking for an opium pill at a fixed hour.

Suddenly the sky is overcast. There is darkness all around. And the cloud bursts and there is torrential rain. M. moves in to the staircase room alongwith the bhaktas. He sits on a chair facing south close to the door. To his left and in front of him sit the Elder Jiten, Vinay, the Younger Ramesh, the Younger Jiten, the Younger Nalini, Balai, Manoranjan, Gadadhar, Jagabandhu and others on benches. It is raining intermittently. It is about 8 p.m. now. Swami Sadbhavananda having delivered the proof at the press, returns. While M. showers the nectar of the Word inside the house, Varundeva (the water god) is showering water outside.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Mahamaya makes one forget all. Only the other day the avatara came and said all this. He himself practised it all. He has made us see it all almost forcibly, yet where does the awakening come?

"O, what a state Thakur had: uttering 'Ma, Ma,' all the twenty-four hours of the day! He would not sleep at night practically. Maybe he keeps quiet for five to ten minutes. Again he wakes up with 'Ma, Ma,' again - inhaling 'Ma' and exhaling 'Ma'! He was just like a child who can not live without his mother, who wants his mother."

M. (to the Younger Ramesh) — If you speak to the wall, can it hear you? What do you say?

"Abraham spoke rightly to Lazarus, 'If you were to go to this rich man's house who is dwelling in hell now and tell the members of his household that both hell and heaven exist, would they listen to you? They would say: 'You are an impostor.' So many prophets have come and said so many things. Has anybody accepted even their words? Then who is going to believe you?"

The Elder Jiten (humbly) — If He graciously grants His darshan once, all doubts vanish.

M. (smiling) — Yes, that too happens. But then one must have 'a rupee or a rupee and a quarter.' Who is going to pay you the fare for going to Badrinarayan? (laughter).

M. (to Swami Sadbhavananda) — Swami Trigunatita said so. Once he felt like renouncing all. He left the Math without telling anybody.

The Math was then situated in Alam Bazar. Everybody was worried where he had gone? He returned after eight days all of a sudden. Then all felt relaxed and made merry with him. The brother disciples enjoyed fun and frolic in different ways. One of them asked, 'I say, Sarda, how far can your renunciation run?' He smiles and answers, 'Up to Konnagar.' 'What happened then?' 'What else? It ended,' says he smilingly. 'I say tell us the story of your renunciation. How it came about and how it ended?' asked a brother disciple. 'All right, then listen,' says Sarda still full of the same simple spirit of pure fun, 'First grew a deep renunciation; then I left the Math and I crossed the Ganga. Then I went to Konnagar stayed in a devotee's garden and satisfied my hunger with the food of charity. I spent a number of days in great joy till I felt a desire to go to Vrindaban. As I expressed this desire to the bhaktas saying: Do please give me the fare to Vrindaban. One of them angrily said: Who can give you so much Mahashaya? Had it been a rupee or rupee and a quarter, it would have been all right.' (Everybody laughs loudly).

A certain Bhakta — Thakur says: 'If you ask for the fare to Vrindaban from the core of your heart he does give it. He even grants darshan.'

M. — Yes, he said so. And it is an eternal truth. But you have to say it from the core of your heart. Sitting in an arm-chair and saying - let it be, if it is to be so. Otherwise let it not be - this will not do. You have to say it with a yearning heart. Giving up food and water, one has to resolve: 'let the body perish. I shall not rise without your darshan.' - such a yearning is needed. Buddha Deva had it this way. Said he, 'I am sitting on this seat. I shall not rise from here. Let the body perish if it must - let my flesh and bones be turned into powder and fly away with the air, I shall not rise.'

A Devotee — Sir, What is the story of Lazarus?

M. — Lazarus was a devotee, struck with poverty and leprosy. He used to beg. A festival was being celebrated at a rich man's house - many persons were feasting there. The beggar Lazarus also appeared at the door. But he was given nothing to eat and he died of starvation there. The angles came and took him to heaven. He was now in great joy. Abraham was also there. One day he heard a loud wail. He lifted his eyes and saw that the same rich man was wailing with death like pain. Lazarus wanted to go to him and bring him to heaven. As he was about to start, Abraham said, 'You can only see him but you can not go to him - there is an impassable gulf in between.' The rich man then made another request: 'Please go to my kith and kin and tell them that both heaven and hell exist.' Lazarus set out, it was then that Abraham intervened to say the aforesaid: 'If you were to go to the house of this rich man dwelling in hell now, to tell that both heaven and hell truly exist, would his people accept your words?'

"If they listen to you, how will the world go on? Mahamaya's work will end. That is why the Mother makes one forget with Her power of ignorance, casts Her spell. One forgets God living amidst sons, friends, wealth and opulence.

"So Thakur taught one to always pray: Don't make me forget by Your world-bewitching maya. Mother, may I never forget.

"One is saved to a great extent by keeping the company of an all-renouncing sadhu. So Thakur exhorts one always to keep the company of sadhus. Did he only say so? No, he himself created sadhus. And they all are living in the Math. Where can you find such sadhus? They only want God, nothing besides Him. Pure blooded they are like the Chataka bird taking no other water than that of the rain - the purest of pure water. Only those who go to them and serve them will rise. Many have risen, the others will. Instead of doing so, one talks nonsense sitting in an arm chair and gives himself the luxury of saying: He grants His darshan once everything is set right.

"See, what divine joy the sadhu lives with. Sarada ran away from the Math and then returned. He was joyful when he ran away and he was joyful when he returned. What a pure fun and merry-making with the brother disciples! For it was all for the highest ideal - Good or bad, victory or defeat, fun and frolic in all these, He was kept in mind.

"But can the householder do so? While thinking of sensory matters one begins to think of the person dear to senses as well. One gets more and more attached to him. That's why He has made an arrangement to prevent the mind from drowning itself in senses. It is He who has created sadhus. Without seeing a contrast one doesn't learn. So just as His power of ignorance ties one down to the earth, similarly His power of knowledge frees the jiva from this world of maya and takes it towards God. The sadhus are votaries of the power of knowledge. Their minds always remain directed towards God. Their watch gives the correct time. The watches of others are not dependable."

2.

M. remains silent for some time, with his mind drawn inward. During this interval some of the bhaktas begin to scratch *kochrer dad* - they begin to comment in whispers upon politics and social mores and praise the Westerners, forgetting time, place and personality. One of the company says to M.: Sir Ashutosh Chaudhri was a man of parts. He was a High Court judge. He had no enemies. He has recently breathed his last. M. says in a disinterested tone, 'So he must be a good man if he had no enemies; if he satisfied everybody.' Now the devotees have decided to bring up various sensory topics without inhibition - they freely talk. Seeing it, M. smiles. However like a magician he silently stops it by pressing a switch as it were or as like one drawing and shutting behind doors a restless naughty boy. A new peaceful current begins to flow by this magic touch of M., a deep solemn mood descends in the twinkling of an eye.

M. (to all) — How many great chief justices, how many great prime ministers have been there in England? But where are they now? Nobody even remembers them. The same thing Napoleon said in captivity in St. Helena to the sons to his caretaker. The boys used to serve him devotedly. Napoleon, showing them a map, said, 'This is the end to what I have been able to achieve. But what Christ did has only endured.' This he said pointing to Palestine. In other words the glory of Christ is everlasting. The work that is done with religion at

the base alone endures - the actions done by man for God. Nobody knows where the other actions are lost.

M. (to Jagabandhu) — How the lawyers talk - always of money matters! W.C. Banerji is carrying out a cross-examination: 'What are your possessions?' The answer comes: so many bighas of land and fruit trees. The next question: 'What else?' Answer: nothing - and all such trivial matters, all pertaining to money and property.

"And there was that case of Shankar Nayar. Justice Makkardey said to Nayar's advocate, Morale, 'You cited a case. That's why.' Morale's criminal experience was not adequate. Such are the matters judges and lawyers talk of: he knows so and so or he does not know so and so. Except for such trivial matters, they talk of nothing else.

"Somebody gives evidence. Can't the judge see that it is cooked; hasn't he himself been practicing as a lawyer for so long before being elevated to the bench. It is not difficult for him to realise this. But because of technicalities perhaps a person, who has done no wrong, is being sentenced - for it does not conform to law. On the other hand it is asserted that arguments are based on equity, truth and justice. Had it been so, why should have an innocent person been punished?

"Such is the play of money. It cannot protect truth and justice. See, it is all this that the judges and the courts concern themselves with. What a big personality, one thought, a judge of the high court was in one's childhood! Now they all appear to be nothing. Truth, justice and impartiality are far from them.

A judge asks a Santhal man, 'What is your age?' The Santhal says 'Judge, you are so great, you know so much yet you don't know even this. All right, just write down I am sixteen.' (All laugh). The fellow is over fifty. He can not calculate - an entirely unsophisticated mind he has. (Laughing) The others counseled him not to speak so rudely to the judge, he could be jailed.

"What is the goal of life? God-realization. If it be so, what are they living with; what are they doing? Unless the mind is purified, one can not realize God. The mind can not be purified with what they are doing; the mind and the speech cannot become one - that being so, how can they see God? In that case it boils down to this: Eat, drink and die. When the goal is God-realization, one doesn't do such things.

"I studied with Justice Sarada Mitra. He was then a lawyer. At times I used to go to the High Court to hear their arguments. One day when I went there Sarada Babu asked me, 'What has brought you here? By coming here a man loses his morals. This is a centre of the wicked men.' Didn't he know that I used to visit Thakur?

"Didn't Thakur say, 'Enter the den of jackal, you will only see the tails of other beasts. If you enter a tiger's den you will find the elephant's pearls and elephant's tusks there'."

M. (to all, referring to the Elder Jiten) — So, the conclusion is, so long as death is not abolished, one must have an aim. What aim? God-realization! It is different when death is abolished.

Some mangoes of prasad have been received from Thakur-Bari. Sadhus and bhaktas partake of this mango prasad. It's about 9 p.m. Having given the devotees the assignment of reading the Kathamrita, M. goes to the third level to take his meals.

16th of October 1882. The reading continues. Jagabandhu is reading - Narendra has arrived at Dakshineswar Temple along with several Brahma friends. Thakur is very happy that Narendra has come. Narendra stays there for the night with his friends, Priya and others. The next morning having taken their bath in the Ganga, Narendra comes with his friends to offer pranam to Thakur. Thakur sends him to the Vatatala along with his companions to meditate there. It is 9 a.m. After a while Thakur himself comes there accompanied by M.

It is about 10.30 now. The devotees stand on the level below the altar near Thakur.

Thakur gives them instructions. Sri Ramakrishna: While meditating one should get completely absorbed in God. It is not possible to find the jewels lying at the bottom of the sea by just swimming on the surface.

M. comes downstairs after having meal and listens to the reading.

M. (to the bhaktas) — The 'jewel' means God. Thakur used to sing a particular song when Brahma devotees used to come: 'Dive Dive, O my mind, dive deep into the sea of His beauty. By fathoming the bottomless, you can reach the priceless treasure.'

"Those people only give lectures. That is why Thakur asks them to absorb themselves in dhyana. Who will listen to their lecture? It's only when you have experienced it yourself that people listen to you.

"The mind is outgoing, it roams about outside. That makes one happy. But if it is withdrawn, pulled inside and concentrated on God one gradually begins to see the wealth. Knowledge, devotion, discrimination, dispassion, peace, happiness, prema and samadhi constitute that wealth. Then one gets His darshan by His grace.

"On one side of the mind, there is the world, on the other side, God. Such a vast expanse the mind has! Meditation on God purifies the mind. He grants His darshan in a pure mind.

"One only had lectures in the Brahma Samaj. After listening to these lectures I used to think that God was far away above. When I came to Thakur I saw that God was so near, at hand. Why so? Because their knowledge was derived from books, while Thakur's knowledge came from 'playing the musical notation' - the difference is that of heaven and nether worlds. So he asks the Brahmans to practise dhyana."

The reading continues. Sri Ramakrishna says, 'There is no Madhava in your temple. O Padua, you have only created confusion by blowing your cunch.'

M. (to the devotees) — Just notice this: Thakur says, 'What use taking mere lectures?' First of all install Madhava that is God in the temple of your heart. In other words, awaken Him, see Him. Then the world will hear you wonderstruck. Thakur said to Bankim Babu, 'You speak in vain. People will listen to you for two days. Then it will

be the same with them as before. By swimming on the surface you cannot find the jewel.'

(To Gadadhar) "What does it avail if you memorize a few things and keep your eyes closed for a while. Without selfless work the mind cannot be purified. You cannot find the jewel."

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — If one could live without eating, was there any need for so much? So one can't understand His ways. Just see, what rules He has made for the world. Eat, drink and procreate, this is the law.

"Yet there are some *clever* people who do not marry. They are clever indeed. It's marriage that brings the worries of filling the stomach and earning money. This leads to a fall from Yoga - because one has to feed some five mouths. If there is only one stomach there isn't so much worry. Live on alms, put a morsel in the mouth and think of Him day and night.

"Had there been no worry of the stomach for man, his mind could always remain riveted high up. It is for the stomach that the man looks downwards.

"Thakur said: 'I saw a man with 'upward glance' at the turning of the tall military building.'

"You must install Madhava whatever you may do. Then alone there will be peace and happiness for yourself as well as for the world."



Morton School, Calcutta.
Friday, 23rd May 1924.
The 9th day of Jaishtha, 1331 B.Y.
The fifth day of the dark fortnight, 28 dandas/10 palas.

A RELENTLESS WAR WITH MIND IS NEEDED

1.

Morton School. M.'s bedroom on the fourth level. M. is sitting on the bed roll facing west. On the bench to south is seated Antevasi. It's 4 p.m. The earth has been lighted up suddenly by the bright rays of the sun after a cloudy day.

Today it is Saturday, the 19th of July 1924, the third day of the month of Shravana 1331 B.Y., the third day of the dark fortnight, 19 dandas/15 palas.

Enters Dr. Bakshi. After sometime M. says to the Doctor, 'We should go and see the place of Shukalal Babu. I have been wanting to see it for quite some days.' Antevasi says, 'Very nice, I will take you there. For quite long Shukalal Babu has been telling me how he wishes you make his place holy by the dust of your feet somehow. He is a great devotee. Besides, the Doctor has a car.'

Shukalal is a rich social person. He has a big business and has a number of houses in Calcutta. He feels very happy in entertaining people. And he performs daily puja in his house. His eldest daughter is a widow, so he has set up Radhakrishna *vighraha* (idol) independently for her. At times holy festivals are celebrated there. He (Shukalal) always renders service to Sri Ramakrishna's sadhus, bhaktas and sevakas. He is very fond of M. In spite of his burliness, almost daily he comes to Amherst Street from Belegkata, sometimes by car and at other times on foot in the spirit of tapasya to see M. He also visits Belur Math. Sri Mahapurush Maharaj (Sw. Shivananda ji, the second president of Sri Ramakrishna Order) is also fond of him. He is also dear to the sadhus of the Math. Some people, keeping his company, have embraced sannyasa or have become bhaktas in the Belur Math. He treats to sumptuous meals those sadhus and bhaktas who stay with M. or visit M. regularly. He serves sadhus also by offering them money. During M.'s stay at Mihijam he almost daily used to send parcels of eatables to him for his use. Manoranjan, Thakur's unmarried devotee lives with him and manages his estate.

M. gets into the car accompanied by the Doctor and Antevasi. The Doctor is seated with M. on the back seat while Antevasi is occupying the seat next to the chauffeur. He is showing the way.

The car enters the main road of Belegkata to the south of Sealdah station passing through Amherst street, Harrison Road and Lower circular road. Next having crossed Pamar Bazar road the car reaches house number 9/1, South Sealdah road / Chunapatti. This is Shukalal's office. It constitutes a two level house in tin with the Sadar Marg and drain to its south. This house runs north-south in length. There is a big verandah in north-south. It has a broad bench.

Seeing M. coming suddenly, Shukalal is overwhelmed with joy. He has been sitting on the bench in the verandah. Wrapping his fat body with a chadar he comes at a fast pace towards the car and stands there folding his hands, with his upper cloth round his neck and bows reverentially to M. Now he welcomes him reverentially and makes him sit on the bench in the verandah.

M. faces west seated on the northern side of the bench. In front of him the assistants are working seated on small wooden seats placed on the floor in a room. Behind them is an old oil painting of Mother Durga on the wall. Close

to Her is Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. In front of these images, on a wooden platform are articles of puja. The assistants leave their seats and offer pranam to M.

M. now says to Shukalal, 'Let me see the house as well.' 'At your service', saying so Shuklal proceeds with M. by his side. House number 12, South Sealdah road is only two houses away to the east. This is Shuklal's residence. It faces south. Facing north, M. enters the outer portion of the house by the door to the west after ascending the verandah. Thereafter he goes and takes his seat on a chair facing south in a big eastern room on the ground level. This is Shuklal's bedroom. To its north, there are two small rooms. The eastern room is occupied by his eldest son and the other western room serves as Thakur's Shrine. Both rooms have pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Shiva, Durga, Laxmi, Saraswati, Ram, Krishna and other deities and god-men. The wall of the bedroom also has many pictures of gods and goddesses.

This single-storeyed house has a courtyard to the north with a kitchen next to it. Behind it are a garden, a cowshed etc. To the west of this single-storeyed house, there is a big two-storeyed house running north-south. Above and below live members of Shukalal's family.

After a while entering the Thakur's shrine, M. prostrates himself before all the gods and goddesses keeping them to the left while facing north. Thereafter he walks through the courtyard to the garden. He asks Shukalal how many cows he has. Shukalal tells him that the cowshed is empty, there being no cow at present. M. says smilingly, 'In my uncle's house there is a cowshed full of horses!'

M. returns now. Phani, the youngest son of Shukalal comes and pays his pranam to M. He is seven or eight. Placing his hand on his shoulder, M. walks ahead. He comes to the southern verandah of the house. In front of him is the South Sealdah Road and behind it the canal. Now comes Jitu and offers his pranam to M. He is the eldest son of Shukalal and is sixteen. Antevasi introduces him.

Ambikacharan, Shukalal's young brother-in-law is suffering from typhoid. He is lying sick in the southern room on the ground floor of the two-storeyed building. While entering the house M. had talked of him. Now he says to Dr. Bakshi, 'Why don't you go and see him?' The doctor enters the patient's room with Antevasi and examines the patient. The patient is on his way to recovery now. The women (of the house) are nursing him. The doctor returns and tells all this to M. M. says, 'You see, my mind has been constantly drawn towards him since then. I can not go to him - I cannot bear it, so I sent you people.'

Shukalal says, 'Ramesh's father is also lying ill in his house.' 'He must also be visited,' saying so M. rises. Instisting humbly Shukalal places a plate of sweets before him. Taking a very small portion of it, M. returns to the office. Now Antevasi and the Doctor return having seen Ramesh's father and tell M. all about him. M. has now taken his seat on a round wooden stool in the southern verandah of the second level of the office building. Close to him is Shukalal. Ramesh is studying in a college and is an initiated disciple of the Holy Mother.

M. now comes and takes his seat in the verandah on the ground floor. He is preparing to leave. Pointing to the oil painting of Goddess Durga inside the room, he says to the Doctor. 'This is the Mother Durga's image from Lanka-dweep (Sri Lanka). It is a hundred years old picture, so beautiful.'

M. now comes and sits inside the car. Shuklal bows low and humbly offers his pranam to M. After an hour the car is again running on the same road as before.

M. is to visit Sealdah railway station. The car enters the courtyard of the railway station through the northern gate. It is to stop there for ten minutes. Seated in the car M. casts his glance on the sweet shops and the restaurants to the left with childlike eagerness and joy. Now the car leaves the main station to the left and goes towards the southern station. A number of passengers, men and women, are crossing over in front. The car almost brushes past some of them. Seeing it M. is upset. Says he, 'How careless! One should be very cautious and keep some distance.'

Coming out of the southern gate and crossing the Circular Road the car is now passing through the Baubazar. The bell of the church to the left is ringing. The car stops at the gate of the Basumati Sahitya-Mandir. M. says to Antevasi: 'Please go and see if Patal Babu is there or not. If he is there I would like to get down and meet him. You see it's Upen Babu's house. Upen Babu was Thakur's devotee. He is dead. His son Satish has grown into a very worthy young man. It is he who has developed all this. It appears, he is not inside the house now.'

Getting the news of M.'s arrival, Patal Babu comes running to the car and takes M. to the first floor. On the way up, showing M. the lino (Printing) machine to the right on the ground floor, he goes upstairs. The entire first floor is full of books. The daily, weekly and monthly 'Basumati' are published from here. Standing on the first floor to the east, M. sees the big collection of pictures hanging on the wall - pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. Says he to Patal Babu, 'Where is the picture of Mother Saraswati?' Patal tells him that it is upstairs. M. says that it had better been there (downstairs) since it is a temple of knowledge. Patal says humbly, 'Right Sir, it will be placed here.' M. asks: which was Upen Babu's seat? Patal Babu shows it to him. Thereafter he is taken to Satish's room, the editor's room and the assistant editor's room. Seeing all this M. says, 'This is a sacred place.'

Patal Babu places a big volume of *Vishwakosh* (World Encyclopaedia) volume V, before M. and says, 'It is The Record of the Imperial Visit.'

M. comes and stands in front of the car. Patal Babu offers his pranam, lying prostrate on the ground along with two or three bhaktas. While going for the car, he sees a number of reading boards on both sides with copies of the daily Basumati. Many people are reading it. After a pause, M. says to Antevasi, 'Just see, how eagerly they are reading. They have forgotten everything else. This should be photographed.'

These are the people back from their office. Some of them have their hands on their waist, the others under the armpit. Some are holding back their umbrella as support to body from behind, while others are standing in a bent posture. Some of them have their office files in the hand while other have a bag of vegetables hanging from their hand. They are all young or middle-aged. They are tired out by their office work but are inordinately earnest. It appears that these people are patriotic and interested in politics.

Having entered the Amherst Street, the car proceeds towards the north. The Mirzapur Park to the right is full of people. There are different arrangements for the young boys and girls to play there. The car stops for a while. Some children are sliding down the incline, some are swinging, some are going up and down the see-saw while others are running races or wrestling. Seeing all this M. is full of joy - rays of childlike joy are playing on his face and eyes. Says he to Antevasi full of joy, 'Just see, how the boys are enjoying themselves. You should observe all this. It keeps one in the right frame of mind.' The car has crossed the Harrison Road. A joyful smile is playing on M.'s face and eyes. He says, 'The more I see, the more I learn.'

19th of July, 1924.

2.

Morton School, the roof on the fourth level. It is 6.30 p.m. The devotees are waiting for M. - they are Lalit of Bhatpara, Bholanath, Basant, Bheem, 'Dirghakesh' (man with long hair) and so on. These people come to see M. on Saturdays on their way back from office.

M. has been to Belegkata and Basumati Sahitya Mandir for more than two hours, having gone there by the Doctor's car along with the Doctor and Jagabandhu. Tired as he is, he sits down on the terrace facing north for fresh air. For quite sometime there is no talk, everybody is silent. In the meanwhile some regular bhaktas arrive: the Elder Jiten, Shachi, Shanti, the Younger Nalini, Advocate Lalit, Balai, 'Healing Balm' (Durgapada) and others. Doctor Bakshi and Jagabandhu are already there.

M. looks pointedly at the sky. His mind is as if a hen sitting on the eggs. After a while he begins to talk.

M. (to the bhaktas) — While flying kites the mind of the boys is concentrated on the kite flying above. Similarly those who are yogis have their sight always fixed above. In other words, except for God they have no other aim in life - fully absorbed in the Self, fully contented. That is why the Gita says that the yogi is superior to the ascetic, the ritualist and the man of knowledge (Gita 6:46). And among the yogis those whose mind and the vital breath are merged in the Innermost Self are the best, such as Thakur.

"Here you have an indication of an order. The ascetic, the ritualist and the man of knowledge are superior to an ordinary man. They have faith in the Shastras, they observe the rituals. But their mind is not absorbed within - they act mechanically like a machine. Superior to them are the Karma-yogis, Bhakti-yogis, Raja-yogis and Jnana-yogis. They have been able to discriminate between the eternal and the transitory. That is why they practise consciously how to attain God, they try to act in a selfless manner. The Self-realised yogis, those who have seen God, are superior to those who have taken to spiritual practice. And among the God-realized, the Avatara is the best. That is why Sri Krishna says: *yoginam api sarvesham* (of all the yogis . . .). What comes after it, Doctor Babu?

The Doctor — *Yoginam api sarvesham madgtena antaratmna, shrdhhavan bhajate yah mam sah me yuktatamah matah.*

[And of all the yogis, he who worships Me with faith, with his inmost self merged in Me - him I hold to be the most devout. Gita 6:47]

M. - *Madgatena antaratmna* means that the mind and *prana* (the vital breath) are all given up to God. There is no liking for anything else in the world. The mind is neither in wife and son nor in daughter and wealth nor in worldly glory, name and fame, attainment of heaven etc. All these have come to mean an illusion. So, does it mean that the yogis have reached a negative state? No, not so, God is the source of all bliss and joy. They taste only the divine flavour. This is a positive state. They are averse to tasting sensory pleasures but not with this (divine rasa). The more one tastes it the more one wants it - there is never an end to it.

"Thakur, therefore, said to a bhakta: 'One has never enough of Him, one is never satiated with Him.' The more you have Him, the more you want Him. Besides the want of sensory pleasures and the want of Him are not the same. The want of Him means an infinite contentment. Those who have attained this state of longing are the ones already liberated in life - they have gone beyond the cycle of birth and death.

"That bhakta (M.) used to keep staring at Thakur. Noticing it, Thakur said: 'Nothing else is needed if the mind is wholly concentrated on this (Thakur's person).'

"Christ also said the same referring to Mary. Mary would keep staring at Christ without blinking. Sometimes she would go into Bhavasamadhi, when her mind and soul were fully absorbed in Christ. He said: 'But one thing is needful and Mary hath chosen that good part.' (Luke 10:42). In other words, she has contracted love for him."

The Elder Jiten — Our eyes are always looking downwards. Even if they look upwards for a while like a kite, they dive down soon. Please tell me the way out.

M. (smiling) - What, tell you the way? Hasn't He told it so many times? He said: 'Keep the company of sadhus, render service to sadhus.' In other words, one should attach oneself to those whose mind is always on a higher plane. By keeping company of them, your mind will also gradually rise higher. I shall not budge, climb a step or do anything - how then can the mind rise without doing anything?

"What a great ideal we have in front of us! I say the advent of Thakur has just this purpose - to raise the people's mind high. He came only to demonstrate the truth of what the holy books say. He was indeed 'the most devout'. He had no care of the body, no awareness of day and night; his mind was absorbed in the Brahman.

"We all are the scions of that great family, yet have no inclination towards it. Imagine your asking for the way! Try, render service to the yogis, spend on tobacco and betel-leaves for them and you will succeed.

"Difficult though it is, yet He does it if you cry taking refuge in Him. For the age of Kali this is the easy way Thakur has shown - Cry and implore: reveal Thyself.

"If you lie like wet wood in water day and night, how can it go on? But the water will dry up near a fire - the kite of the mind will then soar high up in the sky of the feet of Mother Shyama. It will then become its nature to fly in the sky of Brahman. Why? For that is man's birth right. Towards that way is the home of the mind. Samadhi is the normal state of a living being. The mind has been defiled to this extent because of its pre-occupation with sensory matters. If you pray to the Mother, if you cry yearningly, the Mother dries up this wet match-stick again. Then it catches fire, the moment it is struck.

"Tapasya is needed. To realise how important is the company of sadhus one needs tapasya. Tapasya means to go beyond the environment. Then one begins to understand the bad state in which one is in by living alone. Then one tries to cure oneself."

M. (to all) — Thakur used to say, 'It is good if you keep your sight raised towards the sky.' For this will lead the mind towards God.

"Oh, how amazing! It doesn't come about without declaring a relentless war. Rise and fall there is bound to be always but I shall not give up till I achieve my goal - such a resolve is necessary.

"How much one labours to earn money! From morning till evening one is continuously working for it. Even when one returns home one brings a file of papers under one's armpit and goes over them at home. If so much labour is involved only in earning money how much more of it is needed for attaining the supreme wealth? However, one thinks that it can be done even at leisure. But that is not possible. Lie down, cry and pray: 'Grant it.' If you truly take refuge in Him, He does it all."

M. has written an article on Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) in the monthly magazine Basumati. The first section of it has just been read. M. comments on it, now.

M. — Just see. Swamiji clearly says, 'If you want India to rise you will have to make Sri Ramakrishna your ideal. The life-breath of India is the knowledge of the Self. This knowledge of the Self is the source of all other knowledge. Politics alone will not raise India.' Thakur's main teaching is: 'The highest ideal and duty of man is to attain God-realization. This is special to India: God-realization - God first world next. India rose by taking recourse to this knowledge. And it will rise again only by doing so. And he (Swamiji) said something else too: 'Only Thakur knew himself perfectly, none else did. He is an infinite sea, just a jugful of water from it is enough to over-fill one with joy. India is the crest jewel of the world.'

Monday, the 21st July today, the Nagapanchami day according to the calendar, 15 dandas, 43 palas. The devotees of the Morton School are celebrating the birthday of M. today. M. was informed about it last evening. Seeing a lot of purchases being made for a festivity yesterday, M. had an inkling of it and asked Jagabandhu what the matter was. Mustering courage, he told the whole plan. However, M. remained disinterested even on hearing it. He never wants the propagation of his name.' Gupta as he is, he wishes to remain *gupta* (hidden). He wants the propagation, puja and celebration of his adorable deity Sri Ramakrishna only.

The bhaktas also said something else to M. : 'The real inspiration behind this celebration is Jnana Maharaj and other sadhus of the Math. They will also join this festivity. They will all come tomorrow.' M. felt a peace on hearing it. He thought it would be nice since there would be Thakur's puja and the company of sadhus and their seva would be possible. That would be excellent.

Dr. Kartik Chandra Bakshi's house is the venue of the celebrations. This house is situated in Saudagar Patti in the Cossipore locality. Here the Ahirs of the western region keep cattle and live by selling milk. Thatched houses are located to a long distance all around. In their middle, the doctor has his

two-storeyed house. He is living on the second level. One climbs to the second level by a staircase from the road.

Thakur's puja is performed daily in this house. Fruits and sweets are daily offered as offerings. Sometimes a bhoga of cereals is also offered. The sadhus have named it the Cossipore ashrama. Sadhus and bhaktas frequent it daily. They are looked after here. When sick, the sadhus and bhaktas sometimes come here to live.

The Doctor's wife lives in her village home, in Krishnanagar. The doctor has only one daughter. Since there are no ladies living here, sadhus and bhaktas visit without any hitch.

Today various dishes are being served : *pulao* (fried rice) and so on. And why not? It has to be offered to Thakur, and the sadhus and bhaktas are going to take the prasad.

The Thakur's shrine has been decorated with leaves and flowers. Garlands of big roses decorate the image of Thakur, the Holy Mother and M. The whole ashrama is fragrant with sweet smelling incense and dhoop etc.

The sadhus of the Math are performing the puja in one section of the house, and on the other side, others are singing hymns together - singing the name of Thakur's beloved Mother - song after song in accompaniment with the harmonium, the pakhawaj and other musical instruments.

Jnana Maharaj has come from the Belur Math; as also Swamis Girijananda, Shantananda, Dharmananda, Ramananda, Rameshwarananda, Amalananda. Onkarananda, Asheshananda and others. Khoka Maharaj has come from Calcutta. The puja and bhog being over, the sadhus partake of the prasad to their hearts' content after the arati. Fruits, sweets, curd etc. are there in plenty. After the sadhus, eat the bhaktas both from the Morton School and from elsewhere. There must have been a hundred people in all.

It is now 3 o'clock. Enters Swami Sardananda from Udbodhan. Since he is not keeping fit, he has come after his meals. However, he takes a little of sweets and fruits.

M. comes at half past five. He also comes after taking his meals, he is also not fit. The bhaktas are very happy. They were not sure if he would come. M. enters the Thakur's shrine, offers his pranam by prostrating himself and takes *charanamrita* (holy water). The Elder Amulya and the bhaktas are busy singing bhajans. They are singing Thakur's favourite song: The bee of my mind drinks deep . . . , etc.

M. is also plunged in dhyana, seated motionless. Sitting on his yogic seat he listens to the songs: 'What need of Gaya Ganga . . .', 'Which are your moods, and when? You are the river of nectar, Mother Shyama . . .' Such a divine music inspiring samadhi is ringing. A wave of divine peace and joy of devotion is playing on the solemn face of M. Some of the bhaktas see it without winking an eyelid. The Doctor's house has today become a holy place of pilgrimage with this gathering of the bhaktas. Om Shanti!



Morton School, Calcutta

Monday, 21st of July 1924

The 5th day of Shravana, 1331 (B.Y.), Nagapanchami.

INDIA WILL AGAIN RISE WITH THE GLORY OF THE SELF-KNOWLEDGE

1.

Morton School. M.'s room on the fourth level. 4 p.m. M. is seated on his bed facing west. To his left sits Antevasi on a bench facing north.

The devotees have celebrated M.'s birthday only yesterday on the Nagapanchami day in the house of Dr. Kartik Chandra Bakshi in Cossipore. The sadhus of the Math joined this festivity along with Swamis Sardananda, Subodhananda (Khoka Maharaj) and other children of Thakur and partook of the prasada. This celebration took place by the inspiration from the sadhus of the Math. Having made all arrangements secretly, the bhaktas informed M. quite late. M. is a Gupta (sir name) and wishes to remain *gupta* (hidden). Says he: If you have to proclaim anybody, it has to be Thakur alone. This will not only benefit us but also the world at large.

M. is talking to Antevasi about the same celebration: who were the main workers, who inspired the idea, how much expense was incurred, who contributed to the expenses - all such matters.

M. — I felt a great joy yesterday on entering Thakur's shrine. They had decorated it so well. Oh, how rare were the roses used there! The shrine was fragrant with their sweet smell. Is any festivity possible without all this? Add to it, the presence of so many sadhus from the Math - Sarat Maharaj, Khoka Maharaj and others. (Smiling) Jnana Maharaj, it appears, was the main source of inspiration. He is endowed with a lot of originality. He inspires young men in so many ways. Such ideas do not perhaps rise in the mind of others. But he keeps on generating new plans.

"The house was transformed into a place of pilgrimage, isn't it? It would have been right if they had sent some prasada to Advaita Ashrama. Keep a record of the expenses of the celebrations item wise. It will be helpful in making an estimate next year. The song -The bee of my mind drinks deep. . . had occupied the whole of my mind. It was perhaps sung by Amulya Babu?"

Antevasi — The celebration made everybody happy except the Doctor's wife. She is sad because she could not participate. The celebration took place in her house, yet she was not present.

M. — Yes, that's true. But as you say had she been there, the bhaktas would not have celebrated there.

The evening session is being held on the roof. The Elder Jiten, Shukalal, Jagabandhu, Manoranjan, Dr. Bakshi, Vinay, Gadadhar, the Younger Nalini and others have come. M. is seated on a chair facing south. As soon as the evening lamp is brought in, M. begins to meditate alongwith the bhaktas. After sometime M. rises and paces the northern part of the roof. Then he comes back and takes his seat. Now they converse.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Thakur said: 'One should engage oneself in meditation in the evening giving up all work.' One should practice

dhyana-chintan (meditation and reflection) daily regularly. Once it becomes a habit one can not do without it - one would feel bad without doing it. Why to sit for meditation in the morning and evening? To bind the mind. You see, the mind looks outwards day and night, it's restless like a monkey for the worldly matters. One should make an attempt to pull back this restless mind and bind it internally to the lotus feet of the Lord. Daily practice makes it easy. Initially it will seem a bit bad - it is like waging a war with the mind. Later it is controlled by practice and by His grace. The boy roams about outside all the time - bring him back and make him sit at home - just this, what else?

"It becomes very convenient when the avatara comes down. There is flood of *dhyana-chintana* raging all around. As if a festival is being celebrated; like the excitement in a kingdom when the king arrives. How many good sadhus one sees now after the advent of Thakur? Where were such sadhus, ashramas, maths in Bengal before? The whole country was full of *nera-neries* (a community of Vaishnavas believing in the practice of *sadhna* with women as partners). How many ashramas one sees these days!

"I used to read about ashramas in classics like *Shakuntla* etc. and used to imagine them. Now I don't have to imagine them - they are before my very eyes, the ashramas, the sadhus, all these. Such good sadhus these are! How much learned, how many qualities they have - leaving all these behind they long for God. It is by these sadhus that the country will rise and religion will be re-established. This is the reason why they have come.

"They also belong to this country - only they were sleeping all these days. With the rise of the sun of Ramakrishna, the lotuses have opened out. The sleeping lord within the lotus of the heart has woken up. That is why all these honey bees have come flying to the lotus feet of Sri Ramakrishna to find honey. How well-educated all these sadhus are? There are B.A., M.A. B.L., doctors among them. Leaving all, these people are yearning for God - like the gopis came running leaving everything behind on hearing the music of the flute.

"Why this yearning? Why were these sadhus created? Thakur says, 'In Kaliyuga the only way to gain dharma is to keep the company of sadhus.' He did not content himself just by saying so. He created sadhus. Creation of these sadhus makes the men of the world find an easy path to peace.

"Why did He make the gopis come, filling their minds with yearning and make them give up everything else on hearing the music of the flute? Because otherwise *Rasalila* (the divine play of Krishna) would not have been possible - the men of the world would not also have had a glorious, bright and sweet example of *Prema-bhakti* (pure love of the divine) before them. In the same way, He has drawn these sadhus to himself making them give up all - for their good, for the good of India and also for the good of the world. Salvation of these sadhus is in their own hands. They will bring back the lost glory of India - having realised the Self they will enlighten the Indians. India will then rise and His glory will then spread in the world - the glory

of the knowledge of the Self, the glory of the knowledge of Brahman. The world will then attain peace and the Satyayuga will return.

"Who can understand His plan? People think that everything is done by the politicians. It's not so. There is a well-made plan of God behind it. A big master plan there is behind this fall of India and the rise of the West. Since eternity He is doing it - creation, preservation and dissolution; and He brings Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kaliyuga. India is in the period of Kaliyuga these days. Thakur came to tell the advent of Satyayuga. Swamiji saw that the Yuga of the Shudra was coming. That is why Thakur sowed the seed of Satyayuga or Brahman-yuga, early in the day. These sadhus are the harbingers of Satyayuga, Brahman-yuga. On the one hand we have that animal indulgence and on the other, this great renunciation. Breaking and making - this is what He does. He himself is the one assuming the human form and he himself is the embodiment of all blessed qualities transcending them all."

The Elder Jiten — The robber Ratnakar became Maharshi Balmiki by keeping the company of the sadhus.

M. (aside) — Most people only give lectures but never keep the company of sadhus. One must go for the company of sadhus from time to time. What use is just talking? Nobody wants to budge a jot. Thakur would some time say, 'These rascals, they don't take a plunge.' (Laughter) They just talk. You see, so many persons used to preach in those days. They only used to lecture. Without taking a plunge what can one understand?

2.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — Just look at the sky. See what is happening there! The Eternity is working in its eternal ways.

"Just think of the eternal Satchidananda as an infinite sea. There is water all around. In that sea, I, the jiva, am swimming blissfully like a fish.

"Thakur talked of this kind of dhyana. One should practice dhyana in this way. When His grace dawns, this salt-doll of an insignificant jiva going to the sea to fathom it, becomes the sea itself - the jivatman (soul) gets dissolved into Paramatman (the supreme Soul). Then it is all quiet. Nothing remains - no world, no wife, son or daughter, no non-cooperation or politics - nothing. Then all becomes one - that which is the summum bonum of life. To attain this daily practice is necessary."

The Elder Jiten — Then in that state does any distinction survive that between the teacher and the taught, the small and the big?

M. — 'It is a very difficult state to reach, when one sees no difference between the guru and the disciple,' so said Thakur. All feelings of duality vanish. The external world exists, but the yogis do not take any notice of it : For them, all is Satchidananda. There is no duality there. The Vedas call Him the One without a second. That is why *madgatena antaratmna* - his inner self is merged in Me.

"All these states have been seen in Thakur's life. His body would become stiff like wood and the mind, where would it get merged? He would become conscious of the name and form only when he descended for below to the brink of the world. Even then Satchidananda would keep his mind pulled to the extent that he would see Satchidananda manifesting itself in all names and forms. What a divine play of Satchidananda! All men, birds and beasts, trees and creepers, homes and houses, all these permeated with Satchidananda - Satchidananda all. It was in such a state of mind that he gave the *puri* (fried loaf) of prasad to the cat to eat."

The Elder Jiten — Does one not see any divine forms in that state?

M. (sarcastically) — Oh, it will not do to remain so far away. You must enter the shop. Then alone you will be able to see what is there inside - where are potatoes and where are *patahs* (a tasty vegetable). One can't do seated in an arm chair. It is only by going that you can know where Shyampukur is and where the Fort Maidan.

"Just by repeating 'hemp-hemp' you can't get inebriated. You have to crush and eat it before it can come about. Can you enjoy music just by repeating its notation by mouth, whether it be the singer or the listener? You have to play it if both of you wish to enjoy it."

The Elder Jiten — No Sir, the state of dhyana eludes one. It is only in deep meditation that one attains God, when one is fully merged in it.

"A High Court advocate said today: 'Take to meditation. What use is it reading so much?' It touched the mind like a divine word. And here too I am hearing the same."

M. keeps a meaningful silence for a while, as if he wants to answer the Elder Jiten by his silence: Take a vow of silence. Think upon Him. Only then can you look inside. Then alone it will be possible for you to meditate on God.

M. is silent and so is everybody. Suddenly a quiet has descended on the company. M.'s mind has merged high up in God. The minds of the bhaktas are also affected by proximity - their minds have also risen unawares. For some moments, a deep silence reins over them.

Smitten in mind, the Elder Jiten after quite sometime, mustering courage asks M. the questions arising in his mind.

The Elder Jiten — Is it because of the good deeds of our past life that we are sitting here?

Pulling his mind out. M. says in a grave peaceful tone, "Thakur was the highest man, the highest ideal. You come here to hear about him? How could it be otherwise?"

M. (to all) — Aha, such a longing for the highest ideal! It is a sight for gods to see.

"Even gods do not have such a yearning. Why? Because they live with sensory pleasures. If there is fifty percent of sensory enjoyment, the yearning also dwindles to fifty percent.

"Why does man have such a yearning for God? Because he sees death always gaping at him. He reflects that this body is to be taken away by death. Therefore what use is it to indulge in transitory sensory enjoyment with this perishable body? As soon as this feeling comes, the mind begins to rebel. It begins to long for the bliss of Brahman. This is called yearning.

"Does it mean nothing just because we are sitting on this rickety bench? That's not so. What a great ideal we are reflecting upon! Isn't Thakur our ideal? Thakur means one who remains merged in Para-Brahman night and day round the clock. His dhoti would slip down his waist. Similarly the world would slip from his mind like the fall of a ripe mango. He had only Ma, Ma on his lips always ."

M. (to a particular bhakta) — Real yearning means struggle for the highest ideal, yearning for the goal.

"Those who like to hear Thakur's words, know it that, they struggle for the realization of the highest goal.

"It is very nice, very inspiring to see someone struggling for God. It is a sight for the gods to see.

"One can see this yearning all the time in this country. Where can one find such yearning in the West? Christ came so it was visible then. When it is not so one is always engaged in materialism - worry for the sensory enjoyments.

"(In a sing-song manner) 'Soot (yarn) is not sold in this shop, here only the *soot* (son) of Nandarani (i.e. Krishna) is sold.' Soot (yarn) is the symbol for sensory enjoyment, whereas the soot (son) of Nandarani signifies the highest ideal."

The Elder Jiten — Not so easy, Sir. . . (that yearning)?

M. (scolds before the Elder Jiten has finished speaking) — How do you say 'no'? Isn't it because you can't catch 'is'? Do you know all? How far can your eyes see? What is the value of your ego? Do you even know how you were born as a boy from your mother's womb?

"That is why Thakur said that while a man sleeps, he is not aware even if somebody urinates in his mouth. He just turns pale. And for such a man to have pride! Just see, what a helpless state a man is in."

3.

"Aha, glance within yourself for once. What is happening inside this body? It is made of the element of earth. Where did it get its vital breath from? And how? And then what about the mind and the intellect? It is with this mind and intellect made of earth that one attains the highest ideal, God. What a wonderful machine He has made!

"How can then one say that one is the doer? Such a helpless state the man is in!

"That is why Thakur taught us how to pray to the Mother - Ma, Pray don't delude me by thy world-bewitching maya. This maya is present all around, this divine maya, so difficult to overcome. One should pray daily."

A Bhakta (in wonder to himself) — This play of M. with the bhakta is no less wonderful, I see that. The Elder Jiten is fond of talking. Him he scolds to silence. Being reproached his mind plunges into despair. So M. raises it. Says he: Because you are sitting on a rickety bench, does it mean that you are nobody. That's not true. You are a man of quality. Why? Because you meditate on Sri Ramakrishna. Satchidananda has taken the form of Sri Ramakrishna. You are yearning for him. Otherwise why do you come here daily, to listen to his word. The Elder Jiten puts in his objection: 'But where is the yearning?' So he is whipped again. Says M., 'Have you already known yourself? How can you say that you have no yearning? Listen and follow those who know themselves. Knowing oneself means knowing God.'

"It is like the cat playing with a mouse, as it plays with mouse (man) for a while to begin with. Later having crushed his ego, it is united with the supreme ego of God. Then this helpless fellow becomes mighty having been united to God - the dead comes to life."

M. (to a particular young man) — The yogi is one who like a bird keeps his mind flying above this sense world. Sitting on the eggs - the mind of the bird is fully concentrated on its eggs. Similarly the yogi's mind is centred in God. He sees everything but his eyes are half-closed with the sight concentrated within on the Self.

"There are devotees who only want Him - the soot (son) of Nandarani. They always keep the highest ideal before their eyes."

The Young Man — The company of others of different type brings down the mind.

M. — Can it be otherwise? Vivekananda did not visit theatres. Why? Because it very much brings the mind down. Name and form have great influence. Suppose you see a form. If it is good the mind will go towards God. If it is not so it will go towards sensory enjoyment. And as soon as it goes down this way it is caught up. How much effort is then needed to lift it again! That's why when one is in the stage of a sadhaka one must discriminate between what one should do and what not.

"Even so one can go places in the company of the guardian tutor - the way we went with Thakur to witness Chaitanya Lila! If that is not possible one shouldn't visit. Otherwise it brings the mind down c-o-n-s-i-d-e-r-a-b-l-y."

"Is word so insignificant? No, it has a great influence. He (God) Himself is the proof of the word. The Chandi says, 'O Mother, the manifestation of fifty words!' Just see what a great influence one single word has. (To the Younger Ramesh) Just pronounce the word sannyasi. You will see what a change it brings to your mind."

"When one has attained God-realization, one does not utter many words - one is silenced. Thakur said, 'There is no sound when the jar is full to the brim; when the bee is seated on the flower it does not hum'."

While talking, M. is overwhelmed by emotion and begins to sing songs, as the *mahamantras* of Thakur. He begins to sing song after song as if a fountain has burst forth.

*What is this aberration of the mind, O Shankari . . .
O Jiva, death has entered your house in full armour clad in battle array . . .
I do not drink wine, I drink nectar as I repeat Jai Kali . . .
O Lord, I am Thy slave, Thy slave I am . . .*

With the songs, a peaceful mood that makes one forget the world descends in the house. The bhaktas enjoy this God-given divine joyful mood for sometime.

M. keeps silent for a while after the songs are finished. Then he resumes showering the 'nectar of the Word'.

M. (to the bhaktas) — *Gurudatt beej laye*, that is, the sacred name that the guru has initiated you with. It is by practicing it that you attain the highest ideal. Then it is all quiet. On the face of it or on hearing it, it may appear to be a small matter, but an infinite power resides within it. Just see, the seed of the Ashwattha tree. How small it looks, the naked eye can't even see it. But what a huge Ashwattha tree it hides within itself. It is same with the Name (the divine name). The *nam* (Name) contains the *nami* (the person named) that is God.

"How great is the potentiality of the Name? Besides it is highly explosive. Bursting from within it crushes all desires for sensory enjoyment - everything is reduced to ashes. However, no fire is generated in this burning. It only generates peace, supreme peace. The noise no longer exists. Only a sweet tranquility remains.

"What happens in the macrocosm also happens in the microcosm."

The Elder Jiten (thoroughly overcome) — It doesn't happen unless one is mad.

M. — There are two kinds of madness. First, the madness for God which is very good, and second, the madness for material objects. Everybody is crazy for material objects. How many are mad for God?

The Elder Amulya — And mad for all the twenty-four hours. (M. laughs).

M. (with a suppressed smile) — How long did you say?

The Elder Amulya — Twenty-four hours, throughout.

M. — Yes, always, Just see, this is what they live with.

"Members of a mutual admiration society, they come to believe that they have already achieved all. They don't realize that they themselves are mad.

"We are all mad with desire, anger and greed. The monkey dances when it is in heat. The man is also in the same state. And on the top of it to be proud!

"I take refuge in Thee, O Lord, I take refuge in Thee' - this is the only way to save oneself. There is no other way. All great men have shown this way - whether rishis or avataras or godmen. And it is proper if we follow these highest men."



Calcutta
Tuesday, 22nd July 1924,
The sixth of Shravana, 1331 B.Y.,
The 6th day of the dark fortnight, 15 Dandas/49 palas.

THE SADHU - A LIVING COMMENTARY ON THE SHASTRAS

1.

Morton School, Calcutta. The room in the south-eastern corner on the third level. M. is lying in bed on the floor being indisposed. This morning he was somewhat better.

M. has been ill since the night of the 22nd of July. He feels that he has dysentery. It is because of it that he has been having slight temperature for some days. However, there is no pause in his showering of the nectar like word of God. He is visited daily by the bhaktas and sadhus. M. can not do without divine talk. That is why he calls the bhaktas and make them sit cordially on the mat close to his bed spread.

Today he is a bit better. So he has sent Jagabandhu and the Younger Jiten to bring the news of the Math. These two are living in this building itself. The bhaktas return from the Math at 11. As soon as he sees them he eagerly enquires after the Math.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Are the people in the Math all well? Did you talk to any of them?

The Younger Jiten — Ananga Maharaj asked me to spend the night in the Math as before. He said that I must atleast go there sometimes, if frequent visits are not possible.

M. — Did you have any talk with anybody else?

The Younger Jiten — No Sir. Sudhir Maharaj was having a sweet discussing on Brahman with Ananga Maharaj.

M. — Why did they say?

The Younger Jiten — Sudhir Maharaj said that Brahman was the highest. By giving it any adjective or talking of it in some other way, you diluted its greatness. Everything was small compared to Brahman. Ananga Maharaj didn't agree. He said that all was Brahman - *sarvam khalvidam Brahman*. It was the biggest of the big, and the smallest of the small - *anoraniyam mahatomahiyam*. The Puranas, the Bhagavata and other holy books talked of It alone.

M. — Very good, Ananga is in a beautiful mood. (Smiling) A frog in a well asked a frog of the sea: How big was the sea. It replied that it was very big. The frog of the well made a jump and asked if it was big like that much. The other said, 'No, bigger than this.' The frog of the well then took a jump from one edge of the well to the other. When told that the sea was even bigger than that, the frog of the well called the other frog names and said, 'Not one of your fourteen ancestors has ever seen a sea. There can be nothing bigger than this well.' (All laugh). We are all in the same state. God is an infinite sea. One can not reach its end by saying anything one may.

"Thakur used to say: 'He is without form and without attributes. Besides He is with form and attributes for the bhaktas.' The same one has different conditions. Talking of Him in this way, He remains big. He is always big. You see, He is also what we call small, reason: *sarvam khalvidam Brahman* (All is Brahman) and then there is that great saying of Thakur: 'I see the Mother has become all.'

"He who is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute, beyond mind and speech, has become the world through His Shakti to enact His play. 'Brahman and Shakti are indivisible', so said Thakur.

"Thakur experiences pertain to different stages. At one stage one likes this and at another that.

"Sudhir Maharaj is a great sadhu - how much of tapasya has been practised! He has translated all the books of Swami Vivekananda into Bengali. Ananga too is great. On the one hand, he is an M.A. in Philosophy, on the other, he is practising tapasya. Infact, he carries the burden of the whole math on his shoulders.

"One is able to hear the thoughts of such great sadhus by going to the Math. Besides, one also sees dhyana, bhajan and tapasya being practised. What a great privilege it is! Yes, the Math is so near. It is because of the advent of Thakur that all this arrangement has become possible. People can't realize what a great luck it is. So they don't take advantage of it. Just think over it, you get the news of the priceless wealth without any cost.

"And then what is the subject of these thoughts? Aren't they concerned with the highest ideal? One says and acts as one thinks - from thought, action and speech all that emerges is that one Brahman. All these thoughts are the sweet sayings of the sadhu-bhaktas.

"What are the other people living with day and night? They think low, talk of other things, their sight fixed to the tummy. Their desire for name is limitless. And the sadhus, well they only think of God all the twenty-four hours - this is their whole time job. They are not amateurs in religion. Their whole day is spent now in thinking over Him, now in (religious) actions, now in rendering service, now in meditation and singing His glories. What a longing they have! How to attain Him is their constant effort."

M. (to the Younger Jiten) — Did you discuss anything with the sadhus?

The Younger Jiten — No, Sir. Formely I did, now I don't.

4 p.m. M. is resting in the room in south-east corner of the third level as he is unwell. Swami Shantananda has arrived to see M. He is accompanied by Upen, a brahmachari from the Advaita Ashrama. He lives in Kashi, but is on a visit to Belur Math now. A great man of tapasya he is. He is a great favourite of M. and is recipient of his affection. Once M. practised tapasya living with him in Kashi in the Kashigiri garden. Swami Shantananda has come from the Math via Advaita Ashrama. M. is very happy to have him. Making him sit closely he talks to him of tapasya and various places of pilgrimage.

Swami Shantananda — Bhubaneswar is a very nice place for sadhan-bhajan. I feel that the Bhubaneswar Math is the most suitable place, for sadhan-bhajan, of all our Maths and ashramas. If one climbs to the second level, one has a view of a vast distant plain and the hills beyond it.

M. — During the age of Buddhism, a lot of tapasya was practised there. Also Puri is near it. Such places are always very suitable for carrying out tapasya. It is very good that a Math has been established there. Rakhal Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) was very keen on it. It is due to his efforts alone that it has come about Oh, he has departed. He was so fond of this spot.

"Kashi, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Uttar Kashi are all places of tapasya too. The bhava of tapasya prevails in the very atmosphere."

As desired by M., Antevasi brings some sweets and four samosas. The sadhus depart after having taken the snacks.

2.

Regular bhaktas have started assembling in the room in the corner of the third level even before it is evening. M. is unwell and is resting. The bhaktas come and sit on a mat close to M. Shukalal, Durgapada, the Elder Jiten, Bhaumik, Manoranjan, Shanti, the Elder Ramesh and Jagabandhu are sitting near M.'s bed. After a short time come Balai, the Younger Nalini, the Doctor and Vinay. They are talking casually. As soon as the evening lamp is brought in, M. sits up to meditate with the bhaktas. After the meditation, M. starts the conversation.

M. (to the bhaktas) — A Math has been established in Bhubaneswar. It is said that it is very nice for sadhan-bhajan. It will soon come *awaken* when sadhus and bhaktas visit it. (To Jagadish) Did you go there?

Jagadish — No Sir. We heard Khoka Maharaj (Swami Subhadhananda) say that a spring has gushed out in a well in Bhubaneswar and it is giving a lot of water of very good quality. Khoka Maharaj will go there to see it.

M. (smiling) — Khagen Maharaj (Swami Shantananda) came here this evening accompanied by a brahmachari. He said, 'A Thakur's ashrama has been established in Sarisha.' He asked me to visit it. I said that it was possible only if I lived for another twenty years (all laugh).

M. — Why? It is possible in another way. What happens when one breaths one's last and is united with God, one can't say. But if a person goes to another *loka* (world) he can see from there."

Ashwini Chakravarti and Jagadish have come today also. At the behest of M. the bhaktas have gone to the roof of the fourth level in the open. Now there are Ashwini, Jagadish, the Younger Jiten, Durgapada Mitra and Jagbandhu seated besides M. Jagadish is talking of Mahapurush Maharaj and telling many things about the Math. During the conversation comes up Narayana lyengar as the subject.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Aha! What a wonderful life of lyengar Mahashaya! Slowly he was doing everything and then suddenly he embraced complete sannyasa! Is it a small lesson for the house holder? He was a Depty Commisioner, he had no wants. But he gave up all! It is with his money that the Bagslore Math has been set up and he has also arranged for its monthly expenses. He has donated almost all of his property.

"His younger son and son-in-law came here. I could see that the boy was good - like father, like son. He was fifteen or sixteen. The son-in-law was a congress man, a leader, very well-informed. When I was in the Gadadhar Ashrama he was there for two days.

"I said to him: 'What is the sannyasa of today like? Leaving this room you live in that one. Like living in a boarding house.' (Laughter). Spending two pice on a post card you can get all the news from home. Besides there is the railway, the telegram. One can see one's people at times and come back. What is difficult about it? When living at home, one has to do some work. Here one has not to do even that. Just this. Earlier the sannyasa was very difficult. One had to roam for twelve years without keeping a destination in view. It is not so now. So why worry?

"He was very pleased on hearing this from me. The next day, he came and said, 'We were very happy to hear it from you last night.' He was a little unsympathitic as the burden of the household would on fall on the son-in-law."

M. (to Jagadish) — There is a story perhaps you have not read. A person had a bull and a horse. The bull had to work for the whole day. That man could umberstand the language of the animals. The bull said to the horse, 'I am in a great trouble, brother. I have to work the whole day with the plough on my neck? The horse said, 'Why! You can do one thing. Tomorrow when he comes to take you to the field start stamping the ground with your foot.' The next day as soon as the man came to take the bull, it began to stamp the ground immediately. This was conveyed to the master. He said, 'Alright, then you take the horse in its place.' The horse had to labour the whole day. So it realized that it had put itself in pretty pickle. It went to the bull and said, 'I hear that they are going to deliver you to a butcher. If you wish to save youself, do not stamp the ground any more.' (laughter). The horse saved itself. Leaders and barristers can plead for both the sides - for one party as well as for the other." (All laugh).

Anadi Maharaj takes classes on the Gita at the Students' Home in the mornings. M. sends the bhaktas there also. This morning Ashwini went there. He talks of it.

A certain Bhakta — Will only reading of the Gita do it? One needs the power to understand it as well.

M. — Yes, it's better to hear than read; and better even to hear from a sadhu.

"One should hear from those who have realized the Self. Why?

Because it is a *moksha-shastra* (the book that delivers the soul). Not just any other literary or intellectual book. Those who have passed through that state can only understand the inside of that state and its essence. It is a matter of direct experience. If you can't find such a person then hear it at least from a sadhu. Sadhu means the one who has taken to God for ever, giving up everything else, and who has had indirect experience and is eager for His darshan. To hear from his mouth and to hear from the mouth of the householder pandits, there is a difference of heaven and nether worlds. Amongst sadhus the one who has had direct experience is indeed rare! If one can find such a sadhu nothing like it. If not then hear it from the sadhu with indirect experience.

"The Gita talks of complete renunciation - renunciation for achieving God. Just think, the one whose mind is in the pleasures of the world and has had involved in them - may be not continuously but indulges in it sometimes - how can he understand the meaning of the Gita. But the sadhus have forsaken that pleasure. If you say the mind still desires those pleasures though one has renounced them from outside, then the answer is: They are standing away from the items of sensory pleasure and are trying to go towards God. That's why they are in a convenient position to understand the shastra. Besides they keep holy company. Maybe there is somebody in that company who has been able to shake off sensual desires from his mind. The virtue of such a sadhu dries up the sensual desires of other sadhus like fire drying up wet wood lying close to it gradually. This is the difference.

A particular Bhakta — Isn't it possible to practise the sadhan of Gita while one is living in family?

M. — Why not? But it's very difficult. Thakur used to say, that it was possible if one entered the householder's life after practising tapasya and attaining the love of God. In any case the daily company of sadhus is a must. Why? You see, that water plants always cover up the water beneath. It is the same here.

(To Ashwini) "You must have seen in the ponds that a slight push to the water weeds makes the water visible. And soon thereafter, the plant returns dancing and covers the whole of the water. The same happens in the household life *moha* (affection) never leaves one alone. One tries hard and succeeds in freeing oneself from it for a while but then it soon covers up the sky of the mind hiding in an instant the sun completely. That's why daily company of the holy is essential. Association with the sadhus is the right watch., and family life is the wrong one. It comes to correcting your watch daily with the former. One can even live with the *wrong* (family life), if the idea of the *right* namely the knowledge that the aim of life is God-realization is not forgotten. You know that the aim of life is to see God - to become God by attaining Him. *Brahman vaid brahmaiv bhavati*. Just as living with the wrong, a person himself becomes wrong, similarly by living with the sadhus, one becomes a sadhu. Sadhu - that is one who has attained God. Our only duty is to keep the company of those who are yearning to attain God and have taken to the life of a sadhu giving up all.

A Bhakta — But Lord Sri Krishna asked Arjun to attain moksha while living in family.

M. — He who attends to all his duties while he is in the household but doesn't enjoy the fruit thereof is the one who attains moksha. This is a person known as Karmayogi. It is to imbibe this that one goes daily to a sadhu. The sadhu himself has renounced the fruit. While living amongst sensory pleasures the mind gets imprinted with it. One begins to think that it is *nishkama karma* (selfless action) that one is performing. But still the desire lurks within. One gets held up while doing so. The daily company of sadhus awakens one's consciousness - one begins to realise that one has only the right to serve night and day like a faithful servant and no right to enjoy the fruit. One will have to content oneself with whatever the master gives for keeping the body and soul together. That one is working for a relative, not for oneself, this too is *moha*, and *ajnana*. That one is working for attaining God, for God who is present before oneself in the form of the relative, this is like a maid-servant in the family - this idea should be made firm in the mind. This is *jnana*, said Thakur. It helps one to attain moksha. The daily company of sadhus awakens this disposition of the mind. The sadhus have this disposition already awakened. How much work they do for the Math and ashrama, but they do it in the spirit of a maid-servant. The Lord Himself is the master of the ashrama, and the sadhus are His servitors. Even the least traces of name and fame are wiped out gradually by the virtue of the company of sadhus. What a big fire of renunciation is burning there - its flames lapping up all, night and day. Its heat dries up one's desires - it drops down by itself. The mind is then purified - purified by the conviction that the Lord is the doer and the man a non-doer - this wisdom becomes firm. That's why it is compulsory duty of a householder to keep the company of sadhus. By going to the sadhus, their desires also dry up gradually only it takes longer in their case. Why long? For the householder is a little far from that burning fire of renunciation.

"So there is no other way than the company of sadhus. To understand the Shastras, you have to go to them. They are the living embodiment of the Shastras, their living commentary.

"Scholarship is one thing and *medha* another. *Medha* that is to say the competence to manifest the hidden meaning of words of the guru and holy books. The power to retain one's hold on that bhava and translate it into one's life, this Thakur termed as *dharma*.

"The learned only stick to the meaning of the word. The sadhus, on the other hand catch its essence through their spiritual competence. And manifest it in their personal life and develop it. The former is superficial intellection, the latter deep concentrated intellection, conviction. There is a vast difference between the two."



Morton School, Calcutta
Friday, the 25th July 1924,
The 9th of Shravna,
The ninth day of the dark fortnight, 1331 B.Y.

THE AVATARA DOESN'T HAVE JIVA'S NATURE

Morton School. M.'s room on the fourth level. M. is resting in his bed, his head to the east. It is eight in morning. The Younger Amulya, the Stout Sudhir, Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten and others are seated on a bench towards the south in the middle of the room. There is a wooden partition in the room. M. had been lying sick in bed for quite some days. He was on the third level to facilitate nursing. Some members of his family live on the third level. M. has come to the upper level this morning. He is feeling somewhat better. Even so he remains in bed most of the time. Says he to the bhaktas, 'Let this partition be removed. We will have much more space then. The bhaktas can sit more comfortably.' The bhaktas lift the partition and put it aside.

Saturday today. So the devotees who visit on Saturdays have been coming in since 2 p.m. Gradually the bhaktas who visit daily are also assembling. Lalit of Bhatapara, his companion Bholanath (Bhavarani), Basant, Sushil, a student and some others have come. They all come and sit in M.'s room. The bhaktas frequenting daily, namely Yatin, Shanti, Amrit, the Younger Jiten, Shukalal, Manoranjan, the Younger Nalini, Vinay and Jagabandhu have already been sitting in M.'s room. It is 5.30 p.m. now.

After sometime M. climbs down to third level. He returns after half an hour having had a wash. This time he comes and sits on the chair facing north on the roof. The bhaktas are seated on three sides around M. He inquires after them all. One of them tells him that the Elder Sudhir has gone mad. He is an old student of the Morton School.

M. (to all present) — Who is not mad? Everybody is mad with desire, anger, greed, vanity and envy. Say anything to one ever so little, one becomes angry.

"Suppose someone has a salary of rupees fifteen a month. He says to himself, 'Well, Shyam is drawing twenty-seven rupees a month and I am just below him. Aha, only Shyam were to die, I would step into his job.' Doesn't everybody think like this? (To Bholanath) What do you say?"

"*Moha*? In fact nothing is *mine*, all belongs to God. Even then the man keeps on thinking that the house is his, the son is his and with this he dies.

"All men as if remain drowned in envy and pride, day and night. Yet one calls the other mad."

It's 6.30 now. A strong wind is blowing outside. M. rises, and going to the staircase room, says he, 'An old man is always prone to sickness, that is to say, his limbs can no longer work. They are all worn out.'

The staircase room. M. is seated on a chair near the stairs facing north. To his right and in front of him the bhaktas are seated on benches. M. is showering the nectar of the Word.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Khoka Maharaj (Swami Subodhananda) came today. He told us that a spring had gushed out from a well in the Bhubaneswar Math and that he was going to Bhubaneswar to see it.

He had been to the East Bengal. He told us that there the women devotees also assemble at places to hear about Thakur. They read about Him and discuss. He saw such assemblies of women both in Dhaka and Mymansingh. The ladies had invited him. He asked them: 'You don't allow men in your assembly. Why have you done so in my case?' The devotee ladies said, 'Please don't talk of yourself. You are a son of Thakur. You are so near to us.'

"But Thakur said, 'Coyness is the ornament of women.' Once coyness is gone, what remains of their femininity?

"Is it possible for everybody to conquer desire? Only a Lakshman can overcome it - he who lived for fourteen years on roots and fruits, he who had overcome sleep. What a hard tapasya he underwent! It is only then that he was able to overcome desire.

"How very difficult it is! He had no other thought but that of Rama. What a great yogi he was! It is only possible for such a person of overcome desire.

"Thakur used to pray, 'Ma, make me like Sita.' Rama asked Hanuman how did he find Sita in Lanka. Hanuman replied, 'I saw only her body lying there and Yama, the God of death paying visits but returning without her.' You see, her mind and soul were tied to Ram, in a constant remembrance of him.

"Yama's coming but returning without her means that he doesn't take away the gross body - he only carries away the subtle body. The mind, intellect, *chitta* (consciousness) and ego are portions of the subtle body. All these had been tied to Ram. What could Yama carry away then? So he came again and again, hoping to find her sometimes without the thought of Ram. Aha! what a state she was in! It is only in such a state that one can overcome desire.

"But Mahamaya doesn't let you recognize an avatara. Only twelve rishis, Bharadwaj and others were able to recognize Ram as an avatara. The others couldn't. How could they do so unless He let them? How amazing! They were all rishis who had attained the Essence, even they couldn't. They said, 'Ram is such a man of knowledge (Jnana)! Such a great man of propriety he is! How devoted he is to his father and mother!' But the rishis, though already liberated in life, could not recognize the avatara. What a riddle!"

M. (to the devotees) — Thakur became one with anybody he met. Once he went to Kamarpukur. All the women of the locality came and surrounded him as usual. Thakur said, 'It was as if I was 'diluted' into them.' Isn't that so? (Everybody laughs).

"During his last illness he said: 'The Mother will no longer let me live. I have the nature of a child. I blurt out everything. That is why Mother will not let me live.'

"If everybody were to get awakened how would this world of bondage - household go on? So he said: 'Mother is taking me away.' And he added: 'If I were to live a little longer, the consciousness of many others would get awakened'."

A particular Bhakta — He was himself the power of Brahman and the child of the Mother, the devotee Sri Ramakrishna of the Mother. Both of these together. I do not understand how it is possible.

M. — The same power of Brahman has taken the form of the *jiva* (living being) and the world. Besides He inheres all and controls from within. *Bahu syam prajayey* -I will become many, this too the Veda contains. Besides the Veda also says: 'Having created the living beings and the universe, I inhere them all' - *tat srishtva tat eva anu pravishat*. If that is possible why do you think it is not possible that both the bhakta and the avatara live in the same body?

"There is something else also in the Veda - *dwa suparna* - the fable of two birds. Two birds have perched themselves on the same one tree (body). One of the two eats both the sour and the sweet fruit, in other words, indulges in both pleasure and pain. The other bird just keeps looking on, but does not eat any fruit. It remains indifferent.

"Anything is possible by his maya-shakti.

"The bhava of being a bhakta in an avatara though looks like a jiva's but is not really a jiva's. Reason, a jiva is under the jurisdiction of the fruit of his actions, whereas the avatara isn't. He is not born as a result of his actions of the past. He assumes the form of a human-being because of the desperate prayers of the devotees. He remains in the human body as long as the momentum of the force of their prayers lasts. Soon after it he dissolves himself in his Self. Before passing away Thakur said: 'I no longer see two - I see less than that. I see Mother in all - Mother or God - Brahman Shakti.'

"He shows as though he is a jiva, but in fact the avatara doesn't have jiva's nature in him. The avatara is always aware of that he is God in the garb of a human being? The ordinary jiva doesn't know that he is God. The avatara, i.e. God, acts as a human-being of his own will. Otherwise the play doesn't get enacted, you see.

"Christ also played the part of the father and son and sometimes he talked of unity when he said, 'I and my Father are one.'

"Lord Krishna has said the same in the Gita: 'To think of oneself as a jiva, as a human being, is an illusion. Only God as Father is true, the reality. He who does not know this disregards Me. He is a man of no-knowledge. What does the Gita say?'"

A particular Bhakta — *Avjananti mam moodhah manushim tanum ashritam, param bhavam ajanantah mum bhutamaheshwaram.*

(The deluded disregard Me as one clad in human form, not knowing My higher nature as the Great Lord of beings. Gita, 9:11)

M. — When one has caught this, one is liberated. But if He doesn't let one catch it, one can not do so. By the grace of Thakur, the bhaktas could catch him. He said to a bhakta (M.): 'There is a vast expanse of a field with a high wall on it. There is a big hole in that wall. One can see quite far in the field through that hole.' And then he asked: 'Tell

me what is that hole?' The bhakta replied, 'You yourself are that hole'. He was at once very happy. Why? Because the bhakta was able to catch him. He was no longer worried, like the parents seeing that their son is able to stand on his own. It was the same in this case. Why was he so satisfied? Because those men would now propagate him as God. This will lead to the welfare of humanity, it will gain peace. He knew who he was 'Verily, You alone know Yourself, O Purushottama' - *swayam eva atamana atamanam vettha tvam purushottama* (Gita, 10:15). The intimate disciples recognised him by his grace. That is how the men of the world come to know him - to start with through the intimate disciples, later on through the disciples of the disciples, thus the tradition continues. Later, however, this intimacy dilutes gradually, giving place to pollution. Then he assumes another body - a new incarnation. The world goes on eternally and so does the onset of the avatara. Infinite are the worlds, infinite the avatars."

M. (to the bhaktas) — Tapasya is needed. It doesn't come about by hearing alone - one understands the essence only by meditating in a solitary place. One succeeds as soon as one has caught the false ego. Conviction in the guru's word then ensues. 'Faith in the word of the guru is the only way', so said Thakur. Faith brings some eighty-five to ninety percent of success. His grace brings the rest also gradually. Tapasya is needed but it is not possible in the company of many. One cannot understand, what is the 'ripe I' and what is the 'unripe I'. That's why the tapasya and the company of sadhus is needed.

M. (to a particular young man) — Yesterday a sadhu arrived here. He practises tapasya. A very peaceful soul he is. His name Shantananda corresponds so well with his disposition. A great tapasvi, the ancient type. He said that Bhubaneswar was a very suitable spot for sadhan and bhajan.

"He had practised tapasya for a long time in a garden in Kashi. It's only now that he has come away from there. He witnessed the Rath festival in Puri and also the Return of the Rath. Thereafter, he proceeded to Kamakhya. He has been on pilgrimage to all the four centres - Rameshwaram, Dwarika, Kedar-Badri and Puri. He will return to Kashi and stay on there, they say. He has gone about and visited some holy places. Now he will again settle down and think of the Lord. Aha! where can one find a place like Kashi?"

M. (to all) — A sadhu came this morning from the Mayavati Ashrama, Prabhu Maharaj (Swami Vireshwarananda) by name. He told us that a life of Sri Ramakrishna was being written and that its foreword will be written by Gandhiji Maharaj*.

*[The life of Sri Sri Ramakrishna is truly the story of how to make use of dharma in daily acts. His life makes us seek God. He who reads his biography is convinced that only God is real and all else is an illusion. Ramakrishna was the living manifestation of divinity. His sayings are not only the words of the learned but they are the pages from the living book of life. His sayings bring to light and elucidate his own experiences. That is why they affect the reader in a way which they cannot oppose. Sri Ramakrishna is such an illustration of a living deep faith in this age of disbelief that it not only brings consolation to

thousands of men and women but also fills their lives with light. Otherwise they would have remained in want of spiritual light. The life of Sri Ramakrishna is a solid lesson in the principle of non-violence. His love transcends geographical limits and other boundaries. May his divine love inspire the readers!]

"A long time ago, an old advocate of Gandhiji's province wanted to translate the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna into Gujarati. He came and met me. I gave him permission along with some suggestions. He said that he would dedicate this book to Gandhiji Maharaj. Gandhiji was then working in South Africa."

The Bhakta from Khulana — Somebody said, 'The Rowlatt Act nay the Indian Struggle for independence, came here through Paramahansa Deva and Swami Vivekananda.'

M. — Perhaps he did not mention Paramahansa Deva. Oh, did Paramahansa Deva ever discriminate between a friend and a foe? No, he did not see any difference between one's own and a stranger or between the Hindu, Muslim and Christian, between the worshipers of Shiva or Shakti or Ganapati. He was the same with every visitor whatever his inclination. Is there anybody like him? Has anybody seen the like of him at any time?

It is evening now. A lantern has been brought in. Giving up all other activities M. begins to meditate in the company of bhaktas. He is seated on a chair facing north. Behind him is the railing of the staircase. After sometime Lalit of Bhatapara begins to recite the Rama Stotra at M.'s behest.

After this Lalit sings the kirtan of Rama-nama in a sweet, slow pace. At the end of the kirtan, M. resumes the conversation.

M. (to Lalit) — It is said that Thakur used to do the same. While reciting Rama-Rama he would stop breathing. He was then carrying on sadhana in the Panchavati.

It is half past eight in the evening. The bhaktas take leave to depart. M. goes down to the third floor for his meals.

Jagabandhu, Shanti and Yatin are sitting in the staircase room. The Younger Nalini joins them after a while. Antevasi reads the Kathamrita as he lies down on the bench: 'M.'s stay with the Guru - 10th and 11th day'. The devotees listen to the reading. In the meanwhile Balai and Amrit come in one after the other.

After a while musical notes from the throat of the Elder Jiten are heard on the third floor. After some time on hearing the music from M.'s throat also all come to the third floor. Now M. sits on a bench in the verandah in front of the steps and starts a spiritual conversation. One can hear the pitter of the rain outside?

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — Oh! What a disposition Thakur had! Totally pure and sinless, staintless like wearing pure transparent spectacles. He would fully become one with whomsoever he met. Everybody would think that he belonged to him. The women of Mathur Babu's house thought he was their own. He used to live in the women's quarters in this state of mind. He was practising *madhur-bhava*, the disposition of a lover - that of the milk-maids of Braj, that of Srimati Radha Rani. The Brahma devotees used to think that the

Paramahansa belonged to them. On the other hand, the orthodox Sanatanis, the Marwari bhaktas also thought the same of him. Whether it was a worshipper of Shiva or Shakti or a Christian or a Muslim, whosoever came thought that he was his. Mishir Sahib was a Christian. He saw Thakur as Christ.

A short silence.

M. (to Antevasi) — What were you all doing upstairs? Please tell me

Antevasi — I was reading the Kathamrita to them: Mani's stay with the Guru, 10th and 11th day; 23rd and 24th December 1883.

After the midday meal Thakur is resting on the smaller cot. M. is lying on the floor. Thakur says to Mani, 'Brahman has Himself become the jiva (the living being) and the jagat (universe).'

Referring to a certain place some one said that nobody sings the name of God there. But Thakur immediately perceived that it was Brahman alone who had become all living beings. He saw in the field of Bardhaman that Brahman was there in the form of ants, all filled with consciousness everywhere. He had become different kinds of flowers, leaves, all - numberless bubbles (of consciousness), some big some small. He alone is the being in every form.

Soon after this he went into samadhi saying, 'I have become, I have come.'

M. — This means that He is Brahman and He is also jiva-jagat. And, He alone comes down in a human form as the avatara. This is the living and awakened proclamation that He is the avatara. Even then do people believe?

Antevasi — When he came out of samadhi he began talking with the Mother of the universe sitting on that very cot. 'Ma, you are my mother, I your son. The child wants mother. How can he live without her?' He said to Mani, 'You and I are of the same essence my own, like father and the son.'

"It is difficult to recognise the avatara while he is acting as a human being - impossible. He conducts himself just like a man. He is subject to hunger, thirst, disease, grief and fear, just like any man."

M. — O! How beautiful the scenes: so and so is present, such and such is the place and this is the time. Such scenes are not available even to the yogis - they are fit for the yogis, all these scenes.

"And what clear pronouncements! Blessed indeed are they who have heard this all from his lips. They are no ordinary persons. They have been brought by him for his work.

"The person to whom he said, 'I have become, I have come,' was given one sixteenth fraction of Shakti one day by praying to the Mother for it. In fact he wanted more of it to be given to him but the Mother said: 'Only a fraction will suffice.' Besides, is it anything small, a fraction of God's power. It is with this power that he has been making the bhaktas proclaim the lila of the avatara. Without God's power his word cannot be propagated. People don't listen."

Antevasi — He called out for Mani for reading the Shiv Samhita. It deals with yoga.

M. — Yes, but it was not read. Instead he himself began to talk.

Amrit — Formerly you used to narrate 'a scene' daily. That scene of the Boulders is very beautiful. The avatara came with his companions like a troupe of boulders and went away, none recognized him.

M. — Nice indeed! You have reminded me of such a beautiful topic. Nobody could recognize him. How could they? They came, sang and left. Only a few, one can count on one's fingers, accompanied him as his intimate companions.

"Had all been able to recognize him, nothing worldly would have been possible. That is why the avatara is not recognizable. He (Thakur) enabled only a few to recognize him. It is through them that so many have been able to recognize him and will do so in future."

Half past nine in the evening. It is raining outside, and inside is raining the nectar of his word! M. is not keeping fit, yet he is never tired of showering the nectar of his word. Fearing lest it should inconvenience him, the bhaktas wanted to rise. But M. would not let them do so - intent on showering incessantly the Kathamrita! Like the rain, the showers of the Kathamrita continued intermittently for a long time. Says M., 'It would have been very nice, had the Doctor arrived now.'

The bhaktas feel that Dr. Kartik Bakshi is blessed indeed, for he has found a place in the hearts of the inner circle of devotees of the avatara. Otherwise, why should this Maharishi (saint) be thinking of him at the time of serving a feast like a mother. Blessed indeed he is!



Morton School, Calcutta
Saturday, 26 July 1924.
10th day of Shravana, 1331 B.Y.
10th day of the lunar month, 27/56 palas.

THIS VERY MAN WILL THEN BECOME A GOD-MAN

Sunday today. Eight in the morning. The weekly Satsang Sabha of the Morton School is in session on the ground floor. The teachers and the taught assemble and discuss the life and teachings of a great man. Antevasi is there. M. calls Antevasi to his room on the fourth level through the servant Sahdev and asks him: Take this 'shelf' to your own room. All these papers pertaining to Kathamrita will remain in your custody. Antevasi spends the whole day arranging the books and the papers etc. of the Kathamrita in it. M. peeps into the room in the afternoon and says, "Good, how beautiful has become your room! How neat!"

It is 2 o'clock. M. is seated in his room in his bed and is reading a book. Mahesh Chaitanya, a brahmachari from the Belur Math has come to see him. M. makes him sit affectionately close to him and asks him of his welfare etc. First of all he asks him about the Belur Math, and then about all the sadhus of the ashrama in Kashi naming them one by one. During the conversation different views are expressed about Lata Maharaj. He is always in his own mood, generally absorbed in dhyana. Whenever a person goes to him he talks to him of Thakur and his lila in Dakshineswar. Sometimes he instructs sadhus and brahmacharis on how to arrange their life. He asks the young sadhus to beware of women. Mahesh Chaitanya attended on Lata Maharaj lately. He eats some fruits and sweets, offers his pranams and departs.

In the meanwhile Attorney Viren Basu arrives in a car. He intends to take M. with him to Dakshineswar. M. is not that fit so he doesn't go. Viren leaves taking Gadadhar with him. Gadadhar has been meditating on God for sometime, living in Dakshineswar Temple.

Five in the afternoon. Lalit Maharaj (Swami Kamleshwarananda), the head of the Gadadhar Ashrama has arrived from Bhowanipore accompanied by Lal Bihari Babu.

M. comes to the roof and sits on a chair facing south. Swami Kamleshwarananda is occupying another chair facing east. To M.'s right are seated Lal Bihari and Jagabandhu on a bench; they are also facing east. A dark young man, quite young he is, comes and sits on the bench. He has come here for the first time. A conversation starts.

Swami Kamleshwarananda — I have been thinking of coming here since yesterday. How I like to come here! And how I like to see Sarat Maharaj! I may gain something by seeing you people.

M. — Oh, by seeing a little lamp one is reminded of the great lamp. Have you not seen a great lamp with a thick wick, full of ghee? It's through this that the smaller lamps are lit. So the inspiration of the great is instilled in a person by the sight of the smaller ones. (A short silence).

M. (to the sadhu) — You had the rare opportunity of reading out the Bhagavata and other holy books to Hari Maharaj. One begins to understand the holy books by reading them to great persons, the self-realized souls. The self-realized are always in yoga. By reading to them the reader also goes into that state - he begins to understand the meaning of shastras. That was a big opportunity. What did you

read out to him?

Kamleshwarananda — The Bhagavata, Yoga Vashishtha Part I, the Brihdaranyak Upanishad, a chapter from the Veda - all these.

M. — It has done you a lot good.

What is M. thinking now? The conversation is resumed.

M. (to all present) — When the guru wants one may undertake it (social work) - running a hospital and a dispensary. Otherwise one should not go in for it. Thakur said so to Shashadhar. Shashadhar cleverly wanted Thakur to say it; Thakur told us that Shashadhar asked him if he might continue to do what he was doing. But Thakur did not say anything definite. He merely said, 'Let it be.' He shifted the question.

"The command of the guru, that is of the avatara is the command of God, for he comes down and commands as the guru."

M. (to the bhaktas, laughing) — The founder of the Amrit Bazar Patrika, Shishir Ghosh used to tell a beautiful story. A Patriot prayed to God for the freedom of the motherland. God appeared and asked him what he wanted. He said: The liberation of India. God said, 'So be it. But it will take four hundred years.' The devotee was nonplused and said, 'What are you saying, Lord? I will not be alive then.' (Everybody laughs loudly).

"It means that he also wanted to play a leading part in the liberation of the country. So that's it, one's self always comes from somewhere and occupies a prominent seat.

"Thus there is no harm in working at the behest of the guru."

M. (to Lal Bihari) — Thakur told a story. The sacred thread ceremony of the son of a guru was to be celebrated. Many persons were to come for the feast. Different disciples would bring different eatables. A widow disciple said that she would bring curd. She brought small quantity of it in a small earthen pot on the day of the feast. She was a poor woman you see. The guru flew into rage on seeing it. He kicked the pot away with his foot and broke it. He said cursing her, 'Go and drown yourself in the stream. Today you have brought shame on my name.' The widow went into the stream. But there was only knee deep water there. In despair she began to cry: 'Lord, the word of my guru is not being fulfilled.' The Lord appeared before her and said, 'Child, why must you drown yourself in the stream? Here, take this.' Saying so He gave her another earthen pot of curd like the former. She would not accept it lest the guru should again be angry with her. The Lord then turned the pot up side down, and a stream of curd began falling. Happily she went to the guru's house. Seeing small pot the guru was again angry. The woman disciple then upturned the pot - all the pots and pans that were in the house got filled with the curd - the whole courtyard was full of it! The guru was dumbfounded He said to the disciple, 'Come on mother, take me to him who has given you this pot.'

"As soon as the disciple came to the bank of the river and called out, the Lord appeared again. She said, 'Please Lord let my guru also see you.' The Lord said: How is it possible, mother? It is only his first life as a human being and yours is the last.' When she wailed and cried, the Lord showed Himself once to the guru too.

"Thakur used to say that one must do what is one's duty. The duty of a disciple is to take the guru as God. The woman had the vision of the lord because of this conviction. Not only this, She even made her guru see Him."

Three devotees have come from the Harrison Road. One of them is old. On seeing him the conversation turns on Swamis Nityananda and Advaitananda - the old bhaktas of Thakur. These men were elder even to Thakur. Later on, the conversation turns to child-bhaktas, boy bhaktas and householder bhaktas. In the context of the latter, they also talk of the devotees of the former type of bhaktas. Swami Kamleshwarananda says, 'Even in the third generation of the bhaktas one can see a very deep longing for God in some. Just see, how full of longing is Dr. Kartik Bakshi! His mind is not in his family or money. It only pines for God. He is just thirty- three or thirty - four years old.'

Swami Kamleshwarananda — He is a very serious person. Imagine the distance between Cossipore and the Gadadhar Ashrama in Bhowanipore. It is at least seven miles. When you were with us there he used to come daily to see you, unmindful of rain or cold. Besides he is such a busy doctor. Such men can be seen only after the coming of Thakur, and you people as his companions. He is an inner devotee. He is trying to live earnestly according to Thakur's injunction: 'Live like a maid-servant, live as brother and sister after having one or two children.' He is not given to praise or blame and works like a hero.

M. — Yes. He is a man of great determination. They were going to transfer him from the railway hospital, so he immediately resigned his big job. Had he accepted it he would not have been able to enjoy the company of Sadhus. He goes to the Math, he goes to Dakshineswar and comes here daily . He always does what he considers to be worth doing inspite of hundred obstacles. He is like a soldier with a bayonet, always at attention lest he should be fired upon from any side! Having given up service he has taken to practising medicine but he is not attracted by money. He accepts fees from the wealthy and gives away to the poor. He even arranges medicine and diet, even nursing for them. Some sadhus of the Math go and live there when they fall sick. Even if Calcutta is submerged in water he can come swimming! One cannot see the like of him.

"The other day he celebrated a festival at his place in Cossipore. Many a sadhu from the Math joined. Sarat Maharaj, Jnana Maharaj and others. I also went there. A nice celebration it was.

"Besides, he knows the whole of the Gita by heart. His house is like an ashrama where sadhus and bhaktas are served. His wife and daughter live in the village."

Swami Kamleshwarananda — I hear that Thakur is worshipped there everyday.

M. — Why don't you go one day and see it yourself? Without *sanskara* such a longing is not possible.

Sw. Kamleshwarananda — It can also come about by the grace of saints.

M. — The grace of saints also comes by *sanskara*.

M. — (to Lal Bihari) Yes, a machine (radio) has come to Khidirpur. Have not you heard of it? Go and see it once. It sings and others can hear its music while sitting at a distance.

M. (in fun) — Can't you hear it?

Lal Bihari — No Sir!

M. — Oh, you are not tuned to it.

Swami Kamleshwarananda — I hear that he who wants to hear too must have a machine.

M. — If one has such a machine one can hear it. On the coming of an avatara persons with their mind tuned to Him are able to hear Him. Otherwise, you see, so many people hear Him. But how many receive his message? Just a few. Those who have such a machine installed in their heart, because of the actions of their past lives, can only catch the silent message of the avatara.

A particular Bhakta — Which message?

M. — *Amritasya putrah*. O man you are the child of immortal bliss, not a human being. Your home is in Brahman-pur, the abode of Brahman. Eating, sleeping, procreating and fearing, these are not the correct actions for you people. Your only duty is to return home, win back your personal wealth and reside in the abode of Brahman realizing your Self. Win immortality and live for ever.

"This message is being propagated night and day. Those who have the machine within, rightly tuned and pure, can only imbibe His great teaching. Those who have their minds and soul (heart) covered by the hard iron lid of life cannot hear this message, they cannot imbibe it. On the other hand persons whose lids have become a little loose try to seek it here even while living with in the extremely tight bonds of existence and feel restless. One day they also clearly hear and catch the message, which is always ringing, even while living through the cruel cycle of life and death. Their very life then becomes divine. This very man then becomes a god-man."

Brahmachari Manu enters with a companion. He is holding in his hand the prasada of the Mother Kali of Dakshineswar. M. makes him sit affectionately by his side. The conversation is resumed.

M. (to everybody present) — One must accept *sanskaras* and the previous lives. Otherwise so many happenings in the present life remain unexplained, unsolved.

"There is a young man here, Arun by name (M.'s eldest grandson). He

can very well play instrumental music. Last evening, he played it till two o'clock. This boy can remember and play any *ragini* (tune) at home soon after he hears it any where.

"While he was playing it last night one could see that he was so completely absorbed in it that he was not conscious of anything around.

"I could then understand the principle of the avatara in a new light. He whose mind and soul get lost in the avatara is an *antaranga*, a close disciple.

"He who is the Existence-Knowledge-Bilss Absolute, beyond mind and speech, comes down to the earth as a man. The avatara left only the other day. His blessed touch is still present in atmosphere.

"He gave this message: 'I am the avatara, you are my children; keep your hold on Me, meditate on Me, think of Me. I will easily cut asunder the tough bonds of the world and bring you out of this burning cauldron. You will not have to do much. Who am I and who are you - just knowing this will suffice.'

"And then He assured: 'Verily, verily I say unto you, those who think of Me will inherit my wealth as the son inherits the wealth of his father. And my wealth is spiritual knowledge and devotion, discrimination and dispassion, peace and joy and the prema and samadhi.'

"Only a very few could catch his message or recognise him. They placed their mind and soul at his feet and tuned themselves to his tune. These were his *antrangas*, men of his inner circle, and co-actors in His divine play.

"What are other persons like? They are the ones who have not been able to play musical notation - they can repeat it since they have heard it but they cannot play it on the instrument, they cannot manifest it in their own lives."

M. (to the sadhus) — This boy was one year old when he was seen making musical beats with a piece of wood. The Holy Mother was also there in the Thakur Bari. Seeing this she said, 'Just see, a denizen of the world of *gandharva* has come!" Now the boy is fifteen.

M. (to Swami Kamleshwarananda) — Thakur did not go to anybody, others used to come to him. Those who were tuned to him came to him running like mad; like honey-bees they were after the honey.

"Talking of his illness Thakur said, 'Why this illness, you know? This will sift the visitors.'

Swami Kamleshwarananda — Did this sifting take place?

M. — Yes, many people went away saying, 'We see that he cannot save himself. How then will he save others?'

M.'s mind is tied within for sometime. He again showers the nectar of the words.

M. (to everybody present) — Thakur often talked of the dialogue between Uddhava and Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna could not get news of the gopis while in Mathura. So much work he had, besides all that happening! He forgot the milkmaids. But when they came to his mind he said to Uddhava, 'Uddhava, Please go, go immediately and bring me the news of the gopis soon. When I was without power or pelf, they gave me their love with their whole mind and soul. Their affection has bought me over. Unless they absolve me, I shall not be able to absolve myself of their debt. Go to them, Uddhava, go quickly and let me know how they are. Now that I am a man of means so everybody loves me.'

"That is why Thakur used to yearn so much for his intimate devotees. He was then in the Dakshineswar garden with nobody to look after him. Besides, the functionaries of the temple were people of a different sort. He was drawing seven rupees a month. All the members of his family were so poor that they had not enough to eat. Besides they were suffering from malaria. As if this was not enough, they thought that he had gone mad. However there were some who loved this person even in that state, who were they, brother? They were the persons we call *antrangas*, the intimate disciples of his own. Whether he was well or ill, they always stayed with him. Does one forsake a person when he is ill?

"O, what an ideal he placed before our eyes! Calling out Ma! Ma! He was like mad. He had no consciousness of the outer world. Does a human being ever have such a state? A man may have it, say, once but he was in this state of mind throughout his life. If 'woman and gold' was mentioned in his presence he would stop breathing. Where can one find such an ideal?

"As for the other sadhus, well, their sole aim is to win the eight occult powers, *anima*, *laghima* etc. (*anima* is the power by which he becomes very very light). But Thakur did not care for them in the least!

"Sri Krishna said to Arjun: Brother, *siddhis* (occult powers) will bring you power, no doubt, but they will not bring you to Me.

"All these things he told us at the very beginning. He took our minds away from the lower ideals. These all are like thorny shrubs. No other plants grow here. Christ also said the same. That is why Thakur protected us from the very beginning. He cleaned all our thorns.

"His only teaching: How to gain devotion at the lotus feet of the Lord. He wanted nothing else. Just see the Marwari wanted to give him money, he refused. The Marwari said: 'May I keep it with Hriday?' Even this he did not agree to and said, 'I beat name and fame with a broomstick.' Such things, such direct words are easily forgotten by people. That is why he said all these as if with frying of chillies."

M. (to Antevasi) — Let him have some sweet snacks. The twilight is approaching.

The sadhus and the devotees return and take their seats. It is not yet twilight hour. The conversation is resumed.

M. (to all present) — One should take to social work at the behest of the guru. One may then run hospitals, dispensary, or any other institution - it will not be harmful.

"But your talk means little. Are you spiritually perfect? How do you know what is right and what is not? So, your opinion will not do. The opinion of the guru is essential. At the behest of the guru you may do anything. He knows what you are going to do. The path you have taken is good. So how can you follow another path? You will have to carry on with hospitals and dispensaries. But it is not so with everybody. The guru arranges for what suits your stomach."

The evening light, a hurricane lantern, has been brought in. M. rises and goes to the staircase room. He is not keeping fit.

He is seated on a chair at the foot of the staircase facing north. On a double bench in front of him are seated Swami Kamleshwarananda, Brahmachari Manu, Lal Bihari Babu and others.

In no time assemble the daily visiting bhaktas, arriving one by one. Dr. Bakshi, Vinay, The Younger Amulya, Balai, Bhaumik of Khulana, Jagabandhu, the Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten and so on.

The moment the light is brought in they stop talking. Giving up everything else M. begins to meditate on the Lord. The bhaktas also join M.

It is half past seven. M. goes to the floor to take his meals. He is not well. So he takes an early dinner.

Swami Kamleshwarananda talks to others of the earlier days of the Math - sometime he talks of Babu Ram Maharaj, sometime of Hari Maharaj and sometime of other Swamis. He narrates incident after incident, overcome as he is by devotion. The devotees listen to him with all attention. It looks as if they are all submerged in a sea of joy.

Being unwell and tired, M. does not sit in the assembly of the bhaktas. Instead he goes to his room and lies in his bed. While leaving he says: 'Please go on discussing what Thakur has said.'

It is 9.30 p.m. At the behest of M., Antevasi takes the sadhus and brahmacharis to Thanthane Kali Bari in Dr. Bakshi's car and makes them board a tram. They have to go to Bhowanipore.



Morton School, Calcutta.

Sunday, the 27th July 1924

The 11th day of the Shravana, 1331 (B.Y.)

The 11th day of the dark fortnight, 32 dandas/ 44 palas.

THEN THEY ASK FOR ONLY PEACE, PEACE AND PERFECT PEACE

Morton School; six in the morning. M.'s room on the third floor. He has just climbed up from the second floor after his morning wash etc. Antevasi, the Younger Jiten and Vinay are waiting for him.

M. (to Antevasi) — So much work has accumulated. You have to attend to it all today. First of all, you have to go to the Basumati office and deliver this article (on Sw. Vivekananda). And you have to bring the file copy of the previous articles if printed. I have to read them out to the bhaktas. Two, I hear that they are making vests of khaddar which are on sale. Please go and see if you like them. Three, there is a lot of empty space below the partition in my room. You have to plug it.

There is a very big room on the third floor of the Morton School. This room has been partitioned into two portions by a six feet high partition in the middle. The southern portion is occupied by M.; the northern is used as a class room, for class V at present Ordinarily, M. holds classes for small children in this portion.

Thakur used to say that paramahansas have the temperament of a five-year child. They have no constraints. That's why they keep three or four children with them so as to imbibe their ways. This is the reason why M. keeps a children's class close to him. Sometimes, one can see M. sitting in this class, enjoying a simple and sweet talk with them, as if he is only an older child. Sometimes, dilating his big divine eyes like children, he talks to them in disjointed phrases as children do. The western window of M.'s room opens upon the Amherst Street below.

Some feathers are lying outside M.'s room.

M. (to the bhaktas) — How amazing! A pigeon has been killed. Perhaps it is the cat which has killed it. Which other animal could have come here?

A particular Bhakta — It appears that it was seized at night when the pigeons are asleep.

M. — I was dumb-founded when I saw the feathers this morning.

M. (gravely to the bhaktas) — Just note how uncertain the life is! It (the pigeon) was sleeping in the remote cornice of the roof. The cat went even there and killed it. It is the same with the life of all other beings. Death is bound to come, but when it will one does not know. The whole thing ends in a moment.

"Yes, everybody has to depart after a hundred years. This is certain. But we forget that we have to depart. This too is His doing. If everybody remembers death His play in the world will come to a standstill. Who will then attend to all these things? Such is His plan! Almost everybody has forgotten. Maybe some three or four persons have not. They keep themselves always ready to depart. That is why

they do not attend much to worldly duties.

"But they whom He engages in work after imparting this knowledge are truly the saviours of the society, for example, Vyasa, Vashishtha and others. They not only proclaim but also act on the conviction that God is, and that we are all the children of God, a portion of His, and act in the world knowing this.

"Those who listen this are bhaktas. They can keep both sides - God and the world.

"To begin with, hear the Shastra from the mouth of the guru, and know through your intellect that God is. Later on, by carrying out sadhana, one experiences within oneself that He is. Next, by His grace, one sees His presence, sees Him and gains a firm conviction that He is. It was with this conviction that rishis set to work. The work of Swami Vivekananda and the work of Thakur's close disciples belong to the same category.

"And there is another class. They go the other way, in the opposite direction, towards ignorance - that too by His will. They don't know Him and they don't accept Him. He Himself has injected them with this illusory arrogance. This very conceit governs their life. Most people belong to this category. Had they not been there, the world wouldn't have gone on. That's why these people go the other way, that too at His dispensation.

"They undergo troubles and tribulations life after life - indulging in the pleasure and pain of the senses. They become restless and impatient. Then they look for Him. Even then they do not want Him directly; they only want peace and pleasure. Perceiving that all worldly things are enveloped by pain, they don't want them. They only ask for peace, peace and perfect peace.

"God then listens to their prayers and appears before them in the form of the guru. Then they listen to the guru. They begin to have faith in the Shastras and trust in God."

M. (to everybody present) — And there is a state inbetween the two. In it also the man calls on God. He is convinced that God is the lord of the world. But, instead of asking for unmixed peace, undiluted joy, they ask for mixed peace viz. the perishable worldly fame, wife and children - 'woman and gold', that is to say. And, He grants them these too. Such persons are known as *sakaam* bhaktas, devotees with worldly desires. But when this does not lead them to peace, they look for the everlasting peace, everlasting joy. There are three states: the *pashu bhogi* (man with animal like cravings), *sakaam bhogi* (man who worships God for worldly desires only) and bhogi-yogi (man who wants both the worldly things as well as God).

"The yogis are also of two classes: the yogi-bhogis and pure yogis. They have understood that God comes first and the world afterwards. That's why they are yogis. But some of their desires for sensory enjoyment have remained unfulfilled. They fulfil this desire and take refuge in the Lord, for example, the Pandavas. The Pandavas enjoyed ruling a kingdom under Sri Krishna's guidance but didn't get

entangled in it. It was like a mother feeding the child with sweets with her own hands. As soon as she feels that taking more of it will bring indigestion she stops feeding. She only gives to the child as much as would satisfy his desire and keep him healthy. That is why they are called yogi-bhogis. They also gradually become yogis. The Pandavas who were yogi-bhogis became complete yogis afterwards. This is the way of gradual attainment. Then one will be a complete sannyasa inside even while living in the household. The Pandavas even while living in the household, became the complete yogis at last with the grace of Lord Krishna. They left for the last journey after hearing the death of Sri Krishna.

"The pure yogis are like Narada, Shukadeva. These are unmarried sannyasis. They are like honey-bees, would like nothing else but honey of the flowers. Like the chataka bird, who would not even touch the water except that of swati nakshatra - wants pure water. They are pure blooded.

"There are these four classes of men. Men who enjoy like animals (pashu bhogi), men who worship lord for worldly things (sakaam bhakta yogi), men who want both God and the world (yogi-bhogi) and pure yogis. Every being is to become a yogi at the end and attain freedom from this world."

M. (to the Younger Jiten) — This bird has forgone this one birth. After lakhs of births does one attain a human birth. Then man has to go through the three stages. Only afterwards he attains moksha. Even a man can fall again. Thinking of a deer he became a deer - the king became a deer - Jada Bharat (the king Bharat became stone like).

"(To the youngman) The foundation of Indian culture is like a four-storeyed house. Its foundation is the knowledge of the Brahman - complete selfless jnana. On it are the four storeys - yogi, yogi-bhogi, sakaam bhakta bhogi and pashu bhogi. That's why it has sustained through time and will remain so. So they call it *sanatan dharma* - the eternal religion.

"Brahman is eternal. Out of It has come out the four classes of men. The time has four divisions - Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali yugas. In these four yugas four castes have their respective reign - brahmins (spiritual-intellectuals), kshatriyas (warriors), vaishyas (business men) and shudras (servants to the three higher castes). This distinction among the castes is based on one's qualities and actions. This is a social arrangement. It was generated for better integration. When the society is well-integrated, attainment of Brahman-jnana becomes easy."

M. (to all present) — If everybody becomes a jnani how will His world go on? That is why He has created this ignorance.

"The rishis say that generation, preservation and dissolution are the three acts of His sport. He Himself has become the world and the jiva. Besides He Himself is jnana and ajnana, bondage and liberation, all these. *Tat srishtva tat eva anupravashit*. He has

expanded Himself in the form of the world. He Himself has assumed the form of a living being. And then He Himself is sitting within the living being as the controller. It's a one-man-show."

M. (to Jagabandhu) — He has brought us consciousness through the death of this bird. He Himself went to sleep as a bird and then He Himself became the cat to kill and devour it. Those who have merged their ego completely in the Lord can only realize this truth.

"Grandfather Bhishma was aware of it. He knew that God Himself had taken the form of Sri Krishna to establish dharma. He knew also that He was both, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. It was the time for everybody to depart. It was perhaps because of this that he was on the side of the Kauravas. There can be other reasons too.

"Sri Krishna said something too: 'I have come as Death to destroy all. I am Arjuna, I am all of these.' And he named any number of big personalities. The fact is that all is He."

It is already six in the afternoon. Antevasi, Shanti and the Younger Ramesh are sitting on the roof. M. has gone up the second floor. Having cast a glance on the roof he enters his room.

The door is bolted from within. M. is not feeling quite fit today, his indigestion continues and he is feeling heavy. That's why he was on the second floor throughout the mid-day.

It is soon going to be the twilight hour. Hearing some musical notes, Antevasi enters other part of the partitioned portion of the room. M. is singing seated on his bed in his room. The Younger Ramesh and Shanti also come in. Song follows song as if a flood of emotion has been let loose, or the flood water has broken the embankment and is spreading all around. The first song is Rama-nam Kirtan:

*Rama Rama victory to Rama!
Rama Rama victory to Sita Rama !
Raja Rama Raghava, the head of the Raghus!
Sita Rama, the Saviour of the fallen !
O, the bird of the forest,
Sing the name of Rama.
Come on ! Let us call out
Rama, Rama with heart and soul.
Mother, You are Tara
Though You have assumed the three gunas.
Yet you are ever beyond them.
I am without sadhan, without bhajan.
Touch me and purify me.
Victory, victory to Sri Chaitanya,
Advaita Prabhu, Nityananda!
Victory to Srivasa and other bhaktas !
Victory to Murari Mukand !
Gauranga, of the complexion of molten gold !
Who goes on the bank of the Surdhani
With the name of the lord on his lips?
It seems Nitai, the bestower of love, has come.
What have I seen today in Keshav Bharti's hut?*

*Sing the name of Gauranga.
Speak Gauranga, repeat the name of Gauranga.
Krishna Keshav, Krishna Keshav, Krishna Keshav! save me!*

*Rama Raghava, Rama Raghava, Rama Raghava, save me.
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare Hare!
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare, Hare!
When shall I be so full of love
That only Hari will come out of my lips
And tears of love flow down my two eyes?*

Song follows song. The stream has broken its embankment. The intoxication of love has filled the atmosphere in the small room.

Jagabandhu is sitting on a chair in the partitioned room. Close to him is seated the Younger Ramesh on a bench. The Younger and Elder Jiten, Dr. Bakshi, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, the Younger Nalini, Balai, Sukhendu and some others come one by one and take their seats in the partitioned room. These people enjoy the nectar of M.'s song. The song ends. M. keeps quiet for a while, the bhaktas are silent too.

It is 8.30 p.m. M. says seated as he is, 'Who is there?' 'All of us,' answers Antevasi. M. says, 'Come inside.'

M. is seated on a wooden cot facing west. To his right there is a chair. He says, 'Jiten Babu, you are the chairman.' The Elder Jiten takes the chair facing south. The Younger Ramesh and the Doctor sit on the bedding at M.'s behest. M. is not keeping fit.

The Elder Jiten — You have not been keeping well for quite sometime. Which food will suit you?

M.'s mind is still tied within, absorbed in the joy of bhajans. Jiten Babu's question does not enter his ears. Like a child just waking from sleep and calling: Ma ! Ma, where are you?, M. also longingly serves the divine message of Sri Ramakrishna's avatara-lila to the bhaktas, to help them in their faith, for their good.

M. (to the bhaktas) — God has again incarnated Himself for the good of humanity. Thakur himself said: 'Satchidananda has come in this body as a human-being.' Why did he take up the body of a man? He says, 'It is only in a human body that prema, bhakti, jnana and love-lorn dancing, all this divine play is possible.' Man cannot catch the abstract, he is afraid of it. So, He comes in a concrete form. He says Satchidananda plays Ishwar-lila, jagat-lila, deva-lila and manav-lila (the sport of God in the world, the sport of a divine being and that of a man).

"All higher impulses that the man has have to be turned toward God. It is for teaching this that He takes up a human body. This is not possible unless He plays the part of a human being. So, He comes down as avatara. Thakur was mad repeating, Ma, Ma; merged night and day in Her; She who was his mind and soul. He had no consciousness of the body or of the outer world - his mind was submerged in the soul within. When he became conscious of the world he saw that the Mother had Herself become the world and all living-beings therein. That is why he was always repeating Ma, Ma, like a frightened child. How can the baby live without his mother? Seeing the terrible form of Sri Krishna, Arjuna was struck with awe. The rishis were also full of fright. So they prayed - *rudra yatte dakshinam mukham tena mam pahi nityam* -O Shankar, please save us always with your benevolent aspect. Trembling Arjun prayed, 'Please assume again Your gentle form.' (Gita 11: 46-50).

"Seeing the amazing worldly play of Ma, Thakur was struck by awe. So he always wished to see Her benevolent loving form. He saw that Ma makes one forget all and casts a spell. So he prayed: 'Ma, if you must keep me here please don't cast your net of world-bewitching maya over me.'

"Whenever he saw Her form within himself he would go into samadhi, as though a fish was swimming in the sea of joy; and when he saw Her outer form he would weep and call out, 'Ma, Ma.' He would pray and sing hymns in Her praise.

"For the sake of His lila, the Lord assumes both the aspects: He becomes a bhakta and then the lord. Mostly He acts in the spirit of a bhakta, but sometimes he speaks as God and says, 'Hold Me, meditate on Me. Verily, verily I say that he who meditates on Me will inherit my wealth, like a son inheriting his father's wealth. My wealth consists of jnana, bhakti, discrimination and dispassion, peace and joy, prema and samadhi. All these constitute My wealth.'

M. (to Antevasi) — Some devotees explain this phenomenon of God appearing in a human form in this way. We have bodies made up of blood and flesh. We cannot therefore know Satchidananda. So He comes taking up the body of blood and flesh, and He conducts Himself like a human-being in every action. He also has sorrow and pain, pleasure and joy, just like humans.

"The truth is that He is Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. He is beyond speech and mind. But for the welfare of man He appears as man. Men see Him just as a man. But is He a man in reality? No, He is Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. He behaves like a man, he dances; (think of) our Thakur.

"It is like a picture on the screen. One feels as if one is seeing a real man. But the truth is otherwise. When we see the picture of Christ, we get the impression as if he is really there - so vividly we see him there. But the truth is otherwise. It is just the same with the avatara, with Thakur. The devotees, therefore, say: *Vedanta-sidhhanta nrityati*. The principle of the Vedanta is Para-Brahman, the Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. He dances in His rasa-lila with gopis in the form of Krishna, as a man."

M. is silent for a while. He now resumes showering the nectar, the Kathamrita.

M. (to the devotees) — What power a man has! You see, by weeping secretly in a solitary corner, he develops another eye. It is known as the spiritual eye. He can see God with it. This eye remains in the *karana sharira*, what Thakur called as Bhagavati tanu - the spiritual body. When he sees Him the man is fulfilled. The highest duty, the highest ideal of human life is just this.

"Or, take for illustration, a crystal. One can see through it what is lying behind it. Or, say, glass. One can see everything through it. It is such a mystery!

"He has become the world and the jiva with the help of His maya. And He inheres all as the witness.

"All the confusion we have is the result of the ego in the jiva. I am happy, I am sad, I have a son born to me, my son is dead,' - this 'I' is the cause of all confusion. This is something amazing.

"He Himself came as a man; He took upon Himself all the duties of man; He subjected Himself to pain and affection, and then he freed Himself from all these. He said to the bhaktas: 'If you want peace, if you want happiness, you have to hold me and follow my path. Build a relationship with God like me - any one you like - that of a father, or mother, or brother, or a friend.' He himself chose to be a child of the Mother. He said to one of the bhaktas: 'Live in the world like a maid servant of a rich family.' In short, he showed the way to free oneself from bondage."

M. (to the bhaktas) — Of all the living-beings, only man can penetrate this mystery. It is his monopoly. The jiva is he who has an individuality. The fact of his being a jiva can be overcome by developing the spiritual eye. This is the same as purifying the *chitta*. The yogis gain this very spiritual eye. They tear the veil of the infinite with it. Developing the spiritual eye, or purifying the *chitta*, or gaining jnana, or destroying the ego, or breaking the cycle of life and death and attaining liberation - all these come about simultaneously. In fact they are all one.

The Elder Jiten (fighting it out) — That (spiritual) eye is far away. How far can one go with this eye!

M. — Why, even this eye can do it. Thakur has shown the way: It is faith in the words of the guru. Full faith in the words of the guru also yields amazing results. There was a devotee. He was old and helpless. He asked Thakur what was the way. Immediately came the reply: 'Trust in the words of the guru.' What to do when one has no spiritual eye? This, this is the alternative.

"How? Suppose I am blind, I cannot see with my eyes, and yet it is absolutely necessary for me to meet Rama Babu. What to do? I seek the help of another man. He holds me and leads me to him. Handing me over to him he says to me, 'This is Rama Babu, the person you want.'

"Even when one does not see him with these eyes, it is also seeing him if one touches him by holding his hand. Besides, hearing his words can even be taken as seeing him. One can also see with the other four senses. One must put one's trust in the words of good people.

"Just as by believing the words of a person, a blind man can meet another person similarly it is with the words of the guru. By believing the words of the guru or the avatara anything can be achieved. One must have a childlike faith - a 125% faith. The mother says, 'There is a hobgoblin in the house in that room.' The child believes it one hundred percent - he has no doubt that there is a hobgoblin in that room. But what is a hobgoblin, even this he does

not perhaps know, he has never seen one!

"So Bhagavan says in the Gita - *shrutva anyebhyah upasate* - what, Doctor Babu?"

The Doctor — *Anye tu evam ajanantah shrutva anyebhyah upaste, te api cha atitaranti eva mrityum shrutipraynah.*

[Others, not knowing thus, worship as they have heard from others; they too go beyond death by their devotion to what they have heard; Gita 13:25]

M. — This indeed is the yoga of faith in the guru.

Most of the bhaktas take leave to depart after offering their pranam. The Doctor now examines M.'s body. It is late in the night. M. says, 'Those who have to go on foot may leave. Who are to go by car?' Somebody says, 'The Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Amulya and the Younger Nalini.' 'Who is the fourth man?' asks M.. The Younger Nalini replies, 'Me.' 'All right, then go,' says M.

The devotees offer their pranam.

M. (to the Younger Amulya) — When are you going to your *desh* (village)?

The Younger Amulya — No date has been fixed so far. Even so I shall have to go early.

The Younger Amulya is a great devotee. He conducts himself in a very sweet manner. M. says that he has a very pure mind. He is very fond of him.

The Elder Jiten (to the Younger Amulya) — Will this 'stove' have to go for repairs?

M. (encouragingly) — Why? What is wrong with it? These are the days of the advent of the avatara. When He comes, liberation lies under one's feet. What is then to fear now?

"Thakur did not spare even the rishis from his criticism. He used to say that the rishis were big cowards! Why worry? Thakur is with you.

"He is always walking behind the devotees to protect them, and He takes up the responsibility of those bhaktas who take refuge in Him. He grants the intellect which saves and arranges every matter in a way beneficial to them."



Morton School, Calcutta.

Monday, 28th July 1924

12th of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.)

The 13th day of the dark fortnight, 27 dandas/55 palas.

THE GITA CAME INTO BEING IN THE BATTLEFIELD

Morton School, Calcutta. 7 a.m. M. is standing on the roof of the fourth level. He is seeing Antevasi's room in front. Antevasi is tying a bundle of papers with a jute string. The Kathamrita is under print. Antevasi has the responsibility to see it through the press. The fifth edition of volume III of the book is under print. Paper is to be sent to the press for it. M. is instructing Antevasi how to deal with the press people.

M. (to Antevasi) – Whenever you have to send anything to the press - paper, form or book you must record it in the peon book. It helps in maintaining a record. Otherwise it can bring confusion at the end. Maybe that they deny having received it sometime. Man is forgetful, you see. But when you have their signatures they cannot deny.

"You see right execution is so difficult. Just doing a thing is not enough. Primo, one should do a lot in a short time. Two, avoid all confusion. Three, whole of the execution must be beautiful. Four, one should not get bound by work. The nature of all work is to entangle one.

"But if you have the right ideal always present before your eyes, nothing goes wrong. I am taking to work for God-realization - this ideal must remain in the mind. When you do so, the mind would understand that the work is only the path, not the ideal. If one makes it the ideal it brings confusion, one gets entangled.

"Action alone is not enough, one must decide upon the ideal. Whenever the ideal goes low our love of God gets strained. We should then sit in a solitary corner and perform more of dhyana and japa. We should give up work then and take to tapasya. Even if we keep working, fifty percent of our mind must remain in the ideal. If one can keep it in God seventy-five percent it is still better - this was Thakur's view.

" 'Keeping seventy-five percent of the mind in God, one should work with twenty-five percent in it,' so said Thakur. Is selfless work a simple thing? One should do as much of it as one can afford.

"If those persons who are working for progress in worldly life have the correct ideal, their actions are good. Only those who act keeping their mind tied to the ideal act well - whether they act for God or for the world.

"It is said that in the first World War Mr. Bata worked continuously for seventy-two hours sitting in the same chair - he was making shoes for the war. Napoleon as a student also shut himself in a room for three days for solving a problem.

"Shashi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) sat on the same seat for seventy-two hours while performing puja during the days of Navratri. Swami Vivekananda did not take any food for three days to fulfill his vow of sannyasa. Thakur remained sitting in Nirvikalpa

Samadhi for three days. Besides he spent full six months in Jada Samadhi having given up food and sleep. Lakshman did not sleep for twelve years. All these persons had become one with their ideal.

"If one has to work so hard for worldly wealth, name and fame, how much more should one work for gaining the priceless wealth of eternity? He who sacrifices wealth, mind and body develops the strength of ten thousand elephants."

M. (to Antevasi) – Karmayoga is meant for the spiritual aspirant. The work of one who has attained spiritual perfection is different. A spiritually perfect person is ever united with God. What need is there for him to perform action to get united to Him? Take the consonant *k*. By adding an akar *a* it becomes *ka*. If another akar is added to it, it still sounds the same.

"However much a spiritually perfect person may work, his mind ever remains in samadhi. What a labour Swami Vivekananda underwent in America! Some say that he delivered as many as fifty lectures in a day. Yet he remained in unbroken yoga. He said, 'O Sannyasin Bold, say, 'Om Tat Sat!'

"The spirit of his 'Song of the Sannyasin' is illustrative of his own life.

"So Swamiji said, 'The ideal men of work are those who in the midst of intense activity have intense calmness.' The battle-field of Kurukshetra was the birth place of the Gita. What a riddle!

"It's only possible for a mahayogi. There is less possibility of a fall if this ideal is kept before himself by a sadhak.

"Though it is very difficult, yet it becomes easy for one who has qualified himself for *nishkama* Karmayoga, the yoga of selfless work. It's God Himself who gets nishkama karma done by one or two persons. This is to serve as a lesson to others.

"Karma is not the ideal of life - the ideal is God-realization, Self-knowledge. Nishkama Karma is only the means. One must work keeping in mind a number of things."

M. (to a bhakta) – Besides all the persons with whom one has to work are not sadhus - leave alone *siddhas* (the perfect ones). They can't see inside you. So you have to come down to their level to work with them - you have to speak their language and conduct yourself in their way. For this, one needs infinite patience.

"It is possible that they may like to deceive you. But you will not let them. Otherwise you will have to be under them. Here tact is very necessary. If you have to work with a number of persons your must have tact. Thakur's tact in worldly matters was wonderful indeed! One has to guard all the sides when one takes up a work."

M. (to the attendant) – But if one is earnest in one's quest of God everything gets arranged by itself. You should always keep Him, Thakur, in mind and pray earnestly, 'Lord don't enchant me with Your world-bewitching maya.'

"The bhaktas have to be on their guard with bayonets fixed to their guns, like the soldier in the battle-field. Who knows from which side he may be fired upon. So one has to be on alert, awake always."

It is nine in the morning. M. is seated on a chair in the staircase room on the fourth level of the Morton School. He is facing north. Brahmachari Nagendra enters with the Elder Nalini. The Brahmachari has done a lot of work in the Belur Math. He loves work. Now he supervises the farming estate of Mother Kali in Dakshineswar and arranges Her worship etc.

Because of the mismanagement of Mother Kali's Temple in Dakshineswar, the court has appointed a receiver. It is with the approval and support of the Belur Math that this receiver is Sri Kiranchandra Dutt.

The devotees of Sri Ramakrishna are associated with the Kali Temple in a special way. They are all happy with the present arrangement. It was in this temple that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna had 'enlivened' the image of Mother Bhavatarini. He lived here for thirty years. The temple is the holy spot of the avatara's sport. How much of samadhi and darshan, how much of dance and song have taken place here! How much of divine sport the Mother of the Universe in Her effulgent form has played with Her infant, Sri Ramakrishna! M. has great affection for this Dakshineswar Temple associated with hundreds of memories of Sri Ramakrishna. Having prayed to the Mother for it, Thakur had transferred to M. one kala (1/16 part) of divine power to enable him to propagate Her sport. So M. discusses this holy temple with Brahmachari Nagendra (Nagen).

M. (to the Brahmachari) – It is nice that the management of the temple is in the hands of the Math. When Kiran Babu is the manager, it is as if the Math is managing it itself. You are blessed that you have been entrusted with the Mother's worship.

Brahmachari Nagen – It is not possible to carry on in the spirit of a sadhu. One has to frame a policy. This is what defiles the mind.

M. – Let it be so. How many policies did Sri Krishna take recourse to before the battle of Kurukshetra was fought! One has even to use diplomacy when it is needed - not for one's own profit but to execute His mission. Even causing destruction is in order when it is needed. Sri Krishna did just that. Grandfather Bhishma used to call Krishna a *chakri*, that is, the king of diplomacy.

M. – What is the concern of the Math with Khayararaje Estate?

Brahmachari Nagen – We only supervise it. It is being managed by others.

M. – But it involves a lot of labour, even to supervise. The whole responsibility rests on your shoulders.

M. (to all present) – Is it anything so little that these British prime-ministers have to do? Undertaking so much work tends to shorten one's life. Just see, how much strain the viceroy and his associates have! They work here for three or five years. It is generally seen that they do not live long after they return home.

"How can they last after such hard work? It is very difficult to employ the right man - the right man in the right place. It entails so

much of labour. Besides what a responsibility it is! The responsibility of the entire state is on his shoulders! There is, of course, the Legislative Assembly, as well as the Executive Council, yet the Viceroy has so much to do - issuing this communique today and that ordinance tomorrow! He has to employ his mind in every direction. Is it so easy?"

M. (to the Brahmachari) – You will have to work as long as He wants it. One works when there is an order, the order of the guru. The guru's order is God's order. The Guru is not a human-being - he is God in human form.

"Is it possible to live without work? *Prakritih tvam niyokshyati* (Gita, 18:59) - your nature will force you to work. The guru comes and tells how to do it. He says, 'Do it for me.' *Brahmani adhaya karmani sangam tyaktava* (He who acts abandoning attachment, dedicating his deeds to Brahman does not get attached, Gita 5:10) - take to work but in the spirit of selflessness; dedicating its result at God's feet. By doing so you will rid yourself of work and free yourself from its inevitable result which binds. Because 'You have given over the result to Me.' *Yogayukto. . . kurvann api na lipyate* (one whose mind is purified by Karmayoga, who is self-disciplined, has subdued his senses and sees his self as the self in all beings is not attached though he may be acting. Gita 5:7) *Karmabhih na sah bhidyate* (he is not bound by actions. Gita 4:14) *Yuktah karmaphalam tyaktva shantim apnoti naishthikim* (having abandoned the fruit of action, the yogi finally attains peace . . . Gita 5:12).

"Selfless work though difficult indeed, so He assures *swalpam api asya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat* (Gita, 2:40) - that is, the practice of even a little of this dharma protects one from great fear. If you are able to do it a little bit, you will receive a big reward. You will be get rid of fear and bondage.

"He comes in every age to tell the way. That's how the bhaktas can come out of this labyrinth, this cycle of life and death.

" He came only recently, a few days ago. He teaches human beings through you: this is selfless work. It will yield two results - not only will you be freed, but you will also show them the path to freedom. Thakur fries the fish in its own fat!"

Taking some sweet snacks, the sadhus and bhaktas take leave. It is ten o'clock.

Five in the evening. M. is seated on a chair facing north on the roof of the fourth level. In front of him, on the three sides are benches. Some bhaktas - Jagabandhu, Shanti, the Younger Ramesh, Bhaumik and others are seated thereon.

A short while later arrives Vishweswar Mukherji. He is an engineer. He is a nephew of the famous barrister W.C. Banerjee, the first President of the Indian National Congress. He is a middle aged gentleman.

They talk with him on various subjects: on the Congress, his maternal uncle and Thakur. Vishweswar Babu narrates a number of incidents of Thakur's life as given in 'Sri Ramakrishna Lila Prasanga', (Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master, in English) while M. listens.

Soon it is evening. The attendant brings in the hurricane lantern. Giving up all other work, M. immediately begins to meditate. The bhaktas also join him in meditation. Mohan and Shanti sitting towards the south on the bench also meditate. After the meditation M. showers the nectar of the Word.

M. (to Vishweswar) – Thakur said that one should give up all work in the evening and engage oneself in thinking of God. Both morning and evening one should regularly take to dhyana, think of Him for sometime.

(Smiling) "He said to a person: you do not meditate. Are you going to end up with the daughter or daughter-in-law of some family? This is how it happens!

"Even that much (such short meditations) is not enough. One can well imagine what happens to those who just gossip! The rishis and munis meditated day and night, yet some of them ended quite another way. One can well imagine them who don't at all try to meditate on Him. So one must listen to the guru. One must practise dhyana and japa morning and evening, giving up all other work."

Enters Sukhendu. It is 8.30 p.m. Vishweswar Babu offers pranam and takes his leave. M. also rises, he is to go to the third level for his meals. In the meanwhile the Elder Jiten and some other regular devotees come in.

M. returns at nine p.m. The meeting at this hour is to take place in the staircase room. As soon as he enters, M. says in fun, 'Talk about the essence, the basic reality.'

The Elder Jiten – We are here only to hear that. The rest is all trash. The basic reality is indeed the essence.

M. – Just saying that all worldly matters are meaningless will not do. They are steps to climb up, to reach the roof. Besides not all the steps are mud and lime, bricks too are there.

"Since He has made all this, it has a meaning. The rishis knew it. So they said: 'Fear not. It is He who has made them all. Besides, He Himself has become all these'."

M. (to the bhaktas) – Just see, how much confusion He has made with this 'I'. Since there is 'I', there is also 'You'.

"Besides, this feeling of duality also disappears suddenly. Then there is only 'I'.

"The 'I' of daily eight *prahars* (one *prahar* equal three hours) can understand the form, taste, smell, speech and touch (the five senses). But the higher 'I' makes one know something (higher), it makes one see God. The yogis see God with this higher 'I'.

"How can people know the height Thakur had attained - he was always in samadhi.

"All people look alike externally, like sparklers which look alike. But when fired, some of them throw out red sparklets, the others blue. They emit different kinds of sparklets.

"It is the same with human mind - some of them think of worldly matters, the others of God. So they say, there are jewels of men among men themselves."

M. (to the young man) – There are infinite possibilities and potentialities in this 'I'.

"They place parallel mirrors in the laboratory. When they are placed in front of each other, they give infinite reflections. In the same way, there are infinite possibilities in this 'I'.

'The grand-pa eats guavas; he eats both ripe and unripe fruits!' - I hear the young boys singing this beautiful song these days. 'The grand-pa eats guavas - he eats the ripe and the unripe, whichever he can find.' (All laugh loudly).

"They eat the upper fruit as well as the lower one - true to the kindred points of heaven and earth. Just as they look towards God, so also they fix their gaze on the world."

Dr. Bakshi, Vinay and the Younger Amulya come in.

M. (to the Younger Amulya) – Have you come now with them by cab?

The Younger Amulya - Yes Sir.

M. – So you must have seen them (the sadhus). How many were they?

The Younger Amulya – Seven.

M. – You see, this is how you should see sadhus - under some pretext like this. Was Manoranjan there?

M. (to Antevasi) – Please ask Matko (that is Arun, the eldest grandson of M.) to come here with the harmonium. He can sing the song, 'The grand-pa eats guavas. . .'

Antevasi returns after conveying the message to Matko.

Enters the Elder Sudhir. He is an old student of the Morton School. He is somewhat deranged now.

M. (to Sudhir) – Do they give you two meals a day? And do you take bath morning and evening? They are all devotees of Shiva.

M. (to himself) – They call him crazy! What they themselves are they don't know. They are totally mad with desire, anger and greed and they call others crazy! How strange!

Enters Matko. He sings in accompaniment with the harmonium - 'The grand-pa eats guavas - raw guavas and ripe guavas, whichever he gets.' Everybody laughs loudly. As the notes of the song go a crescendo, the wave of the bhaktas' amusement also rises higher and higher. The song ends, but the audience remains overwhelmed by the humour of the song.

M. (to Matko) – I say, sing that song too (to Jagabandhu) the one we learnt to sing in Mihijam.

Jagabandhu – O that one! ‘Vikalpa-vihin . . .’ Thakur’s song!

Matko sings: *Vikalpa vihin, samadhi magan, chirleen asan tomar . . .*

M. is a perfect magician. How cleverly he makes the devotees laugh, weep,
lose themselves in meditation!



Morton School, Calcutta.

Tuesday, 29th July 1924

13th Shravana, 1331 (B.Y.)

The 13th day of the dark fortnight, 42 dandas/33 palas.

SEE GOD IN THE AVATARA, WHAT USE RUNNING HERE AND THERE?

Morton School, Calcutta. It is 11.30 a.m. M. is lying in his bed in his chamber on the fourth level. He is not keeping fit. The Kathamrita is under print with two printing presses. Though Antevasi has the entire responsibility, M. still instructs him on all matters. He says to Antevasi, 'Please go to the Balakrishna Press and ask them to send the gaily proofs without delay. Unless you press them to hurry up, they will get delayed. So one should always keep pressurizing them.' M. has been in bed throughout the day. Bhaktas who come to see him return soon. There has not been much spiritual talk.

It is Wednesday, the 30th of July 1924, the fourteenth day of the lunar month, 46th dandas / 29 palas. 5 p.m. M. has been coming to the staircase room quite frequently. A number of bhaktas have arrived. M. talks to them for a while, and then returns to his room. He has sent Antevasi to the Vani Press, late in the afternoon. This press is also printing the Kathamrita.

It is twilight. M. meditates for a while. The bhaktas join him. He now asks them to read the Kathamrita. Whenever he is not well, he mostly asks some holy book to be read.

At the behest of M., Antevasi reads the Kathamrita, Part I Chapter 14 - Sri Ramakrishna has visited the Balaram Mandir and the Girish Bhavan. Girish has invited the whole group of devotees to his house. Rama and Mahima Chakravarty have also come. It's Friday, the 24th of April 1885. Thakur has contracted a sore-throat.

A joyous festival is being celebrated in Girish's house today. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna has come accompanied by the bhaktas. He is keen to see how 'English men' (the anglicised Indians) carry out a discussion. So Mahima and Girish undertake a discussion. While Mahima believes in jnana, Girish has faith in bhakti.

Mahima - Everybody can become Sri Krishna by taking to spiritual practice.

Girish - Impossible. Only Sri Krishna can be Sri Krishna. If all the qualities of Sri Krishna manifest themselves in a person he is none else than Sri Krishna. An ordinary human-being can't become Sri Krishna.

M. — Mahimacharan doesn't accept incarnation of God, Narendra also doesn't. That's why Thakur has broached this subject. He is going to talk of the principle behind it. Thakur says that a human-being can attain samadhi at the most by spiritual practice but he can't come down to the earth again. However, he who is able to do so has done it by God's will. God wills that the former should teach mankind. On the other hand, an avatara can always lose himself in samadhi and yet come down to teach. It is like a minister who can go only upto the state secretariat with the king but the son of a king can go anywhere - in and out of the palace. The same is the difference between an ordinary human being and avatara.

M. (smiling) — Mahimacharan believes that one cannot do any worldly work after attaining samadhi. About Thakur, he says, 'He was in a higher state earlier. He has now climbed down.' (All laugh

loudly). Seeing Thakur making merry with the devotees, Mahima said so. So Thakur gave examples of Narada, Sukadeva, Shankar, Ramanuja, Prahlad and Hanuman - all of them attended to work after attaining samadhi. The rishis also did so after samadhi, for example, Vyasa, Vashishtha, Yajnavalkya and Janak.

"The avatara is God Himself. He can certainly work in a lower state. If the other human-beings work after samadhi, they do so by God's will for teaching mankind. The avatara, on the other hand, works at His own will.

(Laughing) "Mahimacharan says, 'I had the state twelve years ago which Narendra has today. Why does Thakur dance and make merry with him so much?' (All laugh) Mahima Chakravarty has quite softened now - because of his discussions with Girish Babu. That's why he agrees to all this.

"What a beautiful illustration! The shadow of man disappears at midday. Similarly the conceit of man does not survive after samadhi. A divine illustration indeed!

"Mahimacharan is proud because he can talk on the Vedas. Thakur makes little of it. The knowledge derived from books and the knowledge attained after samadhi are two things, very different from each other. Without experiencing samadhi one cannot rid oneself of one's egotism. That's why Thakur asked the ordinary human being to live in the world like a maid servant. Hanuman was in the mood of a servitor after attaining samadhi. Some of Thakur's bhaktas also had the disposition of a servitor or a son. One belongs to the state of aspirant the other to that of the perfected one.

"How beautifully Thakur defines his close disciples today! Says, he, 'The close disciples are like pillars in the Nat-mandir - They live always close to the Master and share his pleasure and pain. The distant disciples are like exterior pillars - they visit some times to enquire after him.' This illustration of Thakur serves as a measure to sift the intimate disciples from the distant disciples."

At times M. listens silently to the reading. Sometimes he elucidates. The reading is over. M. sits closing his eyes for a while. He again comments.

M. (to the bhaktas) — The bhaktas run after the Lord, and sometimes the Lord also runs after the bhaktas. Just see how Thakur used to go running to Calcutta from Dakshineswar.

"The bhaktas have so much to do. They can't go to him. And even if they haven't much work, there are other handicaps. Maybe some of them are mere boys, they have no money and they are afraid of their people, they may give them a beating.

"Even those who are not plagued by them may not like to visit him for they have their minds in other matters. Thakur knows their innermost thoughts - he knew all this. So he himself went running to them to help them.

"And why not? Wasn't it his duty? If father or mother doesn't do so,

who will?

"We are ignorant people. How far can we see? He can see all, he is the controller of the mind. He gauges both the attraction and the repulsion of our minds and comes to raise us. This is the reason for his visit of today.

"Girish Ghosh has recently started visiting him. He had fallen so low, so Thakur comes to lift him into his arms. The main purpose of his visit today is to grant him his grace.

"Didn't he say just after a visit or two: 'You are the Lord Brahman Absolute, the avatara? You have come to redeem me.' It is to fortify this feeling firmly in his mind that he has come today.

"Girish welcomes him by lying prostrate before him. Such a proud man and see what he does today! What a wonder and why not? How much he has sinned and yet he attained infinite peace, infinite joy and infinite spiritual wealth without paying anything. He has seen the Lord - such an invaluable attainment. And this too he has attained *not* by closing his eyes in samadhi but with his bodily eyes - he has seen the God in the avatara, in the human body of Thakur. He has today brought to his house Him who is the indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, beyond mind and speech, who creates, preserves and dissolves the world in the blinking of an eye; Him he is feeding with his own hands and making merry with Him. That's why overwhelmed with bhakti, drowned in love and forgetting himself in gratitude, he rolls at his feet. What a rare sight, what a living manifestation of faith, it is the descent of *Vaikuntha* (the abode of Vishnu) in the mortal world."

M. (to the young man) — Not only this, he breaks the clod with a clod. Narendra does not believe in the avatara - he belongs to the realm of the Indivisible. Thakur teaches Narendra through Girish. Narendra, you know, is to proclaim Thakur to the world later on. So he makes Girish broach the principle of avatara-hood. How he introduces himself! Says he, 'The avatara is like a cow's udder. It yields milk, so it is of special use. The udder yields milk, that is to say the grandeur of God shows itself through the avatara - and it result in jnana and bhakti, discrimination and dispassion, peace and joy, prema and samadhi.

"Among men in human body, the avatara is the highest. From him gushes forth a flood of jnana, bhakti and intense love for the devotees of this world.

"So it is said that its one and the same thing, whether one merges oneself in the infinite Lord, Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss or one sees Him in all creatures. Therefore it is said that seeing God and seeing the avatara are one and the same. By seeing the avatara one sees God. Christ also said, 'I and my Father are one'. (John 10:30) Sri Krishna also said the same in the Bhagavata: *Aham atma gudakesha sarva bhutashya sthita* - I am the Self, Gudakesha, seated in the hearts of all beings. This has also been said in the Gita (10:20). Jnana, bhakti and prema manifest themselves in the world only

through the avatara. Thakur himself said, 'I am that avatara.'

"If the desired thing is available at a particular place why should one go about elsewhere in search of it? Just see, What an incontrovertible saying this is! Touch the Ganga or the sea at any place, you have touched it all - nobody has to touch the whole of the Ganga - from the Gomukhi to the Ganga Sagar. Or the whole of the sea? Touching the sea at Puri you touch the infinite sea.

"God exists in the form of the universe. And He is also *avanga manas agocharam* - beyond mind and speech. If we can see Him in the avatara, what is the use of roaming about in the universe?"

Enter the Doctor, Vinay and others.

M. — Well, Vinay Babu, have you brought the list of items used in the celebration the other day?

Vinay — Yes Sir!

M. — Let us hear it. It is good if a list has been compiled. It helps to make lists of the coming years.

Vinay reads and M. comments in between. He says to the bhaktas, 'Please listen. The list is being read. If you have any comments please make them.'

(To a young bhakta who is a bit sceptical) "Well if a list of the puja of the time of Chaitanya Deva was available, would you not want to see it shouting yes, yes; just tell me this. They why are you surprised now?"

The first public celebration of M.'s birthday was held at the house of Dr. Kartik Bakshi in Cossipore on Monday, the 21st July, the Nagpanchmi day. Swamis Saradananda and Subodhananda attended the celebrations along with M. Besides the inner circle of Thakur's children, many old sadhus also joined those celebrations. Swamis Dhirananda, Shantananda, Dharmananda, Jnana Maharaj, Omkarananda and many other sadhus participated and took prasad there. The sadhus of the math themselves performed *shodshopachara* puja (a perfect puja with sixteen articles) and *hoam* (oblations performed by offering clarified butter into consecrated fire). All the bhaktas of the Morton School were also present. It is the list of that celebration that is being read.

M. (to the Doctor) — They should not have procured so many mangoes when they are not good - serving a slice to each should have been enough. *Rabri* (sweetened cream) and such others things are not served in plenty. Buying a rupee worth of it, offering it to Thakur as bhoga, it should be served in small quantity to all. Just offering eight mangoes by count to Thakur would have been all right.

"And no vegetable curries were prepared. They should have made some plum chutney. Let there be small quantities of rasagullas and sandesh but there should be a lot of curd. Curd wards off disease. In other words, the meal should be such that it is not harmful to health.

"And the one should hold a council together. All plans should be got approved from experienced hands. Otherwise it leads to waste. So Thakur said: 'A miser is better than a spendthrift.'

Mohan (to himself) — How wonderful is the conduct of the disciples of the avatara! This is indeed the right conduct. They have learnt in the very presence of the Lord in human form. Thakur used to say: 'Why must a bhakta be a fool?' So they concern themselves with all matters. The worker must be competent and his work must be faultless. Thakur used to say, 'He who can keep an account of salt can also keep the account of sugar candy.' He who is competent in worldly matter can also be competent in spiritual matters. The bhaktas have come to hear about religion, but he is talking to them on worldly conduct. Reason? If the mind is competent and concentrated on external matters it can also be so about God. 'One has just to turn round the corner,' Thakur used to say.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Thakur asks someone (M. himself) how much would a stool cost? Bhakta said perhaps one rupee and a half. Thakur rejoined, 'If a bathing seat costs just six annas, why should a stool cost so much. Just see, he was an avatara. What a sense of proportion he had! Can others have it?

"We are fools. We do not possess such a sharp intellect. So Thakur made us see with his finger. Those who have such conscious intellect are the persons to whom Lord reveals Himself.

"Thakur sent somebody to bring a leaf of beetle from the Alam Bazar. He brought seven leaves. Then some employee said, 'I brought ten for a pice.' Thakur immediately scolded him saying, 'Go to him, fool, return these. If you do not want so many leaves you can give them away to others but why should you allow yourself to be cheated.' One who gets cheated by these things, also gets cheated by mahamaya's magic. We have only one mind. With such a mind as this, one can not realize God. Even if he is given something worthwhile, he will not be able to keep it - he will not be able to keep anything divine if and when it is given to him."

What is M. thinking ? His mind is tied to the past. He resumes his talk.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — As a boy I went for dinner with my mother to a local doctor's house. I was twelve then. We got excellent curd and first class sandesh. The *sugar-murki* was giving out a very sweet aroma. That aroma I am still tasting, Oh! (laughs).

"You don't have a chopper and yet take a raw coconut. First have a chopper before taking the coconut."

There has been some wastage of eatables on M.'s anniversary celebration. First one must have a sharp intellect and then experience, besides mutual consultation - only then an undertaking ends well. This was not done in the last festival. Is this the reason that he says that one needs a chopper, that is to say the experience of a jnani, thereafter he should buy a coconut, that is to say celebrate?

For M. there is no difference between dharma and Karma (work) - they are one. If the work is well thought of, well conceived, it purifies the mind and leads to jnana. This becomes the means to attain *moksha* (liberation). Otherwise all work is bondage.

Evening of the next day, in the staircase room of the Morton School. M. is

seated on a chair facing north, he has a woolen cloth on him. It is bad weather - it is raining in torrents and he is unwell. His neuralgic back-ache has increased but he is still there with the bhaktas.

One forgets one's pain when talking or hearing spiritual matters. Just as it is joyful to keep the mind on God at the time of meditation, similarly the mind of those, who are drenched in the showers of divine Kathamrita and their goal, gets merged in God. Their body consciousness decreases. Thus comes joy and the intoxication of divine talk. Just as a man forgets the trials and tribulations of the world by taking wine, similarly the talk of God has also its intoxication. The narration of His life is the life-breath of those in trouble - *tapta jivanam*.

Whenever M. is not well he always showers the nectar of divine words on others. Even when lying ill he makes sadhus and bhaktas sit on his bed and talks to them of God. Once he had fever. The doctors prohibited all talk, but the fever did not leave him for the whole month. Doctor Satyacharan Chakravarty was then called in. He was a devotee. As soon he saw him he said, 'Let him talk. Let him do what he likes.' M. began showering the nectar of Thakur's words. Along with it he rid himself of his fever.

This too is a way, the yoga of *sankirtan* (community singing), and the yoga of showering the nectar of the Word.

M. is a little more unwell today. So he asked for the Kathamrita to be read after the evening meditation. Volume One, 8th section: Sri Ramakrishna in the annual festival of the Brahmo Samaj in Sinduria Patti.

Even in an inclement weather the devotees have arrived - the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Nalini, the Younger Amulya, Balai, the Younger Jiten, Manoranjan, Bhaumik, Sukhendu, Jagabandhu and others are seated close to M. The Kathamrita is being read by the Younger Amulya.

The Reader: Sri Ramakrishna says, 'If the butter of jnana and bhakti is taken out from the milk of the mind, it will never get dissolved in the water of the world.'

M. (to the bhaktas) — There are quite some good people among the Brahmos - bhaktas as they were. That's why Thakur used to go running to them. But none of their leaders would leave his house to undertake tapasya. So, Thakur went to them to say: 'Take out butter and then live in the world.'

"He wanted to do good to all, how they can benefit most, that's why this was very much needed. The 'material' is good but for the want of sadhan it is losing quality. So whenever he saw them he would ask them to take to sadhana. And he would sing this song: 'O my mind drown yourself in the sea of the beauty of the Lord.'

"Vijay Goswami has returned from Gaya after practising tapasya. A new person he has become. How happy Thakur feels on seeing him! Vijay Babu had recognized Thakur. He said, 'I have been going round, I have seen that some have it two annas in a rupee, while others have four annas of it. But here it is full sixteen annas in rupee.'

"Without carrying out tapasya in a solitary place one can not see the difference - one cannot see where one is and where one has to go.

"And unless you take refuge in truth you cannot practice sadhana-

bhajan, this he said and this he said too, 'It is Kaliyuga. By holding on to truth you can attain God.'

"People cannot know him externally. But by holding on to truth you can see Him - it was to say this that he went to Brahma Samaj.

"While living a worldly life man forgets truth. So Thakur said, 'I have given up all to the Mother but I could not give truth to her.' Unless one can distinguish the truth and untruth the body does not last. That is why he had taken refuge in *satya* (truth) while living within *mithya* (illusory world). Within him always dwelt the Mother, the picture of truth.

"He has shown the people of this world another way out. If one can not practice so many rules of the religion but holds on to the truth, even then he can realise God. Said he, 'Truth is like a chain. If one holds the chain, one can find the log.' The log wood is drowned in water, tied to a chain. Log wood meaning God.

"They say: mere talk can not soak the roasted rice. Similarly how can mere talking help you? The Vedas say: someone has said so and so. That particular saying has to be stored within, those emotions are to be collected and fixed in one's heart and mind. Amidst the sufferings and sorrows of this world, the light of that collection of good emotions is needed. To talk so highly from the mouth, and to work like the same as before! The parrot repeats Radhakrishna, but as soon as the cat catches it, the same 'tain-tain' (its natural voice). How will it go about then? The musical notes have to be practised hands on.

"But people of the Brahma Samaj loved Thakur. In whatever bhava one may love him, it will certainly do good. He himself has said, 'The chilli will have its pungent effect even if eaten unawares.' Those people didn't recognise him as an avatara. That may have been so. But he knew that they loved him. So their good was inevitable."



Calcutta,

Thursday, 31st July 1924.

The night of the new moon, 49 dandas/4 palas.

M., THE BHAGVATA PANDIT

The Morton School. 50, Amherst Street, Calcutta. M. is living in a room on the fourth level. That's why many bhaktas and sadhus assemble there regularly. The shower of the nectar of the Word and the current of jnana, bhakti and prema have been there for the last half a century. The bhaktas come here daily looking for spiritual intoxicant. Most of them are employed on different jobs. The bhaktas regularly come there to bathe under the showers of divine words inspite of their engagements and tiring work. Just as the body is cleansed of its dirt by bathing in the water of the Ganga, similarly the showers from the white water bearing cloud of M. cleanses the dirt of the mind. The bees of the bhaktas come in search of the honey of peace and happiness. The compassionate M. is ever-ready to dole out the honey of Sri Ramakrishna, night and day, little caring for the ills of his body.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna has kept M., the Bhagavata pandit in the household by giving him the badge of authority to speak of the Bhagavata to the man afflicted by the ills of the world. He asked the Mother of the universe for a *kala* (1/16th) of power to him, so that he could preach to humanity. M. prayed to his master any number of times to let him embrace sannyasa. But to comply with the wishes of the Mother of the universe, the Master appointed him on the job of a teacher while living in the household. So bowing to the command of his master, M. has constantly been showering the nectar of the Word for the last forty years without distinction between the eligible and the non-eligible persons.

M. announces to the man that He who is Para-Brahman, Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss beyond word and mind, came to the earth as Sri Ramakrishna in a human body. He reminds everybody of Sri Ramakrishna's promise: 'Hold on to me. You will attain just by thinking on me. Who I am and who you are, when you know this you will attain. I swear, he who will think on me, will inherit my glory just as the son inherits the wealth of his father.'

M. has not been keeping well for some days. But this does not bother him. This morning when he had severe pain, he once said to Antevasi, 'What is the cure?' Antevasi had massaged his back with a medicine inspite of M.'s protests. On one hand he had such a severe pain, and on the other he was showering the nectar of the Word. Antevasi notices that while showering the Kathamrita, M. forgets his bodily pains and gets immersed in the bliss of Brahman. He teaches even without speaking that the Kathamrita is the only medicine for the parched lives.

It is 5 p.m. M. is seated on a double bench on the third floor, facing west. In front of him, a duree has been spread on some benches for sadhus to sit on. To the south and north of M., the bhaktas are seated - Shanti, Manoranjan, Jagabandhu and others. The *honey* has attracted the bees of bhaktas.

In no time a special bee comes in the form of Swami Shantananda. He is an ascetic with a sweet temperament. Sometimes he says, 'Come on, brother, let us go (to M.) to forget the world.' One forgets the world within five minutes when one is with M. He holds the mind of the visitors without his knowing and takes it to the shore of the bliss of Brahman.

M. is very fond of Shantananda ji. So he asks him to come and sit close to him as a token of love and regard for him. But he does not sit on the same seat with M. out of regard and reverence for him. Instead he sits on a bench in front. He has been visiting many places of pilgrimage for quite some time.

After offering his pranam and making polite inquiries he begins to talk of the holy places as desired by M.

Sw. Shantananda — I visited the shrine of Amarnath in Kashmir. This Shivalinga (phallic symbol of Shiva) made of bluish ice increases and decreases in size by itself. This Shivalinga is formed in a huge cave. The top of the cave of Amarnath remains covered up with snow for a long time. When the snow melts the water drips into the cave. This cave is situated at a height of thirteen thousand feet. The top is seventeen thousand feet above the sea level. One has to go across a stream of ice. It is very cold there.

"There are no temples, nor is there any place where one can live. One has to live in a tent at Panchatarni, five miles away. It is situated at a height of eleven thousand feet. Swamiji (Vivekananda) also visited it. He bathed in the cold stream of that river wearing a loin-cloth in Panchatarni. Sister Nivedita was with him.

"Pahalgam is sixty miles away from Srinagar. Amarnath is twenty-seven miles from Pahalgam. The journey is very difficult. That's why people say that it is not Amarnath (the lord of immortality), but Maran-nath (the lord of death). (Laughter). Sheshnag is a lake. Its water is milk white, a very beautiful spot at a height of twelve thousand feet. The Mahaguna Pass lies beyond it, at a height of fourteen thousand feet.

"Swami Vivekananda went into samadhi in the Amarnath cave. Lord Shiva appeared before him and granted him a boon - the boon of death at will."

M. — Mother Kshir Bhavani also appeared before Swamiji, so they say. She said to Swamiji: 'My son, do I protect you or is it that you protect me? It is by My will that they have broken the temple.' A great change came over Swamiji thereafter. His tendency to work went down - he was mostly surcharged with spiritual emotion. The Master had told him after he had gone into the Nirvikalpa samadhi, 'I have locked you in. Go and work for the Mother.' The Kshir Bhavani incident can be taken as opening the lock. It happened in 1898. Just after this incident he went to America for a second time. Now Swamiji was in a highly surcharged state. Within some four years of this he breathed his last.

M. — Did Swamiji visit the four *dhams* (the four ancient centers of pilgrimage founded by Adi Shankaracharya)? You have been there to all these.

Swami Shantananda — No. Swamiji did not visit Badrinarayana. But I have.

M. — The Master said: 'He has created centers of pilgrimage, temples and sadhus in every little valley - for those who want Him.' Shankaracharya made these four centers. The principle vow of a Hindu's life is to visit these four places. Sri Ramakrishna's father went to Puri and Rameshwaram. The Master used to say, 'Many a sadhu visit only three dhams, missing Dwarika so that they may think of Dwarika at the time of death.' Thinking of Dwarika means

thinking of Sri Krishna. How many ways there are for the devotees to play with God.

Swami Shantananda — What a beautiful spot, the Mayavati Ashrama! How solitary! The right spot for sadhan-bhajan. Swamiji founded it for the jnani bhaktas.

M. — Are you going to Kashi now?

Swami Shantananda — Yes, I wish to stay there for some time undistracted by anything.

"There is another sadhu residing in the hut in the Kashigiri garden. We shall have to look for some other hut."

M. (to all present) — There is no place like Kashi. The Master saw the vision of *Vishvanath* (the Lord of the universe) whispering the 'Tarak Brahman Ramanama' into the ears of the spiritual aspirants and the Mother Annapurna cutting asunder the bonds of maya. What a fire of tapasya has been blazing there since ages! Countless bhaktas are receiving daily their fuel of yearning there. People from the whole of India flock there. That's why Kashi is known as the queen of all pilgrim centres.

M. — The Himalayas are also a great source of inspiration. Their very sight brings the name of God to the mind. Not only it has secluded places but it also is the place of tapasya of rishis and munis. The Lord says in the Gita: *sthavaranam Himalayah* (10:25) - of all the firm things I am the Himalayas.

"Swamiji said to me, 'It was my desire that I should spend my life in meditation on Him in the Himalayan silence. But what to do? It was as if somebody was forcing me to do all this work holding me by the neck.' He said this on his return from America. And then he said in Almora, 'All my inclination to work is silenced when I am reminded of the Himalayas. The Himalayas are the birthplace of philosophy.' Oh, how great!

"His inside was full of Brahman. His inner desire was to remain merged in samadhi like Sukadeva, but the Master put him to work. Otherwise how could the sport of the Lord be propagated? And how could the world be benefited? There was nothing unfulfilled in him - he was an ever-perfect God-man, one of the seven stellar rishis.

"The Master once asked him what he desired. He replied, 'I wish to remain merged in samadhi like Sukadeva.' The Master said, 'No, the Mother will grant you a higher state than this.' What is it? To be able to see His lovable presence in all, from Brahman to a tiny insect. He always manifested this in his person. To remain merged in Him is the same as seeing Him in all creatures - only the latter is a higher state.

"Had Narendra remained merged in samadhi, who would have preached to this world of pain and sorrow? Every creature is God - *sarvam khalvidam Brahman*.

"It is said that Shankaracharya wanted to propagate this great dictum of Vedanta outside India too. It is Shankar who made Swamiji do this by entering into his mind. All this is a part of one grand plan. The world outside thinks that Shankar was other than Swami Vivekananda. But the fact is otherwise. All things are different manifestations of the same one great Will."

M. (to all present) — That 'Himalayan silence' had as if overpowered him - he was always longing for it. The Advaita Ashrama of Mayavati is the outer manifestation of this desire.

"Though he had immersed himself in the sea of activity in America, *Om tatsat Om* was always reigning within him. The Song of Sannyasin is the outer shape of his inner state of Brahman. Says he, pointing towards the Himalayas, 'Where worldly taint could never reach where rolled the stream of knowledge, truth and bliss.' Oh, what a deep insight! What a great experience!"

M. (to Mohan) — 'Were you inspired on seeing the Himalayas?' the Master asked me this. I had just then returned from Darjeeling. I said, 'I felt such a joy that I began to weep on seeing the Himalayas from Siliguri. It was as if my mind had got submerged in an ocean of peace.'

"Such is the glory of the Himalayas - *sthavaranam Himalayah*.

"I had read Kalidas describing the Himalayas as *devatma Himalayah*. (the Himalayas as the divine spirit) in his 'Kumara Sambhava'. But its deep significance had eluded me then. But on hearing Thakur's question, whether I felt inspired by the sight of the Himalayas, I realized its significance. And add to it my experience of peace and joy. I then understood why the Himalayas were called the divine spirit. In Indian culture, the joy of Brahman and the Himalayas are synonymous."

Swami Shantananda — Did you climb the mountain?

M. — I did climb the Ojla Hill. I went up by a hill train, a little more than a mile.

"But Thakur had not seen the Himalayas. The Holy Mother had seen them when she visited Haridwar, Rishikesh and the Lakshman Jhula. It seems that even Shashi Maharaj did not see the Himalayas. He certainly did not do so later on. But whether he saw them as a student, one does not know. No, he didn't. He didn't even go to Haridwar."

It is the twilight hour. As soon as the lamp is brought in M. stops talking and takes to meditation. He is seated on a chair on the roof facing north. In front of him and to his right are seated the devotees. They also meditate - the Elder Jiten, Shukalal, the Elder Amulya, Bhaumik, Balai, Amrit, the Younger Nalini, Jagabandhu and so on. The Doctor and Vinay arrive a few moments later. Because of over work, the Elder Jiten has not been there for the last two days. He is a bench clerk in the High Court. M. resumes the conversation after the meditation.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — It appears you are over busy.

The Elder Jiten — Yes Sir, a lot of work is pending. There is only one judge that is why there is so much of work. I could not come for two days because of this. Does work leave you the time for meditation? It makes you forget.

M. (laughing) — What did you say?

The Elder Jiten — Work makes one forget everything, brings in so much of confusion.

M. — I don't agree. Why should you say that you will meditate when all work is finished. Why must one take off one's clothes and put on a silken dress on his return from the office? Why is it necessary? One can meditate in one's office dress.

"It is nice with the Muslims - they offer *Namaz* five times a day. As soon as it is time for it, they start praying, wherever they may be. We have seen it at the Gole Dighi. They may have come for a walk, but they would offer *Namaz* there too. Even the coachmen, masons, would stop the coach or stop work and offer *Namaz*. In the courtroom or the train it can be the same. A beautiful rule this is!

"That's why the Master became a Muslim - he was in this state for three days. Mohammed has laid down this rule, to offer *Namaz* five times a day, to give up all work and call on Him. And they also have to perform *vazu* even when no water is available.

"So they take up a little of it (acting as if washing the hands) and do like this. This cleanses them.

"Can anybody lay down this rule unless he has an insight into the human character? What a deep insight! He knew that there was many an obstacle in such virtuous acts. So he gave this simple prescription."

A particular Bhakta — The mind feels restless unless one has washed one's mouth and hands properly.

M. — Of course, that is so. It is because of one's habit. Both the inner and outer cleanliness are necessary. But why shouldn't one meditate on God when a wash is not available? If one spends the whole day in trying to take a bath, when will one find time to meditate on Him?

"Do whatever is possible at a particular time. Where all facilities are available, one should take a good wash and meditate on Him comfortably. Where it is not possible meditation should be carried on with whatever is available. The aim is to meditate.

"Maybe that the outer self has remained unclean because of the non-availability of some thing, but then why not cleanse the inner self by repeating His name?

"By such miscalculation the man falls a prey to cleanlism. He keeps himself busy with outer cleanliness. But the essential thing is the remembrance of God whether it is achieved by external cleanliness or otherwise. To keep oneself busy with the means and forget the end is

not correct."

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — It is the same with work. When there is too much work, one should still find time for meditation. Otherwise meditation will never be possible - one will come to the end of one's life without ever finding time for meditation. So one must call on Him even during the storms and stress of life. One must at least fold one's hands to offer pranam at the time worship; or one may mentally offer Him pranam. And when one has more time, one may carry out the regular sadhana.

M. (to all) — One must practise both these alternatives. Practice makes every thing possible. Those who are weak physically have a number of pretexts. The world is not for them. If one has the strength of ten thousand elephants, one can live a worldly life. Otherwise one must stay under a tree.

"Determination is needed - the determination to repeat His name. It will not do to give it up. When one is very busy one should hold it with one's teeth - with a bull dog tenacity as Swami Vivekananda said.

"The waves of the world do toss every thing up and down, night and day. He who can hold Him inspite of a hundred of obstacles is indeed a hero. Only he will attain. So the Vedas says, *nayamatma balahinena labhyah* - the weak cannot attain the knowledge of Brahman.

"The Master taught: 'You should work as the time demands; you should work the way it is needed and you should conduct yourself with others as due.'

"Oh, How practical the Master was! By being so, one can keep one's mind on Him even while living a worldly life - true to the kindred points of heaven and earth."



Calcutta,

Friday, 1st August 1924

10th of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.)

The first day of the bright fortnight, 51 dandas/58 palas.

FAITH IN GOD BRINGS DETERMINATION IN ONE'S ACTIONS

1.

The Morton School, the staircase room at the fourth level. M. is seated on a chair facing south. A morning in the month of Shravana. Some times it rains, at other times it is sunshine. Jagabandhu is seated on a bench in front of M.

The Kathamrita is under print these days - a further edition of third part. The galley proofs of the first form have been received today. Antevasi is responsible for its printing. So M. gives him instructions in this matter.

M. — The proofs should be read very carefully otherwise mistakes can not be detected. This causes a lot of inconvenience to the reader. It is possible that he may completely misunderstand the text. Besides the habit of the proof reader will not be tightened up. His thinking will remain defective.

"You have but one mind. If it can not detect a misprint by reading, it also can not detect the defect in one's meditation. So Thakur said: 'He who can keep an account of salt can also keep the account of sugar candy.'

"Thakur witnessed the play 'Vidyasunder.' He called the actor who had played the part of Vidya to his room in the morning. He said to him, 'Look here, he who is expert in one thing say in singing and playing a musical instrument, in reading and writing or anything else, can also become an expert in spiritual matters, if he so desires.'

"The mind is just one it has to be concentrated on one thing. Keep it in any direction it will go on in that direction.

"Faith in God or in the word of the guru bring determination in one's actions. Reason? Then one takes to action considering it as God's work. In God's work there can be no feebleness.

"When the mind is not inclined, cannot concentrate on a job, doesn't join itself with it, you should think that it is His work, that it is His worship. When this is done your faith in it will return and you will regain you involvement with it.

"The work of those who are determined to attain God- realization is not so sub-standard. Even if it is so in the beginning, practice will makes it perfect gradually.

"Even by reading proofs a person can attain perfection, can purify his consciousness. Once purified nothing is left undone. Whatever lies before a devotee he has to undertake it knowing it to be God's. There is nothing like high or low work.

"Yes, the work can be suitable or unsuitable. Man has his preferences

naturally according to his *sanskaras*. He is not inclined towards the work unsuited to his nature. But a true devotee is never indifferent to any work. The unsuitable work may take longer to perform but there will be no idleness or slackness. If one doesn't forget the goal, these defects are warded off - perseverance and determination make it easy."

It is nine in the morning. M. proceeds towards the Thakur Bari accompanied by Antevasi. A porter carrying printing paper is also with them. M. reaches the Bechu Chatterji Street at the turning of the Guruprasad Chaudhury Lane. The Thakur Bari is situated in this very lane. M. crosses the road, goes from the north and walks along the east of the way, till his eyes meet a scene to his left. He stands there and sees two persons coming from the side of Thanthania Kali Bari and drying a dhoti, some five yards in length. They walk by spreading their dhotis to make them dry. Their foreheads bear sandalwood marks - they are returning after a bath in the Ganga. M. observes everything minutely. What does he see in the men walking on the roadside? He has an insight full of reverence, for all things, at all times.

The sight of the duo returning after a bath in the Ganga makes him happy, for they have fed their *karana sharira* (the causal body). So they are better than many.

However, he is sorry for their weak and feeble bodies. In a tone full of distress he says to Antevasi, 'Just see, how the cloth is dangling, how it is being soiled by dirt and mud on the way. They are quite oblivious of it. One cannot expect any great work from them - so careless they are! Maybe one of them is good.'

Reaching the Thakur Bari M. asks Antevasi to give an anna to the porter. After sometime Antevasi having delivered the paper to the Vani press comes back.

The session of the bhaktas begins at 4 p.m. on the roof. Lalit of Bhatpara, Basant, Bhim, Bholanath and other bhaktas visiting M. on Saturdays have arrived. They are followed by two bhaktas of Etally and Banerji, the school sub-inspector, Sanat, the Elder Amulya, Shanti and the Elder Jiten. Last to come is Kedar of Kamarpukur.

It is about 5 o'clock. Swami Shantananda of Kashi comes in with a young man. At the same time arrive four students from Jnana Maharaj's ashrama.

M. has been staying in the Thakur Bari since the morning. These days the family is there - some half a mile away from the Morton School. M. goes there daily for his meals like sadhus going out for holy begging. It is his own home, own family, own wealth, but he lives like a guest or like a maid in a big rich family to preserve his body without making any demands on any body. Forty years earlier when he requested for sannyasa, his gurudeva Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna asked him to live in his house like a maid servant. Thakur had added, 'The Mother has told me that She will get a little of Her work done by you. You will have to narrate the Bhagavata to people.' This injection of his guru is being practised by M. literally. Now he is an expert maid-servant.

Another duty of Antevasi is to welcome sadhu bhaktas respectfully. He has spent two hours upstairs with the bhaktas talking of God. Now it is six o'clock.

M. has come back from the Thakur Bari. While talking to the sadhus and bhaktas, he notices Kedar. He rises quickly and brings Kedar to sit besides himself. And he talks to him sweetly and is very happy. 'Yes, isn't the Bel Tree planted by Thakur with this own hand? That mango tree bears

mangoes? Thakur had eaten the mango and sowed its stone. It is that very mango tree. How is so and so? Has such and such person got married? Is your Natmandir (the theatre of Lahas') all right?' - he engages himself in such conversation. Kedar is a resident of Sri Kamarpukur.

The bhaktas watch this scene without a word. Some of them say to themselves: it seems as if Kedar has come from *Vaikuntha* (the region of Lord Vishnu). M. has forgotten everything else on seeing him. He just talks to him about Vaikuntha. Kedar is a messenger from Vaikuntha.

M. (happily to the sadhu bhaktas) — Just meet him. He is a man from that very Holy Land. The Lord descended there the other day in human form. All sport of his time are still there, the trees and the creepers still bear his divine touch. The entire atmosphere is full of his glory. The very earth has been transformed into a great center of pilgrimage because of the dust of his feet. The entire Kamarpukur is filled with a divine light. The Kamarpukur is the very heaven on earth.

Overwhelmed with emotion, M. remains silent for a while. He resumes.

M. — Once Vibhishana (from Lanka), when he saw an Indian, began to worship him full of devotion, so overcome he was with emotion. For him, he was none else but his ideal Deity Rama. This man belonged to the land of his ideal Deity Ramachandra - he was as if Sri Ramachandra himself. Oh, what a high emotion!

M. begins to pat Kedar with his hand so affectionately. He asks him, 'Why have you become so thin and lean?'

M. (to all present) — I saw him as a young boy. He used to go to school. It was my first visit to Kamarpukur. Thakur was in Cossipore then, 1886. It was the end of winter during the puja of the Goddess Saraswati. I gave *jalebis* to the school boys to eat - these were big jalebis of that region. Thakur used to call them the wheels of the governor's cab. (Laughter). Whenever I went there later on those boys would see me and whisper to each other: 'Here comes the man who gave us jalebis to eat, they had young mind you see. At their age, any striking thing done to them is remembered. Kedar was a student there. How big he is now!

M. is again silent. Then he showers the Lord's words.

M. (to all present) — Oh, how Thakur had transformed my mind that I used to see the whole of Kamarpukur enveloped in celestial light - cat, dog, trees, creepers - all shining bright. So I would fall to the ground and offer them pranam. I found a cat on my way. I prostrated myself to salute it - I saw it covered with light. *Chinmaya Rama, chinmaya dhama* (Pure is Rama, Pure His abode).

(Concentrating on the past) "Of the children of Thakur I was the first of visit Kamarpukur. He had not given up his body yet. When I returned Thakur asked me, 'How did you travel to that robber-infested country?' I wanted to visit it again to have the same experience. Thakur said, 'Let me get well. We shall go together.' But it never came about during his lifetime."

Enter Manoranjan, Balai and Sukhendu. It is half past six. After a short while arrive Advocate Lalit Banerji and Amrit Gupta. A little later when the lamp is brought in, M. begins to meditate. Some of the bhaktas do the same, the others sit quiet. At about eight arrive the Doctor and the Younger Amulya.

The Elder Jiten (to M.) — I asked somebody, what is Sanatana Dharma. He gave definitions but I could not understand. I asked you too. You said, 'Thakur is Sanatana Dharma.' This too I could not understand. It would be nice of you explain it a bit.

M. (after a little thought) — Sanatana Dharma that which lasts for ever. *Sana*, that is ever, *tana* means that lasts and dharma is that which preserves. The rule that governs that society for long - which is good for the present as well as for other times. The Vedic order, the rule of the rishis and the dharma of Manu have ten characteristics: truth, purity, self-control, compassion, non-violence, celibacy, *shama* (calmness) and *dama* (self-restraint), forbearance and non-acceptance of belongings. This Vedic set of rules integrate the society. The Vedic dharma itself is the Sanatana Dharma. It is based on a number of rules, not on any individual. Other religions are mostly based on a person. The protectors of the Vedic Dharma have been the innumerable spiritual personalities, avataras, munis and rishis. All of them have fortified dharma by keeping the basic Vedic rules in sight and following them in their lives. First the rule then the individual. The wheel of time both breaks society and makes society. But that set of rules remains always valid. The individual comes and goes, but this rule lives forever.

"The aim of human life is the realization of the Self, God-realization. For this alone brings perpetual peace, perpetual happiness and perpetual joy. And this is what the living being seeks - peace, happiness and joy. The root cause of all these is God, the atman. The rishis saw that if one had to attain God, one should adopt some suitable rules in life. It is by living them that peace, happiness and joy subsist in the mind, even in a difficult situation in this world. Even during the trials of exile, the Pandavas practised these rules. That's how they had peace, happiness and joy.

"Thakur said, 'By holding on to truth in Kaliyuga one can see God.' Manu also said the same: *satyam bruyat priyam bruyat ma bruyat satyam apriyam, priyam cha na anritam bruyat esha dharmah sanatanah.*- speak the truth, speak the sweet things, don't speak truth that is not sweet. Speaking sweet truth is what is Sanatana dharma. This set of rules holds the Lord on one side and the society on the other. It helps the society to fix its gaze on the Lord."

A particular Bhakta — Christianity, Islam, all these keep their hold on the Lord and turn the gaze of the society towards the Lord as well. So aren't they also Sanatana dharma?

M. — In them the individual occupies the first place. The rules of life the second. Without Christ or Mohammed, they have no existence. But the Vedic dharma continues to live even if we give up Rama and

Krishna.

Mohan — The rule holds the society and the Lord holds the rule. In that case Lord himself can be the meaning of dharma - those who are the devotees of God, not only hold the rule but also protect the society.

M. — This is what the rishis have said in the Vedas. The universe stands upon the *akshara*, the indestructible. If He doesn't hold it, this world gets destroyed. *Tasya prakashane gargi chandram asau vidhritau tishthitah. Yum vijnatam yumyati.* Those who hold on to Him are the refuge of the world. The Chandi says so: *tvam ashritam ashrayatam prayanti* (those who take refuge in You are the refuge of the world). And they only are the bhaktas.

M. (to all present) — One cannot understand the essence of all this without tapasya. If you understand its significance just by your intellect, your understanding of it will prove to be inadequate, when confronted with a higher intelligence. By tapasya one realizes that God is the only true dharma. And dharma is also the means to attain Him.

Mohan — Without saying that Sanatana dharma or the Vedic dharma is higher than all others, if we say that the Sanatana dharma is ancient and the other religions are new, there will be no conflict.

M. — Thakur has destroyed the way to all such conflicts. His advent was for this purpose for the harmony of religions. 'As many religions so many paths. Religions is a path - by discovering this truth he intertwined all religions in one thread. So there is no harm in calling a religion ancient.

"Thakur used to say that Sanatana dharma has been there for ever and will remain so in future - the other dharmas come and go."

Mohan — 'Other religions are for the present time only. They will go,' did he say this for the new religions, like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj etc.?

M. — It looks like that. This can mean something else too. How much can we understand of what he said? Even Brahma and other gods can not understand him. After Brahma had carried out tapasya for a long time a voice from above said, 'I exist, I am.' In other words, God is the cause of this world. A group of contemporary scientists say that the world has come into existence by combinations of atoms and another group says it is God's will - grand intelligence. The Vedas say that God creates, preserves and destroys the world. Thakur proclaims this very truth his whole life. The primal cause of the world is *Adya Shakti* - the God, Who ever abided by Thakur. It is She who is called the Mother, it is by Her will that everything happens.

A Young Man — All religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism show the way to eternal peace by wiping out the sorrow of man for ever. The Hindu dharma, the Vedic dharma does the same. So, what is special about the Hindu dharma?

M. — One, in Hinduism the jiva is the image of God; Two, every jiva will attain deliverance one day. This is not to be found in any other religions. Three, the Hindus believe in *Advaita* (doctrine in which only the Brahman is true and real), *Vishishtadvaita* (doctrine that regards Brahman and universe as identical and real) and *Dvaita* (doctrine that regards the Brahman and universe different from each other and real) bhavas. Four, the Vedic dharma broadly gives four paths for God-realization: Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga, Rajayoga and Jnanayoga. Five, the doctrine of re-birth. Six, in Hinduism there are a lot of emotions for establishing relationship with God - *shanta*, *dasya* and so on. In other religions, it is one or at the most two. In Hinduism, sadhana can be carried out in so many bhavas. Seven, Hinduism believes in the Law, not in the individual. Eight, in Hinduism one believes that liberation can only come in a human body.

Mohan — They say that Thakur was the embodiment of Sanatana dharma. What is the significance of this?

M. — The set of eternal values of which the Sanatana dharma is composed has been fully manifested in Sri Ramakrishna. That is why he is called it's embodiment. Take for example, truth. If Thakur once said that he would not take water he did not do so even when pressed a hundred times. Once he did not take water for six months. He said that he would go to Mani Mullick's house. So, he reached his house in Baranagore late at night and said, 'See I have come'. Once he said, 'I will go to answer the call of nature at three o'clock.' He went for it even when he felt no pressure. He was the solid embodiment of celibacy. Once somebody brought sweets for him with the money he had earned by dishonest means. He could not touch them. A person brought a lemon without asking the master of the garden. Thakur would not put it in his mouth. He was never able to store. He could not carry even a clod of earth in his hand. He could not touch money. He never thought of harming even an ant.

"He always saw that it was the Mother Herself who was living as jiva-jagat (the living creatures and the world). Not even for a moment did he separate himself from the Mother."

M. (to all present) — Thakur did not like a dry discussion, academic discourse. His effort was always to see how the man's mind could be tied to the feet of the Lord. He would say, 'I don't even want to know what is there in the Vedas, in the puranas, what is where. Grant me pure devotion at Your Lotus feet.'

"Seeing the bhaktas in discussion he would some times apologise to the Mother, 'Mother, why, what else can they do but discuss at times?' As the saying goes, just by talking one can not cook rice, so one has to carry out spiritual practice. He used to ask us to practise tapasya. When one has gained true faith in God, when one loves Him with one's heart and soul, all intellectual doubts disappear themselves. Why did they who were known as great intellectuals behave like earthworms at Thakur's feet? His was a direct knowledge, the knowledge of others was born of intellect. There is

difference of heaven and earth between the two. By keeping the company of sadhus, by living alone by calling Him with a yearning heart, one gains love for Him. Loving Him brings liberation."

3.

Morton School, the staircase room on the fourth level. M. is talking about God to the bhaktas surrounding him all around. When questioned by the Elder Jiten, M. explains different aspects of the Sanatana dharma or the Vedic dharma.

M. (to the bhaktas) — The rishis earned everlasting joy after God-realization. They made a durable arrangement for transmitting that joy to the society. Their socio-religious arrangement is also everlasting in a way - the supreme joy and peace from God-realization. So they would not let man turn away from God in any situation. Just note, what a beautiful arrangement this is: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha'. Dharma, that is, truth and so on. Taking recourse to it to earn wealth (artha). Fulfil desire (kama) according to the holy books and attain liberation (moksha) that is God-realization. It is like having mother on one side, the father on the other and the children in between. When that is so the children cannot fall. This is an incomparable discovery.

"This arrangement is as deep as it is broad, and it is equally lasting. So many cycles of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali come and go, this arrangement lasts unbroken. They say, 'Son, Just don't live as a worldly man, giving up dharma, that is, God and His basic law. Rather, adopt them and do what you like.' The Hindu view of life holds true amidst the endless whirlpools of time - this is the first arrangement. The second, the discovery of the four paths - Jnanayoga, Rajayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Karmayoga. First, they placed the man behind a fence; then they put him on one of the paths suited to his nature. By treading this path he will finally attain his goal. He will then rid himself of all sorrows and gain lasting happiness and peace. The End is infinite, ever existing i.e. sanatana; the means also the same. The former truly sanatana, the latter relatively true."

A Bhakta — If goal is God-realization and the means is jnana-yoga etc., one may call other religions also Sanatana dharma - they too employ the same means to attain God.

M. — Yes, one may, if Sanatana dharma means God-realization. But here, keeping the means in view, the Vedic Dharma is said to be Sanatana dharma, that is to say, the eternal religion in technical or particular sense. This is a very ancient way. This has been shown after hearing and seeing a lot that by holding on to truth one can attain God. It does not take any personality into account. If one takes to this practice, leaving out Rama and Krishna one can still see God. In other religions the (spiritual) personality cannot be left out. Keeping the idea *aham brahman asmi* (I am Brahman), *tat tvam asi* (Thou art That), in the mind, if one practises the truth one can see God. Such ideas don't seem to exist in the same way in other religions.

"The emphasis is on the means. Besides this Vedic dharma is also

very liberal. *Dvaita* (duality), *Advaita* (non-duality) *Vishishtadvaita* (modified non-duality) - whichever of these moods one may adopt in his sadhana, he will attain the goal. The whole of the Hindu community has been integrated by the rishis by turning it towards God. There is but one constant worship, from birth to death. So all work, whether it be for the family or the society, for the construction of the society, political or economic set up, marriage and so on, is towards God. The burden of the song ever remains the same - the attainment of God.

"Just note how Sanatana dharma is special. *Satyagraha*, the political agitation of Gandhiji is founded on truth and justice. The political power practises injustice. It can be opposed with the help of truth and justice. This is some thing new. The people of other countries would not respond if they are addressed in the name of God or truth. But the people of India have joined Gandhiji's Satyagraha leaving out everything else. Reason? They understand truth, God. This has been going on in this country since ages. The heart of India rests in truth. It can forego anything in the name of truth, in the name of God. You cannot find it in other countries."

The Elder Jiten — Many people say that it is because of religion that India has come to such low pass.

M. — No, it is not correct. Rather, it is because of the lack of religion, because of inaction that this external low state has been reached. The greatness of the rishis' prescription is exactly this. They weighed everything and showed which arrangement would prove long lasting. Whether it was by uniting every action with God or by eschewing Him. Having given it a lot of thought, having meditated on it and having seen it, they declared: *isha vasyam idam sarvam* - all this is inhered by God. Had they kept the individual and the society separate from God, the culture and civilization of India would not have been so lasting.

"By bringing God into every matter, people will become lazy and dharma will comprise just bathing and eating - dharma will enter into the kitchen, in the words of Swamiji (Vivekananda) - this had been seen by the rishis. Even then they preached that one should live life holding dharma, holding God. Forsaking God results in simple animality. In both cases, there is some defect. They chose the path of the lesser evil.

"Outworldly dharma begins to get defiled with time that is why great spiritual personalities, avataras and such other people come down in every age in this country to correct the situation. Currently Thakur has come to raise the mind of men from the low type of worship and united it with God. He says, 'Live as a child of God - *amritasya putrah*. The law of the world is that the mind of the society is sometimes on the rise and at other times on the fall. The division of time into the ages of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali testifies to this law.

"The heart of *Bharata* (India) is tied to dharma. Just see, even during such politically difficult times it has produced so many great men -

Nanak, Chaitanya and Thakur. Had there not been the seed of dharma inside the earth of this country, it would not have yielded such a rare fruit. This is the age of Thakur. Thakur, that is the highest manifestation of God on earth. It is in view of all these different aspects that the Vedic dharma has been called Sanatana dharma."

A particular Bhakta — Isn't our social service - school, colleges, hospital, relief work etc. - not dharma, the Sanatana dharma?

M. — Yes, from the point of view of means, it is dharma. Selfless work purifies our consciousness (*chitta*) and God is seen in a pure chitta. The real Sanatana dharma consists in seeing God. Both the means and goal are Sanatana dharma. The people of this country take to religion in the same way as the westerners take to politics. If a dharma is instituted without seeing God it does not last long. Sanatana Dharma is founded on nothing but seeing God and solid principles.

A particular Bhakta — Which work should one undertake? How should one go about it?

M. — One should take to the work that the guru has prescribed. One should follow his advise and conduct oneself accordingly. The guru knows which work can free one from worldly bonds. So long as the guru is in his physical body, all work must be done in consultation with him. When he relinquishes the body one will have to depend on one's intellect. Even then one must follow his instructions and the injunctions of the holy books.

"It has become a fashion these days to get spiritual initiation (*diksha*). Today one goes to this guru, tomorrow to another. One should make the mantra given by the guru one's very breath in seclusion without other's knowledge. Thakur used to say that the guru mantra is like a pearl which forms itself inside a mollusc when it receives a drop of the water of swati Nakshatra and goes deep down. By carrying out sadhana in seclusion the same seed germinates - one sees God. Then all problems of the present and future get automatically solved."

M. (to all present) — A particular bhakta (M.) said to Thakur: 'It does not seem easy to get saved from this world which is characterised by deception and robbery.' Thakur immediately said: 'What are you saying? Why should you worry? You have a guru.' A juggler threw a cord with a thousand knots towards the audience of a thousand persons challenging them to untie one of its knots. They tried their utmost but could not untie a single knot. Then the juggler himself took the cord, gave it a shake and all the knots were undone. The guru is like him - guru that is God. God comes in the garb of a man. Then he is called an avatara. He came as Sri Ramakrishna only the other day.

The Elder Jiten (humbly) — Sir, please unwind the reel, the thread has got so sticky.

M. — Cry and pray to Him. The reel will unwound by His will in no

time. Thakur used to say: 'The problems which are seemingly beyond thought, feeling and dreams, get solved just by a shake of His finger.' He said: 'A thousand year old darkness gets dispelled in no time just by bringing in light. A big mound of cotton is reduced to ashes in the twinkling of an eye.' By a mere sign of His grace, cotton thread lying entangled for a thousand years gets untangled. Why worry? He is behind you. Tell Him.'

"Sri Krishna opened numberless twists of the reels of the bhaktas. Thakur also opened up many twists of bhaktas' reels. And he is still doing so. He will do so in future too. His advent was only for this purpose.

"The man thinks that this unwinding of the (entangled) reel has a stupendous obstacle. But it is nothing for Him. Just a touch or a sign from Him or by His will, the man gets freed from all bonds in the twinkling of an eye. He came to the earth for this - for unwinding the reel of the bhaktas. There he stands, tell Him. 'If only Mother Shyama turns Her eyes once towards the jiva, he begins to swim in the sea of everlasting joy'."



Morton school, Calcutta.

Saturday, 2nd August 1924.

The 17th day of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.)

The 2nd day of the bright fortnight, 51 dandas/35 palas.

COMPASSION BINDS, SERVICE LIBERATES

1.

Morton School, M.'s room. It is 7 a.m. Today M.'s neuralgic backache has increased. Though he went down to the third level for answering the call of nature he has climbed back to the fourth (level). He is lying down in his bed facing west. To his left are seated Jagabandhu, Shanti, Vinay and others on benches. Shanti has been a student of the Morton School and is now studying in a college. M. encourages him to continue his studies.

M. (to Shanti) — Please continue your studies. You must. Do it with full concentration of mind. Why study? For it cleanses the intellect and the power of thinking. With that one climbs to higher levels of thought. Let us see what that higher thought is. It is nothing but God-realization. Of all the ideals that man can aspire to, God-realization is the highest. How? As it brings supreme peace. All sorrows come to an end. Disease, sorrow, poverty, insults, age and death dilute the intellect. That's it. So one should be ready early so that one may keep one's mental equilibrium even amongst these trials.

"It is by the grace of God only that one can keep one's balance to some extent. Thakur used to say, 'Otherwise sorrow etc. pushes out all reason.' Such a highly competent person was Arjun, yet he went mad at the loss of his son. Such is the play of mahamaya. When Akshay, Thakur's nephew, died, Thakur said, 'My heart was wrenched like a towel.' This boy had grown up in his presence. He used to say, 'I have not lived as a householder. Yet if I feel so much pain, how much more do they feel who live in the household.' Of course, if was only for a few days that Thakur was in such a state. Thereafter he never so much as mentioned this state. All this is meant to serve as an example. One should always remain prepared for these things in life.

"However if one can remain in samadhi, one is out of this play of maya. Even otherwise for how long can one remain in samadhi? And what can bring samadhi? The alternative to all this is faith in the words of the guru. Believe him like a child. The mother says, 'There is a hobgoblin in that room.' The child believes her one hundred percent. What is a hobgoblin, the child does not even know.

"Guru Thakur was an avatara. And he said, 'If you weep while praying, God listens.' He also said, 'The sound of the little bells on the leg of an ant reaches Him. Why should then your prayer not reach Him? And he should keep the company of sadhus who have believed the words of the guru. He should weep and say, 'Mother don't enchant me with your world-bewitching maya.' Thakur has given all these hints.

"The army is deployed on the borders of the state, to stop the enemy when he comes. Similarly one should deploy the services of caution on the borders of the mind. When there is an attack even the wall of caution can fall. It can even push away the thoughtfulness of

spiritually perfect persons - even of the avataras! Rama cried for Sita and Lakshman. Even so this state was short-lived."

M. is silent for a while. He resumes.

M. (to all present) — To save oneself from these visible catastrophes, study is helpful, but it is only the first step. It also develops many other qualities: concentration, a sense of responsibility, obedience, a sharpened intellect, patience, perseverance - all these. The main thing is that the intellect is purified, it is sharpened. (To Shanti) Didn't you rub the kite thread with a paste of glass in your childhood? Similarly the intellect also needs to be rubbed with this paste. The more we rub it the more it is purified, it is sharpened. It is with this kind of treated intellect that one can cut the opposing intellect, the worldly kind of intellect. The better the paste the easier it is to cut the thread of the opponent's kite. Then the kite of the mind can rise up and up in the clear sky. All other intellect is defiled intellect, lower intellect. Only the Godward-intellect, the intellect with moksha as its goal, is the right intellect.

"If one has realized through his intellect that this is the right pursuit one has already advanced a lot. What now remains is to practice. Even if one fails a number of times one must keep up the attempt. But this can be done only by him who has a purified intellect. Otherwise the mind feels sorry along with fear and despair. With such a mind one cannot win the battle."

M. (to all present) — It is said that Raja Bali went to the nether world with five pandits - he would not agree to go to heaven with a hundred fools. It signifies that an intelligent enemy is better than a foolish friend. It is only by intellect, by learning, that Brahman-vidya can be gained. Everybody cannot be made to pursue Brahman-vidya early. But one can be made to understand that the practice of Brahman-vidya can destroy all pain. One should take it only to the extent of probability.

"Later on, if one begins to feel the need of practising Brahman-vidya after falling into the whirlpool of changed circumstances while facing trials and tribulations, it will be easier to tread that path. Possibly some may become sadhus while studying - without ever falling into the maze of worldly life - without ever entering the householder's life, this cauldron of fire.

"And even if they take to the householder's life, their earlier practice will prove useful to them - they will be able to march on in the company of God. This will profit them too. Man's life is beset with pain and sorrow. If one enters it one should get ready in advance. Maybe a person becomes a sadhu while he is still a student. What does it mean? That he is ready to fight that relentless battle - 'if I kill, I'll kill an elephant only; if I loot, I'll loot a big treasure only.' The Mother of the universe does not engage him in the work of creation. He is made to tread the path of jnana and bhakti. He will not only have joy, peace and happiness for himself but he will also pull up others to that path. The Mother has both these - vidya (knowledge that leads man to God) and avidya (ignorance). She will

take them to Her department of vidya."

Jagabandhu and Vinay leave for the Belur Math at half past eight. M. feels quite uncomfortable when he does not hear about the Math. Even during this illness, M. yearns for the news of the Math. That is why he has sent bhaktas to the Math to bring news from there.

Having gathered all information from the Math, the bhaktas cross the Ganga and go to Dr. Kartik Bakshi's house in Cossipore. They take their lunch and rest and reach the Cossipore Garden at two in the evening by the Doctor's car. With them are the Doctor, the Elder Amulya and the Younger Amulya. It is at this sanctified spot that Sri Ramakrishna lived almost for a year during his illness. And it is here that Sri Ramakrishna entered the maha-samadhi. These days, a Christian gentleman from America is living there with his family. They are very good people. When the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna arrive there, they take them respectfully to their home. Today again they visit all these spots with the bhaktas. They learn from them where the bed of the Master was. These bhaktas have visited this place with M. also a number of times. M. had shown them that the Master's bed was in the western side of the circular room near the window. It was also in this garden that Narendra Nath (later Swami Vivekananda) attained nirvikalpa samadhi by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna. Here his (Thakur's) close disciples gained Self-realization and had their desires fulfilled. Here again the close disciples formed themselves into a *sangha* (a group) taking refuge in Sri Ramakrishna's service - for the happiness and the good of many. Sri Ramakrishna Sangha (the Ramakrishna Order) was born in this famous garden. This great spot is as holy as it is historically important.

The bhaktas now reach 50, Shyampukur Road. Initially Sri Ramakrishna had lived in this house for the treatment of his cancer. Here Dr. Mahendra Nath Sarkar, the founder of Indian Science, had seen Sri Ramakrishna as his physician. It was in this house that Sri Ramakrishna had worshipped himself on the Shyama Puja day with flowers, garlands, sandal-wood paste and so on, and it was here that Girish who had such a great faith in the guru, and other bhaktas were blessed by his *varabhaya* posture, of giving boon and freedom from fear.

Now they come to the Balaram Mandir. It is a special centre of pilgrimage in the Sri Ramakrishna lila. Many a time Sri Ramakrishna had joined the assembly of bhaktas here. How much of spiritual talk, song and dance, samadhi and the play of divine mood had taken place here! The bhaktas could not always go to the Dakshineswar Temple. And Sri Ramakrishna too could not do without them. So he himself would go to the Balaram Mandir from time to time and there, calling the bhaktas, would enact his divine lila. It is possible for the bhaktas to forget the Master but how could the Master forget them? Do parents ever forget their children? Sri Ramakrishna was the father and mother of the whole world. So when the bhaktas forgot him for a time he would bring himself back to their consciousness by granting them his divine love. This Balaram Mandir is the meeting place of all the forgetful and bewildered devotee-children of the Master.

5 p.m. The bhaktas having been to a musical competition in Bagh Bazar for a short while, have returned to the Morton School. M. is unwell, he has severe neuralgic pain in his back. Even so he eagerly awaits news from the Belur Math, the holy centre associated with the memories of Thakur, like the chataka bird longing for a drop of rain. As soon as he sees the bhaktas he shouts like a restless child, 'Tell me, tell me quickly all about them, who having forsaken everything have taken to Him for ever. Speak about those all-renouncing sadhus. This is the best item on the agenda of the world. It is about the men of steady wisdom who having given up their parents, their wife and children, leaving behind their all, are engaged in the pursuit of God alone - whole time men of devotion they are. While others are drowned in

worldliness, they have immersed themselves in God. They only want God. It is the account of these men that dispels all sorrows. They tread a path opposite to others. It is only this object of desire which will last forever. Belur Math is indeed the principle centre of peace, happiness and pure joy.'

The bhaktas give an account of the Math, the Cossipore Garden, the Shyampukur grove and the Balaram Mandir one after the other. M. presses them for more and more details. What is an ordinary news for others is very important for M. He says, 'It's all right that you have talked about the cows in the Belur Math but what about their calves? How many cows are there, and how many their calves? How many cows are yielding milk? Who are the sadhus that have come to the Math? And who have gone to the branch centres? Which vegetables are grown in the kitchen garden? Who is performing what work? How many sadhus took their bath in the Ganga with you and who were they? Who performs Thakur's puja? All this information is invaluable in M.'s eyes. Seeing M.'s earnestness and conduct, his reverence and love, the bhaktas realize that everything about those who have renounced the world and about the avataras is not only pure and precious but also helpful in attaining the knowledge of God. While listening to the account of the Math, M. has forgotten all his pain. The bhaktas find M. a completely changed person - like a young man, he is bright with a glow of joy on his face, as though he is living with the Master in the Cossipore garden. Ordinarily people go to a sadhu to hear about Vedanta, but M. goes to the Math through the body of the bhaktas to see sadhus what they do, how they speak or talk - all this.

The whole conduct of the man of steady wisdom is adorable. M. has no sign of illness or anything else on his face. Instead there is earnest curiosity, happiness and peace. What is ordinary for others is so important for M. The bhaktas see a new significance in these words of the Gita: *ya nisha sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti sanyami* - in what is night for all beings, the self-controlled keep awake (2:69).

Seated in the staircase room, M. listens to the account of the Math so full of joy. It is ten at night. The devotees take leave. Having taken his dinner M. sits on a chair facing south in the staircase room. Manoranjan, Balai and Jagabandhu massage M.'s back with *saindhavadi* oil and give hot fomentation. Today it is the 3rd August 1924, the 18th of Shravana, Sunday, the third day of the bright fortnight, 50 dandas/55 palas.

2.

Morton School. M.'s room on the fourth level. It is 8 p.m. M. is lying on his bed on his right side. Manoranjan massages his back with the Saindhavadi oil and Jagabandhu gives fomentation with salt bags. He feels a little comforted with this fomentation. Today his pain has increased. The bhaktas are seated in the staircase room. As desired by M. they listen to the reading from the Kathamrita.

After a few moments, the Elder Jiten, Dr. Kartik Bakshi, Vinay and the Younger Amulya enter M.'s room. After a short conversation, they take their leave. Now only the Younger Jiten, Manoranjan and Jagabandhu are in the room. The massage and the fomentation continue. In spite of this pain, M. says amusing things in between adding different kinds of instructions.

M. (to Manoranjan) — Why did you arrange the marriage of your foolish brother? That's why the responsibility of the household has fallen on you. If you had not done it you would have been free. You didn't marry but you made your brother marry, so the responsibility is on you. Now put up with it for the whole of your life. He will have children. Then also you will have to bring up. *Prakritih tvam*

niyokshyati (Gita 18:59) - your nature will compel you. Do you know what it is like? Say, the head is without any load but a load is tied to the feet. In jail, they tie a big weight to the murderer's feet with the result that he cannot move about as he wishes. It is like that too.

"However there is a way out - if you can forget all and become a sannyasi. But where is its possibility? The attachment which compelled you to get him married will keep pulling you back. Even so if one can direct that attachment towards God, it brings liberation. Then one has no responsibility. One becomes eligible for *yogakshemum vahami aham* (Gita 9:22), the Lord's promise of gain and security.

"Is it only attachment that binds you? You also have the pride of having done it. This feeling is a great enemy - the feeling, who will do it if not I, who will look after him if not I, he is an orphan. Such thoughts push one into it. If this pride could be tied to God one is saved. Otherwise there is no end to it, neither in this life nor in many more to come.

"The English have a good custom with regard to marriage - the father or the brother takes no responsibility for it. The responsibility is one's own - of the boy and the girl mutually. One has only to take the consent of the fathers of both the parties once."

M. (to the Younger Jiten) — The Younger Amulya was asked to marry away his daughter. When the daughter grows up, it is one's duty to arrange for her marriage. But it is not your duty to arrange for the marriage of the son. He should be made fit to stand on his feet, that's all. Then let him work hard and earn his livelihood. When their offsprings grow, the birds do not feed them - the mother bird drives away the mature offspring when it joins its beak to hers for food. Thakur's dictum is the same. Make your son competent and give away your daughter to a good boy. However one must serve one's parents throughout one's life and arrange for bread, clothes and a roof for the faithful wife for the whole of her life. Thakur even says this: 'Even if the mother is of easy virtue, the son must still serve her throughout her life.'

A Bhakta — Is it correct that many a girl don't want to marry these days?

M. — It is not enough to say that they don't want to marry. We should find the reason why they don't want to marry. If a girl wants to take to the life of a nun, it is good, let her do so. But if she wants to evade her responsibilities, it will not be in her interest. One must take to one of the ashramas, whether it is brahmacharya (celibacy) or grihastha (family-life). Otherwise it is being neither here nor there. The mind does not grow. It is better if she chooses the brahmacharya ashrama of nuns. Otherwise she will have trouble later on - she will have nothing to stand upon. Her mind will not firm up. There will always be a struggle in her mind whether she is a sannyasini or a member of a family. Because of this dilemma her mind will never be firm. So the character will not form and the mind not settle. If the girl has no high ideal to live for, the father or the brother should

arrange her marriage. Unless the girl protests strongly, she should be married off.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Many people don't marry but they arrange the marriages of their brothers or other relations. But when the bridegroom is not in a position to earn, it is the person, who has arranged the marriage who has to earn for them. Not only this, he becomes also responsible for their growing family. That's what happens. He has to reap the fruit of his actions in this very life. The same is the case of involvement with Manoranjan. He himself has not married but got his brother married. He is in a pretty pickle.

M. (to Manoranjan) — Now that you have such complex problems you should read the Kathamrita. What else can one do? Do read the Kathamrita, please do.

M. (to Jagabandhu) — People get treatment from the physicians to show off. Haven't you seen rows of doctors' cabs parked in front of the houses of the rich? Similarly some live the householder's life just to show off. Likewise some practice religion for show. All that is a show off. There is no firm resolve within.

What is M. thinking of? He resumes.

M. (to all present) — It is very difficult to find a real friend. So somebody said in despair, 'Save me from friends.' Only the *Satguru* (the true preceptor) is a real friend, not only for the present, but also of other times.

The bhaktas massage M.'s back with the Saindhavadi oil and give him salt-bag fomentation. He has severe pain, but his mind is fixed on his Satguru, the Master. And outwardly he gives instruction to the devotees for their good. To fix the mind on God and to do good to man are indeed the two duties of all the spiritually great.

M. (to the bhaktas) — It is said that formerly people used only the leaves of *akanda* (the swallow wort) to give fomentation to relieve pain. Nowadays no end of medicines have been formulated.

"It is already dark. Go and take rest.

(To Jagabandhu) "Yesterday you were rather careless - you put the oil bottle on the window frame. It is difficult to come across a man who can guard all sides. Thakur said, 'The devotee must have two eyes on his back too'. What about it? Once he scolded me for leaving the umbrella in the Panchavati.

"Why he did he insist that the devotees must have two eyes on their back too, I have understood now after a long time. The mahamaya makes one forget all. One should save oneself in the test of mahamaya by keeping one's eyes open in worldly matters."

It is Monday, 4th August 1924, the 19th of Shravana, the fourth day of the bright fortnight, 48 dandas/42 palas.

The next day, seven in the morning. M. is seated on the staircase room in a chair facing north. Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten and some other devotees come up and offer their pranam to M. They have spent the night in the

satsang room on the second level. The third part of the Kathamrita is under print. M. is holding the press proofs in his hand: 'The meeting of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Vidyasagar.' M. gives the copy to Jagabandhu and himself reads the proof. While doing so he comments.

M. (to the bhaktas) — They belong to a particular class. They say that it is not possible to know God, for example Kant. Vidyasagar Mahashaya is also of the same opinion. They reason it with their intellect but the Vedas go far beyond. They say: 'Yes, He is *avanga manas agocharam* - He is beyond mind and sight - but He is visible to the pure intellect. He is certainly invisible to the intellect involved in senses. The pure intellect is attained by tapasya. Ego is the dirt of the mind. It can be got rid of by meditating on God. Take for example a piece of gold. It has a coating of dust on it so that the gold below is not visible. Wash it with water, you immediately see its form. There is the coating of ego over it - a creature's ego. Join it with God's ego, the jiva becomes Shiva. But it is very difficult to get rid of one's ego. If you call on Him with a yearning heart, He shows by His grace that the jiva and Shiva are basically one - *tvameva aham* - You are me. Thakur used to converse night and day with It, the God. By his grace his bhaktas have also attained this state.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Just reflect on this, while I go downstairs. (To Jagabandhu) And you may please read the proofs while the Younger Jiten holds the copy. (Bhaktas read the proof and in-between comment on what is read. In the meanwhile, M. returns).

M. — What were you talking of ?

A Particular Bhakta — Why did Thakur go to Vidyasagar?

M. — Thakur used to say, 'He who is accepted by 'ten' persons, he who receives their respect, has divine power in him.' Thakur had heard of Vidyasagar Mahashaya's compassion in his childhood. In age, he was senior to Thakur by sixteen or seventeen years. Even so he showed respect to Thakur. Compassion is the essential quality of *Sattva*. It leads to God. It was to tell him that he had this pearl within that he went to him. 'Just a little shake,' said he, 'and it will come out.' That is why Thakur asked Vidyasagar to visit Dakshineswar. The latter promised to go there, but could not. Thakur was sad. One day he said to me, 'What kind of man is Vidyasagar? He gave me his word but could not keep it.' Had he gone there, Thakur would have probably made him see God in this very life.

"It is the ego which is a great obstacle in the way of seeing God. Thakur used to say, 'It is like a veil, it covers the thing, it covers God. If by His grace somehow it is lifted, one realizes God. I am the servant of God - this also is ego, he used to say. He used to ask us to live in the world with this ego of a servant. Even showing compassion is ego. Yudhishtira had the ego of being always truthful. So it was that Lord Krishna rid him of it.

"That is why Thakur said to Vidyasagar Mahashaya, 'Doing good to others is certainly good, but it should be done in a selfless manner. It should be done knowing it to be God's work and considering oneself

only His instrument.' Arjun was given the same lesson."

M. reads the proof while Jagabandhu holds the copy. In between he talks. Says he to the Younger Jiten, 'Please take a gulabjamun, each one of you.' Saying this he himself gives gulabjamun to every bhakta. And he says, 'Please take these chanbada (sweet made of cheese) to the Advaita Ashrama and also these oranges. See that the sadhus take them in your presence. Tell them that he (M.) has asked you to see to it.'

Jagabandhu reads the copy, while M. keeps on talking. However, when he finds a little mistake in reading, he scolds him and says: 'You must keep your sight all around you. If you can concentrate your mind on this, you will also be able to concentrate it on God.'



Morton School,
Tuesday, 5th August 1924,
20th of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.),
The 5th day of the bright fortnight, 45 dandas/30 palas.

THE AVATARA IS THAT HOLE

It is half past seven in the evening, in the staircase room, on the fourth level of the Morton School. M. is seated facing south in a chair near the door of the room. The portion of the door towards north touches his chair. He is clad in a white dhoti, a long cloth shirt and slippers on his feet.

M. is holding second press proofs of the (Bengali) Kathamrita, Volume III, page 8 to 24, in his hand, narrating Vidyasagar's meeting with Thakur. Seated to his left and in front on the benches are the devotees: the Elder Jiten, Balai, Manoranjan, the Younger Jiten, Gadadhar, Jagabandhu and others. Dr. Bakshi, Vinay, the Elder Amulya and the Younger Amulya arrive a little later.

The Kathamrita is in press. It involves a lot of work. Jagabandhu sent proofs to the Vani press twice - in the morning and along with paper for printing in the evening through Dilchand.

A hurricane lantern is lying on the higher bench to the left of M. On the bench to the left of M. is seated Jagabandhu with the lantern in front of him. He is going to read the proof.

M. (to Jagabandhu) — Just read. (To the bhaktas) All of you are going to listen to the visit of Thakur to Vidyasagar's house.

M. holds a pen and the proofs in his hand with an ink pot in front on the higher bench. Jagabandhu reads the copy.

M. (full of surprise, to the bhaktas) — How can one like to read and write about what one has seen through the window! O, have you gazed on the sky from the window of the room! Speechless one becomes. Where do we lie in this infinite affair? This affair of His is infinite indeed - infinite the sun, infinite the moon, infinite the satellites - everything infinite. We think that perhaps our earth is everything. But it is not a fact. There are so many other infinite bodies like the earth. He is the creator of them all. It is Him that these proofs talk of. Brahman is beyond vidya and avidya (knowledge and ignorance) . . . What is Brahman, nobody can tell by word of the mouth. Brahman has never been defiled by the touch of the tongue.

M. — And this affair! Who has the capacity to understand it? That's why Thakur scolded Krishna Das Pal: 'I can see that you have the intellect of a widow's son.' Thakur had asked him: 'What is the duty of man?' He replied: 'To do good to the world.' It was then that Thakur had said so. The intellect of the widow's son means a low intellect. The son of a widow grows into a man after great difficulties - having taken recourse to many low means. That's why it is a low intellect.

"Then he said: 'Is the world so small that you can do good to it? He who has generated this infinite creation will do good to it. You, the lowliest of the lowly, insignificant person, who are you to do good to it? Rather, you should say how to do good to yourself. He inheres matter. By serving Him you do good to yourself. Talk of service, not, doing good. It is not given to man to understand His worldly sport.

"We get a little glimpse of it because of Thakur's advent. Otherwise there was all darkness. He came, so we found with great difficulties a little hole. By seeing through it one has had a little glimpse of the Beyond. It is all infinite. On this side it is nothing but darkness.

"Thakur said, 'One day the Mother showed me a huge wall. Nothing could be seen beyond. With great difficulty. I made a hole in it with my nail. But soon it got covered up. After a lot of difficulty I was able to make a big uncovered hole. Through this opening I saw all, the infinite - the endless - the boundless all.'

"Having narrated this, Thakur asked a devotee (M.), 'Tell me, what is that hole?' The devotee said, 'Of course, you are it.' He was very happy to hear this. At times, he used to test the bhaktas to see whether they had caught the meaning of his words.

"The avatara is that hole. Through him a man can know a lot about God. There is no other way. Mahamaya is all powerful. Everything is under Her, so said Thakur. Is it simple arithmetic? No, it cannot be calculated - it is beyond calculation, all this.

"The yogis can see a portion of it by His grace. In the beginning he evades your touch. You wish to catch Him, but He doesn't let you. It's like light with in a lantern, you can see it but you can not touch it. When mahamaya by Her grace lifts the veil, you can have glimpse of Him. You can touch Him. What happens then cannot expressed by word of mouth. A salt doll went to fathom the sea but it never returned - never told any thing. Who will tell? He who was to tell is no longer there - his individuality having merged in the universality. The Ganga has lost itself in the sea. The Ganga has become the sea. Even when this state is reached a few persons are sent back by Him for teaching humanity. Only they can give some idea of that state. It is like the dumbman's feelings on seeing a dream. He can only utter 'gain, gain' in joy. But mahamaya makes one forget everything. She does not let you know."

Surcharged with emotion, M. sings:

You have made me forget the world, O mother enchantress!

Dr. Bakshi — What should one do so as to be able to touch that light?

M. — Weep with a yearning heart. Thakur used to say, 'It comes about when one cries yearningly like a child for his Mother.' Except for the Mother he likes no one. It is then that Her grace dawns.

"So tapasya is needed. Is it a subject of debate or a table talk. If one can forget one's home, husband, son and daughter, mother and father all - like the gopis becoming mad shouting, Krishna, Krishna - they even forgot that they were women, so full of Krishna they were. It comes about only in such a state - It happens only when we have got rid of our calculating intellect.

"Is He so small that you can catch Him? The rishis have divided the creation into fourteen regions. By this they are able to give some idea

of it. The truth is that He is infinite and so is His creation. It is to make one understand this idea that they have used the term fourteen regions. Nowadays one can have a little idea of it with the help of science. They say that there are an infinite number of stars and each star is bigger than the Sun. If it be so there are infinite universes - infinite suns, infinite stars and infinite universes. Just by seeing a little, Arjun began to tremble. So that's it."

M. (to the bhaktas) — Even though He is so great, He comes down for the bhaktas assuming a form. He comes as a human being for the bhaktas. You see it was only the other day that He left. Wasn't Thakur God himself? He said himself: 'I am that *Akhanda Satchidananda* (Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute) I have come now as a man to do good to you.' Are these our words? No, they are the words from his mouth.

"He cannot be caught unless He lets you. He came down in a human form. He was a human, absolutely human - a man who had to answer the call of nature, who cried like an ordinary man. The ordinary man only sees this. Here too, there is a veil, a magic. However, he would show a little, a very little of his *self* from time to time to his intimate disciples. It is like lifting the curtain a little to show a room from within - it is like the mother-in-law giving a glimpse of the newly-wed bride by lifting her veil a little. He kept himself covered with sorrow and pain, poverty.

"One can only know Him if He wills so. There is no other way. If one wants to know Him one should go mad after Him - this is what Thakur told Ishan Mukherji. If one sets about it with great courage, determined to do or die, then alone it can come about."

M. makes a pause. Then he showers the nectar of His words again, inside. Outside, the clouds of the month of Shravana (the main month of rainy season in India) are showering rain drops.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Please raise your eyes and look around. All around you there is union of Shiva and Shakti. All the four directions are covered by his meshes of maya. Purusha and Prakriti (the Lord and the nature) everywhere. And it is He who arranges for the protection of this infinite phenomenon. Father and mother, son and daughter - all these relationships are also He. He Himself takes the form of love and ties the man's mind with it, then alone the world survives. For the propagation of the world, he has assumed the form of sensual desire: *dharmaviruddho bhuteshu kamo asmi* - in creatures I am the desire, not contrary to dharma (Gita 7:11). Just like the two halves of a grain of gram, everywhere there is the union of Purusha and Prakriti.

M. sings:

*She always remains absorbed in everlasting joy with Shiva.
She is so absorbed in the mood of Her art
that the earth trembles when she stamps it with Her foot.
Both of them are more than mad,
There is no fear or shame for them.*

The Elder Jiten (frightened) — All darkness - nebulous.

M. (with assurance) — No, you cannot say this. If it were so, it would amount to predication, describing His form. But there is no predication in His case. One cannot describe His form by word of mouth. All that can be said is 'Neti, Neti' - not this, not this. This is one side to it.

"And there is another side, that of avatara, man-god. The avatara comes to awaken a few countable persons - a selected few. He has strong concern for these people. It is His sport. What else?"

"When it rains, the water falls on all the seeds. But they grow into different kinds of trees. It is the same with the avatara. The rain of his grace falls on all, but everybody manifests it externally according to his sanskaras. The seeds are different. Seed that is sanskaras - one is a Hindu, the other a Muslim, a Christian and so on.

But He is attracted by only a few persons."

M. (to the bhaktas) — This business of joy! What can a man understand of it? If one meditates, one should meditate on it alone. The planets, the satellites, all move because of the light of the sun. It is with His light that all the infinite phenomena take place - *tasya bhasa sarvam idam vibhati*.

M. (to a certain bhakta) — Parallel glasses are used in the laboratory. If you put light in front of one glass, it is reflected into numberless lights. It is the same with the world, an infinite series. This is the last thing, it can not be described.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — What a great arrangement He has made to preserve this creation! The union of Purusha and Prakriti is the main item. The items next to it are water, air and fire, summer, rain and other seasons, and cereals. Thereafter the love of the parents. And what else besides? And just peep inside your body, what is happening there? Is it not amazing?

"I read in a newspaper that seven boys were born to a girl, one after the other. If such a thing can happen in miniature, why can't whole universe come out of the belly of Her who is the Mother of the universe?"

"All these are arguments by analogy. However, they are not less forceful - they are all most scientific."

M. (to the bhaktas) — We are the children of Rajarajeshwari (the queen mother of all queens), we should keep this in mind. In the case of the son and the father, the horse and the soldier - the former takes after the latter at least to some extent. The qualities of the father and the mother are inherited by their off-springs. So Thakur said, 'He who meditates on me will inherit my wealth just as the son inherits the wealth of his father.' Are we small people? No, we belong to a high family. The bhaktas need not worry - those who meditate on Him should blow over their sacred bodies as they go along.

M. sings:

*O the King of kings, let me have a glimpse of Thee.
I have sacrificed my vital-breath at Thy feet.
Pray purify it with
the mrit-sanjivini mantra (the words that revive the dead).*

M. (to all present) — Somebody asked Thakur whether God was with form or formless. Thakur replied, 'I have seen the Mother in both these aspects. I ever see Her likewise. She is the Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. And she also assumes different forms for the sake of devotees.' He added, 'I saw the Mother at the Kalighat. She was playing with little children, catching butterflies. On another day I saw Her walking on the Ganga at Kalighat.' And on another day he said, 'You see, the Mother has come wearing a red-bordered sari. She has tied a bunch of keys to the corner of the sari.' A whole roomful of people were sitting in Thakur's room in Dakshineswar. Keshab Sen was also there. It was then that Thakur said so. And he talked to Mother in the presence of everybody. One could hear one side - Thakur's words, the words of the Mother were audible to Thakur only. One day he said, 'The Mother is climbing up and down the temple. The little bells of Her anklets are ringing, and one day he said in the Cossipore garden: 'Today I saw the Mother playing on the veena. During the days of his sadhana, Thakur remained absorbed in the formless aspect of the Mother continuously for six months.

"All these are Thakur's declarations. There is no but about them. Those who believe will reach the goal; those who cannot accept will not attain Him in any life. They will be left behind. Now is a great chance. It is only recently that He came - everything about Him still lies scattered here and there. The echo of his words is still ringing in the ears. The meeting is only just over - its sounds have not yet completely faded out. It is a great chance - you have only to launch the boat of yourself. The favourable wind will itself push the boat. No more reasoning or discussion. The first thing is faith, the second action. The meaning of just one of the sayings of Thakur is realized after the tapasya of a whole life."

M. is again silent for a while. He resumes showering the nectar of His words now.

M. (to Dr. Bakshi) — Where is the time for reflection on this infinite work of God? There is always the anxiety of how to satisfy one's hunger. So, Thakur was happy whenever he saw persons who had the wherewithal and didn't have to worry for their food. He used to turn his face away whenever he saw anybody always worrying about one's food. If all the time one worries about one's food, When will he think on God?

"Did he ignore or find fault with them? No, not so. He came to place a particular ideal before us. Besides, he hadn't much time. That's why he said so. He used to yearn for God all the twenty-four hours of the day. He came so that people should see this state of his and learn to yearn for God. He came to demonstrate how to love God. Whom could he denounce? He himself was all. He lived as one with the world. Somebody beat the boatman, he felt the scar of it on his own back and he began to moan with pain.

"Seeing those who were troubled by the want of food and clothes, Thakur would sit before the Mother and cry, 'Mother when one is in want of food and clothes, his mind doesn't concentrate on God.' When some bhakta didn't have a job, he would ask other bhaktas to manage it for him.

"He came only to place the highest ideal before us. He did it so quickly and only to a few, and departed. The way to get rid of sorrow and misfortune is either to see God or gain the knowledge of the Self. Man is the child of the ever-blissful Mother. Once you know this, all sorrows vanish. There are not many sorrows to which the body is prone but the pain of the cycle of birth and death never ends. It was to show the path - how to get rid of this great pain - that he came. He showed it and left. He showed how to get rid of the pain, of food and clothes and that too through the people of a lower class - they will first deal with the problem of the want of food and clothes. He injected into them the feeling of pity and shame. But, the main purpose for which Thakur came was to dispel the everlasting pain and to substitute it with peace and joy. So he pushed the bhaktas out of their worldliness, and showing them his real nature, made teachers of them, made heroes of them and then departed in the twinkling of an eye. These persons have realised that God comes first and the world next."

M. (to a particular bhakta) - What can man do? He has a body, you see. And because he has a body he has all these problems. Where there is individuality, it has to be so. This individuality, this I-ness is indeed the main force which makes the worldly business move on. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, they all say the same. There is pain and sorrow because we live in the world. Even an old man wants to keep the vow of the day of fruit meals. It is because of individuality that all these problems exist.

"There are some articles in a glass cupboard. You can see them all but cannot touch them. Boys try to catch hold of the exhibits in the museum but they cannot. There is glass in between. In the same way, the ego is the veil, which is individuality. If, however, by His grace, this veil is lifted, the jiva becomes Shiva. Then there is nothing like His creation etc., what survives is something which cannot be expressed.

"The main attempt of Thakur was to direct the man's sight towards the thing beyond the creation. He himself granted such a sight to some and united them with that thing. Others also he advised to try turn their gaze away from the world patiently and unite it with Him who is the creator of the world. He has also shown how to do it: Uniting the ego with God, live the worldly life. Live in your house like a maid servant of God, the way a maid lives in a rich family. When you have a body, your I-ness is bound to be there. You have to make use of it. Do your work but, don't enjoy it's fruit. Give it to God. Like the maid having a right only to food and clothes, you also take that much. This is known as *nishkama karma* - selfless action. This also helps gradually to erase one's I-ness. Otherwise because of your I-ness you will have to be reborn to reap the fruit of your actions. And

you will also live happily in this life.

"One can not see God because of the consciousness of the body. This is the same thing as I-ness. You may live with your I-ness after uniting it with Him through your intellect. Gradually the mind will get considerably purified. Then you will see that light. But transparent veil of the glass will still remain. In other words the mind, the intellect, the consciousness and the I-ness, they all will get purified, but the basic avidya (spiritual ignorance) will remain to some extent. One can not touch that light through the glass. One feels one can touch it but cannot. The yogis go through such state. It's like sitting beside the door frame of a house. A glow of joy is seen as coming out of the house but the door is shut from within. To destroy this basic ignorance is only possible for God. Man can only try to do this much. Generally speaking this much progress is sufficient. One should sit down there and cry for sometime, laugh for some time, dance and make merry. All these things have been given by Thakur to the bhaktas."

M. (to the young man) — There is no fear if you can hold Thakur. Didn't he say himself, 'You will attain simply by thinking upon me.' But it is difficult to hold him. There is no splendour about him - he has come concealing himself completely.

"Many people talked of Vivekananda as a great man. They used to say, Ramakrishna has such a big man as his disciple, so he is famous. Thakur used to live in the spirit of humility. They could not recognize him. Thakur would treat everybody with consideration. He said to Keshab Sen, 'You people are *bahadoori* wood while we are *Havate* wood.' Those bhaktas thought that Ramakrishna was not so high as Keshab Sen. So the members of the Brahmo Samaj used to quote Thakur. They used to say, 'Just see, he has himself said that he was 'havate wood' and Keshab was 'bahadoori wood.' (Everybody laughs).

"And just see, he went to Vidyasagar and said to him, 'You are a ship while we are just a fishing boat.' He said to Narendra: 'Father-in-law's house.' These men of Brahmo Samaj used to talk of all these things but they did not understand their significance. So they would give the wrong meaning to it.

"Thakur was neither after name nor affection, *nirman moha*. He used to give respect to others to make them big. By seeing it the bhaktas will give them more respect. They would think that when the Paramahansa (Thakur) pays so much respect, they must be really great. The father gives to his son what he wants of him. Thakur also used to give respect for the same reason. Sometimes the father also gives respect to son when he grows old. It was the same here but the followers could not understand the meaning of Thakur's word.

"A person from Tagore's family Jatindranath Tagore by name, sent somebody to Vivekananda to convey to him that he (Vivekananda) was big in his own right. Why should he then talk so much of Ramakrishna. He asked him to give it up and said that they would accept his leadership. Swamiji laughed on hearing this. What is their

fault in it? How could they understand Thakur? They were of different nature. There are three kinds of nature: sattva, rajas and tamas. Most people have rajas in them - they only see outside. They cannot see within so they see quite the opposite. As the nature one has, so he conducts oneself and speaks.

"Vivekananda delivered a lecture in Madras entitled 'Sages of India.' Having mentioned Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Shankar, Ramanuja, Madhava, Nanak and Chaitanya, he said at the end, 'The summation of all those great people, I have mentioned is Ramakrishna.'

"Is the highest ideal known to everybody? Those who have caught it, must be taken as the favoured few. That is why we love them so much who constantly think of Him.

"Many people put on the *gerua* (ochre cloth of a monk). But how many meditate on that highest ideal? The sadhus of the Belur Math are, however, engaged in it. That's why one wants to be so much to be in their company, one yearns to hear about them.

"Vivekananda said, 'If I tell a truth, it belongs to Sri Ramakrishna. All other things I say are mine.'" And he added, 'Even the close disciples have known of Sri Ramakrishna only as much as he has made them do so. Sri Ramakrishna was a man of infinite moods of which there was no end.'

"Vivekananda said, 'I or anyone of his disciples, living for millions of years, can not understand a millionth part of what he was.'

"And he had added, 'Make me your slave life after life.' He also said, 'Out of a handful of dust, lakhs of Vivekananda can be made by this man, Ramakrishna.'

"Aha, what he has said about Sri Ramakrishna in the arati and stava (hymns)! Such an expression is not to be found in any holy book. Says he: 'Thy feet are like nectar to the mortals, quelling the waves of death. Therefore, Thou friend of the lowly, Thou are my only refuge.' And then 'O, the breaker of worldly bondage; Thee transcend all gunas,' and he also says, 'O thou, the only goal of all being.' 'He who takes refuge at his feet knows the ocean of this world as nothing more than a puddle made by a cow's feet.' Oh! what a love for the guru! Vivekananda knew none else than Sri Ramakrishna."

M. is silent. What is he talking to himself in a whispering tone?

M. (to himself) — It is all so confusing, Mother, why do you make me think then? Grant me, Mother, pure devotion at your lotus feet.

He is again silent. After a while, he asks the Elder Amulya to sing. The Elder Amulya sings:

*Behold O man ! Behold the Heaven of joy
Of matchless beauty, beyond the sea of life,
Shining in its glory.
Come one, come all, ye who sigh and ye who groan
Rid thyself of pain and sorrow.
Thou will get peace in the heart, and*

Intense love will awaken in thy heart . . .

All the bhaktas then sing this song together at M.'s wish. The song is over.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Seeing the goings-on in the world it seems it is 'the grand-pa has his fruit-meal fast.' Now sing a song of His human lila, like 'Beautiful is thy name, O the Refuge of the lowly!' Thakur used to sing it himself.

The Elder Amulya — This one I shall not be able to sing.

M. — All right, sing the one you know.

Amulya sings:

*The child, the beloved of Nanda,
having his home in Gokul.*

M. (to the bhaktas) — One should always be alert, like the soldier with the bayonet. And you must have your sails hoisted, waiting for the favourable wind. Hoisting the sail, in other words, to repeat the Name, to meditate, to cry with a longing heart. After this longing comes 'sunrise'. When does one long? When all desires for sensory enjoyment has been got rid of.

"Thakur said, 'Keep sitting consciously whenever you may be, and keep on crying. I shall take you to the right place.' The Bible says the same: 'Keep wake. The bridegroom may come any time.' Oh, what beautiful words! Their very sound takes the mind across."

Now it is 10 p.m.



Calcutta,

Wednesday, 6th of August 1924.

21st of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.),

The sixth day of the bright fortnight.

BRING DETERMINATION, FAITH AND SERENITY IN YOUR WORK

The Morton School, roof of the fourth level. It is eight in the morning. One has the showers of Shravana intermittently. The sky is overcast.

It is Thursday, the 7th of August 1924, 22nd of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.). The 7th day of the bright fortnight, 35 dandas/36 palas.

M. is standing in front of Antevasi's tin cabin on the roof, with a copy of the Kathamrita, Part III, pages 49 to 120, in his hand. The printing of the book is in full swing. He converses with Antevasi.

M. (to Antevasi) — Please send this copy immediately to the press with Dilchand the bearer, and see to it that it is very carefully packed. Then they will also carefully do everything. Man's mind keeps on flying here and there, it only fixes itself on that which personally matters to it. Ultimately selfishness concerns itself either with woman or with gold - money and fame. If one does not expect either of these the mind does not concentrate on the work in hand. Those who can concentrate otherwise are called yogis. They take every job to be God's. So they give all their mind to everything in it. There is nothing small or big for them. They care first for quality and then for quantity. There are too few of such people. That's why they constitute an ideal for the world. They have but one aim - that of attaining God's grace. No man can live without work. So they also work like all others. Only they don't take its benefit. They have but one ideal - to realise God. So they work with an unselfish motive. Such people are called karmayogis.

"The exertion and concentration of one man is transmitted to the other. It may not be so in the beginning. But if one keeps on trying it unmistakably happens later on. This also constitutes service - anything that helps the other is service if done unselfishly. It does good to one self, it leads to God-realization. He who does good to others is a better man. Because of him the society improves. The society in turn influences other peoples - they also become better gradually.

"So, the lives of the bhaktas are precious. All their actions have God-realisation as the aim. Thus work becomes worship. To be slack in work will not do. When it is so the mind does not settle on God. One may work but there is no joy. But when one works selflessly one feels a joy and is satisfied that the work has been done well.

"The life of a devotee is always a lesson to the mankind. Thakur came personally to deliver all these instructions.

"When a man gets tired of working long hours he should say to himself that he works for God, that He is there in front. That way frustration and fatigue will disappear immediately.

"Those who aim at God-realization remain engaged in work without

tiring. Whether it is work or japa and dhyana, all this is work. And they will do it in the spirit of service. Such well-inclined men of service help the beginners to learn from their example. Similarly when a person feels bored with japa and dhyana, he should try hard to seek the company of those who have developed a taste for it. If he does so, his interest will return."

M. (to Antevasi) — Please keep in mind that the press-men delay the job, they don't attend to it on time. If we keep to time and return the proofs after spending time in carefully reading them, it will have its impact on them. This will not only help them but help us too.

"The devotee is always in yoga, whether he is asleep, or dreaming - it is like the uninterrupted flow of oil.

"Besides the beginners mostly forget God amidst the pressure of work. They begin to mistake the work for God. One should then give up all work and meditate. It is like recharging a spent battery. The mind is to be resharpened like resharpening a (blunt) knife.

"There is no end to learning - it is a lifelong affair. So Thakur said, 'I say my friend, as long do I live, so long do I learn.' But if one can remain in samadhi all the time, it is not needed then. Otherwise, one must engage in work, taking it to be God's."

4 p.m. M. is sitting in the staircase room on a chair facing south. In front of him are seated Jagabandhu, Manoranjan and others. A bhakta is climbing up the stairs. He has pox marks on his face. As soon as he reaches he prostrates himself and offers his pranam at M.'s feet. On his face there is a glow of joy. His eyes are full of tears of love. He begins to talk full of emotion but soon he feels a lump in his throat. Full of emotion he says, 'Today the wish of my life has been fulfilled.'

This devotee is a resident of Srihutt, his name Rajani, age forty. He has a humble disposition. Shedding tears of joy, he says, 'When I read the Kathamrita I long to see you but the opportunity does not come my way. It is after a lot of efforts that this desire of mine has been fulfilled.'

This bhakta is a bachelor. His temperament is also sweet and good. M. makes him sit beside him on the bench with affectionate consideration. It appears that his worldliness has been washed away from within - sannyasa is there inside. M. talks happily with him.

M. (to Rajani) — By meditation on Thakur, the inside is automatically cleaned. Wasn't Thakur an avatara? So meditating on him is meditating on God. Those who like him, you be sure that they belong to 'higher home'. Even if they are very insignificant in the eyes of the world, they are great in the eye of God. Thakur said, 'Those who are in their last birth will have to come here.' This saying holds true even now. He (Thakur) lives on, only he has given up his body. I hear that some bhaktas have his darshan even now. Besides his words have taken up various forms. These forms having given up their all, have come to live in the Belur Math. Those who love God will love these people. One gains the wealth of him whom he loves.

"What is the wealth of Thakur? Yearning. Nobody has ever seen such yearning for God in anybody. Those who love him even after knowing all the incidents of his life, you may know, have yearning within

them. Japa, dhyana and tapasya are practiced by so many but why don't they see God? The answer is because they have no yearning - this is the reason. I must have His darshan in this very life. Without His darshan it is useless to assume this human body. Only those who are yearning for God like a child yearns for its mother can love Thakur.

"Why does one not develop a yearning? Because his desire for worldly enjoyment still subsists with him. He is still keen on transitory things, to enjoy worldly pleasures. So he doesn't develop a yearning. A true yearning comes only at the end of worldly enjoyments. When one realizes that there is nothing enjoyable either in this world or in heavens or elsewhere. Then comes a thirst for the enjoyment of the God like a chataka bird yearns for crystal-clear water of direct rain. The manifestation of such a yearning was Thakur.

"The external sannyasa is only like a signboard. Only the internal sannyasa is right - the internal sannyasa means the yearning for the joy of God. Then the desire for the happiness of worldly acquisition drops off by itself. This is the state of sannyasa. Those who love Thakur earnestly, be sure that they have already developed sannyasa within. If they care they give the outer sannyasa to others."

It is dusk. The attendant brings a lantern on the roof. Giving up all work, M. meditates sitting on his chair facing south. Sudhir the Stout, Gadadhar, the Younger Amulya, Shanti, Jagabandhu and other bhaktas also meditate seated as they are in front of M., and to his left and right.

Hemachandra Sarkar comes in and takes his seat. After the meditation M. sees him and takes him to the staircase room to talk to him. Hem Sarkar is a college inspector, an ex-student of M. and a devotee. After the conversation Hem Babu takes his leave. M. comes back to the roof. Enters the Elder Jiten.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — Come in, do come in. When you come, we enter an ideal world otherwise we keep lying down below.

The Elder Jiten (folding his hands) — Let the mind be united in the Ideal (God).

M. (smiling) — 'If that was to happen what would become of them?' Thakur said this to Keshab Sen pointing to those sitting behind the bamboo curtain, that is to say women. If he remained immersed there (in divine pursuits) how will this go on? Who will look after the household? God keeps one in the world by single bond. If that is unbearable, cry to Him, apply to him. Then he will cut asunder the bonds. He leaves some whom He wants to teach people. He even keeps some of them in the household for instructing humanity - inwardly there is complete sannyasa within.

"Thakur said to the bhaktas, 'Live like the maid of a rich family.' The maid takes her master's home as her own. But she knows that it does not belong to her - her home is in the village where her son and daughter are living.' Night and day she works constantly, but within herself she always has the curiosity when she would have a holiday and go to see her children. It is in this way that Thakur wanted the bhaktas to live in this world.

"Serve all taking them as forms of God. When one does so it opens the road of liberation. That which binds can also liberate. Only one has to take a turn. One rises by supporting oneself with the ground on which one falls.

"There are only two paths. To idealize the real (to see the world manifested by God), this is one. And to realise the ideal (to see the real God) is the other. On one path, one resorts to *not this, not this*, that is to say, there is no God in any worldly thing. He is not even intellect, consciousness or ego; on the other, *it is this, it is this*, that is to say, everything is God. The former is a destructive process. The later is constructive - God has become all this - wife, son, daughter - it is this feeling that I am serving Him in them all."

A man comes in. He talks to the Younger Amulya and departs. This gentleman has invited the Younger Amulya to meet him.

M. (to the Younger Amulya) — Why not leave now? Go and see. One must finish the work immediately. Haven't you seen that the yogis always finish their work and then they are carefree. Except for thinking of God one should keep no other care in the mind.

"Once the worry to work begins to accumulate in the mind there is no end to it. It takes the shape of a mountain in the mind. The mind of a yogi is like a clean slate. How to have darshan of the Lord, just that alone is their care. Just as girls having dressed themselves with all care await their bride-grooms. The yogis also await Him.

"Who is a yogi? He who has promised to himself that he will only long for God, nothing else like the Chataka bird who only takes the pure crystal-clear drop of rain and no other water - it's a promise to death."

A particular Bhakta — Shall we even have such a state?

M. — Why not? All bhaktas of Thakur are none but yogis. They can stay in their house and they may go out as sadhus. They are men only outwardly - inside they are very different. They all belong to the class of the Chataka bird. All those who like to hear about Thakur or speak about him belong to a high family.

"Those who are in the household are hidden yogis. Can the world evaluate them? All the rest are 'brinjal sellers' you see. Only the jeweler knows their worth. That's why Thakur was so mad after the bhaktas. He use to cry and pray to the Mother, 'Mother, bring these people.' He was prepared to give them their price whether they were boys or householders. They were all poor like a church mouse but Thakur would get impatient if he did not see them. He would go running to their houses. Thakur had recognised them. All the bhaktas who are coming now or will come in future are yogis."

Next day, 8 a.m. M. is sitting on his bed in his room on the fourth level of the Morton School, he is facing south. To his left is seated Antevasi.

For past sometime M. has been writing about Swami Vivekananda in the monthly magazine 'Vasumati', at the special request of the sadhus of the Math. All these articles will be published as appendices of the 5th volume of

Some printed extra forms of these articles of Swami Vivekananda have been procured from the Vasumati office. These will have to be sent to sadhus in different ashramas. This is the topic of conversation.

M. (to Antevasi) — Please send to these three ashramas today - Deoghar Vidyapith, Kashi Advaita Ashrama and the Bombay ashrama. The sadhus like to hear Thakur's words very much. Only some of them have been able to understand all these things. Aren't they the manifestation of his teachings?

"The main teaching of Thakur was giving up of 'woman and gold.' These sadhus are the embodiment of this great saying. That is why I always ask the devotees to go and be in their company. You may read a thousand books you may do anything else, nothing avails so much as the company of sadhus. Where were sadhus in Bengal? It is only at the advent of Thakur that one can see them."

Antevasi binds all the three packets with gum. M. suggests the way to do it.

M. (to Antevasi) — You must not use so much gum it goes waste. Besides it does not bind well. One must not waste anything. One should take only as much as it needed. If a man neglects such small matters he can attempt no big ones. One should be careful on all sides. All these are Thakur's instructions. They are full of meaning. Did we know these things? He knew all. He had a divine insight - he knew quiet well how things happen.

"Our work is product of our mind. By seeing one's conduct one can understand one's mind. The work of a dull mind is unconsolidated. It is not pretty. Those who are serious do nothing hollow. They are ever ready to work. Besides the actions of the bhaktas will have these qualities: concentration, determination, perseverance, faith and calmness.

"People of independent countries are skilled. To preserve their independence all have to work hard. Many of their qualities are noticeable in their work. How hard working are the men of the west! How much perseverance they have!

"But all these qualities too will be there in a bhakta's work. Most of it, of course, will be an intellect surrendered to God. That is what brings internal peace. Why? Because they are *siddhyasiddhyoh nirvikarah* - unmoved by success or failure (Gita, 18:26).

"Thakur could not tolerate any waste. He would scold one when he saw any waste. The people of the west say, 'Waste not, want not.' They are happy with the condition in which they are. Just see this, how many persons earn how much and they spend it on anything. This brings about dearth. Besides though they work throughout life there is not end to it. They have no leisure. So Thakur said, 'It is better to be miserly than to be a spend thrift.' Both of these are extremes. Neither is good. Even so a miser is better than one who wastes.

"Has Thakur left any aspect untouched? Every saying of his is a

mantra (a sacred saying). If a commentary is attempted of these it will take volumes. He has clearly stated what is helpful and what prevents one's transformation from animality to divinity. Not only that, he has forcefully got it done through his bhaktas. If a man has accepted this right instruction he has already succeeded, one must know and has gone up the way to cessation of suffering."

Antevasi goes to the post office at ten o'clock as desired by M. holding in his hand packets of articles on Swami Vivekananda.

It is now 8.45 p.m. M. is sitting on a chair facing north on the terrace. Close to him are the devotees - the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, the Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten, Balai Gadadhar, Shanti and the devotee from Silhutt and so on.

On the 19th of previous July, M. had visited Shukalal Roy's house in Belehata by the Doctor's car, accompanied by the bhaktas. A person was suffering from typhoid in that house. M. has sent Jagabandhu today again to Belehata to enquire after him. Jagabandhu has now returned. The patient has got rid of his disease but he is still weak. His attendants are very tired.

M. — They who nurse should take rest. Otherwise any one of them can fall ill at the end. One of them should act as their leader. His only duty is to take care of the health of the attendants. His should look to it that they have their food and rest at the right time. If the disease is serious the difficulty is all the more. Thakur had to be nursed for a long time. Those who attended on him themselves fell ill at times. Then Thakur would say, 'Look here you will not attend on me.' He would never find fault. He knew human weakness. This body that we have doesn't last long. Even so if you follow rules it can last for some days. This is the nature of the body. So Christ said before breathing his last, 'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.'

A particular Bhakta — One feels very restless when there is illness in the house.

M. — Disease has a great relative value. He who suffers gets transformed many a times - he develops dispassion. And other members of the family also develop it. All these trials lead one to depend on God. Because of their affection everybody cannot leave the patient alone. And then there are limitations of the body. One falls a prey to attachment. When one's pride fails one develops dependence. Some doctors even get an awakening. While treating Hari Maharaj some doctors had this awakening on seeing his unbelievable endurance. The Mother breaks the clod with a clod.

"In the beginning, people think that by getting them treated and nursing them we will free him from disease. But when at last they find neither water nor the oar they become dejected. Then they see a ray of hope in the form of God's grace during that despair. Even if the patient dies it brings an awakening in some. And if he recovers one becomes more firm in faith - one begins to believe that God has something better - from a motivated worshiper he gradually becomes a motiveless worshiper.

"Thakur used to say, 'How ignorant are these physicians! They say they will cure the patient and they forget Him who is the master.'

One needs both effort and faith in God. Effort alone does not bring peace to the mind.

"Those who have more of animal feelings within, those who have greater desire for sensory enjoyments, initially go away from God when there is a catastrophe. But they have to return in the end.

"The Gita calls the manifestation of animal nature as *asura*. The Lord says, 'I throw them down in the asuric wombs for many lives'. Is this the result of His violent nature? No, it's not so. What does He do? With some rules He runs the world. The Asuras do not accept them. So He punishes them. Does the Mother have any enmity for the children? Outwardly she may beat a child. Like a mother keeps a watch on her naughty children till they return home, similarly the God remains with the jiva till he is able to free himself from his nature. Whether, good or bad, a son remains a son for the mother's affection. So long as the son of the family does not return to the family, God keeps him company.

"Whenever I was in trouble he (Thakur) would point towards the boys and say, 'It is for their education that all this is happening to you.' The world is a cauldron of fire. There is only sorrow here; there is not an iota of happiness, the real happiness. If a new trouble arises, it will be now for the benefit of them (pointing towards Jagabandhu and others). Through this He will awaken the consciousness of those who are in the household.

"Why is there pain and sorrow in this world? The answer is that if it was not there nobody will think of God. It is pain and sorrow which takes the human mind to majestic heights.

"They who remain steady during the trials and tribulations are ideal men, for example, Lord Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna. This is one side of the picture. On the other side you have the animal man - the least disturbance upsets him. In between there are human men. The animal man will become god-man - this is the great message of the Indian civilization.

"Trials of life are like a touchstone to bring out the purity of one's mind. That is why Kunti Devi asked God for troubles."



Morton School Calcutta.
Friday, 8th of August 1924.
23rd of Shravana, 1331 (B.Y.), 31 danda/6 palas.

SANNYASA IS NOTHING BUT GIVING GOD WHAT IS HIS

The roof at the fourth level of the Morton School, 4 p.m. The bhaktas of Saturdays have arrived on their return from their offices - Lalit Roy, Bholanath Mukherjee and their companions. Jagabandhu, Gadadhar and others are also present. M. is meditating behind a latched door.

Rajani, the devotee from Srihutt has been to the Math today. He wanted to stay on there but the Math authorities did not let him. He is sad and is talking to the bhaktas about it.

Now M. comes to the roof and offers his namaskar with folded hands. He doesn't let others offer their pranam by touching his feet. Mostly he himself greets first. This is what he does today. As he comes out of his room, he repeats the word 'namaskar'. He takes his seat facing north while the bhaktas are seated on benches in front of him facing south. M. talks in a happy mood.

M. (to bhaktas) — What were you all talking of? Bhaktas talk of nothing else but God, isn't it? Chaitanya Deva used to call any other talk as 'rustic talk'. Swamiji (Vivekananda) used to say that it was all false talk.

"Which chapter were you talking about? The whole of it - from man to God - is one book. The talk with reference to God is called the Vedas, the Upanishad. All other talk is 'rustic talk', materialistic talk - it is of a mean order. Why should you indulge in it? You belong to a high family."

The bhakta from Srihutt has not been allowed to stay in the Math. This was the topic of discussion among the devotees. Has M. known it? Otherwise why should he ask the moment he sets foot on the terrace: what were you talking of? It appears that this saint (M.) knows all about the lower movements of the human mind. So he tries to raise it to a higher level of bliss and happiness. There the lower impulses of mind, of finding fault cease to exist. Only a divine, generous, bright, peaceful and illumined sight subsists. Isn't this what is called the motiveless grace? Without such a grace the world turns into a terrible desert full of fire. It is this motiveless grace of the saints which brings the human mind out of the darkness of the painful thorny ignorance and establishes it in the sacred region of the Lord's pure and delicate lotus feet. This grace takes the afflicted human mind from the forest of thorns to the holy temple of the Deity, from the scorching sun to the cool corner of a shelter, from the 'house of soot' to the bright divine regions. This is the one prerogative of the avatars and their close disciples. Only they can transform the mud-soiled human mind into a pure, clean and beautiful one - only they can make it serene, soothing, happy, bright and illumined. It is for this one act that the Lord descended on the earth along with his close disciples in the person of Sri Ramakrishna in our age.

Lalit, a bhakta with knowledge and a serene mind, replies humbly to all the questions of M.

Lalit — You see they have not let him stay at the Math today. Instead reprimanding him they sent him away in the hot midday sun. He is very sad. We were talking of this.

M. — We should accept the reprimands of the sadhus. It is their kindness in a way. In Jagannath Puri Temple, the guards strike with a kind of soft whip on the backs of pilgrims so that a big crowd may not form near the sanctum -sanctorum. Many of the pilgrims, it has been seen, ask for such a stroke. They say, 'I say brother, you have not hit me.' They believe that such a stroke frees one from sins and the mind becomes pure. That is to say one is blessed by receiving this 'prasad' of stroke while one has gone for the darshan of the deity. (Everybody laughs) Yes, yes this too is a prasad.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Educated gentlemen go to the sadhus ashrama with a stick in their hand. On returning they complain, 'You see, they did not show me any consideration. Rather they insulted me.' And so on. These are all stupid people, they lack insight.

"Renouncing their home, parents, friends and dear ones, all these, the sadhus have gone to the Math, with the only object of attaining God. Did they go there to live a worldly life with you? Did they forsake everything for this? What did they lack? Each one of them is very learned. They had no want of any kind - of food, clothes and other things. They gave up all only to attain God.

"You go to them at any time of the day and expect them to feed you and show you consideration and respect. How can a man do so? It is possible that a midday meal for only some fifty persons has been prepared. And suppose a hundred persons have come. Will they again cook to feed them and waste the whole day? If this happens, their whole day is wasted. Is it for such an activity that all those people came away forsaking their all?

"And then how will they meet the expenses? All they have, are the provisions received in charity - they manage to serve Thakur and the sadhus with it somehow. People don't see this side of it. Though they (sadhus) haven't gone there (Math) to hurt anybody's feelings. What else can they do - those who bear the responsibility? Many a times they have to be hard and they know it. Besides, the Math is not a hotel. One has to pay for one's meal even in a hotel. And when you explain to them the reality, these gentlemen take it ill. What to do then in such a case?

"Why can't you go to them for a talk and have their holy company after taking your meals? Whereas you should go to them to offer them your worship, you go there that they may worship you. How terribly unreasonable! Isn't it so kind of them that they talk to us and give us their darshan?

"Besides, they may not have time for you. What a busy life they lead; How do you expect them to discuss politics with you? And then each one of them has his own mode of worship. There is always a battle going on in their minds between their personal inclinations and external circumstances. How many different kinds of work they have to attempt to?"

M. (to the bhaktas) — Those who complain have no time to think over all this - their only concern is their own interest, they are unmindful

to the convenience of others. How can those who cannot discriminate in these matters, attain the consciousness of Brahman - how can they attain the intellect immersed in Brahman? How can they realize God? How can he who cannot account for salt keep an account of sugar? For shame, what men of mean intellect they are!

"How profitable it is to have the darshan of the sadhus - they awaken our consciousness in no time. These people have taken the vow to realise God having given up their all. They put up with all troubles, they try to obey their guru in everything. Plague is raging in Lahore and maybe the guru asks them to proceed there and offer their services in the spirit of service to the God-in-the-sick. This will be their tapasya. They immediately go there. Whether there is an epidemic or flood or famine or a catastrophe, they would go to help in obedience to their guru's order. How handsome these boys are, like golden moons; their looks cool the mind and soothes the eye. On seeing them, rather than giving your mind, body and soul in the pursuit of God, you complain saying, they have insulted you, they didn't serve food to you, they didn't talk to you - such are your feelings. These are all selfish, stupid ideas. They must all be given up. If possible, you should go and serve them otherwise come back home after their darshan bringing back your lost consciousness. Not to speak of them alone, we should also, whether we are householders or sannyasis, do so, forsaking our all - we must try to surrender our all for the sake of God. Instead of wasting our days in the service of ghosts and witches, we should devote our precious life in the service of God. By taking the wife, son, near and dear ones as different forms of God and the home as the temple of the deity and serving them, that is God, the mind gets purified. Even they are inspired by God-consciousness - the home becomes an ashrama. In ancient India such a spiritual feeling prevailed as a living idea. This you must learn from life of the sadhus living with the vow of selfless service. Instead, to see their faults!"

M. makes a pause and then resumes showering the nectar of His word.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Thakur used to make his disciples beg if they were in the state of sannyasa. This was to dilute their ego and pride. In Cossipore he made women go out a begging. Ginni (M.'s wife) was one who did so. Balaram Babu's wife, Lakshmi and some others also did the same. Of course, he sent out men also. Why did Thakur make them do so? Because this helps rid one of pride. As soon as one gets rid of one's pride, one realises one's real nature. Isn't this jiva trapped by the eight bonds!

"So long as the bhaktas live in the household, they commit so many mistakes. Why don't they come out to embrace sannyasa? Instead of coming out, they nurse their pride of being big man of wisdom and feel what not!

"Everyone of you will have to give all to Him. Why? Because everything belongs to Him. How have you become the master of all you have? You are rich because of other's wealth - but you have forgotten this fact. Most of the time you feel proud of possessing riches and wealth, wife, son and daughter, home and your dear ones.

Just analyse and see what is really yours. Is even this body yours? Can you create flesh and blood, and then mind, vital energy and intellect? Aren't all these His? Everything belongs to Him but we say that it is ours. Sannyasa is nothing else but giving Him what is His. You should live like a servant - tell your ego that you are His servant. Then you may go out with outward sannyasa or stay with your family - you are His slave.

"Begging reduces one's pride, and builds up the genuine ego. One begins to see that one belongs to Him. Begging signifies standing at the door and praying for the basic needs of the body. It sublimates the lower 'I'. This rishis made it a rule after considering all the aspects.

"He who has no faith in God cannot take to begging. Besides, by acting on the guru's words one slowly gains devotion and faith. The lower 'I' is changed into the higher 'I' - the barbarian 'I' transformed into the cultured 'I' - the poison becomes the nectar of life - and finally the man becomes divine - the child of man becomes the child of Immortal Bliss."

M. (to a certain devotee) — Once a few devotees were on their way to Dakshineswar, while Thakur was going to Calcutta by a hired cab. They met on the way. Thakur stopped his cab and made a devotee (M.) board it. Though there was space in the cab yet he didn't ask others. He who had been taken into the cab suggested that the others could also come in as there was enough space. Thakur said sharply, 'No, they will go on foot.' Why did he do so? Was he a hard-hearted person? Certainly not. Never had we ever seen such an affectionate individual. Why then did he act in such a manner? He wanted that they should stay humble. Going on foot helps maintain one's feeling of subservience. Otherwise one begins to feel important.

"Once Thakur asked a particular bhakta in Cossipore to buy a *bati* (shallow soup plate). Another person suggested that it was already there. Thakur rejoined, 'No, let him bring another even if there is one.' It was mid-day. The bhakta left for Jorasanko, though he had not had his lunch. He brought a bati. Why did Thakur make him do so? Thakur knew that he would think of it all his life. This would do him good. He would gain strength of mind on thinking that he had brought a bati for the Lord. It would bring him great good, he would be in constant living meditation."

Lalit and other bhaktas take their leave. It is 8.15 p.m. M. rises from his seat on the roof and takes a chair in the staircase room facing south at the foot of the door. Jagabandhu and Swami Girijananda have just returned after attending a lecture in the Theosophical society. It dealt with the story of the Brahmin and Raja Nahusha. M. hears the whole of it.

As desired by M., Shanti now reads the Kathamrita - Thakur at the Chirva Mahotsava (the great festival of the flattened rice). M. listens to the whole narration with a concentrated mind and then comments on it.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Why did he (Thakur) attend this festival? It has a meaning: It was to revive an old centre of pilgrimage, temples, festivals etc. These have been established throughout India. In other

countries too they have provided them so that the people may take God's name at least once a year, witness a festival and enjoy the company of God's devotees. One forgets all under the pressure of worldly matters. By visiting the centres of pilgrimage and such holy places one is reminded of God, one enjoys holy company. Then one tries to know one's real self, howsoever short may be its duration. It brings strength to the mind as also peace, happiness and joy.

"The advent of the avatara is not to destroy but to fulfill. Five hundred years ago Chaitanya and Nityananda came and set up a centre of pilgrimage. Their close devotees Raghav Pandit and Raghunath Das were there. They were their close disciples. Thakur went there and again lit a fire in that very Peneti. Doesn't it begin to get smothered (with time)? The feeling for God gets suppressed. Thakur revived it. Now it will keep burning for many more centuries. He himself declared: 'I am Chaitanya.' So he went to Peneti and lifted a five hundred year old veil of neglect. Now the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and those of Chaitanya would meet there. This is how the Lord revives the teachings of religion and makes them shine forth.

"And, this was the time when the English ways had penetrated the society. People had ceased to revere holy centres - the English educated person did not like to dance unfettered by shame or utter and sing loudly God's name. He broke this tendency. Were not all his close disciples anglicized? Narendra actually used to dance with Thakur.

"And there is another side. Without being one with the ordinary man, it is not possible to practise true religion. One has to mix humbly with all to sing God's glory. It was to crush the pride of being learned, respectable, wealthy, high born, that Thakur went himself taking his disciples with him, and danced like mad there. The bhaktas would not have gone there just on being asked to do so. So he took them with him.

"Every act of his has a deep meaning. Man tries to reason it out such a thing happened only once in Peneti. However, it is not so, it is all planned. A 'made-easy edition' of religion is festival or celebration. The great personalities have spread these festivals etc. throughout India."

For sometime M. has occasionally been feeling unwell. He is having pain in his left arm and back. The devotees discuss with Dr. Bakshi how to rid him of it. The Elder Jiten, the leading bhakta offers a number of suggestions. The others also do the same. M. listens silently to all. When the bhaktas have done with their suggestions, M. resumes showering the nectar of the holy words.

M. (to the bhaktas) — We people think that we can manage everything. But it is not so. There is a greater planner above us. Only His plan will last till the end. We think we do everything. So we plan and try to execute it.

"But in reality there is another doer above us. It is by the will of this great doer that everything happens. (M. reminisces) Thakur had just

given up his body. I was then a teacher in the Oriental Seminary. I was the headmaster of three schools at a time. I had to teach for an hour in each school. I used to go there by palanquin, at times also by tram. Once I was changing tram at the Burra Bazar when I saw a sadhu there. His face was similar to Thakur's. He had his seat there. He was like a child. I would go and stand besides him daily. When the sun was bright I used to hold an umbrella above him. Seeing him Thakur would fill my mind. Once he favoured me by asking if I could help him take a train at Howrah. I said, yes. Thereafter I bought his ticket and made him entrain at Howrah. He kindly gave me a small piece of paper saying, 'Put it in a case and keep it with you as an amulet. You will never be in want then; all your travails will end.' After the train left I walked on happily carrying it with me and reached the Pontoon Bridge of Howrah. As soon as I cast a glance towards Dakshineswar I was reminded of Thakur's words, and felt downcast with shame. I touched the paper with my forehead and threw it into the Ganga. I felt ashamed of myself. I realized that Thakur was always looking after me. For he had said, 'What is there for you to worry about? You already have the privilege of having a guru.' The moment I remembered these great words of his, I was overwhelmed with shame. Then I returned home reassured, full of bliss."

M. (to the bhaktas) — It is a great medicine to repeat his name. There is no better medicine. The sadhus say, 'The water of the Ganga is the medicine and Lord Narayana - Hari, the physician.' All sorrows vanish on remembering Him.

The Elder Jiten — Every year during Moharrum, Mohammedans observe national mourning.

M. — I read about the disciples of Iyazis in some stories. One of them said, 'Father, I hit myself so hard that even today I feel its pain. And it is going to last long.'

"In the view of the worldly people, all these joys and sorrows go on. They will never end. So the rishis were not in favour of displaying sorrow. Joy and sorrow are there and will remain so. The rishis tried to take the path to happiness. That is why mourning is not so much the custom with the Hindus. Celebrate birthdays, victory days - all these are good. Grief brings dejection to the human mind. That is why the sadhus have joyful celebrations on the 13th day of the death of a person because giving up his body he has merged himself in Brahman. So they have joyous celebrations.

"It is better to hear of one's real Self than of grief and pain. Whenever grief comes to the mind one should make it realise that it is only momentary - now it is there, now it is not. But all creatures have a real Self which is bliss, peace, love and Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute.

"The grief and sorrow in the world are like shadow's play - they are both light and dark. Today we hear something good, tomorrow it turns bad. Somebody is born now, we hear that he is dead the next moment. It is like the shifting picture in the bioscope. (Laughs) Once

I saw a picture in the bioscope. Seeing a cavalry charge in it, a viewer thought it was real. So he went behind the curtain to see it. I told him that it was nothing - that nothing had happened. But he believed it was real. It is the same with worldly life. His mahamaya presents it to the man as something real and he begins to believe it - that is His avidya-maya (maya of ignorance). In reality only He exists, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. The world will last but two days, the everlasting is only God. Besides, He came in the form of a man only the other day. He left only thirty-eight years ago. By His grace, he has given us refuge at His lotus-feet. He will give you refuge too, also to those who will come after you. Isn't he known as the Refuge of the Humble, the friend of the world?"



Morton School, Calcutta.

Saturday, 9th August 1924.

24th of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.)

The 5th day of the bright fortnight, 25 dandas/41 palas.

SMOKE CANNOT POLLUTE THE SKY

1.

The roof of the Morton School. Seven in the morning. M. is standing and talking to Jagabandhu. Today, 12th of August 1924; 27th of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.). Tuesday. 12th day of the bright fortnight, 6 dandas/56 Palas.

M. (to Jagabandhu) — Now you may go. Take Rajani with you. You will show him everything in Dakshineswar - all places and all people associated with Thakur. You see Gadadhar's primary school as soon as you land at the steamer point in Erendah to the North beyond the *maidan*. Gadadhar, a sadhu, was a pupil of Nityananda. He used to practise tapasya there. And there he breathed his last. He had his samadhi there. Thakur often used to visit there accompanied by his bhaktas. Above the temple of gate, there is a big picture - Sri Chaitanya, intoxicated with God is dancing in a singing party of the city in Navadwipa. The cows seeing Chaitanya Deva stop eating and are earnestly staring at his divine face. The boatman holding the oar in his hand looks at his moon like face and is dumbstruck. The young daughter-in-law of the house is bathing in the stream. But her eyes are fixed on the sweet person of Gaur. Her brass pot is floating away from her but she is indifferent to it. Thakur showed this picture to Vijaykrishna Goswami.

"Everything about Dakshineswar is holy. For thirty years he (Thakur) sported his lila there. The dust of his feet has sanctified the whole garden there. The touch of his body has purified the whole atmosphere, the grove, all. The gods and rishis in the form of trees enjoy the sweetness of the lila of the avatara there. Religion resides in every particle of dust in a living form.

"On the way from the steamboat point one sees the house of Sadhan Chaudhuries which was earlier an ashrama of Yogin Swami. Thakur used to visit all these places.

"Everything about the Kali Temple is sacred. Oh, what great things that happened there! What a lila has been enacted there! For thirty years the avatar-lila was performed on this holy spot. One must meditate in the Kali Temple, also in the Natamandir, Thakur's room and the Panchavati. All these places are like a dry match-stick. Rub it but once, it begins to burn. Didn't Thakur himself meditate in all these places? His power still resides there - it is there in the atmosphere. By sitting and meditating there this power gets awakened - it helps the sadhak; it concentrates his mind. If one falls into the Ganga the body is bound to touch the water. It is the same here. When one enters that sublime atmosphere one immediately sinks into it - one doesn't have to make any effort. This is what is known as a centre of pilgrimage. How much meditation did Thakur do there! How much darshan he had of God's presence and what not! In all the manners in which it is possible to enjoy the bliss of Brahman was experienced by Thakur in his body in that one life.

These are all different *bhavas*. But man does not know how to enjoy such priceless wealth. God himself came down in a human body to give all this to the bhaktas. The moment you enter there your mind is inspired by it. Those who come to this climate through the burning fire of worldly life, have their mind cooled as by a bath in the water of the Ganga. And they will be able to live comfortably with this cooled mind for a long time in the world. The more frequently they go there the more of peace they bring with them.

"One should also visit Ramlal Dada's house in Dakshineswar. The Holy Mother lived there, also Lakshmi. One should also go to Jadu Mullick's garden as well as to Shambhu Mullick's. Thakur frequently went there. In Jadu Mullick's garden Christ entered Thakur's body. Thakur also used to meet Jugal Babu. He had his house near Alam Bazar. Thakur was fond of him. Natwar Panja's house is also there. He was poor during his childhood and used to graze cows in the Dakshineswar garden. Thakur loved him too. Later on he became very wealthy and had a house and so on. He installed an oil press and earned a lot. You must find out who are there in his family. He loved Thakur when almost nobody knew him. So he is worthy of our love and respect.

"Please go and see the Alam Bazar Math. Swami Vivekananda lived there, on his return from the triumphant tour of America. The first Math came into being at Baranagore. Go and see that place too. This was the first ideal Math. Day and night the inmates remained absorbed in meditation and devotion with nothing more than a loin-cloth on their bodies. There were also a dhoti, a chadar and a pair of slippers. Whosoever went out of the Math would just put them on. Thakur had departed only recently. Everybody was full of intense *vairagya* the world didn't exist for them -such an intense *vairagya* they had! You must also take him to the Cossipore garden. Thakur was there for ten months. It was there that a group of devotees was formed during Thakur's illness. Thakur used to have darshan of Sarva-mangala of Cossipore. The bhaktas must also do the same. And the Cossipore cremation ground - it was there that Thakur's physical body was consigned to flames. In the times to come, all these places will become centres of pilgrimage for the men of the world. You must always visit them all. I am old, cannot go there myself. You will visit them and talk to me about them. You will go and see them. And then come and tell me about them. Thakur used to say that those who had very strong imagination could see these places almost 'fourteen annas in a rupee,' (almost wholly) with their mind's eye, by just hearing about them. I have now adopted this means."

Jagabandhu is about to leave with Rajani when Mukund enters. He is a Rector and a great recipient of M.'s affection. M. says to Jagabandhu, 'Please take him also along with you.' (To Mukund) Please go. You must also visit all these holy places. (To bhaktas) Upadhyaya is expected here. I shall tell him when he comes to go there and meet you. Upadhyaya is a man from Dhaka. Please go now it is getting late, leave quickly.'

Today a divine bhava for Dakshineswar has awakened in M.'s mind. Whosoever comes to him is asked to go there. It appears that he is having its vision with his divine sight as a place filled with divine light. Vaikuntha (the abode of Vishnu) has come down on earth in the form of Dakshineswar. Once

Thakur saw the trees, creepers, flowers and fruits, men and houses all full of light. Even a cat was illumined. That's why M. says to the bhaktas, 'Please go and have a glimpse. It will undoubtedly do you great good. The Lord was here in a human body for thirty years. It is a great centre of avatara-lila. Even without Thakur's physical presence, (spiritual) bhava is alive there lighting it up. If one enters into the divine sea of his bhava, the mind and soul of the bhaktas imbibes it's cooling effect without one's being aware of it - one feels the touch of the Lord deep within. This too is a kind of vision of God, though indirect.'

As directed by M. Jagabandhu, Rajani, the Younger Nalini and other bhaktas visit Dakshineswar before noon and bless themselves with the darshan of Thakur. Having taken their lunch of the Mother's prasada in the Kali Bari at midday, they come on foot, after some rest, to Alam Bazar and have darshan of the holy spots. Then they enter the Cossipore Garden. The bhaktas have visited this place a number of times with M. That is why after having darshan of the holy places as described by M. they go to the cremation ground in Cossipore. Thereafter they go for the darshan of Sarva-mangala and visit Dr. Bakshi's house in Cossipore at quarter past seven. At half past eight in the evening the party along with Vinay comes to M. at the Morton School. It begins to rain after a short while.

M. is sitting on a chair in the staircase room. Rajani, Balai, the Elder Amulya, Shanti and others are also seated there.

Seeing the party of the bhaktas returning from Dakshineswar M. says happily, "Do come in. I have been waiting for you so earnestly like a Chatak bird. Tell me all about that holy land where the Lord enacted his avatara-lila for long thirty years. Even now the whole atmosphere is surcharged with the emotion of his presence in that holy place. Whosoever goes there is deeply affected by that sacred emotion. That is why I ask everybody to visit it.

"Very nice a good day's work. The day which is spent in the service of the Lord is the only one well spent - all other days are wasted. Only this holy earning will last forever - all other earnings will end with one's death."

On hearing that Upadhyaya did not go M. says, "He is, of course, a pot with a hole. Such a pot cannot hold water within."

As described by M. the bhaktas sing a song together led by Ramani :

*O, the bee of my mind,
Get intoxicated at the lotus feet of Ramakrishna.
The choice of sensuous pleasure
is covered over with thorns.
Don't drink at it and loose yourself.*

Now M. accompanied by the doctor and Vinay goes by car to the Karbala Tank to witness Muharram. Thanks to the catholicity of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings M. has great love for all religions.

2.

Morton School. The staircase room on the fourth level. 8 p.m. M. is seated on a chair at the foot of the door facing south. The bhaktas are seated on benches to his left and in front of him - the Elder Jiten, Doctor, Vinay, Amrit, Jagabandhu and others. The conversation is on. There is a starkling moon in the sky.

Today it is Wednesday, the 13th August 1924, 28th of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.), the 13th day of the bright fortnight; 1 danda/18 palas. The 14th day, 54 dandas/ 56 palas, is to follow.

M. (to the bhaktas) — The Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj has sent us an invitation for the Bhadra festival. It is to start tomorrow. All of you will please attend it. Isn't Thakur's divine touch still there? It has become a place of pilgrimage. Its darshan is so inspiring. How much affection Thakur had for Keshab Babu! He had himself injected in Keshab his catholic ideas, It's because of this that the bhaktas worship Para-brahman uttering 'Ma, Ma' in the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj. The visit of Thakur's bhaktas, you people, awakens that bhava further. Thakur said, 'Throw the bait. When you do so, the big red-eyes rohu fish will come up from deep waters.' That is to say the fish of divine inspiration will emerge and you will be filled with God.

"The man asks, 'Where is God?' He is there before his eyes but he cannot see Him. How many marks of God there are in the world! First of all, the avatara is none else but He. Second, his companions are still living. They have his bhava alive. Due to this touch of bhava, they are blessed and are worthy of world's respect. Third, the places of His divine play such as Dakshineswar. The people of the world go there because of this divine attraction. The samaj and such other holy places are also the spots of His divine sport. Possibly, after some five hundred years, people will take it as a subject of research whether Thakur came there or not. People will be surprised saying, 'What, God came as a man to this place!' Our contemporaries don't express any surprise being too near his advent. Besides, everybody cannot recognise an avatara. Even when He is so near, they go on repeating - 'Where is God? Does He exist at all?' Fourth, we have the Kathamrita - Thakur's *mahakavya* (great epic) - we have so many proofs, all living ones and yet we have no faith. This is what is known as maya.

"Those who have firm faith are able to see His hand and His mark in all these. They are great, of the same class as that of the Paramahansa.

"There is such an abundance of divine emotion - everything is illumined by it, yet one tires oneself out going here and there and shouting, 'Where is God, where is He?' It's only a few years ago that he departed - just thirty eight years. Such a holy place is Dakshineswar - his room, his bedding, his cots etc. They are all there. Besides there are so many sadhus and bhaktas. Had he not been God himself who could have made those moon-like golden faced boys give up their parents, their home and what not? Those diamonds of boys were able to feel his touch of love within their hearts. They heard his call - 'Come on, where are you all? I have come for you. Come and hold me. I shall take you right across this sea of the world to the other shore, where constant happiness, peace and bliss exist.' Like bees attracted by honey, the new yogis of the new age have taken refuge at his feet, having given up their all. They have lost all their taste for the world, so the new sannyasis of the new age have come out in search of immortal bliss, giving up their all and facing every hardship. This is the greatest proof - that Thakur was God Himself."

M. (to himself) — The celebrations are being held so close to us. Will you not attend them? What does it matter whether there is an

invitation or not? (Referring to the Elder Jiten) Thakur said to Ram Babu, 'One goes to all places where these is talk on God or where celebrations are held in His name, even without an invitation.' The Lord Himself said : 'I live neither in Vaikuntha nor in the hearts of the yogis. I am there where my devotees sing My name.'

The Elder Jiten — I don't like their (Brahmins') talk. They don't interpret correctly.

M. (excitedly) — Who can talk of Him correctly? I challenge it. Who can do so? Only He can correctly reveal Himself. None else in the three worlds can do so. Brahman has never been defiled by the touch of the mouth, so said Thakur to Vidyasagar Mahashaya.

"Everybody *gets covered* in the same way. The influence of the home, body, mind, intellect desires, earlier sanskaras, education, environment etc. tells upon all. So it becomes impossible to have a correct understanding. The intellect gets covered by a shadow. This veil is the work of Mahamaya. One has the correct realization only in samadhi. The veil covers the moment one begins to tell - it is like the light within a bulb which one sees but cannot touch. However through a hole whatever comes out is a flood (of bhava) if one knows how to use it.

"This is not an intellectual discussion. Because they are highly rational, people say that they are very nice - these matters are beyond the intellect. They cannot be expressed correctly even by pure intellect. *'Only he has understood whose has realized it in his soul.'*

"The divine sparks of Thakur entered into Keshab Babu. From him they have come to his disciples - even though they are dim, they are the sparks of the same immortal bliss."

3.

It is about 9 p.m. Outside there is moonlight spreading all over the sky. Next day it is a full moon day. To M.'s left a lighted lantern is lying on the high bench. M. goes inside and brings the Kathamrita. Says he, 'Let there be some reading from the Kathamrita.' With these words he hands over to Jagabandhu the first volume of the Kathamrita, having opened it at Khanda VII - 19 August 1883; Present M., Adhar Sen, Balaram, Narendra, the Captain and others. The fourth section has been read. Everything is still. M. begins to talk now.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — They say that one may go even uninvited to a place where God is being talked about. This is for one's own benefit, one feels blessed. Thakur used to go to Keshab Sen to talk and hear about God. The Captain did not like it. He used to say that Keshab Sen was a defiled individual, not a sadhu. Hearing this Thakur immediately retorted and silenced the Captain. Said he, 'You can go to the Laal Sahib (the Governor) for money, there is nothing wrong in that. And I go to Keshab to talk of God because he meditates on God, repeats His name. This is what is needed wherever the name of God is meditated upon, sang or discussed, it is a place to visit without any hesitation - even though the worldly people may not like it.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Thakur asked a bhakta (M.) to read the Ashtavakra-Samhita. But the bhakta was inclined towards pure devotion. He also wanted jnana. Bhakti and jnana in one. That day Thakur himself refers to the Ashtavakra-Sanhita and removed all doubts said he, 'Both knowledge and devotion can co-exist in one person. Krishna Kishore used to repeat God's name. He who has the knot of his mind untied can practise jnana though he may be a bhakta.' For the ordinary devotee he prescribed the yoga of bhakti. Jnana yoga does not suit the householder, for whom it is bhakti yoga. How beautifully he combined both the aspects. Said he, 'Smoke can soil a wall but it do nothing to the sky.'

The Reader — What does it mean ?

M. — Ordinary householder has a small mind - it is bound from all sides. It is concerned with himself, son, daughter, near ones and so on. Jnana yoga will be harmful to him, like smoke soiling the wall. But ideas like 'I am Brahman,' or 'I am That' cannot harm the spiritually high who has his mind absorbed in the Lord even though he may be living as a householder. For example Krishna Kishore and the Pandavas. He said, 'Prahlad had both bhakti and jnana. Just as a competent sannyasi can practise both jnana yoga and bhakti yoga together, similarly the competent bhaktas can also practise bhakti yoga and jnana yoga together. If his bhakti can break the knot so can jnana. The yogis are both bhaktas as well as jnanis.

Mohan — Those who love their country love all their countrymen. Is it compassion ?

M. — No compassion consists in living with the knowledge that God resides in all. This is what Thakur said. There is a shade of ignorance in 'my country, my countrymen.' God resides in every creature - this is compassion. So and so is one's relation - wife, son or daughter, such an idea comes through ignorance. God resides in all of the relations - this idea comes from compassion. When one looks after them or renders service to them with the feeling of God-in-man, it can purify one's mind. Love of God will gradually grow. Compassion is higher than maya, and service with the feeling of God-in-man is still higher than compassion.

"Service to all my country men is higher than service to one's family. And higher to service of one's countrymen is the service with the feeling that God resides in all.

"Thakur went to see Vidyasagar Just because of this - the reason was that the latter going beyond the lower idea of serving one's kith and kin, was serving the common man. But then there is a service higher to it. It is nothing else than serving god in every creature. the medium is all creatures but the ideal is service to God. It was to say this to Vidyasagar Mahashaya that Thakur went to him. Said he, 'If you render all this service to humanity selflessly knowing that it is service to God, it will purify your mind, you will be able to realise God.' Vidyasagar could not understand it. The service being rendered by Mahatma Gandhi is the service knowing that it is a service to God. So it is great. He is not so much a lover of his country as that of

'Ram' residing in his country men. The lover of God is greater than the lover of the motherland."

Antevasi — Thakur used to say, the more the veil of darkness and ignorance is lifted from the mind, the less will he be one's distraction and more the mind will go towards God. One finds the ebb and tide in the river near the sea. How to lift this veil?

M. — By keeping the company of sadhus and rendering service to them. And also by chanting God's name and His glory. In the case of sadhus this veil is partly lifted. By keeping their company and serving them one becomes like them.

The Elder Jiten — I don't understand when one says that the Ganga is flowing constantly within a jnani?

M. (laughs loudly) — So you have understood everything except this? It means that the jnanis declare that Brahman is true and the world, an illusion. Besides, they connect themselves to Him - 'I am Brahman, I am That.' The idea That Brahman is true is firmly held by them. Thakur used to say: 'Somebody plays a monotone on his flute - bhon...on...on.. And the other plays various ragas and raginis on it. The latter illustrates bhakti yoga. The bhakti enjoys sharing the lila with Bhagavan. He swims in the Ganga - sinking now, coming out. And then he becomes a piece of ice in the ocean of Brahman and crackles causing bubbles on the surface.'



Calcutta,

Wednesday, 13th August 1924.

28th Shravana 1331 (B.Y.)

The 13th day of the lunar month, 1 danda/18 palas.

Next day, the 14th of the lunar month, 54 dandas/56 palas.

BLESSED IS HE WHO IMBIBES THAKUR'S BHAVA

It is the full-moon day. Today is the day of the Bhadra festival. Celebrations have been going on throughout the day in the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj in the Mechhua Bazar. The exterior and the interior of the temple have been decorated with different kinds of leaves and flowers and strings of multi-coloured electric bulbs. Bhajans, community singing and sermons are going on since morning. The Brahmo devotees are visiting it in clean clothes. One can hear the sound of the community singing accompanied with 'mridang' on the main road. Inside the temple the teachers - Pramatha Sen and others, sitting on the pulpit - now give talks, and now worship the Mother, the embodiment of Brahman, uttering 'Ma, Ma'.

It is 7 a.m.

M. enters the temple by the northern door to the west accompanied by Jagabandhu. He is in a pensive mood. Perhaps he is recalling the blessed visit of Sri Ramakrishna to this temple - he is perhaps sipping surreptitiously the nectar of Brahman. Even though he is so well-known to Brahmo devotees, it appears from his mood, that he wishes to taste the joy of the Lord, in all humility, seated in this temple of God, without the knowledge of others. Some people come and take their seats in front of him. M. is behind them all. Sri Ramakrishna said, 'One should go to the Lord's door in a very humble mood. It's only then that the joy of devotion enters within. Water does not stand on a high hillock.'

A devotee is seated close to M. His eyes and mind are fixed on M. A sermon by a (Brahmo) preacher is entering his ears but since his mind has fixed itself on the reflection of the waves of bhava on M.'s face, it doesn't leave any mark on his mind. The devotee is reminded of what M. had said on the previous day in the meeting of the bhaktas - namely that Sri Ramakrishna's current of thought had entered Keshab's mind in this very (Brahmo) Samaj building. Though dim now it is still very much a particle of that very nectar. The devotee does not fail to see that M. is collecting the particles of Ramakrishna's nectar by churning constantly the sea of incessant talk. The devotee discovers something else too - how M., a top-class scholar of the University, possessing so many divine qualities, has been able to attain such a wealth of humility. After a while, on coming out of the building to the main road, he says to the bhakta, 'Mother, the embodiment of Brahman, grants Her grace to him who calls for Her innocently with a deep longing heart. Besides, one cannot find a place in the Mother's lap unless one rids oneself of materialistic thinking. The Mother is ever ready to give shelter but how many people seek Her shelter. These words spoken by Pramatha Babu are the particles of Thakur's nectar. He is a nephew of Keshab Babu. He has been to Thakur a number of times. Those particles of nectar have been transmitted to his devotees by Keshab Babu. Our visits to the Samaj help them a lot. Did Thakur come for the benefit of a handful of persons? No, his advent was for the good of the whole world. One is blessed to the extent one can hold his ideas. His great sayings are spreading throughout the world through so many instruments. As the time passes, the people will realize his greatness more and more.'

5 p.m. M. comes to Antevasi's cabin and says to him, 'Please go there, do go to the Navavidhan (Brahmo Samaj). Its going to be another lecture there. Besides you will hear some hymns. Trailokya Babu has also written songs on various divine moods of Thakur. You should hear them all. It is only by piercing our extrovert mind from all directions with the arrows of the nectar of Thakur's words that one succeeds. Relentless effort is needed to control the

mind. Once you let it go astray, it throws one thousands of miles away. One has to be like a soldier in the battle field. He tries again and again -now takes a few steps forward and now retreats, only to advance. Acting in this manner one should fight with the mind - taking the vow to 'do or die'. And please take Upadhyaya also with you. This visit will inspire you. I shall also follow shortly. Where so many devotees gather to call upon Him, there He comes. Please go there. Such an opportunity doesn't come every day.'

After an hour, at 6 p.m. M. comes again to the Navavidhan bringing with him many devotees. Mukund, the Doctor, Vinay, the Elder Amulya, the Younger Nalini, Balai and others. 'Healing Balm' (Durga Pada Ghosh) has also come. They have all come at the forceful persuasion of M. He (M.) knows the weaknesses of human-beings. Men are blind with pride. But an expert teacher like M. forces the devotees tactfully into the sea of nectar. Then they drink joyfully the divine nectar. He who is able to pierce their veil of ego is known as guru. Having tasted the nectar once one goes out later on to collect the honey like the bee by oneself. The work of the avatara and his disciples is to give a taste of that very divine joy to the mind within.

M. is sitting in the western section of the Samaj Mandir alongwith devotees. The lecture lasts for quite some time. Now the arati is being performed in front of the pulpit. Brahmo devotees having lighted small candles worship the formless Brahman-with-qualities. The candles held by hands are going up and down with the beat of the drum, while the lips utter, 'Victory to the Mother! Victory to the Mother!'. Some devotees get so surcharged that they begin dancing gently, making half-a-circle in the empty space, with the lamps. Some have shut their eyes, the others are lost in emotion. Their faces show their emotion within making them so attractive.

Having enjoyed himself for an hour at today's celebrations, M. comes out with bhaktas. It is 7 p.m. Standing on the footpath in front of the Morton School, M. talks to the devotees.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Today it is the full moon and also the Festival of the Swing. Besides there is going to be an eclipse of the moon. The Sanatana Dharma will take a concrete form today. Tens of thousands of people will bathe in the Ganga. On seeing such a sight the mind is assured that there is some substance in it.

Dr. Bakshi — We have a car. Why not go to the Ganga for a while?

M. leaves by car accompanied by the Doctor, Vinay, the Elder Amulya, and the Younger Nalini. Having had the darshan of the Ganga at the bathing point in Bara Bazar and meeting the devotees there, M., on his way back, witnesses the celebrations of the Swing in Kashi Mullick's house. Then he goes to the bathing point again through Bara Bazar and after that he goes along the bank of Ganga upto the crematorium at Neemtala. Numberless people are taking a dip everywhere. Members of the Seva Samiti (voluntary organization for service) and scouts are helping those who have come to bathe. Later on, they go for darshan in Madan Mohan Temple in Bagh Bazar, where the festival of the Swing is being celebrated. After this they have the darshan of Mother Kali in Thanthania.

Jagabandhu, Balai and Rajani are already there in the Kali Bari performing japa and dhyana. M. and the bhaktas come and sit beside them. After a while, M. prostrates himself before Mother Kali, and taking some *charanamrita* in the palm of his hand, stands up. He is to go to Thakur Bari. (M.'s house - Kathamrita Bhavan, 13/2, Guruprasad Chaudhury Lane in Calcutta).

Jagabandhu says, 'What a beautiful night! It is the full moon day along with

the eclipse of moon. How I wish we spend the night in the Math.'

The Doctor agrees. The bhaktas return by car to the bathing point in Ahiri Tola. They are Jagabandhu, the Doctor, Vinay, Balai and the Younger Nalini. They hire a boat for a rupee and 'float on the Ganga's chest.'

The wind and the tide are both favourable. The boat moves with great speed. The full moon is above, its rays are reflected in the water. The water is shining, as if the Mother is full of dance today. The electric lights on both the banks of the Ganga from Calcutta to Baranagore are shaking with the wind, like a garland. All this arrangement has been made for the eclipse of the moon. Thousands of volunteers are there to help the bathers.

The Swing Festival is being celebrated in the garden-house of a *marvari* devotee on the bank of the river in Shalikka. There too plenty of electric bulbs are shedding their light illumining the sky above.

The bhaktas move on as they see these divine sights. They proceed towards the north singing:

*What need of Ganga, Prabhas,
Kashi Kanchi or such other places.
If the lips can utter Kali, Kali, Kali,
when the life ebbs out.
O Mother, the embodiment of Brahman,
make me mad with love.
What need have I of knowledge or reason?
Make me drunk with the wine of Thy love.
O Mother, Thou stealest the heart of Thy bhaktas!
Drown me in the sea of Thy love.
In Thine mad-house of the world
some laugh, some weep, some dance full of joy.
Jesus, Moses, Sri Chaitanya,
O Mother, are all dead-drunk with Thy love.
When, O Mother, shall I be blessed
by being in their company ?
It's the fair of the mad in heavens,
the Guru and the disciple both the inebriated.
Who can understand this play of love ?
Thou art mad with love, nay,
Thou art the head of the mad ones.
O Mother, make me rich with the wealth of love
Premadasa is so poor in love.*

*He who knows the Mother, the embodiment of bliss,
himself becomes the everlasting bliss.
He does not go on pilgrimage.
Except for Kali he hears nothing.
He does not believe in Sandhya or Puja,
for he knows that its Kali who does everything
He has made Kali's feet his refuge,
so easily he is indifferent to sense objects.
Only he will find the shore beyond the sea of the world,
How can he let go his very base ?
Says Ramakrishna
that such a man has no ear for worldly blame;
The nectar of Kali's name so intoxicates him
that as in night, his eyes looks sleepy during the day.*

*Here comes the New Man.
Come on, if you wish to see him.
Carries he on his two shoulders*

*two bags of discrimination and dispassion, always.
Uttering 'Ma, Ma !' with his holy lips,
he plunges into the water of Ganga.
Says he, 'O the image of Brahman,
the day is past, yet Thou has not revealed Thyself.
He tells the athiest and the ignorant in simple words,
She who is Kali is also Brahman.
These two are different names
but basically they are the same.
One calls it water, the other aqua,
yet others pani, vari and so on.
Similarly Allah, God, Jesus, Moses,
Kali are different names of the same.
Such a man does not distinguish between
the poor and the rich;
doesn't care for name, knowledge and high birth.
On seeing a simple soul
he forgets himself and
raising his arms he calls aloud
'Come here, do come!'
Here I sit alone to do you
the favour of taking you across.
I have carefully tied the boat
that takes one to the other shore.'*

It's 11.30 p.m. The boat of the devotees touches the landing point at the Math. Quiet is the Math, quiet the nature and quiet the bosom of the Ganga - all quiet. Quietly the devotees offer pranam at the steps of the shrine of Thakur. Thereafter they offer pranam in the rooms of Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda and go back to the bathing point of the Math. Swami Vijayananda greets the devotees in the courtyard of the Math.

Many a sadhu is sitting at the bathing point of the Ganga - Bhava Maharaj, Basant Maharaj, Sanat Maharaj and others. The devotees again sing together with the sadhus :

Here comes the New Man,

Come on, if you wish to see Him . . .

The eclipse took place at half past twelve at night. They all sit down to meditate and carry out japa. Swami Prabodhananda keeps to his seat till the morning. Since it is morning, one can hear indistinct sounds from the other bank of the Ganga. The bathers take their dip for liberation.

What a divine sight! It is the western bank of the Ganga where the all-renouncing sadhus have made their ashrama. In front flows the Jahnavi (Ganga), the redeemer of the fallen. Not far is the great modern centre of pilgrimage, Dakshineswar, which has supported for thirty years the sport of the Lord. And on the other bank you have the great cremation ground, where the body of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna was consigned to fire. On both sides of the Ganga there are chains of electric lights.

The sadhus and the bhaktas have spent the whole night in dhyana and bhajan. What a holy sight! How it inspires the feeling of God, how it uplifts the mind! Blessed indeed is he who can see such a divine sight and enjoy this bliss even for a single day in his human life. The joy of Vaikuntha described in the holy books can only be realized through imagination by the ordinary mortals of the earth. But the vibrant joy of today is alive here, directly to be tasted. Such an opportunity comes only as a result of many holy deeds.

There are some who even tonight indulged in evil. But these sadhus and bhaktas, seated on the holy ground of the Math, have been busy meditating on the Dispeller of all evil. Blessed are the sadhus, blessed the devotees and blessed Sri Ramakrishna! Also blessed are his intimate disciples, M. and others. Free are the minds of the devotees, attuned to tasting the divine bliss of their holy touch.

Full of joy a bhakta sings at dawn:

*Behold, O man ! Behold the haven of joy.
Behold, O man ! Behold the haven of joy,
O matchless Beauty, beyond the sea of life,
shining in its glory.
Come one, come all, you who sigh and you who groan,
rid yourself of pain and sorrow.
You will get peace in the heart;
Intense love will awaken in your heart.
Many are the yogis, rishis and munis,
plunged, we know not, in what meditation,
with half-open eyes.
What nectarine bliss they have drunk
and forgotten the world !
What ambrosian hymns are sung by gods,
praising the guileless qualities of the Lord !
Millions of moons and stars come out
and dance without a pause.*



Calcutta,
Thursday, 14th August 1924,
29th of Shravana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The full moon day of the eclipse, 51 dandas/53 palas.

THE SPOT OF THAKUR'S LILA, INDIA'S NATIONAL MONUMENT

Morton School, roof on the fourth level. A little before the twilight hour. M. is sitting on a chair facing north. The devotees are seated in front of him on all three sides on benches. M. talks about the avatara, places of pilgrimage and Indian culture. Swami Girijananda comes from the Belur Math, offers his pranam and takes a seat. M. begins to talk on the same subject with him.

M. — It is my earnest desire that the Yogodyan of Kankurgachi should be acquired by the Math. The remains of Thakur are preserved there. Swami Vivekananda himself brought these relics in a brass pot on his head and installed them there. Besides, Thakur had visited this garden of Ramdutta Mahashaya. He sat in the drawing room at the ground floor. And he prostrated and offered pranam in the Tulasi *kunj* to the east of the temple there. And then Ram Babu lived there, always in the thought of Thakur. All these fires are still burning there. It is now a great place of pilgrimage. Ram Babu also breathed his last at this very place. I have been insisting again and again on sadhus and bhaktas to procure it for the Math.

"As for the Cossipore Garden, well it would be very nice if it is acquired by the Math. I am told that it can be had for about a hundred thousand rupees. Thakur was in that house for ten months. It was there that a group of bhaktas was formed. Thakur granted Nirvikalpa samadhi to Swami Vivekananda there. Whatever he had to give to the bhaktas he gave there in that place. It is there that he said, 'He who was Ram and he who was Krishna is now Ramakrishna.' In future people from all over the world will come to see these places just as one goes to Dwarika and Kushinara.

"All these places must remain with the Math. Reason? The Math is an organization with a long tradition. If they go into the hands of an individual, they will soon deteriorate. May be that a particular individual may run them with lot of devotion but in the hands of others, great harm can come to them. The sadhus of the Math have given up their all and have taken Thakur as their sole possession. Therefore, they will always earnestly and reverentially see to it that all these holy memorials remain safe. So, all the places associated with Thakur should be with the Math. In future they will become great places of pilgrimage for all - now they are sacred only for the bhaktas. With the passage of time Thakur's name will spread more and more. And with it all these places will gain more and more importance. They will all become national monuments of the Indian thought.

"Just see, how many memorials to the war-heroes of the past are being adored. But in India the religious heroes have been worshipped since times immemorial. The great rishis Bhrigu, Vashistha and others came so long ago. Yet even today their names are known everywhere. How many persons worship Rama or Krishna as heroes?

All of us worship them as incarnations of God.

"The rishis thought out loftily. Such thoughts of theirs never perish. Along with their thoughts, their names also keep floating on the waves of time. Why is it so? Because what they have thought out is immortal, the image of peace and joy. That is why people carry them in their hearts.

"People say this is good or that is good - such and such things bring joy and also those other things. But when this imagined joy ends and they see that there is no pure joy in this or that, then they realise that grief is a necessary condition of sensory enjoyment. It is then that they try to attain the supreme joy. The rishis have given us the direction to discover that very supreme peace. That is why such men are always worthy of our reverence.

"Seeing His creatures and His devotees floating on the sea of sorrows, God comes down in every age. He comes, revives and awakens the meditation on Brahman in a new way. The individual and the society then taste peace and joy.

"The rishis have called human beings as 'the sons of the immortal bliss.' How assuring! Like parents they say, 'Children, whenever you really miss happiness and peace, take shelter in this great saying. Then your spiritual knowledge will return; your sleeping consciousness will wake up.' Thakur as an avatara has left this very great word for us. Said he, 'Whenever you don't find real joy and peace, pray in this way: 'If there is anybody at the back of this world let him arrange for my peace and joy.' These are not the words of a man. God Himself has said so from his mouth. But the man does not believe. He is intoxicated with His maya. So He taught another prayer too: 'Mother, don't enchant me by Your world-bewitching maya. Mother, I take shelter at your feet.'

"The great words of the rishis and the avataras assume human shapes in every age. Conforming to time and place, the great spiritual souls create oasis of peace and joy in the desert of the world, so full of pain. The spots where the footprints of these souls have been made are known as centres of pilgrimage.

"Which thought is connected with Thakur's name, which joy? The thought of the everlasting peace and happiness. *Bhuma vai sukham na alpe sukham asti.*

"Thakur taught how to fill the mind always with joy in this painful world - both with his words and with his life. It is like the game with little boats. Now Thakur is absorbed in the joy of Brahman - absolutely unaware of the world; next moment he comes down and sees that Brahman has Himself manifested in the form of the world and its creatures. Then he utters, 'Mother, Mother.' He calls Brahman as Mother - *sarvam khalvidam Brahman* (Chhandogya Upanishad : 13, 14, 15) - All that is perceived is Brahman.

"He did not reject the world. He saw it full of Brahman. The steps and the roof are made of the same lime and brick dust. He tells us, 'You are a child of a rich house. Live in the world knowing it as such.

This is the knowledge of the Brahman. When you attain this knowledge, happiness and sorrow of life will not overwhelm you. You will remain steady in every condition. You will not lose yourself in toys. You will remember that you are the son of the Immortal Bliss.

"And he also says, 'If the mind does not fix itself soon on Brahman, then try to see all the creatures as different forms of Brahman.' *Ishavasyam idam sarvam* - everything in the universe abides in the Supreme Being (Isha Upanishad). Have faith in them. Be devoted to them. Serve them. By doing so you will gain a peaceful mind and with this peaceful mind you will experience joy in every condition This is practical Vedanta.

"In this way, what looks like two extremes, the two opposite looking thoughts, get reconciled - true to the kindred points of heaven and earth - he has joined them together from the point of view of Brahman. This insight makes one realize that the whole universe is permeated with Brahman - it becomes pure by the touch of God.

"The western evolutionists are not able to see in this way. Theirs' is a lower insight - they don't see the creator of the world. Darwin looks at the world with this lower sight. He says that man is the highest among all created beings, that man has evolved from organisms, from little insects birds and beasts gradually. They do not accept involution, they do not know that God is Himself living in all these forms. Only those who have realized the Self, the God, can have such an insight - these people see a great consciousness behind all creation. They say : *sadai saumya idam agre aasit ekam advitiyam* - the benign Lord is before everything. He is one without a second. Thakur makes it clearer and emphatically says, in this age of atheism, 'What is there to discuss? I am seeing that the Mother Herself has become all this.'

"(Laughing) They were not able to find the 'missing' link. After a lot of research they said, 'Monkey is the ancestor of man'."

A Bhakta - Seeing it with a lower sight, it seems to be correct. A lot of human intelligence shows itself in many actions of a monkey.

Another Bhakta — Thakur considered monkeys also. He said, 'One day I saw a number of monkeys sitting in the Panchavati. So, peaceful they were as if they were in meditation. And a little later I see them behaving as they did in Lanka - jumping about, running here and there and creating a lot of confusion.' Well, will these monkeys also attain liberation? Thakur's sight did fall on them.

M. — Yes. There were many monkeys in Dakshineswar in those days. Even now one can see some of them. The monkeys had Thakur's darshan. Blessed they are! If you ask, but did they know that he was an avatara? The answer to it is: but Thakur knew that he was an avatara. His holy sight fell on them. Don't we believe in previous life? What is there to wonder at if they have been liberated by having his darshan. In Vedanta they say, one attains liberation in a human body. In the Bhagavata, the commentary on Vedanta, they say that like human beings, other creatures are also liberated by the grace of

the company of avataras. Chaitanya Deva was asked why he didn't write a commentary on Vedanta. He answered, 'Had there been no Bhagavata one could have written it. The Bhagavata is a commentary on Vedanta.'

"The trees and all that there is in Dakshineswar and Kamarpukur are all gods, rishis and gandharvas. It is for enjoying the sport of the avatara that they assumed these forms. Thakur saw them all enveloped in divine light, that is to say, personified consciousness. By his grace some bhaktas also saw them as illumined beings. The bhaktas have also seen the trees and the other life in Vrindaban enveloped in a divine light - divinely illuminated is Shyam, divinely illuminated is his abode.

"There are but two sights - one is the sight of thought, the other is that of bhakti. In the eye of a bhakta all this is true.

"Thakur used to say, I have seen the Mother in Her aspect of God-with-form. And I have also seen Her as formless God. She is both with form and without form. Besides she has any number of other aspects too. There is no end to Her aspects. It is the same thing but there are two views of it.

"Those who have said that liberation comes in a human body are correct, the other belief is also correct. There is no contradiction between the two. They are complementary to each other. They have stressed birth as a human being. So the man may be conscious, he may make the fullest use of human life. What is impossible for Him who has created this universe in the twinkle of an eye and can also destroy it in the same way? All of you want a reason for all this. How far can your reason go? The moment the fever goes a little higher you begin to wail. You become unconscious - this helpless human intellect can not go far.

"Modern biologists only have the lower sight - a sight bounded all around. Solution to all problems can only be had from the point of view of the scriptures, the Vedas, the avataras. He who has uninhibited faith in Thakur, he who believes in all these, does not have to strain his intelligence. He is blessed by the garland of pearls of the Mother of the universe round his neck."

Today it is Friday, 15th of August 1924, 13th of Shravana. 1331 (B.Y.), the first day of the dark fortnight, 48 Dandas/27 palas.

Having taken some sweets Swami Girijananda leaves. M. has had the whole news of the math from him. Many a bhaktas is present.

It is twilight hour now. M. is meditating in the company of the bhaktas. Reading from the Kathamrita is taken up after the meditation. He himself opens the fourth part of the Kathamrita at Twenty fourth Khanda; 9th of August 1885. It is the month of Shravana. These days M. listens to the story of Lord's lila of this period. Antevasi reads: Dwija's father has arrived. Thakur treats him with all respect.

M. (to all present) — Oh, what an affection for bhaktas! His father beats Dwija at home. To save him from this ill-treatment Thakur becomes so humble before his father. (Laughing) what a wonderful

man he is! How tactfully he mentions the faults of Dwija's father: 'Somebody said that you were a very worldly person, but that is not so.' And he added: 'If the son is a good fellow it must be understood that it is because of the holy deeds of his father.' (Laughing) Thakur gave some sandesh to Dwija in the presence of his father. The father would think that he loves my son. This lover of bhaktas himself fanned Dwija's father. Just see how he loved his bhakta. And he added, 'Had I been well I would have myself taken you to the temple.' Thakur sat beside him on the mat and then touched his body with his hands. It means that Thakur destroyed his bad sanskaras. So that he might not prevent his son from coming to him. See, that's why a man can never pay back the debt of his Guru. The Lord takes upon Himself all the burden of His bhaktas.

"His grace fell even on Dwija's father. He taught him by taking recourse to relative merits. His ego could have been hurt if Thakur had told him directly. That is why he spoke to him everything mentioning Dwija.

"Said he, 'First turn your mind into gold before you live in the household - live like butter in the water.' In other words, first become a bhakta of the Lord and then live in the household. Thus you will be able to distinguish between the eternal and the perishable. This is what is called discrimination. Smear your hands with oil before you cut the jackfruit. That is to say, dye your mind with Lord's love before you enter family life. This means one has to attain the knowledge that he is a man of God, not of the world. God first, world next.

"When the bhakta knows these sayings from the Kathamrita he becomes strong in his mind. He has the assurance that God remains behind the bhakta and he always protects him. In such a case the bhakta gets half liberated in this very life."

The reading continues. A conversation goes on with Mahimacharan. Mahimacharan knows Thakur only as a sadhu, he doesn't accept him an avatara. He studies Vedanta and performs some charitable acts. He believes that Thakur is great of because of the actions of his past life.

M. — Just see how kind is Thakur to Mahimacharan. In how many ways he tells that there is a complete manifestation of the Lord in him (Thakur). Says he, 'The Mother Herself is playing with the bhaktas within this.' Even on hearing it from Thakur's own mouth, Mahimacharan can not catch that the Lord is present in him. Thakur repeats this three times.

The Elder Jiten — Why is Mahimacharan not able to catch inspite of all this?

M. — Who is capable of catching Him unless He Himself lets one catch Him? This cannot be achieved by book reading. Only twelve rishis were able to recognize Ram as the Lord Himself. The others called him a man of spiritual knowledge. Mahimacharan says that by practising spiritual discipline everybody can attain the state of Thakur. Today Thakur has himself protested against this. He said, 'There is something special here. This cannot be attained by spiritual

practice.' To illustrate his point, he said, 'Though Totapuri had himself attained the nirvikalpa samadhi, seeing (me) attain Nirvikalpa samadhi in just three days under the madhavi, he said, 'What is this!'. He could only understand it later - who was inside this. My father knew that Raghubir was with in me - Raghubir that is to say God.'

"He himself has kept this egoistic feelings in Mahimacharan's mind. There must be some variety in sport otherwise it becomes monotonous. This also is a class (of bhaktas). He protected Mahimacharan's way of thinking. He said, 'Yes, the heart of the bhakta is the sitting room of the Lord.' Mahimacharan thought that Thakur had that state because of his previous meritorious actions. 'Thakur is a devotee of God, not God himself - this is how Mahimacharan feels or that everybody is God, and also that this divine state can be attained by spiritual discipline - I am Brahman."

A Bhakta — Is it maya (illusion) when one sees a small light in the room?

M. — Yes, that divine light, the divine power, is the source of maya. They say that the whole world is submerged in it. So it is said in the Gita that it is divine and that it has been created by God. The whole world comes under its jurisdiction. One can cross over only by God's grace - Those who take refuge in Me, alone, cross this maya (Gita 7:14). This maya has hidden Satchidananda. This veil can be lifted only be His grace. The Chandi says that this Mahamaya plays even with the minds of the jnanis (men of spiritual knowledge). As long as one is in a body, one is under Her rule. Because She is so powerful, Thakur as a human being, always prayed, Mother don't enchant me with your world-bewitching maya.'

The Elder Jiten — Thakur has said clearly that those people (Brahmos) have learnt the name of the Mother and Hari from here. But some of the Brahmos don't accept it.

M. — The words of Thakur are ever true - it doesn't matter who accepts them and who doesn't. What is true must bear fruit, it always does! This is what Max Muller caught: where from did 'Mother' come to him (to Keshab Sen). On meeting Swamiji he understood that it was from Thakur that he had it. How far can the man's intelligence go? Men think that they can make one big through intelligence. but this is not possible. Only God's intelligence is the true intelligence, everlasting. That is why the words of Thakur are accepted by all the great men of the world. Nobody listens to those who thought that they could capture the fort with their intelligence. One does not know where they are - they are going down in the bottomless sea of the world.

The Doctor — Can one see God in a dream ?

M. — Why not ? Thakur has spoken of those who attain perfection in dream. Perfected-in-dream, perfected-in-moment, perfected-through-practice and ever-perfect, all these are true, so said Thakur.

The Doctor — Who is that bhakta who had the darshan of Chaitanya

Deva in a dream? And who has also had other darshan in the wakeful state?

M. — There are some devotees who wish to remain hidden. So they are not named. This bhakta (M. himself) and Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) were both influenced by the Brahmo Samaj. That is why they were suspicious of their divine visions in their states of dream and wakefulness. So Thakur said, 'Yes, these days Narendra sees visions in the state of wakefulness.' On hearing of this bhakta's darshan of Chaitanya Deva in a dream Thakur was in tears, and overwhelmed he exclaimed, 'Aha, Aha!'

What is M. thinking ? The showering of the nectar of words starts again after a little pause.

M. (to the bhaktas) — How amazing is the sport of the Mahamaya! Thakur said six or seven times: 'God has entered into this.' Even then the veil of Mahimacharan's mind didn't get lifted. Thakur also said, 'Those who come here must know these two things: first, who I am and the second, who they are.' Even then Mahimacharan could not understand.

"If he wills, anything can happen - he can completely transform Mahimacharan in a moment. Then, why doesn't he do so? The answer is: Variety is necessary in lila. Here Thakur elucidates man's nature! Faith and reason. He said to a devotee (M.), 'Promise that you will reason no more.' But there he accepted Mahimacharan's view that anybody can become the Paramahansa Deva by taking to spiritual practise. Why did he accept it? We may say that it was for two reasons. First, so that even a not so worthy person may take to sadhan. And second, Thakur was all purity - without any knot - a man of numberless, boundless moods. Whichever be the mood of a person at a particular moment, he would assume that bhava. Though Mahimacharan is in a lower level mood here nevertheless it is a mood, so he agrees to it. When Mahimacharan carries out sadhana in that state of mind and does not see the shore he will imbibe faith and self-surrender. He will then be able to understand the meaning of that great saying: 'Who I am and who you are' - when he knows it, he will attain."

Mohan — Thakur said, 'He who calls upon God from within will have to come here.' 'Will have to come here' - if it is that, it is nothing but fanaticism. In the Shakta, the Vaishnava and the Christian belief, they will convert people to respective their belief to attain liberation.

M. — No, this would not amount to fanaticism. He also said: As many religions, so many paths. He said this after practising all the religions. He did not ask himself to be worshipped. That would have been fanaticism. What he said means that the Shakta, the Vaishnava and the Christian must take to sadhan of their own variety. But when he attains earnestness, that is, he begins to yearn for God, he will at last understand that his own ideal deity has now assumed the form of Ramakrishna. Is this being intolerant? Basically the Brahman and Shakti are not different from each other. It is from that basic conception that Kali, Krishna and Christ have come. Everybody

must follow his own religion. When one becomes earnest one understands at last that one's own ideal has manifested itself as Ramakrishna. Mishra Sahib saw Thakur as Christ. Having offered pranam to Mother Kali when he lifted his eyes he saw Christ on the pulpit. The Bible talks of God and Simian. He did not accept Christ as his ideal Deity. But since he was earnest so he, overwhelmed with joy, worshipped the child Christ in front of the pulpit knowing him to be an avatara. Christ had not yet been taken as an avatara. He was just one month old. It is said that many a Christian and Muslim bhaktas were fulfilled on coming to Thakur - this was before his intimate disciples arrived.

"It is not religious intolerance. Truth (it is). This is a proof that Thakur was an avatara. Basically there is but one truth - it's manifestations are many, and ultimately it remains one truth."



Calcutta,
Friday 15th August 1924.
30th of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.)
1st day of the dark fortnight, 48/27 palas.

THE MOTHER CAN MAKE A HOGPLUM TREE YIELD MANGOES

1.

Morton School, the roof of the fourth level. It is 4 p.m. First day of the month of Shravana today. White clouds float at times in the sky. It is very clear.

As it is Saturday, Lalit of Bhatpara, Bholanath Mukherjee and Basant with a friend have arrived on their way back from the office. They come here almost every Saturday.

M. is meditating behind closed doors. The bhaktas talk about M. and about the intimate disciples of Thakur, with Antevasi.

The twilight hour is approaching. M. comes out and enquires after the well-being of the bhaktas. Seeing that the hour of the departure of the train is approaching the bhaktas take their leave.

M. comes back and takes his seat on a chair in the staircase room facing south. In front of M. and to his left are seated on benches the Elder Jiten, Balai, Shanti, the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, Jagabandhu and others. Everybody meditates with M. Enters Upadhyaya.

M. (to Upadhyaya, pointing at his own body) — There are these three herein - *thinking*, *feeling* and *willing*. When the mind is exhausted the will tells us about it. He Himself has given this will-power to man. You have just said that you are going to the Math - this is the work of the will-power. Without will-power the world cannot go on. Our will-power however, is subject to God's will. Being so it has a great scope. By working within this scope man can become god - he can see God.

"Suppose there is a cow. It is tied with a rope round its neck. The longer the rope the more the cow can move around in accordance with the length of the rope. This is within its limitation. This rope is like a man's sanskara. A man is tied with his sanskaras. The master can increase the length of the cow's rope. He can tie another with it. He can even untie the whole rope. In this way He can take the man beyond sanskaras or He can tie him with new sanskaras to it. He can even completely change the sanskaras. Thakur used to say: 'The Mother, if there is a need, can make the hog-plum tree bear mangoes.'

"Mahimacharan believed that the man was completely subject to the result of his actions - he had to enjoy its fruit. Thakur, agreeing with this idea said, 'Yes, the actions of his past life.' And then pointing to his intimate bhaktas he added, 'You people will not have to do much sadhana. Know this much and you will succeed: 'First, who I am, and second, who you are'."

A certain Bhakta - It is true that anything can happen if God so wills. But does He add to the will-power of the bhakta if the latter so desires?

M. — Yes, he does add. It comes about when there is earnestness and great yearning. Thakur said, 'When son has such a deep longing that he neither eats nor sleeps, the father sets apart (in advance) his share (of inheritance).'

Mohan — The Mundaka Upnishad has this mantra: *Yamevaish urinute*, which has been explained by Shankaracharya as follows. Says he, 'When a sadhak wishes to attain Him, He makes Himself available to him due to his strong will-power.'

M. — What else? The Upnishad talks of both - God's will, and also that of the bhakta. Thakur says, 'If you weep with a deep yearning within the Mother reveals Herself. During sadhana only the will of the bhakta matters. When one goes without food and sleep and cries, the father and the mother fulfill his desires.

"Thakur said, 'The magnet attracts the needle. The needle also attracts the magnet.' He once went to a bhakta's house in the Haritiki garden without prior intimation. Seeing him the bhakta said, 'Whereas I would have gone to see you there but you yourself have come instead.' It was then that Thakur spoke as above.

"When the bhakta's will joins with His, the bhakta becomes very strong. The weakling becomes mighty strong."

M. (smiling to Upadhyaya) — So you must be going to the Math.

Upadhyaya (interrupting) — Should I take something with me when I go there?

M. — Very nice, yes. Please take some sandesh (sweetmeats) and fruit.

Upadhyaya (restlessly) — No. I mean if should I give something?

M. — That can be done too. Pay a rupee as an offering for Thakur's bhoga. But do so early. Don't say you will pay in the (Math's) office after pranam to the deities. And there say that you will have your food there? (With smiling eyes) Isn't it good also to have a beating from the sadhus? What do you say?

Upadhyaya (unwillingly) — Y-e-s perhaps.

M. — All of your ancestors were teachers. That's why you have the name 'Upadhyaya'. The rishis were all gurus of the world, isn't it? They conducted themselves in this very way. And all these teachings are also theirs. One should go to the sadhus in the spirit of humility to be blessed by them. One is blessed by just being in their presence. Besides, one must not cause inconvenience to them, as for example, by sharing meals with them directly without first asking or informing them. They are there after renouncing everything so as to be able to meditate on God without any worry. How great good luck we have that we can meet them? On the top of it to trouble them! That's not right. One should go to them to serve, not to be served. One should go to them for their blessings not for blessing them.

Upadhyaya has a very restless disposition. He may promise but may not keep it. He speaks too much - mostly nonsense. He said many a time that he would go to the Math but he didn't. One day he said he would go to Dakshineswar one of these days but he didn't keep this promise either.

Hearing the other day from Antevasi that Upadhyaya had not been to Dakshineswar M. said that he was like a pot with a hole in it which cannot hold any water! Yet M. again showers his blessings on him. May be he corrects himself. How unselfish is the grace of the great spiritual personalities! How many ways they employ to revive the sentiment of self-respect in a man's mind! M. even employs the ploy of referring to his ancestors. May be he reforms himself in their name.

2.

It is the month of Moharrum. The Elder Jiten talks about it. Says he, 'Nowadays the Muslim devotees of God are celebrating Moharrum joyfully.'

M. — And why not? Except God there is no real joy. Mohammed showed the way to this joy. How he loved the devotees! That's why they make merry in his name even today. So many years have gone by yet they have not forgotten him. Nobody does anything for anybody unless he receives love from him. That's why God comes in a human form from time to time to dispense love. Coming as Mohammed, He made a current of love flow over the dry desert land of Arabia.

"He proclaimed himself as the messenger of God, that is to say, a representative of God. The Muslims do not believe in the avatara. But Christ called himself an avatara: 'I and my Father are one.' (John 10:30). And he also said: 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' (John 14:9)

Mohan — Why did Mohammed not say like Jesus that he and his Father were one? Rama, Krishna and Ramakrishna have all said that they are in connection of God. Thakur praised the discipline of Islam and had the darshan of a bearded man shining with light. He was none else but Mohammed - God.

M. — It only shows that the concept of avatara was not current in those days. Christ called himself the son of God, an avatara, he was crucified. If he didn't say so how does it matter? What did he say? The power that he manifested from within proves that he was an avatara. Who but an avatara can perform such superhuman deeds? Rama, Krishna, Thakur, all of them proclaimed themselves as avatara to their intimate devotees. They did not say so to the ordinary men. To them they said they were devotees of God. Mohammed may also have said the same to some. After all, not everything could have been reported.

"Besides there is another fact. Mohammed proclaimed that God was without form but with attributes. As avatara He becomes God-with-form. This will be a contradiction. That is why God is without form but with attributes and Mohammed was the vehicle of His message."

"Even in the Upanishads avatarism lies latent. The Advaita Vedanta does not accept it. The Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj also do not

take it. Just look at the superhuman life of Mohammed. He said, 'Only God is the master. Only He is great. Love Him with all your mind, soul and wealth. All else is illusory, perishable - it will not accompany you after death. Only the love for Him will accompany.'

"Aha, what a love which bound everybody! Before his departure from the world, he could not come to the mosque one day because of some illness. Some five hundred devotees began to wail not finding him there. When he heard their wails, he could not control himself. Leaning on the shoulder of another person, he came to the mosque. What a love he exuded! So long as the sun and the moon shine the story of this love will remain live remain alive."

Mohan — Some people say that there was another purpose of Thakur's sadhana of Islam and of Christianity, besides the harmony of religions - to purify society. By Thakur's practice of Islam and Christianity the difference among the Hindus, Muslims and Christians will be vanish.

M. — Perhaps it will be so. At the base there is only one - there is no contradiction here. There is but one Truth. Remember this, the external adjustment will be easy.

M. (to the bhaktas) — When God comes as an avatara the attraction for religion particularly increases. However, with time it gets diluted. Then He comes again. Even when there is a decline some flow is still there. The flow of the religions of the Buddha, the Christ and Mohammed are still going on.

"Now it is Thakur who has come. It is so very recent. This flow will remain for a long time even after him. Yearning for God is the very soul of religion. With the passing of time it becomes weak but flow is still there.

"It is God who sports as a deity, who sports in the world, and who sports as a human being. The sport of God as an avatara is the same as His sport as a human being.

"The two streams of good and evil have been flowing since eternity. The avatara comes and fortifies the good. The evil is then subdued. Then it again develops a form and is again followed by the stream of good. Thus the world goes on.

"Thakur said, 'Hold me.' On doing so the evil will then have no effect. It is his (Thakur's) age now.

Moharrum is being celebrated at the Karabala tank today.

M. — I have been living in Calcutta for so long but I had never seen the celebrations at the Karbala tank. So I went there by Doctor Babu's car the other day and saw it. We were too late. It was 9 o'clock. The celebrations were coming to an end, the joy of Moharrum. They were distributing sugar drops as bhog an offerings. - they also gave us prasad.

"Oh what a great love they have for Mohammed. His son and

daughter had been killed cruelly. That is why they mourn. It happened thirteen hundred years ago and still they do it. How much love is needed for this!

"Why is there so much love for Mohammed? He has drenched his devotees with it. Only love begets love and without love no religion can be established. Fortunately we were with Thakur, so we understand a bit of it. Thakur bought his devotees with love. Can anybody ever repay his debt of love?"

"On seeing these celebrations one can have a glimpse of why Thakur became a Muslim for three days."

Mohan — Mohammed had so many other qualities. He was three-in-one: the head of the state, the commander-in-chief and the religious perceptor. Considering how he built up brotherhood, the debt that the modern democracy owes to him comes to mind. He led a simple life - he himself stitched his clothes and made his shoes - he worked as a labourer with others while building a mosque. He used to help women in domestic chores. How much of compassion and sympathy he had!

M. — We only think of his love. Thinking of God as love he (Mohammed) had filled himself with love. A particle of this divine love can transform a man into God.

3.

It is 8 o'clock. The Kathamrita is under print. It is in full swing. Its whole responsibility rests on Jagabandhu. M. says to him: Please read the proof. They (Vinay, Shanti and Balai) will hold the copy. The eighth and ninth forms of Volume Three and the first form of Volume Four of the Kathamrita are being corrected. While the proof is being read M. explains in between.

M. — Thakur used to say, 'The rishis were fearful but not Narada and others. It means that one should finish one's work at the earliest. He said, 'It is like wiping one's mouth after eating a mango.' The main thing is to finish one's work. The *khadi-kath* (ordinary wood) flows away but the *bahaduri-kath* (a particular special wood) lifts up others also as it floats. The *vijnani* is fearless - he dances raising both of his arms. It means that he accepts God both with form and without form. When he is immersed in Brahman-jnana, he is joyous and when he is out of it he is still joyous. Reason? He sees that the God who is without form is also with form - that He is living among the world and the twenty-four elements.

A particular Bhakta — Did Thakur dissuade Pandit Shashadar from reading too much of scriptures?

M. — He said that it results in dry discussions. Is there no difference between sucking the pressed sugar cane and sucking a fresh one? Read a little and then take to sadhana. It is no use reading the scriptures without inculcating discrimination, dispassion and the love for God. It only causes confusion. Thakur used to say, 'The patient was sitting up. The physician came and made him lie down!' And he also said, 'The musical notation should be brought hands on

in one's life.' He even said to the pandit, 'What is the use of knowing the whole of the Gita with its commentary if there is no renunciation, no dispassion, no love for God?' He said that the essence of the Gita was *tyaga* (renunciation) that is, to give up all just to possess God and to love Him. What is it like? It's like bleating of a calf. When the cow hears the pressing bleat of its calf, it comes to it by itself.

Mohan — It is said that the jnani's disposition is that of a frightened person. Here has the jnani been discouraged or has the bhakta been praised?

M. — No, here the jnani and the vijnani have been compared and not the jnani and the bhakta. It is the state of both of them after God-realization. The one who gets merged in Brahman, he becomes one with Him. The other comes back bringing with him the 'I' of Vidya (knowledge) and that of the bhakta. And on coming back, he sees that it is Brahman who is appearing in name and form, and the world - that everything is permeated with Brahman. Whom can he fear? He himself is Brahman. All creatures and the whole work are Brahman. Overwhelmed with jnana, Durvasa saw everything filled with Brahman.

"Thakur said the same to the Pandit, 'First establish God-with-form in your mind. Later proceed to God-without-form.' When one has practised *Bhava-shakti* (the power that It exists), it becomes easier to practise later the *a-bhava* (the vacuum or without form). It also from bhava to a-bhava and then from a-bhava to bhava - that is the entire circle. By Thakur's grace his intimate disciples have progressed in this way. He brought Narendra from a-bhava to bhava and took Rakhal from bhava to a-bhava. Another devotee (M.) also, he took from bhava to a-bhava and then from a-bhava to bhava. He has asked for both jnana and bhakti together.

"Thakur used to say, 'The essence is the love for Satchidananda, whether it be by the path of jnana or by the path of devotion.' First of all, one has to practise the sadhana according to one's bhava with all one's effort. When it becomes established in the heart He reveals Himself in that very bhava. If He feels the need, He also shows himself in the other bhava. He used to say, 'First go and see Jadu Mullick by any means possible. Then he will himself show, and tell, how much wealth, how much riches he has'."

Antevasi — He said to the Pandit, 'You have become a 'chhanabara.' What does it mean ?

M. — It means that he was quite ready. The Pandit had been carrying on with puja, path (reading of the holy books), japa, dhyana and right conduct. So Thakur asked him now to remain immersed in the nectar for some days. In other words, he asked him to carry out tapasya for some days - to bring the notation to the fingers. The 'chhanabara' is to remain immersed in the nectar of bhava and bhakti through tapasya after one has gained the knowledge of the shastras. How he said it: do it his for a few days. He knew that the Pandit did not have the inclination. That is Why he asked him to do a little.

Mohan — Let us dance raising both the arms - what is its significance?

M. — *Nitya* and *lila* both are true. The jnanis accept only Brahman and deny the world. Brahman accepted, the world denied. But, the *nitya* and *leela* belong to the same One. Those who are only jnanis, to them he says they are frightened persons. The jnani has been called a frightened person. But the vijnani has seen that the same Brahman has become the world, taking up all names and forms. So, Thakur said, 'There is joy in merging the mind in the Indivisible One by meditating on Him. And there is also joy in keeping the mind in His *lila*.' His was not a single-track mind. He believed in the *nitya* and the *lila*, both. Said he, 'Both *lila* and *nitya* belong to Him.' All this is a description of Thakur's own state. It constitutes a scripture. People debate, don't they, who is big and who is small or what is true and what is false. The man has only a small capacity. He lives only with one *bhava* and calls other's *bhava* as false. Thakur has solved such a great problem of Vedanta by his direct spiritual experience. He said that the eternal Krishna is also the eternal bhakta. The gopis wanted the eternal Krishna. Thakur accepts both God-with-form and God-without-form. He used to say, 'I hear there is snow in the north which never melts.' This is an apt simile for the eternal Krishna.

The Elder Jiten — The other day we were talking of Thakur as saying: 'The jnani living in the world is like one living in a glass-house from where he can see both inside and outside. And the all-renouncing person is standing as though in the open under sunlight.' We have read the same today. What does it signify?

M. — For example the light of a lamp and the other of the sun. When one lives with one's family, one's mind remains attached to one's house, family and so on. For the all-renouncing person, the whole world is one family. The sunlight, well, it is that of Thakur, and of Chaitanya Deva. All these are descriptions of his (Thakur's) own states. The 'all-renouncing' person means Thakur, Chaitanya Deva. By Thakur's grace, his devotees see the sunlight even while living in the world. This is a speciality of Thakur's devotees. It is by Thakur's grace that it all happens.

"To the Pandit he said: 'Whether God is with form or without form, you must take a plunge. Be mad for Him. Love Him' - whether it be by the path of jnana or by the path of bhakti. Religion is nothing but loving Him. The intoxication of bhakti's love and the intoxication of jnana - both are true. When one succeeds in loving Him all doubts are dispelled by His grace. He shows all, God-with-form and God-without-form. The gopis possessed both Brahman-jnana and prema. Sadhana is needed."

Rajani came from Srihutt and was with M. He wanted to stay at the Math. As no accommodation was available there, he was sent to Swami Kamleswarananda, the head of the Gadadhar Ashrama with a letter. M. asks a certain bhakta whether Rajani has left or not. M. is always keen to help the bhaktas to have the holy company and serve the sadhus. He says that but for it there is no way to religion - one may read or reflect a thousand times. This is the real practical Vedanta.



Calcutta,
16th August 1924.
31st of Shravana 1331 (B.Y.),
The second day of the dark fortnight, 46 dandas/3 palas.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S MEETING WITH KESHAB IN THE NAVAVIDHAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

1.

Morton School, M.'s room on the fourth level. It is 4 p.m. M. talks of a special mission to Antevasi.

M. (to Antevasi) — Today they are going to discuss Sri Ramakrishna's meeting with Keshab in the Navavidhan Brahma Samaj. They hold a discussion on this very subject every year at this time. We have an invitation for it. You may please go there. There Acharya Pramatha Babu who is the nephew of Keshab Babu, Nandu Babu and others will discuss about Thakur. They have had Thakur's love - great men they are. Please go there on my behalf and take part in that discussion.

"Please read (to them) Thakur's life from the Kathamrita, it is in the beginning of Volume I. And read the first and second chapters of the Second Khanda of Volume I - Thakur with Keshab in the boat. And lastly read the first, second and the fifth chapters of the tenth Khanda of Volume II. You will get a living picture of the meeting of Thakur with Keshab in brief.

"This will bring out all the things he (Pramatha Babu) has about Thakur in his memory. He has had Thakur's love. He would never forget it. It is intertwined with his mind. Probe it a little and a spring of love will gush forth from it.

"Pramatha Babu is great. He hasn't married. He is a saintly person. A scion of such a great family! His family members are Vaishnavas. Isn't it?

"Read it please to me."

Antevasi reads out to M. the life (of Thakur) from Volume I, and the first and second chapters from the second Khanda.

M. — Just by reading this nectar-like character sketch, the Brahma devotees will remember that Thakur had infinite moods. Otherwise whatever nuance of his image is there in their mind will persist. Human mind has only a limited power of acceptance. One talks only of whatever little one has understood with its help. When this continues for a time, staunchness enters into every cult. However, when you hear Thakur's life from here, you will remember his words. It will come to your mind that he was a man of all cults. Brahma devotees went to him, also the Hindus of the Sanatan Dharma and Arya Samaj. The Muslims and the Christians also went to him. He did not belong to any particular sect. If we must label him we may say that he belongs to the non-sectarian sect. He was the teacher of the harmony of all religions.

"If you read it with this background, Thakur's contact with Brahma

devotees, particularly with Keshab Sen will come out dazzlingly alive. In its absence otherwise it will lose some of its lusture. Nobody retains a mere sermon in his mind. How that village boy came to occupy the seat of a world teacher will come alive."

Antevasi is now reading the first and the second chapters of the second Khanda of Volume I. At the end of first chapter M. speaks.

M. (to Antevasi) — This will make people understand the level where the minds of two men of two different natures meet. Thakur accepted God-with-form besides being a believer in God-without-form. He believed in image worship. Keshab didn't accept it. Keshab was an English educated man. He travelled to foreign lands. He lived with his wife, son and the family. Thakur was a sannyasi absorbed in samadhi day and night. Thakur was a priest and Keshab a famous preacher.

"The idea that he was going to talk with Keshab on God was enough to put him in samadhi. Thakur stood on the boat, on the water of the Ganga, immersed in samadhi. Oh, what a divine sight! While he was sitting on a chair in a cabin in the boat he was in samadhi. On seeing this they who only lecture can realize what is *dharma*. How much love of God one must have before one can attain this state! One forgets the world, even one's body which is so dear. The effect of just this sight is far greater than that of a hundred thousand lectures.

"The men of the Brahmo Samaj would know that religion is based on experience - it is not just talking and hearing or reading books. Instead it is to become God by contemplating on God. *Brahman Ved Brahmaiv bhavati* - the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Himself. One reads this in the Upanishad. Today they see all this with their own eyes - what the darshan of Brahman is."

The second chapter also having been read, now the tenth Khanda of Volume II is being read. Thakur goes to the Kamal Kutir (Keshab's residence) to see him. The latter is ailing and is very unwell. Thakur sits down on a wooden cot in the verandah of his drawing room. He is impatient to see Keshab! Sitting on that cot he goes into samadhi.

Antevasi — 'All these (chair and couch) were necessary earlier. What use are they now?' - why did Thakur say so?

M. — Since Keshab was not to live long so Thakur said, 'What use they are now.' And he added, 'The body and the atman are different from each other like betel-nut and its skin.' The body of keshab was going to die but atman is imperishable it will exist. Only after God-realization does one realize this.

"How wonderful! In a room full of people, he said in their presence, 'I say the Mother has come in a Banarasi Sari.' People are doubtful, so he proclaimed the Mother in this manner. Actually the Mother and he are one. Does he only talk of God? No, he brings Him before their eyes, and forcibly makes them see Him. He makes them see as much as it is humanly possible. It is Kaliyuga - the age of science. People are generally sceptical. Don't they say, 'If there is God show Him to us.' That's why bringing the Mother of the Universe there he talks to

Her before them. This did not happen only once - it was always thus."

The fifth chapter is being read. From the inner apartment Keshab enters the drawing room with great difficulty holding the wall. His body is just a skeleton. He offers a long pranam to Thakur by lying on the ground. Thakur is still in the state of bhava. In that very state he talks.

Antevasi — What did it mean when Thakur said to Keshab, 'An elephant has entered your *kunde ghar* (a thatched cottage)'?

M. — That the divine bhava had entered into Keshab. During those days he often talked with the Mother of the Universe in an emotional state, he used to cry, he used to laugh. This body of flesh and blood, and the nervous system cannot bear such forceful bhava. As a result the body was breaking down. *Kunde ghar* means body and the elephant means the divine bhava. The bodies of worldly persons are capable to have worldly pleasures, they are not fit for divine realization. Divine bhava and bhakti, when they enter into the body, bring basic changes in it. A new nervous system comes up, a new mind and intellect are born. The bhakta has a total rebirth. The previous body looks the same as before but in reality it is not so. As the contemplation of God purifies the mind and consciousness, in the same way it also purifies the body.

Antevasi — What is the significance of: 'Once your name is registered in the hospital you cannot leave it?' What is *roger baki*?

M. — Hospital, that is refuge in God. *Roger baki*, that is worldly feverishness, the desire for sensory pleasures of woman and gold. As long as the latter subsists, the body lasts. When the body perishes, soul leaves one's body. It has to take up another body. Unless one has attained God-realization, one is not liberated from it. Fruits of action have to be reaped. And this fruit has to be borne till one gets a birth to have the God-realization.

"Or *hospital* signifies the *jiva-bhava*, the feeling of being a creature. So long as it lives the body is needed. The birth of the body, its preservation and its dissolution, all these three are troublesome. Till one's consciousness is purified one cannot have His darshan; till then one has to face grief in the world. When the nature of the jiva is destroyed, divine nature takes birth. Then there is no grief - it's happiness and joy always. The very attempt to destroy this nature of being jiva is to get registered in the hospital."

M. — Oh, what a love for Keshab Babu! Like an ordinary mortal he vowed to offer coconut and sugar to the Mother to relieve Keshab Babu. All human behavior. How he concealed himself! Why did he do so? Otherwise how could he his lila be enacted? To enjoy with the bhaktas, that's why Thakur came as an avatara. This time it was complete pure *sattva*. Otherwise couldn't He, who brings about birth, preservation and dissolution at His will, cure Keshab Babu just by willing it? But this he wouldn't do. A man takes upon himself the sorrows and grief, worries and disease of ten others and suffers for them, but amidst all this he always utters 'Mother, Mother' and goes into samadhi! This is the ideal.

Antevasi is unwilling. He says to himself: 'The teachers of the Navavidhan Samaj are elders, very knowledgeable. What shall I speak of in their presence? I am young, and they are old in wisdom.' Then he suddenly remembers the great saying of Thakur - faith in the words of the guru is needed - you must believe like a child.' Soon he discovers that his mind's weakness is gone, and a serene and fearless mood prevails upon him. A blissful self-confidence has returned. And he enters the Navavidhan Samaj Mandir.

The Samaj Mandir has been decorated externally and internally for the festival. Inside it is full of people. They are all educated, peaceful bhaktas. The women are sitting upstairs behind a bamboo curtain. The atmosphere is sweetly serene and deep. The interior has been illuminated with electric lights. In the middle of the temple a thin carpet has been spread over two wooden cots. Acharya Pramatha Babu, Nanda Babu and others are seated there. They are the nephews of Sri Keshab Chandra. The bhaktas are seated on benches to the north, south and the west. Antevasi forgets to take notice of such a big assembly. He only sees Sri Ramakrishna sitting in his heart with a joyful face. In a natural and simple manner he offers his salutations to the acharyas, and says, 'I have been sent by Sri M. to take part in today's discussion in this assembly and to read some of the portions of the Kathamrita.'

The teachers happily invited Antevasi to come and sit with them. All the devotees in the temple are very curious to see what this young man is going to do. Facing the pulpit, Antevasi begins to read the short character-sketch of Sri Ramakrishna in a slow, clear and sweet but loud voice, in the manner of lecture, as instructed by M. He notices that everybody is listening happily to Thakur's life.

Then the first and the second chapters of the second Khanda of Volume I of the Kathamrita are read, followed by the first, second and fifth chapters of the tenth Khanda of Volume II. In the course of the reading the acharyas are sometimes grave, sometimes in a happy mood - they gently shake their heads, emit sounds from their throats indicating their happiness.

Antevasi reads the nectarlike character sketch:

Keshab and other Brahma bhaktas frequently used to visit Sri Ramakrishna. At times Sri Ramakrishna also went to meet the Brahma bhaktas. He had seen the Brahma Mandir of Keshab many a time at the prayer time. He would go to Keshab's Kamal Kutir frequently and enjoy himself in the company of Brahma devotees. Keshab too would go to see Sri Ramakrishna in the Dakshineswar Temple, sometimes alone, at other times with his devotees.

The Brahma devotees and the acharyas exclaim 'Aha! Aha!' in one voice as a mark of their joy.

The reading of the first part goes on - it is about Keshab's spiritual genius:

Keshab has won over the mind and soul of many a Bengali young men like M., by his saintly character, faith and devotion for God and unequalled mastery over oratory. Knowing him to be a very dear person, many young men have given him their sincere faith, devotion and love.

There is again a gentle sound of joy from the Brahma bhaktas.

Now Antevasi reads about Sri Ramakrishna's boat trip with Keshab on the Ganga:

Thakur goes in samadhi again and again on the boat as well as in the cabin. Everybody witnesses this samadhi with great curiosity. Keshab is somewhat worried.

Some of Brahma bhaktas shake their heads with joy at the memory of the past.

Vijaykrishna Goswami came with Sri Ramakrishna. Seeing him there presence Keshab feels embarrassed. Reason? Because of his difference of opinion with Keshab Babu, Vijay had left the Navavidhan Brahma Samaj and joined the Sadharan Brahma Samaj.

Thakur is seated on a chair in the cabin. Even now he is full of ecstasy. Says he in an indistinct voice, 'Why have you brought me here, Mother? Can I take them out of the meshes of worldly narrowness?'

The faces of the Brahma bhaktas show signs of indifference and self analysis.

Now the first, second and fifth chapters of the tenth Khanda of Volume II are taken up - 28th November 1883 - some months before the death of Keshab:

Keshab is seriously ill. Sri Ramakrishna has come from Dakshineswar to see him. M. has been walking on the foot-path of the Kamal Kutir from two to five p.m. waiting for Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna arrives at five o'clock. The disciples of Keshab make him sit on a wooden cot in the verandah in front of the drawing room on the first floor.

Keshab is inside in the ladies quarters. Sri Ramakrishna is very keen to see Keshab. He says that he may himself go inside to see him. Keshab's intimate disciple Prasanna tries to change his mind saying, 'He also talks to the Mother of the Universe these days. Sometimes he smiles, sometimes cries, while listening to the Mother.' Hearing this, Thakur goes into samadhi. It is winter, the verandah is cold. So Thakur is taken inside the drawing room when his samadhi is over. He is there seated on a couch, still immersed in bhava. He says under its intoxication, 'What need is there of the couch, chair and such other items?' The body will not last, this is what Thakur seems to be hinting at.

The Mother of the Universe is present there before Thakur. He sees that the Mother is wearing a Banarasi sari. The Mother is going to lift Keshab into Her arms within a few days. Is it to convey this message that he has come? Thakur says, 'Mother, don't be so restless. Sit down.'

"M., Rakhal, Latu and some others are there with the Master. Besides, there are Brahma devotees all around. Under the intoxication of mahabhava, Thakur says, 'The body and the Soul are different. The Body is born, so it would go. But the Soul is immortal. The Soul and the body are like the nut within the skin of a betel nut. The body is separate, so is the soul.' It looks as if this too is a hint at the impending demise of Keshab.

3.

Keshab comes out from the ladies room holding on to the wall. His body is just a skeleton. He sits down on the floor. Leaving the couch Sri Ramakrishna comes and sits beside him. Keshab has a glimpse of Sri Ramakrishna and offers him his pranam by lying prostrate for a long time. Still in the state of bhava, Thakur talks indistinctly to the Mother of the Universe.

During the reading hearing all this, the Brahmos sometimes show signs of happiness, also sometimes sign of sorrow on their faces at the thought of an impending catastrophe.

Sri Ramakrishna says to Keshab, 'I know the cause of your physical illness. The feeling of divine craving for God has entered your mind. It disturbs the entire nervous system. This is the reason for your illness.' He adds, 'An elephant has entered into your *kunde ghar* (thatched cottage).' (Smiling) 'When you have your name registered in the Lord's hospital, that is when you have taken refuge in Him, till you are cured, that is till you have seen Him and till you, a human being become one with the Lord Himself, this body survives. And, when one is in the body there is illness. The result of this disease is surely going to be good. It is the same as when the gardener digs the earth round the rose plant to its roots, so as to get good flowers. You are going to enjoy the bliss of Brahman after this.'

And Thakur says to Keshab, 'I was very worried on hearing that you were ill. You see, I got so worried to hear of your indisposition. When you fell ill earlier, I used to get up at night and cry. I used to implore the Mother, 'Mother cure Keshab.' I would say, if anything happened to him to whom would I talk of God in Calcutta? I had taken a vow of making an offering of a coconut and sugar to Mother Siddheshwari when you would get well. However this time, I haven't felt that much - I have been worried a little for two or three days.'

What a concern, what a love Thakur has for Keshab, Seeing this the Brahma devotees are wonderstruck.

Keshab's mother has sent Umanath to Thakur to seek his blessings for Keshab. Thakur says, 'I am not to bless him. It is the Mother of the Universe who will do so. People have the ego to say, you will recover, but it is not possible for me. It is the Mother who will do all this. Ask Her.'

"The Lord laughs twice: once when some land is partitioned between two brothers - when they say, 'This is mine, and that is yours'. But It is God who is the Lord of the land. Again The Lord laughs when the doctor says, 'I shall remove your illness.' The Lord laughs and says, 'I have given the body. It is My will whether to keep the body or not.' But the doctor intervenes as the lord and says, 'I will cure.' He doesn't know if God kills, who can save?" "

Hearing this the Brahma devotees got worried. Fear entered their minds.

This discussion continued for an hour and a half. In the meanwhile enter Dr. Kartik, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, Durgapad Mitra, Shukalal, Manoranjan, Shanti, Balai, the Younger Nalini, Sushil, Sukhendu, Amrit and others as desired by M. They come in and listen to the reading of the Kathamrita.

The reading is over. Silence reigns inside and outside the temple. Everybody listens in a serene mood to the narration of a naturally deep love between Sri Ramakrishna and Keshab. Now the commentary starts.

Antevasi (to Acharya Pramathanath) — You are all blessed indeed. How often have you seen Sri Ramakrishna and received his love! We believe that his was a pure love, his grace unfailing. By the blessings of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra you were able to gain Sri Ramakrishna's grace.

Acharya Pramathanath — I can never forget Sri Ramakrishna's affection. How many memorable moments, how many incidents are coming to my mind! Whenever I went to him he would offer sandesh to us to eat with his own hands. I was quite young then, so I was afraid to go into his presence. He would gauge the feelings, the thoughts, of visitors like one sees the things lying inside a glass almirah, and he would talk of them as innocently as a child. So I was afraid to go to him in the presence of others lest he should talk to

others about me later on - that would be so embarrassing! I tried to visit him when he was alone but he could always detect the fear and embarrassment in my mind. I suppose that because of it he never talked of me to others. However, whenever I went alone to him how he showered his affection on me, how many things he would say for my benefit! Once he said, 'The curd is so sweet when it is made in a new earthen pot. You people are like new earthen pots. You have not married. But perhaps you will not go in for it. You are fresh pots. If you call the Lord, He will listen to you. Pray to the Mother and weep secretly in a solitary corner saying, 'Mother reveal Thyself!'

"Another day he said, 'You are young. This is the right time to call upon Him. Devote your young years in His service.'

"Yet another day he said, 'You have seen a hog-plum, the fruit used for making pickles, haven't you? Woman and gold are like this fruit. What is there in the hog-plum? Just stone and rind! When you eat it, it gives you bilious colic.'

"He was indeed very witty. One day Brahmananda (Keshab) was to go to Dakshineswar. He arrived there late. As soon as the Paramahansa (Sri Ramakrishna) saw him, he said, 'There comes the bridegroom! We are dressed and making sounds.' Women dress themselves in new saris at weddings - these saris make such a sound.

"What a love he bore to Brahmananda! Can we ever understand it?

"All these things about him are gushing forth from within like a flood. How many can I narrate? Oh! can anybody else give such a love?"

Nanda Babu — One day he said to me, 'The world is also His. Live in it. No harm there. It is like fighting from inside a fort. But you must hold Him with one hand and hold the world with the other. At the right time you will hold Him with both hands.

"One day he said, 'Cut the jack-fruit after smearing your hand with oil.' And he asked me to repeat what he had said. I replied, 'By smearing the hand with oil the gum of the jack-fruit will not stick.' He was happy and said, 'Yes, exactly in this way you will not be bound by affection when you live in the world after attaining devotion.'

"One day he asked, 'Tell me, how the maid lives in a rich family.' I said, 'If she is a good maid she sees the house as her own. She does every work.' He said happily, 'Oh yes, one should live in the world just like her. One must attend to all chores but keeping the mind on God, just as the maid's mind remains turned towards her home where she has her children.'

The closed gate of the hearts of the Brahmo devotees opened up and the reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna began to gush out like a spring. Some others also wanted to say something but the time was over.

Pramatha Babu (to Antevasi) — You people are also blessed. You have directed your mind towards God at this age. And you love the Paramahansa without ever seeing him. As for us, though we have

eaten sandesh from his hands we have not been able to love him so much. You people are more blessed than we. You have had M.'s love, that's why you are so much attracted to him.

The discussion is over. It is already past 7 p.m., almost half past seven. The prayer session will start now. M. arrived at 7 o'clock. Unnoticed by others he is sitting near the western door. He puts on a Nickle spectacle a number of time and sees the inside of the temple, the dramatic scene between the Brahma devotees and of Antevasi. His eyes smiling and happy denote that he is enjoying the success of Antevasi as the manager of this drama.

The roof of the Morton School; 8.30 in the evening. M. returns from the Navavidhan Brahma Samaj Mandir alongwith the bhaktas. At M.'s behest, Antevasi again reads the meeting of Sri Ramakrishna and Keshab. At the end of the reading, M. says, 'Sometime in future all these lilas will be enacted like a stage play. But I have seen this divine lila with my own eyes in this mortal world.'

M. is suffering from backache. Antevasi massages it with Belledonna as he did in the morning.



Calcutta,
Sunday, the 17th August 1924.
1st Bhadra 1331 (B.Y.),
The third day of the dark fortnight, 44 Dandas/51 Palas.

NARENDRA CONQUERS THE WORLD WITH A FRACTION OF THE GRACE OF THE PRIEST

1.

Morton School, the staircase room, it is 6 p.m. M. is seated on a chair. In front of him are seated Jagabandhu, Harendra Dutta with his companion and some others on the bench.

It is 18th August 1924 today, 2nd Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), Monday, the 4th day of the dark fortnight. The *kathamrita*, the nectar of the Word is being showered.

M. (to the devotees) — You all must go to the Navavidhan. Today also they are celebrating. Many persons will speak.

The devotees go there. A little later arrive Dr. Kartik, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, Bhaumik, Upadhyaya and Fakir Babu. M. himself comes to the Navavidhan at 7. It is the day for imparting instruction to Brahma young men.

Acharya Pramatha Sen says, 'Form your character with full faith in God. Worship God from this very early youth. You will also attend to your worldly work. The great personality of Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna has also imparted this teaching. This young age is the right time for attaining devotion and faith. The more the devotion and faith you attain now, the more peace you will enjoy later on. You will also be able to reform others. Bhai Hirananda belongs to Sindh. He has had the privilege of the company of Brahmananda (Keshab Sen) from his early youth. Then he had contact with the great personality of Dakshineswar. Under his influence he acquired a good deal of devotion and faith. On its strength he has formed a firm character. As a result of his character he is a maker of modern Sindh. You must accept his great ideal and not only bless yourself but also bless your motherland.'

Acharya Pramatha Sen is followed by Kamakhya Babu, a teacher: 'The youth is the foundation of future life. The stronger this foundation the sweeter will be the later life. There are two conditions to it - one, faith in God and two, brahmacharya. Those who have faith in God are ever truthful. Truth and brahmacharya are both the pillars of faith in God. Those who have acquired truth, brahmacharya and love for God are men of character. Great work is accomplished by them alone. They too themselves feel a joy within. Even ordinary people have progressed by virtue of the company of the Paramahansa of Dakshineswar. What great things they accomplish having gained devotion and faith in God through his love. And they themselves attain peace and happiness.'

The next speaker is the illustrious patriot and revolutionary Vipin Chandra Pal. Says he: 'Without faith in God nothing great can be achieved. Character can't be built. A strong character makes the impossible possible. You are the future of the country. Build your character and serve your motherland. Your country looks up to you. No country can rise without its youth power. Rise and awaken your country.'

It is 8.30 p.m. now. M. is seated on a mat in the assembly room alongwith the bhaktas on the second level of the Morton School. They have just returned from the Navavidhan Brahma Samaj. The devotees comment on what they have heard there. One of them says, 'Some people have talked of

Thakur in today's meeting.'

M. (to the bhaktas) — So many people praise him now. But how great they must be who loved him in his lifetime! When the divinity gets established, everybody begins to adore one.

"He was living in Dakshineswar on seven rupees a month. Besides, he was often as if mad. Who are those, brother, who were able to recognise him then? They are not ordinary men.

"Sri Krishna said, 'Uddhava, go and bring me quickly the news of the gopis. When I was unknown, I was just a village cowherd boy, the gopis gave me their love with their heart and soul. Please go and bring me the news of these very gopis. For so long I have remained absorbed in my state duties. I shall never be able to repay their debt. Only if they kindly release me themselves from it, will it be possible. Otherwise it can never be paid back.'

"Can an avatara be recognized? No, not by man. It was by his will that a few were able to recognize him (Thakur). The avatara comes exactly like any other man, bringing with him all of man's appendages - grief, pain, good and evil, all. And he hides himself with this veil. But within this he dazzles a very few by revealing his real identity. Seeing the splendour of the sattva behind the veil the devotees are speechless with wonder. They begin to wonder whether he is a man or God. That's why Thakur would sometimes enjoy himself with his devotees by referring to his real self. He would say, 'Why, what have you to say about what Girish says (that Thakur was avatara)?' Sometimes he would say, *achina gachh* (an unknown tree). Well, it's there though it can't be recognized. And at times he would sing a particular song:

*None of you has recognized him,
Who in the garb of a lowly mendicant
roams about from home to home.*

"He who recognizes an avatara has nothing more to do - that's all he had to. He will achieve everything just by it. But say how to recognize him? On one hand you have a man, educated in the western way, so learned, on the other there is an illiterate priest, poor to the extreme. But it is the latter who wins at the end - all education, learning, pride of family and character lie at the feet of the indigent brahmin. By a fraction of the brahmin-priest's grace, Narendra is today a world-conqueror; and that poor priest is the adored of the world. The rajasic westerners bow their heads at his feet. Is it given to anybody to go to the bottom of the divine sport of the avatara? It is amazing indeed!"

2.

It is Tuesday tomorrow. M. had gone to Panchanan Ghosh Lane to listen to the *kathakata* (narration of ancient stories accompanied with music etc.). He had sent Jagabandhu and other devotees to listen to a religious discourse in the Town Hall. M. has had his dinner on his way back from the Kathakata. The devotees have been waiting for him in the verandah on the second level. It is half past nine at night. M. sits on a bench and talks for a while before bidding them good night.

M. (to the devotees) — They were talking of the Vrindaban lila (of Lord Krishna) - about the conversation with Uddhava. Uddhava had gone to Mathura to find all about the gopis - he had been sent there by Sri Krishna. Uddhava saw a gopi milking a cow and singing a song of pangs of separation from Sri Krishna. She was not singing a song composed by any other. Whatever emotions gushed out of her heart, lost as she was in them, they came out of her throat in a song. Her mind was not in milking. Her child was crying for milk but she was deaf to it. The husband was shouting at her again and again saying, 'The child is crying. Come back quickly with milk,' but she would not hear him. At last he came and gave her a push. Then she woke as if from sleep. In a choked voice she asked, 'Yes, what's the matter?' Uddhava saw that the milkmaid had almost lost her external consciousness, her mind having completely merged in Krishna's thought, and losing its identity got absorbed in Him and became one with Krishna. Her hands were working mechanically, milking the cow. After a time even this stopped - 'O my mind! plunge into the sea of Krishna's beauty,' - bhava samadhi.

"The jnana of the jnani-bhakta Uddhava received a big blow. Uddhava, as soon as he came, said to the gopis: 'Your beloved Krishna is an avatara. He is enacting his lila as a human being. He is the controller of every mind; it's he who presides as the creator, the preserver and the destroyer of the world.'

"Seeing how the Gopis loved Sri Krishna, Uddhava felt ashamed. Said he to himself, 'In vain are my jnana and reason. Blessed indeed is the gopi.'

"This is one scene. Here is another: A gopi is at the spinning wheel spinning yarn, and singing. Her baby boy is calling out, 'Mum, give me something to eat. give me to eat.' But she is not aware of it. He gives a push; still no external consciousness. She drops the cotton from her hand - her hand lies in her lap. She does not wink, her eyes are like those of the bird hatching its eggs - wondering the Self. One does not know if she is breathing or not. The baby begins to cry lying on the breast of the mother, thinking perhaps that she is dead. Somebody else, hearing the child cry, comes and tugs firmly at her arm. She regains her senses then.

"Uddhava, seeing this sight, is speechless. This is a second blow to his jnana and reason. The gopi is almost dead with the pangs of separation from Sri Krishna - 'The mind of the gopi has sunk into the sea of Krishna's love.'

"Another scene on the bank of Yamuna. The gopi is carrying three brass-pots of water on her head, and singing as she moves along. She is late today for her bath and storing water. Her companions have left much earlier - she is alone. She places the water-pot at the edge of the water, sits down and rubs both arms with water. She has the song of Krishna's love on her lips. The woods, the land, the bank of the river - the whole world - are drenched in the rays of the full-moon of (the month of) Kartik. The song she sings is the song of Krishna's love, of the joy of love of Rasa (dance of Krishna with gopis). Uddhava

stands on the bank of the Yamuna and sees this lila. As she sings, the gopi is oblivious of her surroundings as on the night of the Rasa-leela - her soul having sunk in the sea of Krishna's joy. Uddhava notes that the strains of the song have ceased. He comes nearer and lo! The gopi's face is sweetly aglow; her vital-breath, as if, has ceased in her body. The cloth she is wearing has slipped as it is no longer in her grip - she is insensible to her modesty. After a long time, the members of her family reach there searching for her. Because there is no water they are thirsty, so are the cows and the calves. They pull her out of her swoon. Even then she is inebriated with bhava, and she shouts: 'O my life-breath, Krishna, my very life!'

"This third blow, as with a heavy mace crushes Uddhava's own pride of his love to Krishna. He realizes that the gopis' love for Krishna gushing forth from the depth of their hearts and soul, and making them oblivious of their bodies, has the same relation with his own love of Krishna just as a chunk of butter bears to a piece of stone.

"Oh, what a force these reciters have! They narrate the lila as if it is being enacted before their eyes. The audience sat motionless spell bound - having sublimated the emotions, as it were.

"This was followed by a song. I remember a couple of lines and present them to you. Please sing these as you go home. The song is by Uddhava:

*Blessed the gopis, blessed you are, blessed Vrindaban!
Where the love of Krishna has embodied itself!*

The next day, it is Wednesday, 20th August 1924; 4th of Bhadra 1331(B.Y.). The celebrations in the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj are continuing. The topic earlier was the discussion on General Boothe's Life. Jagabandhu, the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, Rajani and Upadhyaya have returned from Navavidhan. It is 7.30 p.m.

M. is seated on a bench in the verandah on the second level of the Morton School. In the meanwhile arrives the Elder Jiten also. Conversation starts.

M. (to the devotees) — General Boothe is the founder of the Salvation Army. It is a big world organisation. They redeem the fallen women. Seeing them one is reminded of Christ, one feels inspired by him. He came some two thousand years ago. He did many deeds, one of them particularly was the redemption of the fallen women. Many people are working today taking that as their source. Every deed of an avatara is a living idea - each a centre of a special power. It's like a dynamo, it works for thousands of years.

"Christ redeemed Mary. I feel it is that incident which is at the root. These people are working taking it as their ideal.

"Christ said: The healthy don't need a physician, the diseased need Him. So I have come for the sinners, not for the virtuous alone. 'I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' (Mark 2 : 17).

"Mary was the daughter of a wealthy person. Her parents died. She was living in the Magdala mansion. She was extraordinarily pretty.

After the death of her parents she fell in character - she became self-indulgent. It is said that her clothes and jewellery were imported from Greece and Rome. Later on she felt repentant. One day, she saw Christ passing by her mansion. Immediately she felt redeemed, she felt the purity of Christ enter into her. She took to hard penance; she cut her hair short, put on sack cloth and wept. One day when Christ was in Peter's hut with his devotees, Mary came running and fell at his feet. And how she wailed! She washed his feet with tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. (See Luke 7:38). He said, 'Woman, thy sins are forgiven.' (cf. Luke 7:48). After his crucifixion, she was the first to whom he gave his darshan. She sat weeping near the sepulcher. Aha! What a love! (See John, Chapter 20).

"He also said, 'He who gives shelter to the orphans receives the Lord's grace.' This is the basis of all the orphanages which have come into existence.

"Every saying of an avatara takes a concrete shape in time."

Some among the devotees perhaps do not like such acts of charity. M. has realized it. So he answers their thought.

M. (to the devotees) — Thakur did not like a single track mind. So different kinds of devotees used to visit him - Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and the different denominations of the Hindu devotees - the Kartabhajas, Ghoshparas, even Nava-rasiks. On one hand he had the orthodox sadhaks of Vedanta, on the other the virachari of the Tantra, such as Achlananda. He did not reject anybody. He used to take the berries of bhakti alone out of the briar. That's why he said to Keshab, 'You may not accept the Rasa-lila (of Krishna) but you must take the gopis' attraction to Krishna.'

"Did he only lift Girish Babu into his arms? He redeemed many in the world of theatre, both men and women. How it goes: 'If you pick up and expel rascals from the village it becomes a desert?'

"One becomes a pure bhakta after a lot of tapasya. Thakur could not do without bhaktas - he used to cry for pure bhaktas. This he did for twenty-two years. Then they came. Earlier various kinds of bhaktas used to visit him. He used to talk of God with them as much as possible and enjoy their company. The company of the right type of devotee comes only as a result of hard tapasya."

3.

The next day, the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna - the eighth day of the dark fortnight. M. is seated on a chair facing north on the terrace at the fourth level of the Morton School. In front of him on the three sides are seated the devotees on benches - Dr. Kartik Bakshi, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, the Elder Jiten, the Elder Amulya, Balai, Gadadhar, Shanti, the Stout Sudhir, Upadhyaya, Rajani of Silhutt, the Younger Nalini, the Elder Lalit of Bhatpara, Jagabandhu and others. It is 8 p.m. now. A new bhakta has arrived.

M. had sent Rajani this afternoon to the Prachar Ashrama of the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj. The ashrama is situated in the Ramanath Majumdar Lane near the Mirzapur Street. But Rajani could not locate it. On

this topic there is a lot of discussion among the devotees. He was even not able to find the way, hearing this M. is surprised.

Rajani is a simple villager. He hasn't much of worldly intelligence. M. desires that somebody should accompany him to show him the way.

M. (smiling, to Jagabandhu) — He has not been able to find the way. (To Shanti) Will you lead him there? No, you are too tired as you are coming from Campbell Medical School.

"(To all present) Who is the hero who can take Katlu Khan across the *Suvarna rekha* (a river) with just ten thousand soldiers?

"Jagat Singh stands up. He says, 'Only five thousand will do.' Only Jagat Singh could do it, only he could."

Shanti stands up with a smile on his lips.

M. (to Shanti) — So you are going? Bravo! Let me see how.

Parvati Mitra, a dealer in horses, is the manager of the Hart Company in Dharmatala. He is a devotee of Naga Mahashaya. He will celebrate the function of Naga Mahashaya at his home. He has sent Durga, his eldest son, to M. Durga invites M. folding his hands. M. says, "There is little possibility of my going there, an old man as I am. Some of the bhaktas will join." Durga offers his pranam and leaves.

Upadhyaya has been to the Belur Math today in compliance with M.'s wishes so often repeated. M. hears about the Math from him. In this context, various kinds of sadhus are mentioned - those who are rajasic and others who are tamasic, some smoke ganja, the others are choleric and so on - they talk in this strain. Hearing such 'tasty' but derogatory remarks, M. changes the unedifying current to an uplifting talk.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Thakur was alive then - in 1882. I went to the Barabazar to see some sadhus. Somebody introduced me to the big congregation of the Sikhs. There an old sadhu instructed me on this very topic - on the necessity of the company of sadhus.

"Saying so he narrated a tale. It runs like this: A person at the Mansarovar Lake used to perform a yajna for birds. His object was that his yajna would attract various birds including *hansas* (swans). With the hansas would come the *paramahansa* to be sure. Paramahansa, that is to say Vishnu.

"The significance of the story is this - whichever the variety of the sadhu, he must be respected. While giving respect to him, while worshipping him, by doing so God's grace comes down if one is lucky - one can see Him at the end.

"Why do you show respect to a sadhu? For the sake of God, isn't it? So it can bring the grace of God on you."

M. (to Upadhyaya) — Thakur also told us a story. A sadhu was taking his bath. As he stood in the water he took off his loin cloth and was washing it when it suddenly fell from his hand and drifted away. Draupadi was also taking bath at that time. She tore off some half a piece of her sari and gave it to the sadhu. The sadhu put it on and

came to the bank.

"When Draupadi was being disrobed in the court of the Kauravas she implored Narayana from the core of her heart to save her modesty. The Lord appeared before her and asked her if she had ever offered a piece of cloth of any sadhu? Draupadi reminded herself of it and narrated the same. The Lord then said, 'You have nothing to fear.' The more Dushashana pulled her sari the longer the cloth of Draupadi became.

"It signifies that the sadhu is God in another form. Whether you worship God or a sadhu, it is worshipping God.

"Having narrated this story, Thakur made his listener (M.) repeat it. Why? So that it leaves an impression on his mind."

M. (to the bhaktas) — Is it enough to say that there is nothing extraordinary about a sadhu - that all men are equal.

"The sadhus hold on to God. So those who hold on to the sadhu i.e. devotees, are holding God Himself.

"God is said to be full of love. Do people understand this? When this love is seen in a human being then alone it (God's love) can be understood.

"Man has within him all these three - the animal, the human being and the divine. The exterior of all men is the same but the difference between their inherent qualities makes them different.

"When one sees that a person is giving up his all to others and himself undergoing all kind of pain for God-realization, even death - such a love they have for God - then alone people can perceive that He who is transferring this unique love through this man, is surely Himself full of love. It is from this, that is from this illustration of an all-renouncing person that we can conceive the love of God.

"So one must give respect to sadhus, one must worship them. The worship of the sadhu is the worship of God."

The Elder Jiten — The modern man is not inclined to accept it. He says, 'The sadhu eats but he does nothing. One should give to those who earn their livelihood by their labour and are poor.'

M. — I am not talking of politicians. I am talking of the Vedas, Upanishads, the saintly persons and avatars. Those who say so, have this idea in their roots that all men are equal.

"When you go to the market to buy cloth do you go to a rice seller's shop or to a cloth-merchant's? Similarly when you want God you should go to those who are carrying on the profession of God - one should only go to the avatara, the rishis or some saintly person. And an all renouncing sadhu trades in God.

"Even so if you give to the poor taking him as Narayana or God, it is worshipping Him only. This purifies your mind. Then you can see God

in that pure mind. This indeed is the path of selfless work. But to be able to see God in the poor, you have to go to a sadhu.

"If you give to a person knowing him to be poor, it is compassion on your part. You will get the reward for your compassion. You will earn name and fame. Seva (service to the poor) is above it. It is God Himself. This is the service of God-in-the-poor. Ram and Janak served their subjects with Brahman intellect - with the idea of serving jiva as Shiva.

"Thakur went to Vidyasagar Mahashaya just to tell him this. He said, 'All these acts of charity, doing good to others and so on, if done selflessly bring God-realization.' He added, 'You have a pearl within you. There is a little veil over it. Come there (to Dakshineswar), I shall lift it. - the pearl will then come out. In other words, you will see God.'

"Higher to earning and eating is giving in charity with a motive. Higher to it is doing good to others - charity out of compassion. And the highest of them all is rendering seva (service). Seva is selfless. It brings God-realization. Therefore, it is the highest.

"Why is God-realization the highest? Because it destroys every kind of pain. The mind remains joyful, peaceful and happy in every condition. The happiness born of a deed of charity does not last in every condition. That which brings happiness in all conditions is seva - serving others as God.

"Those who aim at complete eradication of pain, that is to say, God-realization, realization of the Self, have to serve the sadhus. For them, service to sadhus, worship of sadhus and worship of God are one and the same."

A particular Bhakta - If a sadhu does something wrong, will people not call him bad - say if he commits a theft?

M. — Yes, if he is caught red handed, say if he is caught stealing a brass jug, it is surely something to think about. In that case the jug should be taken back from him and he should be freed.

The Elder Jiten — The devotee from Silhutt is rather confused. The other day I saw that he was keeping his umbrella unopened protecting his head with his hand as he went along.

M. (excitedly) — How could it be otherwise? He who has not married has the strength of ten thousand elephants. Why should he believe in 'conventionalism'? He does not care for anybody. What are other people doing? They are slaves of money, woman and name and fame. On the other hand, the sadhu throws all these away like the droppings of a crow. What does a sadhu owe anybody?

M. cannot tolerate even a simple criticism of a sadhu.

M. (to Jagabandhu) — Yes today it is Janama-ashtami (the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna). Let there be some reading from the Kathamrita. Let us have our 'Vatsrik (annual) Lila celebration.'

For some days M. has been listening to the great sayings and narration of the lila of Thakur of the date on which the Kathamrita is read. This M. calls 'Vatsrik Lila celebration'. Therefore today they read the narration of 1st September, 1885. The Elder Amulya reads:

'Sri Ramakrishna is in the temple of Dakshineswar. It is the beginning of his throat trouble. Even so he keeps himself busy thinking night and day of the welfare of the bhaktas. He tells them that the mind of the bhakta does not get shaken by the ups and downs of life if he keeps the company of sadhus, carries out tapasya in a solitary corner for some days and attains bhakti.

" 'Whatever restlessness and sorrows one has are all due to one's attachment to woman and gold. One must strive to concentrate and keep one's mind at the lotus feet of the Lord. Then alone one achieves peace, happiness, and joy. This is what is called bhakti. Man takes birth only for it.' Isn't it that jiva is born again and again - In answer to this question of Vaishnava of Katoya, Thakur says, according to the Gita, 'Yes, there is rebirth.' One is reborn with the thoughts one has at the last moment of one's life. But when he (Vaishnava) reasons, he (Thakur) says, 'What you say is a result of low intelligence. The highest duty of man is God-realization, seeing Him. You are born in the world 'to eat mangoes' (that is, to enjoy the bliss of Brahman). And he added, 'You have come to eat mangoes. You should eat them. What use is it to keep a count of the trees and so on?' Even so, when he found the Vaishnava reasoning he scolded him. He said to him again, 'Try to realise what you have read from different books by practising tapasya secretly in solitary corner. Learning by rote the texts of books alone is of no avail. If you merely shout 'siddhi, siddhi' (wine) you can't get intoxicated. The stuff has to go into the stomach.'

The reading continues. Girish Ghosh calls Thakur the Absolute Brahman and sings a hymn in his praise. He prays for the boon to serve him for a year.

A particular Bhakta — Was it out of his faith that Girish called him the Absolute Brahman or was it just the mad expression of his inebriation?

M. — It was out of faith. Thakur himself has said, 'Such is your faith and devotion!'

"No counterfeit can stand a wash. This faith of Girish Babu lasted throughout the rest of his life. He was born a lion but in the presence of Thakur and devotees he was just a child. He was the first to proclaim him as an avatara. Thakur accepted this opinion of Girish - namely that Thakur was an avatara - and asked Narendra, 'Girish says that I am an avatara. What do you feel about it?' And then he added, 'Girish has twenty-five annas of faith - that is, more than 150% faith.'

The reading is over.

A particular Bhakta — How to have the intelligence to see the guru as one's ideal, as God Himself?

M. — By keeping the company of one who has such an intellect, and by serving him; by keeping company of sadhus, and by weeping and praying to the Lord, 'Grant that I may understand it.' The more you advance towards God the more you will understand it - that it is God Himself who is present before the disciple in the guru. It is the same

one power, only it has two bodies, that one power is now Guru and now the ideal Deity.

"Guru that is to say God. He Himself comes as an avatara. He is the guru of the entire world. His power manifests itself in the disciple in the world. That is why Thakur said, 'One should develop the intelligence to see one's ideal Deity in the guru. By seeing Him as a man it will reduce itself to ashes.' And he added, 'The way to see God is to have faith in the word of the guru - faith in the word of the avatara.' The avatara is the guru, Thakur is the guru."



Calcutta,
Thursday, 21st August 1924.
5th of Bhadra 1331 (B.Y.),
The 7th day of the dark fortnight, 52 Dandas / 9 Palas.

M. IN THE GURUDWARA

1.

The fourth level of the Morton School. M. is seated on his bed spread in his room and is meditating. He has a muffler over his head and a simple *lal-imli* (a brand name) sweater on his body. Over it he is wearing a 'war-flannel' shirt of grey colour with loose sleeves. It is winter, 4 o'clock in the morning. M. is steady on his seat while he is engaged in meditation. He doesn't have outwardly consciousness.

It is the first of January today. It was on this day in 1886 that acting as a *Kalpataru* (the wish-fulfilling tree) Sri Ramakrishna Deva made many bhaktas have the darshan of their ideal Deities. M.'s mind is merged in the contemplation of that very Brahman-darshan.

Still sitting on that very seat at 7 o'clock he hums some song:

*Is there a boat like the one piloted by the guru,
Which takes the distressed across,
by the grace of his lotus feet, . . . etc.
Pray come, guru. Let us both go across . . .*

It is eight in the morning. Attorney Viren Basu has come with his car. M. sets out for Dakshineswar with Vinay and Viren. He comes back to Thakur Bari at half past eleven.

Today the Army has its annual parade in the *maidan* (the big ground) of the Fort. Though not enjoyable, M. would not like to miss it. So he sends two devotees early in the morning to witness it - the Younger Nalini and another person. He will hear all about it from them in the evening.

M. takes his lunch in the Thakur Bari and takes rest there. His family members are there. He returns to the Morton School at four in the evening.

It is the Kalpataru day. Being the first of January, the offices are closed. So many bhaktas have assembled. Lalit of Bhatpara, Bholanath and others have arrived. The gathering includes Shukalal, Manoranjan, the Elder Jiten, Durgapad, Dr. Bakshi, Vinay, Amrit, the Elder Amulya and the Younger Amulya, Advocate Lalit, Jagabandhu, Balai, Gadadhar, Budhiram and other devotees.

Initially they sit outside on the roof. But because of the cold as soon as the light is brought in, they go to the staircase room of the fourth level. M. meditates with them all.

The Dakshineswar Temple doesn't have its past splendour - its painful for them all - they talk of it after the meditation. Even so every particle of dust of that place is holy - it is a great centre of pilgrimage. The Lord lived there in a human body for thirty years. They talk of all these.

Arrive Swami Madhavananda accompanied by another sadhu. M. welcomes them affectionately and makes them sit by his side on a bench. Swami Madhavananda is the President of the Advaita Ashrama of Mayavati. They converse on various topics after making kind enquires.

M. (to Swami Madhavananda) — You people have done a great work. You have brought out Thakur's life (Life of Sri Ramakrishna, Advaita Ashrama, first edition 1924). It took about three years of

work. There was a great need for it. And everybody is busy in the non-cooperation movement these days. Politicians are also too busy. They have no time for it.

Swami Raghavananda — These people don't believe in such things.

M. — It is no doubt true! Many do not like it. Gandhi Maharaj has said such a great thing in the foreword to it. 'His life enables us to see God face to face . . . Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of Godliness.' How wonderful! How many people have the insight as that of Gandhi Maharaj? Probably the others talk of it patronisingly.

"When we used to hear of God in the Brahmo Samaj we felt that He was very very far. O Mother! When we heard Thakur it seemed that He was sitting just close to us, close at hand. Gandhi Maharaj didn't have his (Thakur's) darshan but he has a very high perception. See how he has caught it, just see.

"How could it be otherwise? Thakur did not have only the darshan of God - he himself was God, an avatara. So all those who have a pure mind can catch it, understand it. Besides, so many persons were made to see God by him!"

Swami Madhavananda — Gandhiji is trying to attain *swaraj* (freedom) to the exclusion of everything else. He is very sincere about it.

M. — He is the right Karmayogi. Giving up all sensory enjoyments if one takes to any work he is called a Karmayogi. What a great yogi he is! Unless one is a yogi one can't do work correctly. I shall do everything but shall not take its benefit - this is the thought of a Yogi. Gandhiji's work is right. How high the country has risen!

What is M. thinking of? He resumes his talk.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Self-control was Thakur's self-government, whereas others take it to mean independence. Thakur's idea is different and so is his language.

Some of the bhaktas have boldly embarked upon political matters. The non-cooperation movement is being run in the country under the leadership of Gandhiji. Everywhere this is the topic of discussion. Great leaders are going to jail. The housewives have also come out to take part in it. One or two bhaktas are fully engrossed in this matter. M. tactfully diverts the current of the conversation toward God. Says he, 'It is like an eruptive patch on the skin made by tying the dhoti hard on the body. Once you scrape it to relieve itching there is no end to it. At last one begins to do it with both hands giving up all modest behaviour.'

M. (to Swami Madhavananda) — But Thakur's politics is only that far (laughing) - 'Kunwar Singh says that the English are the rulers. So we should salam them.' Swamiji said to Nivedita, 'I have nothing to do with politics.'

A particular Bhakta — Well, how much self-abnegation does one see in politics! How many troubles these people undergo!

M. — Yes, of course there is *tyaga* in politics. Take, for example Macsuini of Ireland. He did not take any food for ninety one days and then kicked the bucket. But this *tyaga* also has a motive. What it is like? It's like a school boy who goes to school without taking his meals. Why? Because he was given only two sandesh while somebody else was given four. So he left in a huff. (All laugh)

"This is *tyaga* for the sake of sensory enjoyment - there is less of self-indulgence so one wants more. But *tyaga* for God is quite another matter. Gandhiji's work is Godly. So he repeats Ram, Ram! There are good people in politics also. But they are quite few, mostly they are workers with a personal motive."

The conversation turns to Subramanya Iyer, the famous judge of Madras. He has relinquished his title of knighthood in protest against Jalianwala Bagh massacre. The world famous poet Rabindranath Tagore has also returned the same title. Somebody has written an article on him. Madhavananda talks about it. The same article also talks about Swami Vivekananda.

M. — Then it is an interesting article. I have come to know of something new. He threw away his turban and said, 'Arrest me.' This is something new about Swamiji (Vivekananda). Naren Sen also did the same to Dufferin.

"We all wish to hear something about how our countrymen are behaving with the government - it is quite natural. This government cannot last long - the Indian people will win in the end."

Three months ago, some two hundred and fifty sadhus gave up their bodies in the waters of the Ganga in Rishikesh. They used to live in the huts in the forest. For years a broken mountain rock had stopped the flow of water on the road to Badri Narayana. Last october the water forced its way down the rock suddenly bringing such a catastrophe in Rishikesh. The government had warned earlier, but the sadhus did not care for it. Only a few shifted to the inhabited part of the city. A sannyasi from the Belur Math, Sarveshwaranandaji by name, and Bhavani Chaitanya, a brahmachari died there. Bhavani Chaitanya was an M.A. and the sannyasi was a learned man. Besides, there was one Brahmachari Dhiren. He too was very learned and the Ishan scholar of the Calcutta University. He had shifted from the forest to the Kailash Ashrama in the evening, so he was saved. Later on it was said that both the sadhus of the Math let themselves be drowned, of their own accord, keeping to their seats in the hut, depending on God.

Such conversation is going on.

M. — Big rocks came rolling down the stream. Perhaps it was because of their impact that most of the people died.

Swami Madhavananda — Who can save when He kills?

M. — Yes, Thakur told the parable of the big frog. An arrow from Ram's bow hit the big frog. But it did not cry. When Ram asked why it didn't, it said, 'I did not cry for help. Whom could I ask for help when it was Ram Himself who was killing me? When a snake seizes me I shout, 'O Ram, help me, help!'

M. — Once when I was in the Swarga Ashrama, there too was a flood in the river. I did not hear of any drowning tragedy. I had gone quite

far away on hearing the warning. When I returned from a distance of four or five miles, I noticed that the place which was a plain before was under 'two men' deep water. Who is to look after the sadhus? They depend solely on the will of God.

Swami Madhavananda — Some cottages are being built by the (Ramakrishna) Mission. (Distressed) Our countrymen will pass away just like that. Who cares for them? Our rulers are not concerned with such matters. Because of their indifference we will all perish in the raging malaria epidemic.

M. — Our country men are with Gandhi Maharaj in his agitation for this very reason. They reason to themselves that they are going to die in any case. Why not die fighting? There is a limit even to forbearance. That's why Swami (Vivekananda) said with a heart full of pain: 'This indifference of the government has driven us to the neighbourhood of brutes. No food, no clothes, no education, no roof over the head. The feeling that he or she is a human-being, has been lost. Add to it famines, floods, epidemics - all these are of course there! What an unfortunate state!

A pause, M. is reflecting on something. He resumes.

M. (to all present) — What an insight Thakur had! Can we know it? There were sandesh, rotting in an earthen pot, hanging from the roof in his room. But he would not give them away to anybody and everybody. He would only give them to the devotees with his own hands. Maybe that the others thought that he was such a miser. Only he knew why he did not give them to all. So far as I can see, it was perhaps because one has to take upon oneself the misdeeds of the wicked one's deeds. He said, the sin of the butcher killing a cow rests on the shoulders of him who feeds the former. A butcher had partaken of the feast arranged in honour of the dead with others and then killed the cow.

"Thakur used to receive a plate of offerings in his room whenever a special feast was held in the Kali Temple - he used to receive it almost daily. On a particular day when he did not receive the plate in time he went cracking his slippers to the treasurer's room. Said he, 'Why has the plate meant for my room not been sent? It is already so late.' Yogen Swami (Swami Yogananda) was a young boy then. He said to himself, 'His nature is driving him - in other words, the priest is a brahmin, accustomed to taking (units of prasad of) rice and bananas - he has not been able to get rid of it.' But Thakur was the controller of minds. Knowing what Yogen meant he said, 'See, devotees come here. When they share it, Rasamani's wealth will be put to the right use. So I went to bring it myself.'

"He had a divine insight - it is not possible for us to understand him.

"If you take to a work and do not surrender its results to God, you have doubtlessly to bear its consequences. Offering the results of work to Him and taking no benefit yourself, is the right way. Even if some mistake is committed therein, it is not taken into account by Him. Thus it was said: *Swalpamasya dharmasya trayte mahato bhayat* - if a devotee takes but one step, God advances ten steps to

raise the devotee."

The sadhus take some sweets and leave. M. goes to the congregation of the Sikhs to see the birth anniversary celebrations of Sri Guru Gobind Singh, at 172, Harrison Road by Viren Babu's car accompanied by Akshay.

It is about nine in the evening.

2.

Morton School, the terrace of the fourth level. It is not yet twilight. M. is meditating in his room with doors latched. When he comes out he sees many a bhakta sitting on benches on the terrace - the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Jiten, Vijay, Manoranjan, Gadadhar, Budhiram, Shanti, Jagabandhu and others. There is also a sadhu. He has come from Yashohar, his name Swami Tarananda. M. folds his hands to offer namaskar to the sadhu, makes some kind enquiries and descends to the third level for a wash. But before going downstairs he again enters Antevasi's cabin, takes out Sri Sri Chaitanya Lilamrita and gives it to Shanti, saying, 'Please read it to him (the sadhu) from here till I come.' Shanti reads about Chaitanya's sannyasa.

It's 2nd January 1925 today, 18th of Paush, Friday, the 8th day of the bright fortnight, 38 dandas/29 palas. M. comes upstairs at 5:30 p.m. And having exchanged a few words with the sadhu, he sets out for the Sikh congregation in the Mechhua Bazar by the Doctor's car with Vinay and the Doctor. He also asks the devotees to follow.

Near about the Chitpur Road. Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten, Gadadhar, Budhiram, Manoranjan, Vijay and others reach there on foot. M. sits on the first floor facing the Darbar Sahib (the holy book of the Sikhs) in the *veerasana* (a kind of heroic posture practised in meditation), folding his hands. The place is decorated superbly with flowers - inside the room there is another room decked with flowers, and there is a flood of light - the whole house is dazzling with electric lights. Inside the room there is a ghee (clarified butter) lamp, on the walls are pictures of Ram and Sita, Chaitanya in his singing party and so on. After some time M. rises and enters the northern room. Here he sees the images of Radha-Krishna, Shiva, Salagram and other deities. M. prostrates himself before them. There is a sadhu - the priest. He rises from his seat and gives prasad of tulasi and dry currants to M. and bhaktas.

M. comes down and stands at the base of the stairs. Antevasi is just behind him. Bringing his mouth near his ears, he whispers, 'Aha! Thakur's impetus brings us here - it is he who brings us to such places.'

The Doctor asks which impetus he means. Antevasi and M. reply together: 'The training that one attains Him by every path.'

M. comes and stands near the car. Addressing the chauffeur he says, 'Please go in and have darshan.' The chauffeur goes in while the devotees take their leave. They go by foot to the gurudwara in the Cotton Street. M. follows them. With a white turban on his head, a Sikh sadhu waves holy lights before the Granth Sahib - it is arati with camphor. The arati over, another sadhu offers *ardas* (prayer). He has a black turban on his head and a *kirpan* (a sword) hanging from a shoulder band.

Having first remembered Bhagavati (Mother-goddess)

Let us meditate on Guru Nanak;

Then Guru Angad, Amar Das and

Ram Das may assist us!

Let us remember Arjun, Hargobind and Shri Hari Rai,

Let us meditate on Shri Hari Krishan,

A sight of whom dispells all sorrows.

Let us remember Guru Teg Bahadur,

the nine treasures (wealth and eight occult powers)

Shall come hastening to our homes.

May the holy Shri Guru Gobind Singh Maharaj,

the hero of Dharma, everywhere assist us.

An old Sikh devotee asks M. humbly, 'Maharaj, where do you live?' They exchange a few words. M. asks him if there is any arrangement for the holy food of sadhus. The sadhu tells him, 'Yes Maharaj, there is arrangement of prasad for the holy men - there is a free kitchen.'

M. sees a picture of the Golden Temple (Harimandir Sahib) of Amritsar hanging on the wall. The old saintly person also goes there. He begins to tell M. the history of the Temple: 'Guru Ram Das built it. He is the fourth Guru. Maharaj Ranjit Singh covered the white marble temple with gold. The Akal Takhat (seat of Para-Brahman) of the Sikhs is also there. The decree issued from that place is binding on all Sikhs. All the twenty-four hours of the day there is worship, reading of the scripture and singing of hymns.'

The cloth covering M.'s head falls off. The old sadhu covers M.'s head with it. It is a rule that when one enters a gurudwara the head must remain covered. It also applies to mosques. The sadhu tells M. that since it is the new year, the building is being white-washed.

Another Sikh devotee comes and takes M. to another big picture. It depicts how Guru Hargobind Singh, the sixth Guru, freed the numerous Indian kings captured by Jahangir.

Now everybody is given *karah-prasad* (flour-pudding) and some pieces of guavas. M. climbs down with the devotees. At the foot of the door, M. says, 'I came here once some forty or forty-two years ago. It is much changed.' M. offers pranams thrice, at three places in this temple, lying on the ground.

The devotees reach 172, Harrison Road, the house of Raja Ram Singh. Here too, they are celebrating in the Gurudwara. While going there the devotees asked M. whether he would also go there. He said he would. But he changed his mind when the devotees had left. Instead M. goes to a big congregation at 79 Cross Street.

The devotees squat on the floor in the Gurudwara in Raja Ram Singh's house and listen to the recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib. The reader priest is seated on a seat facing south-west as he recites the text from the Book. The language is Gurumukhi. He reads the fifth *mahalla*, the words of the Sukhmani of the fifth guru Arjun Dev. It is about the glory of the knower of Brahman and association with holy men. What a sweet intoxicated voice he has! The mood corresponds exactly with the language. This is the Gita of the Sikhs, which the Sikhs recite daily.

The reading continues - The reader translates it into Hindi saying, 'That man is indeed great who has his pride destroyed by the company of the holy. . . Who has the power to describe the great spiritual glory of the holy man? O man, the splendour of a sadhu equals that of God. Even the Vedas do not know the great importance of the sadhu. . . O brother, there is no difference between God and the sadhu.'

Coming a little later, M. sits beside a pillar towards the south in the Guru's Temple. He listens with a concentrated mind. The Doctor is to M.'s right. Behind him are the Younger Nalini, Budhiram and Manoranjan. To the left are Gadadhar, Vinay, the Younger Jiten, Vijay and Jagabandhu.

It is about 8 p.m. M. takes his leave. When he is getting up after offering pranam, an old Sikh worker says joining his hands, 'You are requested to kindly come here at ten or eleven on Sunday without fail. The *akhanda-path* (continuous reading of the scripture) will end at that time. The old man then greets with *Sat-Sri-Akal*, the Sikh greeting, meaning : The True, the Great one beyond Time.



Morton School, Calcutta
Thursday, 1st January 1925
17th of Paush 1331 (B.Y.),
The 7th day of the bright fortnight 39 Dandas/10 Palas.

GURU NANAK AND ARJUN DEV

Morton School, the room on the fourth level. M. has a muffler round his head, a sweater on his body. He is seated on his bed facing south, having covered his whole body with a shawl. He is meditating. A short while after it will be 8 o'clock. The school will start at ten. It has opened only yesterday after Christmas holidays. Enters a devotee teacher. They talk.

M. (to the teacher) — Well, why don't you speak in the Satprasang Sabha? I am thinking of appointing you and Gopen Babu assistant secretaries. You will get some allowance. You will also read from the Gita.

The teacher (humbly) — I feel shy of speaking. When I don't practise myself, how can I ask others.

M. — But why? You can always say: Thus spake Bhagavan Sri Krishna. You may not instruct in your own name. In fact, the proper thing for us is to say: He says all that. By doing so you instruct yourself too. It is not preaching others. It is a special art of teaching.

Gopen enters the room.

M. (to Gopen) — Yes, Gopen Babu, both of you will have to speak in the Satprasang Sabha. (Pointing towards the teacher) I have asked him to be ready with it. You will read from the Gita and the Bhagavata. When the bhaktas read from the scriptures, the Lord Himself comes there.

M. (to all present) — One can talk of spiritual matters in two ways - either as a guru or as a servitor. Those who have received His command can speak as a guru. The others should do so as a sevak - as service to the gross, subtle and causal bodies. All these matters are the food of the causal body. We have all these three kinds of service in our Math - the hospital, dispensary and relief work are all services to the gross body; the school and college, they serve the subtle body; while preaching is the service of the causal body, to preach His name to others as a sevak, not as a guru. 'The Lord has all these forms, I talk of His words to Him, I am only an instrument,' - preaching in this manner it does not harm. One includes oneself. Then it amounts to reciting His name and His glory. Then alone one develops humility."

Gopen is M.'s daughter's son. The Younger Jiten, Gadadhar, Budhram and the Younger Nalini are in the room. The Satprasang Sabha is a religious congregation of the Morton School. It is held every Sunday in the morning. The teachers and the taught attend it. The Gita and the Bhagavata are read and talks by the teachers and the students are given on a given subject. This has helped both teachers and the students to know Sri Ramakrishna. Many of them have embraced sannyasa renouncing their all. There is no fanaticism. It is based on Sri Ramakrishna's harmony of religions. The life and teachings of Christ, Mohammed and other saints are discussed without the distinction of creeds.

It is 2 p.m. The Morton School has closed for the day. The parlour near the staircase of the second level. M. is with all the school teachers. They are discussing methods of teaching. M. is the rector and is chairing the teacher's conference of the day. He is seated on a chair with his back towards the western wall. He has a war-flannel shirt on him and a white pleated chadar of raw silk on his shoulders. All the teachers are seated on benches. In front of M. in the eastern row are Shachindra, Devendra, Kangali, Haren, Mani, Jagattaran and the Younger Haripad. Three rows of benches, on M.'s right, face north. In one of these rows are seated the Elder Haripad, Keshab and Jagabandhu. In the row behind them are Vimal and Gopen. In the last back row are Jnana, Gauri and Purna.

M. has started the practice of teaching all subjects in Bengali medium a few days ago. He has recorded in his book of circulars some wise, well thought out ideas on education. The Elder Haripad, the headmaster reads them out:

There are only two aims of education. First, forming character, and second, to pass the University examination. Before teaching English, one should tell the story or the idea behind a poem in Bengali (or the local language). While doing so a question or two should be put to the students. While teaching History a map should be used. In Geography, of course, it has to be shown. Even in literature it should be used. This will help pupils to retain the topic longer without feeling any burden. History is philosophy taught by example. The moral of history should be told. Poetry should be made to be learnt by rote. (Professor) Tony was surprised and used to say, 'How is poetry read (here) without being memorised?' All poetry, whether in English or Bengali or Sanskrit, should be learnt by heart.

There are only two things, language and thought. We try to express the thought. So we must teach as much of language as is necessary to express the thought.

In Japan everything is taught in their vernacular. It helps to clarify thought. Even science and philosophy are taught in Japan by the medium of the mother-tongue. English is optional there.

The session ends at forty minutes past two.

It is 3 o'clock now. The devotees have gathered on the terrace. Jagabandhu is relaxing, lying on a bench. In the south-eastern corner Gadadhar is seated, reading something. Budhiram is telling his beads in the tin-cabin closeby. And Vinay is making a cushion. M. is resting in his room. Sukhendu has just arrived.

M. comes to the terrace at 4 o'clock, holding in his hand the rules and regulations of the Vidyapith. From the beginning, M. has been looking lovingly upon the Vidyapith - he has spent seven or eight months in Mihijam at the time of its inception. Whatever is done in the Vidyapith, they consult M. about it. He has read the rules and regulations making some changes in them and modifying others. M. is holding a copy of the same in his hand.

M. (to Gadadhar) — Please tell Jagabandhu when he gets up that these have to be sent to the Vidyapith. Let him wake up first, then only you will tell him. Tell me what I have said you.

Gadadhar — When he wakes up I will tell him to send these to the Vidyapith, Deoghar.

M. — Yes, you will not wake him up to say that these have to be sent there. Do you understand? (To others, smiling) Perhaps he is listening (M. and the devotees laugh loudly).

Jagabandhu also joins in that loud laughter.

Jagabandhu has been resting with his eyes shut. He has heard all. He rises and writes the address. Sukhendu goes out to post it.

It is 5 p.m. Lalit of Bhatpara, Bholanath, Basant and other bhaktas, visiting on Saturdays, have arrived. They are sitting on the south-eastern edge of the roof near the arch. M. comes out of his room and takes his seat on a chair. The exchange namaskar and polite enquiries. Presently join Vinay, the Younger Nalini, the Younger Jiten and others. Jagabandhu, Sukhendu, Vinay, Gadadhar and Budhiram are already sitting there. After enquiries when M. comes to know of the illness in the Younger Jiten's house, he sends him to the Ranaghat house. He lives in Calcutta and is the cashier of the Improvement Trust. M. converses now.

M. (to Lalit and others) — Yesterday I was with the Sikhs at four places - Mechhua Bazar, Cotton Street, Cross Street and Harrison Road. It was the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh. Oh, how beautifully they had decorated everything! One spot was decorated with flowers. What a faith, what a devotion! Whether it is a Gurudwara or any other place, the Guru is God. If one has devotion for the Guru it is understood that one has devotion for God. The Guru and the ideal Deity are one and the same. The Sikhs have supreme faith in the Gurus. It is infact the same faith as the Hindus. Had the Gurus not come at that time, there would not have been any traces of Hinduism left. They would all have become Muslims. Didn't they forcibly convert so many to Islam? When Guru Arjun Dev opposed it Jahangir murdered him. Jahangir said, 'Either make a Muslim pir (a Muslim divine) of him or kill him.' Seeing his common sense, selfless work, complete renunciation, a firm faith in God, a magnanimous heart, patriotism and religious faith, dazzling jnana and yoga power, the Hindus formed a community in his ashrama. Even the rajas and maharajas took his help and consulted him. He was the first to organise a community of the Sikhs. Guru Granth Sahib is his compilation - an immortal work. Oh, what great things I heard yesterday. How they bring solace to the soul! His love matches his depth. Gurumukhi language had no script. He invented it. He was killed in Lahore very cruelly by the order of the government. He was made to sit in an iron cauldron with fire below, and they poured hot sand over his head. Despite such cruelty he did not lose his spiritual wisdom and faith in God. They sing of his glorious deeds in every home of Amritsar and Tarantaran.

"Yesterday I heard some readings from the Sukhmani. What a sweet language, how great its ideas! It was written by Guru Arjun Devji. Like the Gita it is also daily read or chanted in cadence in every home. It appears he was also an authority on music. Reason? The whole text of the Guru Granth Sahib is sung in high classical music. The Sukhmani also sings the spiritual importance of association with sadhus and recitation of the Name - in other words, the greatness of the *rupa* (form). The whole of the Guru Granth Sahib is full of matters concerning the company of sadhus and service. That's why there is so much devotion for sadhus and service to them in the Punjab.

"Doubtlessly Guru Nanak is its principal initiator. These people take Guru Nanak as an incarnation of God. He was a contemporary of

Chaitanya Deva. He was sixteen years older than him. (Smiling) Somethings Thakur would say, 'The Sikhs tell me that I am Guru Nanak.' You know, so many Sikh devotee soldiers of Damdama used to come to him. Thakur prayed to the Mother shedding profuse tears: 'Mother, pray redeem them.' Even when they had recess for two-three hours they came running there.' Thus he said to the Mother, 'Mother, You will have to redeem them. See how they come running to you. How earnest they are!'

"Wherever there is true manifestation of God's power, one finds a longing for Him. The external practice of religion has always been there and will always be so, but when the avatara comes there is a greater yearning. This is a new phenomenon but it recedes gradually.

"Once I lived in a locality inhabited by the Sikhs in Kurukshetra. I was a guest of a family. I took my meals with them and so on. It was a very hospitable family. This too is the last lesson of the gurus. You see, Kurukshetra is in the Punjab (it is now in Haryana, formerly a part of Punjab)."

What is M. thinking? He resumes his talk in a feeble voice.

M. (to Bholanath) — Do you wish to visit the centres of pilgrimage? Thakur didn't talk much of them. He said, 'It is enough if one goes to Kashi and Vrindaban. The former is the place for jnana and the latter for bhakti.' He said it to a person who was very fond of going on pilgrimage. He said, 'Just tell me what has happened to me. I don't encourage the devotees when they wish to go on pilgrimage. They want me to speak in favour of their proposal.' How can the devotees understand him? Only he knew who he was. He knew that it was no use going on pilgrimage leaving him out. Vijaykrishna Goswami, in reply to somebody said, 'At some places God's manifestation is jut an anna, at others it is two annas. But here (in Thakur) it is sixteen annas (full 100%).'

"Places of pilgrimage are lit by His light. When He makes a place fit for His advent, it becomes a centre of pilgrimage, and when He assumes a human form He is known as avatara. These centres are always there. But if one can meet the avatara here why undergo the trouble of going to those centres? It is very difficult to catch him, to recognize him, for he is not recognized even by those who live quite close to him. He keeps himself veiled with his own maya. If he is gracious enough to let someone know a little of him, he may then be recognized. Unless he wills it nobody can catch hold of him.

"(Trying to peep into the past) Did anybody go on pilgrimage during his lifetime?"

Lalit — Swamiji (Vivekananda) went to Bodh Gaya.

M. — Yes, he went there for five or six days.

Lalit — Yes, Rakhal Maharaj (Swami Brahmanananda) sometimes went to Vrindaban . . .

M. — Yes, just once. When Thakur saw that he couldn't do without it

he sent him. He said to the Mother, 'Mother, don't let him sink.' Oh yes, Suresh Babu (Suresh Mitra, called Surendra by Thakur) went to Prayag during the Kumbha festival. With him was R. Mitra. And Baburam (Swami Premananda) also went to Vrindaban.

Its winter. There is frost. It is twilight hour now.

M. (to the devotees) — Let us go into the room.

The devotees rise and go to the staircase room. Everybody meditates. One of the devotees, sitting in his tin-cabin, is thinking of the evening arati in the Vishwanath Temple in Kashi. The conversation is resumed. Arrive the Elder Jiten, Dr. Bakshi and some others. Lalit takes leave along with some others.

M. is seated on a duree spread over a double bench, facing south. Close to him seated on the eastern bench are the Elder Jiten, Ramani and Gadadhar. In other rows to the north, facing each other are seated Sukhendu, 'Brooke Bond' (Yatin), Balai, Manoranjan, the Doctor, Vinay, Budhram, Jagabandhu and so on. The Doctor gives M. a book entitled 'Sukhmani Sahib', containing translation into Bengali from Gurumukhi. M. brings the book to touch his forehead. He talks now.

M. (to the devotees) — Why is Thakur taking us to different places? To show us that he alone has become all. What the Sikhs are celebrating, it's he; for whom it is being celebrated (Guru Gobind Singh), it is he; and he who is celebrating is also he (Thakur). Didn't Thakur say, 'I can see that it's Mother who has become all.' And sometimes he used to say, 'The Mother has entered this pillow-case,' - in other words he was an incarnation of Brahman-Shakti.

"He has put such glasses on our eyes that we see everything red - everybody is our own. Yesterday when we went to Gurudwara, I felt as if I was in Amritsar. In Amritsar, in the Darbar Sahib, they are always celebrating. What jnana and bhakti have been imparted to them that they are so mad! Day and night puja, reading, arati and singing of hymns go on there. Add to it the distribution of holy food, the karah-prasad (holy pudding of flour). Man remains bound by the five elements. And he also gets freed with their help. Just by turning them towards God, this is achieved. One can worship Him by seeing, by tasting, by smelling, by talking and by touching - one can worship Him with these. How beautifully they had decorated the Gurudwara with flowers! One should offer Him what one likes best. Making an offering and then taking it as prasad gradually brings liberation. Just enjoying it without making an offering only increases the bondage."

M. takes up the Sukhmani and reads it from here and there. He is at the 8th sarga now : The Characteristics of the Brahman-jnani.

M. reads. He reads in Bengali: 'The Brahman-jnani remains always unattached like water on the lotus leaf. Like the sun which gives sunshine to all, good and evil, but itself remains pure - the Brahman-jnani is sinless. Like the breeze which brushes past the raja and the indignant alike, the sight of the Brahman-jnani falls equal on all. Whether you dig earth or worship it with sandal-wood, you can never transgress its patience, it is the same with the Brahman-jnani. Like fire, the Brahman-jnani purifies all.'

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — What has been read just now, we saw it all

in Thakur. The way he looked upon his intimate disciples, the same way he looked upon Raske (Rasik), the sweeper. He used to offer pranam to Rati's mother, a prostitute, taking her as another form of the Mother of the Universe. A black woman from the western region used to assist a master-mason as a porter. He offered her also his namaskar as yet another form of the Mother. He took upon himself all the sins of Girish Babu and purified him.

"It was enough to go to him. He used to hint that just as the body is cleansed by bathing, similarly the mind is cleansed of its dirt by going to him. He would ask others to take to the recitation of the Name and austerity but never insisted upon it. On the other hand he used to persuade bhaktas to meet him more often.

"(Smiling) Once Hazra was telling his beads in the south-eastern verandah. In the state of bhava, Thakur snatched the string from his hand, broke it and threw it away. Said he, 'That you should tell your beads even here!' He meant that one could get enlightenment there in no time. That He was standing in front of him. Telling of beads and practising austerities etc. are done only to see God. There He was standing before him in a human body. What need was there of all that - so Thakur thought.

M. (to all present) — The Vedas say that one can have a feel of Brahman. Thakur said, 'No, not merely the feel of Brahman. He comes assuming a form and talks.' And then Thakur told everybody about it. There was a room full of men - mostly sceptics - Vijay Goswami was also there. Thakur said: 'Verily, verily I say the Mother has come.' And he said to the Mother, 'Mother, You have come in a sari with a red border; your bunch of keys is dangling from your shoulders.'

"One can see Him, touch Him and talk to Him - not merely see Him.

"The men of the Brahmo Samaj said that it was all hallucination. When he heard it, Thakur said, 'How do they say it? Whatever the Mother says is confirmed (in real life).' Whatever Thakur told the bhaktas actually came to pass. Therefore he said so. Had it been hallucination, how could it all come true! It was not only once, whatever he ever said tallied with truth. Not a single word has proved to be wrong till today. How could it be otherwise? He said, 'The Mother talks through me.' If that was so, how could his words be wrong? There can be no mistake in the word of God."

M. (to a child devotee) — Just see, how he takes one to so many places. He sends one to the Brahmin-jnanis, the Christians, the Buddhists and also to the followers of Nanak. And, of course, he sends one to the places of worship of the Hindus. Having seen all one must sit at last at one spot and recite His name. Is it enough to eat the fruit from the top of the tree? No, one must also eat the lower ones. What will it avail to merely sit and shut one's eyes? One should see all.

M. (to all present) — A bird was casually sitting on the mast of a ship. When the ship went into the sea the bird realised it. Then it

hovered, to the east, west, north and south. But, it could find no land with flowers and fruit. At last getting tired, it again came to sit on the same mast. Likewise one should see everything. And when one is tired, one should sit in a corner and repeat His Name.

"It is certain to happen. It all comes out of the *Adya Shakti* (Primeval Power). It is Adya Shakti who makes one see all this, that the world resides within the mind. The Adya Shakti is both within and without. It is She who directs one's intellect from within before one can do anything. He who works knowing this is called a jnani.

"There is a belief that it was all in the mind. The Vijnanism of the Buddhists has it. Nagarjuna preached *shunyavad* (nihilism) in the first century. It was based on a saying of the Buddha: *sarvam kshanikam kshanikam shunyam shunyam* - this is also like 'the world is an illusion' of Vedanta. There was also a reason for such preaching. Some five hundred years after the Buddha a lot of pollution had entered Buddhism. The reason for it was perhaps Ashoka's aggressive propagation of Buddhism. It brought its reaction. It was then that Nagarjuna came on the scene. He wiped clean and raised it. He preached that the world was a void. This belief reigned mightily for two hundred years but the devotees could not keep their minds so high. Thus appeared in the third century Asanga and Basubandhu. They came and said, 'The world is in the mind. It is the creation of the mind.' This belief lasted long. Hiuen-Tsang believed in it. He was a great scholar. As was his scholarship so was his spiritual bent - he was a highly spiritual individual.

"The idealism of Berkeley of the modern times also accepts vijnanism.

"But Thakur's system is different. Whenever he saw this worldly play, he would call out 'Ma, Ma', and go into samadhi. Didn't he see that it was the Mother who was directing all making man's intellect as the medium. What is the meaning of samadhi? Just to see that all is centered in God."

After a short pause M. resumes.

M. (to Antevasi) — Guru Nanak was a shop-boy. He was employed in the shop of his sister's husband. He was very young. It was a grocer's shop. Once a number of sadhus were passing that way. He called out to them and gave them some wheat-flour free of charge. When his sister's husband came to know of it, he rebuked him severely. Said he, 'How will this business last?' He replied, 'Why? This is profitable. The shop is being run for profit. Giving to sadhus is giving to God. Because, the sadhus are nothing but God's forms. One enjoys forever the profit of giving to God, one gains immortal bliss. The parents, the kith and kin of Nanak tried hard but could not bring his mind down to the earth. So they said that Nanak had gone mad. As soon as Nanak had his consciousness awakened, he took the vow of a wandering sadhu and left. He went to many countries - he even went to Mecca. Thereafter he became what we saw yesterday - seated telling his beads, while two intimate disciples are seated on both sides of him. One of them Mardana, a Muslim; the other is Bala. Why to tell beads? To teach humanity. One cannot understand the

significance of the deeds of a spiritual personality. People see it in one way, but in reality it is different.

"(After thinking for a while) I saw Thakur with the string of beads in his hand. But as soon as he had told his beads once or twice, he became unconscious and went into samadhi. Who was there to repeat His Name? The string fell from his hands. This is the climax of renunciation - the world is totally lost - one gets absorbed in Brahman."

M., overcome by emotion, sings:

*My mind is so very childish . . .
I have none but You as my refuge.
There is none else who can
Free me from trouble and fear and take me across.
Only Your feet dispel fear in this world.
How can this lowly man leave them?
My pain ends. And joy awakens in my heart,
When I behold Your effulgence with my mind's eyes
You are my friend in life, without You I cannot be saved.
My thirsty heart and soul call You.*

M. (to the bhaktas) — 'When I behold Your effulgence with my mind's eye' - it is samadhi then. In it one loses one's external consciousness; forsaking the world the mind gets absorbed in the infinite. This is the one aim, the summum bonum. Thakur was in this state day and night.

"Oh, just see, with what powers the man is endowed! How weak he is! But he can penetrate this veil of the infinite. So much grief, pain and want he has, yet he can penetrate it's mystery inspite of them. Thus the holy books say, 'Even gods come down as human beings to realise it.'

"It is by His grace that lust and anger can be overcome and one can remain stable amidst grief and pain. Without His grace it is impossible. 'Lighting the lamp of spiritual wisdom at home, see the face of the Mother, the manifestation of Brahman.'

"The avatars come to make you see it, to grant you fearlessness. Sainly persons are not under the control of anybody. Outwardly they look like ordinary men. But their inside is empty, only the Mother of the Universe filling it. They are men of the joy of yoga, they have reached the Everest of yoga. In that state, woman and gold and pleasures of the body look like the droppings of a crow. They alone penetrate the veil of Maya. Like a he-pigeon they take their beak away from worldly matters. The she-pigeon becomes soft when the beak is put in its mouth by other pigeon, but the he-pigeon recedes immediately after the beak is put into the its mouth. Sensuality becomes tasteless, one gets absorbed in the bliss of Brahman.



Morton School, Calcutta,
3rd January 1925
Saturday, 19th of Paush 1331 (B.Y.)
9th day of the bright fortnight, 39 dandas / 6 palas.

MAN CAN TEAR APART THE VEIL WITHIN

1.

Morton School, the staircase room at the fourth level. It is the twilight hour in winter. M. is conversing on God with the devotees.

Some days ago he visited the gurudwara of the Sikhs and heard the Granth Sahib being read. He also heard the song of Sukhmani Sahib. All that divine talk is now being recollected - the words of Guru Nanak, Arjun Dev and others. Besides M. meditates on Thakur granting Brahman-darshan on the *Kalpataru* day (the first of January). Now Christ's words have lighted up his mind. Thoroughly engrossed, he talks of him.

M. (to the devotees) — Pained by the degradation, indiscipline and deceit of the Jews, Christ said, 'Ye vile and adulterous generation, ye look for a sign.' (e.g. St. Matthew, 16:4). That is to say that you need a proof that I am the son of God; that is why you ask: I should work some miracle!

"(To a bhakta) What do you say? (To all) A sensual man wants to see a miracle. Why should he show one? Why should he work a miracle for those who are down with grief and pain? Christ said, 'I shall show you a real miracle.' What is that miracle? - 'walk on the upstream path' - always to remain full in the bliss of Brahman.

M. begins to sing:

*O Friend, how can I tell you
what is in my mind, since it is forbidden?
Without a real friend I cannot survive.
The man of one's heart is easily recognised by the eyes.
There are only one or two such men who laugh in bhava,
who are absorbed in the joy and
Who can walk on the upstream path.*

"The bhaktas walk the path upstream. Everybody else floats with the current. The spiritually great ones, the bhaktas, walk in the opposite direction. They do not walk in the direction other's walk, that is, in the direction of the world of senses. They walk up the upstream path. What happens when one holds the beak of a male pigeon. (Showing with his hand how the beak is pulled back) It frees itself like this. And when you hold any other pigeon, what does it do? It gravitates towards sensual enjoyment.

"I will have none of it - like a bare sword. No compromise.

" 'He alone is man who tastes the bliss of Ram.' The others hold on to something else - some sensual object of pleasure.

" 'My Lord, I do not want money, people, pretty women or poetry; grant that I may have selfless devotion to you, O Lord.'

"Just see this, this is what Chaitanya Deva said. He wanted nothing - wealth, woman and so on, only selfless devotion, selfless love for God.

"Aha, how beautiful Nanak Deva spoke: 'May my mind remain at the lotus feet of the bhaktas.' What a great saying! His teachings are contained in the Japaji - 'Who can describe the greatness of the holy' - what a realization!

"Only he knew how great the devotees are? Thakur also said, 'The bhakta and Bhagavan are one and the same.' And he said, 'The bhakta is like an elephant, when it dies it is still worth one lakh of rupees.' That is to say that all about the devotee is priceless.

"(To a particular person) For example you people. You yearn for God. Such persons are bhaktas.

"The rishis perform the homa for such bhaktas. Having made an oblation they say, 'Come devotees. O Lord, pray send them.'

May Brahmacharins come to me; Swaha.

May the Brahmacharins come to me quickly; Swaha.

May the Brahmacharins come to me from all sides; Swaha.

May the self-controlled Brahmacharins come to me; Swaha.

May the peaceful Brahmacharins come to me; Swaha.

(Taittiriya Upanishad, Shiksha Valli, Fourth Anuvak)

"The oblation for the Brahmacharis! Otherwise how can they cool the breath of their life? The rishis who remain mad for God night and day pray in this way. Thus, Nanak Deva also said, 'May my mind remain fixed at the lotus feet of the bhaktas.' The other Gurus also felt the same way."

M. (to the Younger Ramesh) — You didn't go there. Do go tomorrow to both these places. It will inspire you. On the Harrison Road itself, there is a banner: 'The Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Gobind Singh.'

M. (to all) — What a liberal heart Nanak Maharaj had can be seen just by this one incident in Puri. He had gone for the darshan of Lord Jagannath. The priests thought that he was a Muslim. So they didn't let him enter the temple. It was then the time of arati. What to do? He sat outside and began to sing a song of the Great one. He composed it there and then and sang. Here is the song:

*The sun and the moon are lamps in the big disc of the sky;
The stars shine like so many pearls.
The fragrant breeze from Mount Malaya is the incense,
The wind serves as the fly whisker,
The whole wood is lighted up.
How to perform Your arati,
The destroyer of the pain of rebirths?
The anahat sound is ringing like the flute,
The allured mind is daily thirsty
Like a bee for the honey of the lotus feet of Hari,
Pray grant the water of Thy grace to Nanak-sarang,
So that he may live in Thy Name.*

M. (to the youngman) — It is said that as soon as he began to sing

this song, all the people came out of the temple to listen to him. The temple was empty. Just see, what a plan the Lord has to add to the honour of the devotees. Had he allowed Nanak to enter the temple how could have this immortal song been composed? It has become a classical song. It is sung in all the gurudwaras. Its original is in Gurumukhi. Ravi Babu (Rabindranath Tagore) perhaps adapted it into Bengali. What a high spiritual mood! As if he saw the entire universe performing the arati of the Lord.

The Youngman — One finds the same mood in Emerson.

M. — No, there it is somewhat different - that isn't so high bhava. Nanak saw nature as though it was absorbed in praying to the Lord with joined hands. While the former is imagination, the latter is actual vision.

M. (to the devotees) — I remember another incident of Guru Nanak. Mardana was his close disciple. He was always with him. He was a Muslim. Nanak always preached that all happened by God's will and that all is pre-destined. Mardana's faith in it did not go so far. This is what happened at the time when Guru Nanak was setting out for Mecca. One day Mardana showed a grain of corn and asked Guru Nanak, 'Guruji, who will eat this grain?' He answered, 'A hen in Kabul.' Mardana took that grain and immediately put that in his mouth. While he was devouring it, the grain instead of going into the stomach entered the nasal tube. Though he tried hard it did not come out. Then both of them reached Kabul on their way to Mecca and stayed in an inn. A hen was roaming about on a mat in the courtyard. Mardana then sneezed forcing the grain to come out. Like an arrow the hen came and pecked it. Guru Nanak laughed and said, 'Have faith. God has arranged everything in advance.' One sees and hears so much and yet does not believe.

"God has arranged food and clothes for all. Taking the incident as the base he gave the following immortal verse:

Nath, Khasam ke hath kreet kreet dhakka de

Jahan dana tahan khana Nanaka sach hai.

"*Nath* means nose; *khasam* means the master meaning that the jiva has a rope through his nose. That rope is held by God like that by the master of a camel holding rope through its nose in his hand. *Kreet kreet dhakka de*, that is to say, pushing the man into various states, God makes him understand this truth only. Man's mind falls from yoga (union with God) because of the worries of food and clothing. So he says, 'One will get his food and drink where He has kept it for him.' This is a great truth. *Nanaka* meaning Nanak the man, or any jiva. He is called Nanak or Guru Nanak by his bhaktas.

"Christ also said the same to Peter. He would often say to Peter, 'Follow me, and I will make you fisher of men.' (Matthew 4:19). Peter was a fisherman - he used to catch fish. On hearing this daily, he said one day: Lord, you are asking me to give it up and follow you. From where will come food and clothes?' He told the reality. Its a great truth from the point of view of the world. Christ then said, 'O

ye of little faith, He knows all you need. He will supply your need.'

"And what happened to Narendra? Falling on evil days he was so confused. He asked Thakur to ask the Mother of the Universe for it. Thakur said, 'The Mother has already arranged ordinary rice and cloth for you. Don't worry.'

"All these are a type of men. So they speak out what is originally in the mind of the people. He who has faith in God is always at peace. The others have to worry for their food and clothing. But how many people of faith are there? Almost all belong to the other type. That is why these people speak for others.

2.

Arrives Upadhyaya.

M. (jokingly to Upadhyaya) — Come, do come in, this side (to M.'s right). Please be seated.

Upadhyaya — To sit on the same seat with you!

M. (pulling Upadhyaya's shawl) — No, no, sit here. You deserve to sit. Where are you these days? Aren't you here in the Mechhua Bazar?

Upadhyaya — No, I am in the parlour. By your grace I have recovered. I am well after bathing in the nectar of words showered by you. I didn't have to take any medicine.

M. (to all present) — Once some of us, friends, visited a lunatic asylum. One of them talked rather well - on sociology, science, philosophy - on all these subjects. Then he said, 'Sir, I have three-four of my children at home. They caught hold of me on other people's asking and shut me here.' My companions listened to such talks and then saw the dance of another lunatic. He danced well. The first lunatic said, 'What are you seeing, a dance?' Saying so, he himself began to dance. Oh, what a terrible dance!

The Elder Jiten — Stark naked! (All laugh).

M. — Yes, the man thinks that only the lunatics dance so. That he himself is a lunatic too, he does not know. Men dance the dance of the shameless, taking hold of woman and gold, Thakur used to say.

"He has arranged all. But the man says, 'I, I.'

"Has He arranged only the external? No, there is arrangement for the internal too. Just see how much one has - teeth, the tube within the throat, lungs, what not? This pillar of external and internal desires! There are so many classes of desires. His senses work, his mind works and so does his intellect and then he has his ego. $x \times y \times z$ is one of the outer series, and $a \times b \times c$ another series.

"A combination of these two has generated this 'I', this strange consciousness. The aggregate effect of both these series is this strange consciousness - I.

"And, is that all? When you look into the properties of all that, you discover infinite series.

"The rishis had direct experience of all this. So in amazement they said God exists and *anoraniyam mahato mahiyan* - He is the smallest of the small and biggest of the big. So they say that the infinite is within us. That infinite within the finite! Besides, the finite is within the infinite. This consciousness of ours does so much. When both the series do not conform, it is called death.

"Just see how beautifully He has made! The attraction of the form, taste etc. comes from the external. To receive it we have eyes, ears, nose, tongue and touch - all these.

"The infant has no awareness in the beginning - what is what, he doesn't know. When he hears a word he puts his ears in the wrong direction. He does not know fire - seeing something red he tries to catch it. The moment he sees something beautiful he is attracted by it. But no sooner does he put his hand in the fire and feels its heat, he immediately pulls it back. As his hand touches a rose and the thorn pricks him, he says 'Oh' and takes it back. As he goes on doing so his mind is superimposed with these impressions. In this way a strange consciousness, of I, of ego, of individuality makes its appearance gradually. The 'I' is a combination of all these.

"Then how to reach the unlimited consciousness with this limited consciousness? When this limited consciousness becomes one with the unlimited consciousness only then. Thus Thakur said, 'As I was peeling an onion, I saw that nothing remained at the end.' That is to say the salt ball becomes one with the sea.

"All this is superimposition. You always live in the terms of the finite. How can you understand the infinite?

"Thakur used to say so, to join this very limited consciousness with the unlimited consciousness. He used to say, 'Build a relationship as a servant, a son, a friend and so. Or build a relationship of *Soham* (I am That) as in Jnana Yoga' - this is joining this small 'I' with that great 'I'. One has to graft this unripe 'I' with the ripe 'I' - just as it is done with plants. This is the only way to control this 'strange consciousness' (ego), the cause of all pain.

"How great is God, how can the intelligence of man know it? Thus, how much can a man describe His glory? The song goes thus: Shiva even with his five mouths cannot fully describe His glory. (To the bhaktas) What is after this line: 'The five mouthed Shiva sings Him'."

M. — See, Shiva with his five mouths cannot fully sing His glory. The next line is: The Sheshanag cannot fully describe His glory with his hundred mouths. (Humming the tune) His beauty enchants yogis - and then such an attraction and enchanting power. When one has seen His vision - nothing else looks better.

M. (to Upadhyaya) — The rishis said, He is *durgam*, means difficult to know. *Yogibhirmamyam* - that is even the yogis do not know Him.

If that be so how can the jiva struck by grief and pain know Him with his limited consciousness?

A Bhakta from Vivekananda Society — A little earlier it was said that the man can penetrate the veil and now you say, even the Yogis do not know Him.

M. (in a firm voice) — Yes, both are true, 'For Your devotees, O Mother! You have a form. When the body made of five elements dissolves itself in the five elements You become formless.' The Yogis do not know Him means that He cannot be known by the calculative intellect. If You want to know Him, take to tapasya and you will know Him by His grace. When the mind is purified by tapasya, He grants His darshan by His grace.

"He has a form and He is also formless. When you climb the roof you can understand that He is both. Thakur would sometime say, 'There is nothing, nowhere.' And then he would say sometime 'He can be experienced a little.'

"He talked to us about Chaitanya Deva. When he was in Puri, his feelings were of God-without-form. He used to see Him then as God-without-form. And at other times he used to see Him with a form like Sri Krishna in the Rasa group."

The Elder Jiten - Sometime Thakur used to say that he did not like images (of deities). Which was that state?

M. — Yes and he also said, 'I don't like the sunshine, the flowers and so on.'

"One cannot understand all this by sensory knowledge. Thakur saw everything as His manifestation - whether it was God-with-form or God-without-form, they were all Sat-chit-ananda for him. He had a mind too pure, to have the least touch of any stain.

"Aha, I shall never see again such a state of Paramahansa. Having immersed himself into the sea of joy of yoga (union with Him), he comes out absolutely fresh. He does not look like anybody, and then he gets mixed with everybody.

"He lost all the experience of the world while in samadhi - a totally new state Thakur was in. No superimposition on him then - 'The parrot comes out of the wood wearing a golden crown.'

"When Brahman enters in a man, Brahman meaning the most expansive - it works riot within, like an elephant, when it enters a mud and straw hut, destroys everything inside."

M. (to the young man) — A tree is known by its fruits. Thus one can understand Thakur by seeing his 'fruits'. What is that fruit? Just see what great things have happened in a short time in the world on his account. Here was an illiterate brahmin priest; and see, the great men of the world are showing such reverence to his words. Max Muller wrote his life. This alone makes us understand who he was - an avatara.

Enters a brahmachari of Vivekananda Society. The topic of conversation changes immediately.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — Many big men have entered the Math these days - all B.A.s and M.A.s. I saw it in the Vidyapith in Mihijam. And so many of them are practising tapasya in the Himalayas. Can we compare the other B.A.s and M.A.s with them? If they are the Himalaya, the former are mustard seeds. If they are ocean, the former are water puddle made by the cow's hooves - so much of difference there is.

"Some have been brahmacharis for twelve years, the others sixteen. In other people money, the desire for transitory name and fame are running riot. Day and night they worry about woman and gold. On the other hand what do those in the Math have? How to have the vision of God, this is what they yearn for. When necessary, Brahmanjanis go to the Kalighat to sit fasting there like the Holy Mother. They are ever ready to do anything which can make them attain Him. They sacrifice even their life.

"All *gujiyas* (a kind of sweetmeat made from dried milk) look alike, but some of them are filled with cream, the others with lentils. It is the same with men though they may look alike. But are they the same though similar they are in the looks?"

M. (to the bhaktas) — It was 9 p.m. in the evening. There was nobody there. Suddenly says Thakur, 'Let no bhakta think that I am indispensable. that is, for teaching people And then he adds, 'It is like a water pipe. If one pipe gets out of order the engineer comes and changes it. Similarly, the Divine Engineer will come immediately and fix a new pipe. His work does not stop because of anybody.'

"The devotees are like different pipes - water comes out of them all. They all propagate His bhava in different directions. Thakur had infinite bhava."

The Elder Jiten — Had there been no avatara it would have been so different.

M. — It is like the hollow and crest of a wave. Why is there a hollow? So that there may be a crest. All this happens by His will - the rise and fall of dharma.

"Do the bhaktas think that if the avatara did not have his intimate followers his work would stop, it will not go on?"

M. is silent for a while, then he mumbles 'Shambhu, Shambhu'. He resumes his talk.

M. (to the devotees) — I am reminded of a scene whenever I think of Kashi - some are bringing water on their head and all others are standing in a row with water pots on their shoulders. He is *Swayambhu* and I, His servant. This is the meaning of saying Shambhu? Among them there is a dancing sadhu. That 'Shambhu' is getting mixed with the *anahat* sound.

"When one enjoys repeating His name, all lust and anger disappear."

M. utters 'Shambhu, Shambhu' all alone for sometime - performing his solo kirtan in a loud voice.

Some of the bhaktas also join him in this chanting of the name. And then he pauses for a while and again sings a song:

*When will such a good day dawn,
When our evil days will change into auspicious ones.*

M. (to the bhaktas) — O, how Thakur used to dance on hearing this song. He would go into samadhi. This is the way he would answer what I have told about 'I'. He impedes the struggle. Surrenders himself, dissolves into the higher, true 'I'. In other words, superimpositions open out. Now there is 'no thread on the reel'. Only the yogis who are in that state can experience the joy of yoga.

It is nine in the evening.



Morton School, Calcutta
Saturday, 3rd January 1925,
19th Paush 1331 (B.Y.),
The 9th day of the bright fortnight, 36 dandas / 6 palas.

THE AVATARA IS THE SUN AND HIS CLOSE DISCIPLES ITS RAYS

1.

The Thakurbari in Guruprasad Chaudhury Lane, Calcutta. Half past nine in the morning. M. is seated in his room on the second level, he is on a cot facing south. He has a press proof of the fifth volume of the Kathamrita in his hand.

Enters Antevasi. He offers pranam and says, 'Sukumar Maharaj of the Math has come with me for your darshan.' M. cannot place him by his name, so Antevasi says again, 'He has two other names too: Shambhu Maharaj and Swami Satswarupananda. He was the headmaster of the Vidyapith. He is now going to Uttarakhand for tapasya.'

M. — Where is he? Let him come in. (When he enters the room) O, him I know (laughs).

Swami Satswarupananda — Earlier I used to come here with Jiten Biswas (Sw. Vishwananda).

Three sadhus - Swami Avinashananda, Swami Satswarupananda and Swami Nityatmananda came this morning by bus from Belur Math to the Howrah Station. From there Swami Avinashananda has gone to the Advaita Ashrama in the Wellington Lane and these two have come to see M.

M. welcomes Swami Satswarupananda heartily and makes him sit on his cot towards the south. The other person sits on a chair in front of M.

This room of M. is very small. 8 feet by 6 feet. To the north east in this room a wooden cot lies touching the wall. To its north there is a table with some books on it - the diary of the Kathamrita, the printed forms of the fifth part. To the south there is a small almirah. It is full of books like the Encyclopaedia and other such books. To the east of the cot in the middle, there is a door to the east. One enters the adjacent room towards the east through it. In the middle of the southern wall there is a window with a door to its west. It is by this door that M. can go in and out to the verandah. The window in the northern wall is covered with a thin wire-net. The wall to the west is blind. On this wall and the other one hang pictures of various gods and goddesses and of divine personalities. There are also the pictures of Thakur, Swami Vivekananda, the Holy Mother, Chaitanya's singing party, the Gaur-Nitai, the bird sitting on its egg and so on. On the wooden cot there are two mattresses, a bed-sheet and a pillow. This bedding is somewhat soiled.

M. is seated on the wooden cot. He has a waist-coat on his body. A snow-white red-bordered short dhoti wraps his body like a shawl.

M.'s eyes are fixed, shining bright, his face full of joy. M. has a high forehead, his white beard flowing down to his chest, and a few hair on his head. In a happy mood, he talks inspiringly.

M. (to Swami Satswarupananda) — God speed! The sooner the better. It's a sight for the gods to see. Simply struggle is enough, not to speak of realisation.

A Sadhu (to himself) — Even in his bodily sufferings how bright and serene his eyes are! How full of divine joy is his face, as if his mind is immersed in the sea of joy! How much love of God brings such a state?

Enters Swami Raghavananda. Antevasi leaves his seat for him and sits in the north of M.'s bed at the behest of M.

M. (to Swami Satswarupananda) — Where are you camping?

Swami Satswarupananda — In the Ambika Mandir of Rajpur, in the foothills of Mussoorie, eight miles above Dehradun. The Kishanpur Ashrama is three miles below.

M. — Is there anybody else there?

Swami Satswarupananda — Yes sir, Swami Avyaktananda of Patna, Swami Jnanananda of Kashi and Sw. Jagadananda.

M. — Who, Jnanananda?

Antevasi (laughing) — He who is not afraid of the crocodile. He said, 'I shall cut the crocodile into pieces and making a 'jhol' (ragout) and eat it.'

M. (laughing loudly) — Yes, yes. I now know him. A very brave man. (Pebles of laughter from all).

Swami Raghavananda — Rajpur is a beautiful spot having pure associations. Swamiji (Vivekananda) met Hari Maharaj there. And it was there that he gave his consent to go to America at Swamiji's request.

M. (to Antevasi, as he hears the sound of the bell from the Thakur's shrine on the third level) — Just go up and show them our shrine of Thakur.

The sadhus climb up to the Thakur's shrine. They have the darshan of Thakur's sandals. Thereafter, sitting in the 'Natmandir,' they take the fruit and sweets of the early morning offerings, and then climb downstairs to be with M.

Swami Raghavananda — Proofs have arrived. (M. is inattentive) Proofs have come.

M. — Yes. (to Sw. Satswarupananda) It is our fifth part (of the Kathamrita) under print. The appendix talks about Swamiji. All these incidents are half a century old but I see them as if they happened only yesterday.

M. (to Antevasi somewhat smiling with joy) - Tell me, let me see why it is ever new?

Everybody thinks.

M. — Didn't Thakur give the true ideal? Everybody is going towards it. Whichever be one's stage one gets light from there. That is why it is ever new. Aren't we all at different stages? All are not at the same

stage.

Swami Raghavananda — Well, Thakur used to tell ‘the house’, for example, the house of indivisible. What is that?

M. — That is to lead us. If a nice thing is placed before us, we proceed towards it - that’s it. He leads us from stage to stage.

Swami Raghavananda — Well, how can one know which stage is higher than the other? Who will tell this ? Some five people are doing one thing while I am doing another. Now which is greater or smaller, who can tell?

M. — He who has to decide is seeing all. Maybe He is laughing.

M. — Thakur said that there was another path, that of *Soham* - I am That. One can’t do it by this path. Its quite a different matter - (smiling) it is not from that path.

Antevasi — What, avatara?

M. — Yes, avatara.

M. (to Swami Raghavananda) — These different levels also He has made. But they (the people) unnecessarily fight. Without His will, not a leaf moves on the tree. The Lord said, ‘Many are the births taken by Me and you, O Arjun. I know them all, while you don’t, O Parantapa.’ (Gita 4 : 5).

"He who knows the past also knows the future. But, you do not know. Hold Me. This will do you good. *Ma shuchah* - grieve not. Hold Me. No fear.

"Such a clear message but who listens?"

M.’s sight is fixed higher up. Both his eyes are sparking.

M. (to himself) — *Arthan vyat-adhat shashutibhyah samabhyah* (Ishopanishad : 8)

M. (to all present) — Who can know Him? It’s He who bestows everything. It is He who does all. It is He who has become all.

M. (to the sadhus) — After his return from America, Swamiji (Vivekananda) said while pacing the roof of Balaram Babu’s house, ‘What he (Thakur) said I have not yet been able to understand : ‘Yours is not from the direction of Vedanta.’

"But later he understood by his grace. It was his later perception. And he wrote such arati and *stava* (hymns of praise) - ‘The breaker of the bonds of the world’ and ‘Om! Hring! Thou art the True One . . .’

"Never mind he did realize later on. A big flower takes time to open out, for example the lotus flower. The smaller flower blooms sooner but then it also sheds it’s petals earlier.

"Thakur made Swamiji write these hymns of praise so that the world

may listen."

M. (to Antevasi) — Just recite from memory.

Antevasi (slowly) — *Khandan bhav-bandhan jag-vandan vandi tomay, Niranjan nar-rupdhara, nirgun gunamaya. . .*

(We salute Thee, Lord, adored of the world. The breaker of the bondage of the world, taintless Thou embodiment of blessed qualities. Thou transcendent of all gunas, human form Thou bearest. . .)

M. — Just see what Swamiji says: He who is formless transcending all gunas, the great Brahman, has now come in a human body with all attributes, this Sri Ramakrishna. He says : 'He who takes refuge at his feet will certainly cross this sea of the world.' But for God who has the power to do so? and he also adds: *drid nischaya manasvan* and *nishkaran bhakat-sharan*, even when absorbed in samadhi, he is the selfless refuge of the bhaktas.

"All contradictions meet only in God. That is why in a hymn of praise, this arati Swamiji says: 'Thakur is the meeting point of all religions contradicting each other and then he is above them all.' (To Antevasi) What is after *namo namo*?

Antevasi — *Namo namo prabhu vakya-mana-atit mano-vachana-ek-adhar* (Refuge of the mind and speech, Thou art beyond the reach of either).

M. — Just see Thakur came in a human body, he was the greatest among men (*narwar*), beyond mind and speech. It means that he who is Indivisible Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute, who is beyond the human power of mind and speech has now come as avatara in the person of Sri Ramakrishna. He alongwith Shakti is making his sport in the world - creation, preservation and dissolution.

"When one recites these two verses before taking to meditation, the latter comes right. Those who live in solitude will be able to understand Thakur by reciting these verses of praise."

Antevasi — Mahapurush Maharaj (Swami Shivananda) also put it so beautifully: Whatever Swamiji had to say about Thakur, he said all in this hymn.

M. — Why not ? These are all the words of the divine personality. Itself, the same *narvar*, the greatest among men, the same grand man. Behold the man! Christ talked about himself. Swamiji has compiled the very words of that grand man in this hymn as his offering.

"He who said in Cossipore during his (Thakur's) last days, 'If he (Thakur) himself says he is an avatara I shall believe,' that very individual composed these hymns later on.

"People only commit to memory, they don't meditate on these hymns. If you meditate on these two, you will attain - you will know Him truly. How many persons are benefiting from the hymns because he

composed them. So many maths and ashramas, throughout the world, sing them."

M. (to Antevasi) — *Ugram krinomi*, this is in the Chandi (in the Devisukta of Rigveda) - I raise, and if need be, I also drop. (To Antevasi) You know it by heart - recite it.

Antevasi and Swami Raghavananda recite together:

Om aham rudrebhiih vasubhiih charami aham adityaih ut vishwadevaih,
aham mitrauvarunobha vibharya aham indragni aham ashvinobha. . . etc.

[I roam with Rudra and the Vasus. I roam with the Adityas and Vishvadevas. I bear both Mitra and Varuna. I also bear Indra, Agni and the Ashwani. Rig Veda : 10-125-1]

M. — He says in this mantra : *yam kamaye tam tamugram krinomi tam brahmanam tamurshim tam sumedham* - Him whom I want I make the greatest. I make one Brahma, other Rishis and yet others profoundly wise.

"An illustration of it is Swamiji who was made a world teacher by Him. And He also brought a couple of persons down. One of the latter was said to have the state of a paramahansa but he fell later on. When he did not visit Thakur for a long time, Thakur said, 'Do you know why he does not come? He is doing what I asked him not to do - he has fallen into the company of women.' Another person was called an *ishwarkoti* (a Godman). During his last days Thakur said to him, 'Who? Who are you?' In other words, he had given him up - as he had fallen."

"What to talk of others? A person falling from the state of Paramahansa and the other one from the state of *ishwarkoti*! Do people come to thier senses even after seeing this?"

M. — The mind is so unripe - it is like a laundered cloth, it takes any colour you die it in. But after one has seen God this does not happen - the environment has no effect. The company (of the worldly) does not affect him - *jitsangdosha*.

A particular Sadhu (to himself) — M. had said the same in reply to Swami Shuddhananda when asked about Bhavanath viz, 'He who can raise can also bring about his fall.' Thus perhaps the teachers say : *karttum-karttum-anyatha-akarttum samarthah*, God and the avatara are all capable.

Swami Raghavananda — If everything happens by the will of God, tapasya has no meaning.

M. — Tapasya also becomes possible by His will. So many people hear about it but how many practise it? If He wills one carries out tapasya inspite of a hundred hurdles. But if He doesn't one does not take to it even though one may have a hundred opportunities. Man's duty is simply to try for it. So long as one has perseverance in other matters one should also try to practise tapasya. After tapasya one realizes that it is not by tapasya that He can be attained. It is only by His grace that one can attain to Him. So what should one do? Try to

remain absorbed in it. When the mind is attracted by some undesirable act one should try to give it up. Even then the mind perforce goes down. What to do then? One has to put up with it.

"The ultimate thing is that all happens by His will - *yamevaish vrinute tein labhyah* (to a sadhu) - What is that mantra?"

A Sadhu — *Nayamatma pravachanena labhyo na medhya na bahuna shrutena, yamevaish vrinute tena labhyah etah esha atma vivrinute tanum svam.*

[The Self is not attained through discourse, nor through intellect, nor through learning. It is gained only by him who is accepted by the Self. To such a one the Self reveals its own nature.]

M. — There is this one too - *na tapasa na chejyaya na bahuna shruten.*

The fifth part of the Kathamrita is under print. As M. is indisposed he cannot read the proofs by himself. So he is helped by Swami Raghavananda. He is with M. these days.

Swami Raghavananda wants to read out the new matter of the fifth part to the sadhus. However, the sadhus want to hear it from M. himself. But when Swami Raghavananda insists again and again the sadhus agree to hear it from him. The topic is: Shyam Bazar of Thakur's native place, followed by the description of the Hari Sabha of Jorasanko. Thakur is telling about his state in the Hari Sabha - he was in such a state of bhava that it looked as if his body would not last.

M. — When the account of Gaya was being read out in Thakur's presence, we saw him sobbing and weeping. (Fixing his memory to the past) You see, his past had come back to his mind. He knew who he was - *svayamev ataman atamanam vetth tvam purushottama* (Gita 10:15) - Verily You alone know Yourself by Yourself, O Purushottama.

Antevasi — Is it what happened to Chaitanya Deva in Gaya?

M. — Yes. When Chaitanya Deva went to Gaya to perform the rites for his dead father, he went into a deep bhava - he had the vision of God.

Swami Satswarupananda — O, O, the same incident.

M. — When Thakur heard it, he began to sob and weep.

Antevasi — Where, in Dakshineswar?

M. — Yes, in Dakshineswar.

Antevasi — The readers of the Kathamrita think that Thakur would not go to Gaya for the reason that he had been born as an avatara there. When the incident of Chaitanya born as an avatara would come to his mind, he would give up his body - this nobody remembers.

M. — That's why he would not go to Puri also. Chaitanya Deva was

there for twenty years. Towards the last twelve years, he was in the mahabhava. Remembering all those things the body would not last, that's why he wouldn't go there. Chaitanya Deva is now Sri Ramakrishna. He himself said: 'Christ, Chaitanya and I are one.'

M. (to all present) — Thakur said to Swami Vivekananda on the first day, 'Have you heard of Gaur of Nadia (Chaitanya)? I am he.' He replied, 'Yes, I hear people saying Gaur, Gaur.'

"Our house had not been partitioned till then. It was in that room in front, that Swamiji told me this. And he also said, 'Mahashaya, has this person gone mad? He says, that he is the same as that Gaur of Nadia'." (All laugh).

Antevasi — Well, how did Swamiji take it - in what bhava?

M. — What bhava? He was just a boy then. On the top of it he was an English-educated boy.

M. and Swami Raghavananda (in one voice) — He did not believe in reincarnation.

Antevasi — I have been corrected. I thought that because Thakur claimed that he was an avatara of Chaitanya Deva that Swamiji had called him mad.

M. — Swamiji took it the same way as any young man would do. He knew English, so he had become all the more sceptical. He did not believe in reincarnation. You see, the Englishmen do not believe in it.

"That's why Thakur swore by it and said it so emphatically to all. You see, all those who had been educated in English used to visit him. Thakur would say, 'Verily I say, the Mother has come - She who stands in front and talks to me.' Only this could make the sceptics believe. Thakur made ordinary men see God as much as possible in these days of disbelief."

M. (laughing) — Narendra said: How much he pulls me with great affection here, while I sleep comfortably in my Simla home!

"Just see, he who called Thakur a mad man later wrote a hymn with this - *tasmāt tvamev sharanam mam dinbandho* that is to say - O, the friend of the lowly, I know nothing. You alone are my refuge.

M. (to the sadhus) — There is a great difference between the avatara and his close companions. Like the Sun and its rays - the intimate disciples are the rays.

M. still has a painful hand - it pains. He had forgotten it while showering the nectar of Thakur's words. The sadhus were also busy drinking the nectar. Realizing M.'s suffering, Antevasi fans him. M. says, 'Please open the door.' Swami Satswarupananda opens the eastern door. After two minutes M. asks Antevasi not to fan him. He does not want seva from a sadhu.

Enter Ghosh Mahashaya. M. says in a lighter vein, 'Please come in Ghosh Mahashaya. (Laughing) I can also call you Sandesh Mahashaya, as you are working in a sandesh (sweet) shop.' (Everybody laughs).

M. (to Ghosh Mahashaya) — Don't you sometime want to eat sandesh? You see, the environment has it's influence.

"(In a serious tone) The mind catches whichever colour you dye it in. But when it ripens there is no fear. The mind ripens when one has had His darshan. (To Ghosh Mahashaya) Please fan the sadhus."

Ghosh Mahashaya is about fifty, rather obese, a nice man, he always has a pleasant smile on his face. He keeps silent. M. counts the pages of the appendix of the Kathamrita. Only thirteen pages have yet to be printed.

Swami Raghavananda — When this is finished, something new, should be added.

M. — Yes, I was just turning the pages of the diary; there is a lot of material.

Swami Raghavananda — It would be better if the fifth part is bigger. There is no possibility of publishing another part. Humanity will be infinitely benefited by it.

A particular Sadhu — The humanity will be benefited more if he (M.) lives. Too much labour is involved in writing more. It will further tell upon his health, which will be a loss to all.

M. — This writing work is meditation on Thakur - a labour of love. Otherwise the mind remains engaged in bodily pain only.

Swami Raghavananda — Will you give 'the daily-chronicle' after this?

M. — No, not now. I shall have to write anew.

Antevasi — What is the daily-chronicle?

Swami Raghavananda — An arrangement according to date and years.

M. — It will tell what is written where.

M. gives a copy of it to Swami Satswarupananda. Antevasi also goes through it.

M. (to Antevasi) — It would be nice if you take them all to the next room.

The sadhus rise and go to the next eastern room, spread a mat and sit there. M lies down on his bed. His pain has increased. Ghosh Mahashaya fans him.

The sadhus see it but are helpless - it is not possible to render him any service unless he becomes unconscious because of pain.

Swami Satswarupananda (to Antevasi) — Why did you not ask us earlier to get up? I could see that his pain had increased. Since you did not say anything I kept quiet.

Antevasi — A child with his mother. The child does not know how

much his mother is suffering, it only wants her affection. We are also like that.

Ghosh Mahashaya has brought a hurricane lantern to foment M. tightly holds the elbow of his right hand with an apron. Earlier while he was talking, his elbow was wrapped tightly in flannel. He has been suffering from this pain for the last eight months.

It's eleven now, sadhus take their leave. There is a picture of the bird sitting on its eggs on the western wall of M.'s room as you go out. Antevasi shows it to Swami Satswarupananda and tells him that it was made at Thakur's behest, after he had passed away.

On 24th August 1884, Thakur said to Mani in Dakshineswar, 'A yogi's mind remains always absorbed in God - always fixed on the Self. One can understand it by seeing the half closed eyes, as of the bird when it is hatching it's eggs - its whole mind is fixed on it's eggs - it hardly looks upward. Well, can you bring such a picture for me?'

The sadhus say to themselves as they walk along : Ailments do not spare even such spiritually great personalities. The world is selfish, we too are the same. M. has given us the nectar and we left him when he was in pain. Can one ever repay the debt of God and the Guru?



Belur Math,
Tuesday, 10th May 1932,
The fifth bright day of Vaishakha, 1338 (B.Y.).

THAKUR'S LEELA, THE HARD SURROUNDING SHIELD OF MAYA

1.

Calcutta, 50 Amherst Street, Morton School. M. is sitting on a bench in the staircase room on the fourth level with Antevasi (pupil boarding at guru's house) seated close to him. M. is to send him on a special task. He gives is giving him different instructions on this subject.

M. (to Antevasi) – Please go today and warn Shukalal Babu. Tell him that he should consult me before lending money to anybody acquainted through this place (M.). Please go to Beliaghata today, please go and give this message.

"Shame! Why must he do it? This money business is such! It estranges one's own. That's why, Thakur used to say so much about it. He would not have any monetary dealing with others.

"One should not lend money. If you can, give away five rupees in charity. Lending involves taking back. Oh, what a confusion it creates — you may have to go to law for getting it back.

"Just see, how much trouble a man undergoes to earn money. He has to turn the blood of his body into water. It is that money.

"Besides, one should not go in for debt for other person. This breaks friendship, it disturbs the mind.

"So Thakur used to say, 'There is no *pela* here.' *Pela* means a fee to witness something. And he said another time, 'Do you know why I don't talk to such and such person? He will not work. Instead he will stay here. I feel like saying it to somebody. So I don't talk to him.'

"The mind of everybody is not prepared. Those who have no insight act in this manner. How to prepare their mind for it they do not know. When the mind is ready one gives up all of one's own accord — when one knows that all is illusion, one gives up everything.

"So long as one has body-consciousness one has to think of how to live well, how to make the body comfortable; till then there is the need for money.

"When the mind is ready one gives up money of one's own accord, one willingly gives away. Before this, he will not give even when asked — he will not give even if the Guru asks him.

"Viren Babu would not go there too often. He used to say, 'As soon as I go to him he would tell me that such and such good work is being done and that I should donate five hundred rupees.' This was the reason why he didn't go."

M. (to Antevasi) – Two sadhus came here bringing a devotee from

Bombay. He was a big merchant. Somebody said to me, 'Please tell him how to spend his money.' (Laughter). I said, 'Certainly, I shall tell him.' I said to him, 'Thakur did not tread this path at all.' How stupid! Asking me to tell him how to spend money!

"Let him come here as often as he can. When he develops devotion for the Lord he will do it himself. He will then understand that God alone is the Master of this money. Till then how will he listen to you? He will perhaps say, 'He has such a big business, yet he brings me with him and asks me to spend in the service of the sadhus.' (Laughter).

"Thakur once said to Mathur Babu, 'If you have no money, sell your estate and give in charity.' Having said so he at once said, 'Mother, why do you make me say such things?'"

A Particular Devotee – A sadhu asked me to go to such and such person, and tell him to donate his house in the service of the Deity, in the service of sadhus. I went and told him so, but he did not give it away.

M. – Why will they not say so? They have no insight. If one has the insight one does not say so. How much trouble one undergoes to earn money, you see! One has to perspire from head to foot. Will one give away money at your asking?

"First of all give your love and prepare his mind. Let him develop devotion to God. Then he will know that all is transitory. He will discriminate between the eternal and the transitory. He himself will then give away. May be that if you ask him earlier, he may stop visiting you. That's why, Thakur never asked anybody to give in charity. He used to say that nobody would come if asked to give. He said to the Mother, 'Mother, how fond they are of money! Let it remain with them. Grant that I may have *shuddha* bhakti (pure devotion) at Thy Lotus Feet.'" "

M. (to a Bbrahmachari) – One should not accept money even when requested. When one does so one has to bear the burden of obligation. That is why, sadhus live on alms. This does not involve any obligation. If you like you may give, otherwise you may not. Even so, one should accept only a piece of bread, or a handful of rice, or just a pice.

Two devotees visit M. One of them is the master and other his employee. The master sent his man to Shukalal Babu in Beliaghata to bring one hundred rupees on loan. The employee told this to Antevasi on the previous night. Antevasi told it to M.

M. cautioned the employee saying firmly, "One should not ask for a loan even on behalf of others. Shame! Let him himself ask for it."

This incident is worrying M. So he again says to Antevasi.

M. (to Antevasi) – Please go, do go yourself today and tell him. Warn him. You will tell him: Let him do what he considers right with his acquaintances. But he should not do give anything to those whom he knows through this place, without asking me. Just think, as soon as

mention of this place is made he will at once give him. Fie,! taking such advantage!

Antevasi – May be when mention of this place is made, he would himself borrow, even steal, to be able to give.

M. – He was giving twenty-five rupees a month to a sadhu. The sadhu lives in Kashi. What an effort is being made to stop it. Besides, the bigger a man the more his expenses. One has to guard all sides! And then there are various other expenses.

It is two in the afternoon. M. is standing on the roof in Antevasi's cabin holding the Kathamrita and a book of Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda). He is talking to Antevasi.

M. (to Antevasi) – Please copy the text infrom the Kathamrita where Thakur has talked of the importancegreatness of Swamiji (V.N.), and also copy some of the speeches of Swamiji. Then you may give them all to the Basumati. Many sadhus of the Math want me to write something on Swamiji. Miss MacLeodMcLeod has sent me a similar message.

Antevasi – Miss MacLeodMcLeod also asked me to say this to you. She said, 'Mr. M.N. (Mahendera Nath) paints a living pen picture. Please convey to him that I sincerely request him to write something about Swamiji.' Many old and new sadhus have also said the same.

M. – Yes, but it is only possible if the Mother gives the power to do so. Without Her grace, bhakti and jnana do not get fully expressed while writing. Giving a narration of incidents or writing a commentary does not make a significant impact. At the most, one's ideas may be clear but it does not touch the heart. And it does not help to develop the character. The writing should be such that it pulls the reader's mind towards God and ties it to theHis lotus feet of God. The reader would know that the highest ideal of human life is to see God. Thus his highest duty is to first fix the mind on God and then to render any service, may he be a sadhu or a worldly man. The outward renunciation helps the sadhus to advance a good deal but if one forgets the ideal one is not able to 'melt gold' in this life. And he who is in the household has trouble at every step. Maya and affection move about night and day ready to caste their nets on him. He can be saved a little if he has gained bhakti by the grace of the Mother of the Universe he has gained bhakti.

"Instructing anybody or writing something entails a lot of responsibility. Many times it ends in unintended catastrophe. In the words of Thakur, 'The patient was sitting up, the doctor came and made him lie down.' This can happen or one may say such a stupid thing as 'there is a cowshed full of horses in the house of my maternal uncle.' Well, please copy all that."

M. dictates from the Kathamrita while Antevasi writes. Where he has only to copy, M. indicates by a mark. Antevasi copies it.

Now he copies the texts of the divine words of Thakur on the greatness of Narendrar. Balaram Mandir, 1885 AD, the 2nd day of the Rathyatra (of Lord Jagannath).

"Narendra is a thousand petalled lotus; a large tank; big red-eyed rohu fish; a worshipper of the Formless; a lion among men; he has conquered his senses.

"Thakur said to Narendra in the Panchavati on a morning in 1882, "The goal of human life is God-realization. You should meditate secretly in a solitary corner. Say to Him, crying, 'O Lord! Bless me with Your vision.' God is with-form and also without-form. When He is seen in both of His aspects and one has received His commandment, one can instruct humanity."

"One day in Cossipore, Thakur wrote on a piece of paper, Narendra will teach. Another day he said in Dakshineswar, "Narendra belongs to the class of the ever-perfect. The abode of the Absolute. The class of the Homa bird. He will never be tied to the world. His advent is for teaching humanity." Narendra is an ordained world teacher. All that he heard from his guru blossomed in his life by tapasya. And he presented it to the world. It was not the hearsay that the common man usually talks of. He didn't say anything without understanding it himself. One day Thakur said to Narendra, "Some people call me an avatara, what is your opinion?" Swamiji replied, "It is good that others believe it. But without knowing it myself I will not accept what others say." When he knew, he shouted at the top of his voice, "Sri Ramakrishna is God, he is an avatara." He added: I or any of my brother disciples, if we spend lakhs of years trying to comprehend Sri Ramakrishna, will not be able to understand a millionth part of what he really was. Sri Ramakrishna is the embodiment of sum total of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Shankra, Ramanuja, Nanak, Chaitanya and all other religious teachers of the world. Sri Ramakrishna came to resurrect religion at the meeting-temple of the harmony of religions. Swami Vivekananda was the living symbol and an apostle of Sri Ramakrishna.

"Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, seated in the throat of his apostles, himself proclaimed to the world the great teachings of infinite peace, joy and bliss of the eternal vVedic dharma in Chicago, the great city of America, on the stage of world's parliament of religions.the conference of world religion."

It is about 4 p.m. Mahim Babu, the middle younger brother of Swamiji, has arrived accompanied by six devotees. They sit in the room close to the staircase on the second level. One hearing about them M. accompanied by Jagabandhu and some bhaktas come down from the fourth level. After polite enquiries Mahim Babu says, "I am very happy to know that the Basumati is publishing an account of Swamiji written by you. This indeed is very good. It will find a place in the Kathamrita." At M.'s behest, a companion of Mahim Babu reads out the first portion of the article on Swamiji.

In the meanwhile arrive Dr. Bakshi, Vinay and the Younger Amulya followed by Panchanan Babu, a High Court advocate.

Today there is the festival of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna in Yogodyan in Kankurgachhi Yogodyan. Mahatma Rama Dutt, the great devotee, is its originator. The festival even continues till today, on the *Janamashtmi* (the Birthday of Lord Krishna) day. Bhol Nath Mukherjee and Lakshman have returned after witnessing the festival. They have brought some prasada. Everybody partakes it.

At five, M. says, "It would be nice if we could go there. Girija Maharaj was so keen about our presence. By going there we would visit that holy place a second time. We would also see Suresh Babu's garden. That too is a holy place. It was also visited by Thakur. Nothing can happen unless it is destined. Am I not old — I cannot move about much. Thakur went to Rama Babu's house in the month of December in 1883. He had purchased it just then."

They decide to go. M. gets into the Doctor's car with Jagabandhu, the Doctor, Vinay and the two Amulyas. The car stops in front of the gate of Maniktala garden. A big crowd is there. Group after group is partaking of the holy food — *khichri* (a dish of rice and dal), *tarkari* (vegetable curry) and so on. Food consisting of two hundred and nine articles is offered to the Lord there. Community singing of devotional songs is going on at many places. How joyful is the whole place!

M. stands in front of the temple to have darshan of Thakur. Somebody gives him *charanamrita* (nectar of divine feet). Swami Girijananda keeping M. ahead of him makes way through the crowd and helps him to take a round of the temple from the middle. M. prostrates himself near the door to the north of the altar. Coming out he again prostrates himself before Rama Babu's (place of) samadhi. Then he takes prasad along with the bhaktas inside the room.

Again he prostrates himself in the Tulasi Kunj inside the room at its entrance. He says, "Thakur came and sat here. And he said that it was such a solitary corner. One can meditate on God here so very well."

Now M. enters the room to the south of the tank. There is a wooden cot in the room. Prostrating himself there he sits on it. Says he, "Thakur rested in this room on the day when he came to this garden and took fruits and sweets with the devotees in a joyful mood. It was forty-one years ago. But I feel as if it happened only yesterday. What an impression he has made on my mind! I have been to other places too but I don't remember much about them. However, the image of the place I visited with him has been impressed on my mind like the engraving on a stone."

M. returns to the Morton School via Thakur Bari. It is about six. The devotees have assembled on the roof. At M.'s behest Jagabandhu reads the Bhagavata, Skandha I, Chapter VIII, the invocation by Kunti Devi.

"Kunti Devi says: Krishna, you are the first Purusha, you inhere completely the inside and outside of all matter. But, you are hidden behind curtain of maya. So, no one can recognise you."

M. (to the devotees) – None can recognise the avatara. Only whom He lets can recognise Him. Oh, what a grace on Kunti Devi! That is why, she is worthy must of being remembered every morning. What a great devotion must one have within to have the good fortune of recognising the avatara! Rending the hard veil of affection, 'Krishna is my brother's son,' breaking away the social conduct, 'I am his respected aunt,' she recognised Krishna as the full manifestation of Brahman.

"We could not have understood this mystery if we had not witnessed Thakur's leela. By showering his grace on us Thakur has shown us his real Self. That's why, we can understand Krishna leela. He would daze bhaktas by showing them his real Self. Which is right, this or that, such was the confusion we were in. Krishna at least had external splendour. Since his childhood, he had performed so many supernatural deeds. What a splendour of yoga he manifested then, in the battle of Kurukshetra. Besides, this hymn of Kunti Devi was also sung immediately after he had manifested this splendour of his. Ashvathama had used the *Brahma-astra* to kill the Pandavas at the time when Sri Krishna was going to Dwarika. Sri Krishna saved them with his divine powers from sure death by destroying the power of the *Brahma-astra*.

"On the other hand, Thakur's leela, from the beginning to the end, is a hard surrounding shield of maya. He was almost illiterate, poor, a priest on seven rupees a month, his family members were no better — none of them earned more than ten rupees a month. Add to it, people talked of him as a mad person. Sometimes he would walk naked; sometimes he carried a pole on his shoulder, tying a tail made of cloth to his back, and took big strides.

"The Indivisible Sachchidananda who is beyond word and mind, lives with such a veil and conducts Himself thus. Showing himself in this way at times, Thakur would confound his devotees. In the beginning he would ask somebody (M.), 'What can you see in me? Have you heard of an 'unrecognised' tree? There is a field extending limitlessly with a wall in it. This wall has a hole.' He then asked somebody, 'Let me see if you can tell, what is this (hole)?' The devotee answered, 'This is none but you. One can see God within you.' He was happy at this answer and said, 'Yes, you can see to the extent of two to three kosas (a kosa is equal to two miles) — very far away.'

"If there is the veil of ignorance, it is not possible for anybody to recognise the avatara.

"Krishna made Draupadi recognise his real Self at times. That's why, she would run to Krishna whenever she found herself in trouble. Oh, what a grace that such a thing should be possible! To attain the power to hold Him whom the greatest of yogis cannot holdcatch. What a bhakti Draupadi had! Whenever there were tears in her eyes Krishna would immediately come before her. She introduced him to Uttara. 'Save, save O supreme yogi' — saying so she sought shelter under Sri Krishna. This was when the *Brahma-astra* of Ashvathama was sought to kill (the male fetus of Prikshit) in Uttara's womb. Generally it is not possible for the members of the avatara's family to recognise him but Sri Krishna had introduced himself to everyone of them. Otherwise, this leela could not have been enacted fully. Saving the Pandavas from catastrophes, restoring to them their throne — if one sees just this, it does not constitute the whole of His leela. That will lead to greater egotism. So the Lord shows His real Self to some at times. It helps them not to fall a prey to pride even while living in all splendour.

"Thakur's father knew that Thakur was an avatara, Raguvira in a human body. Totapuri also recognised him as also the Brahmani. Thakur's sister (i.e. Hridya's mother) also knew him. So, she had worshipped him. In the state of bhava Thakur told her that she would die in Kashi and this is what happened.

"Some of his contemporaries were able to recognise him by his grace. K. worshipped the feet of Thakur with flowers and sandal paste in the shrine on the first floor. Thakur told Vijay Goswami about it. I was also there.

"One of his *antaranga* (devotee of the inner circle)antarangas (M.) was able to recognise him on his very first visit. Thakur asked somebody (M.) what he thought of him, whether he saw in him

anything more than an ordinary man. The devotee said, 'God has sculpted you with His own hand. The others He puts in the machine (of the fruit of their actions).'

"Girish Babu also said during his very first visit, 'You are Brahman in full.' Thakur accepted it. So he asked Narendra, 'What is your reaction to what Girish says (that I am an avatara)?'

"It is very difficult to recognise an avatara. Even rishis could not recognise Rama and Krishna, except a very few."

The reading continues.

"Having offered an extraordinary prayer Kunti Devi sat down.

"Kunti (to Sri Krishna) – O the world teacher, grant that I may always have such catastrophes that bring me your darshan and completely erase the sorrows of life — such trials may I have always have."

M. – One has to renounce both adversities and riches. Only then one sees God. Reason, the ideal man is a 'man of steady wisdom' who is not perturbed by adversity and does not hanker after happiness. The happiness of the world and adversity are both joined to each other. *Parivartante chkravat sukhani che dukhani che* — sorrow and happiness move in cycle. Today there is happiness, tomorrow sorrow. Yesterday one had sorrow, today happiness. This is the rule of the world. There is an everlasting joy above it. That is the joy of Brahman. In samadhi one is not aware of happiness and sorrow. The mind remains absorbed in everlasting, limitless joy. The minds of both the knower of the Essence and of those who are ignorant of It are subject to happiness and sorrow when their minds come down. Even the great Ashvasttha tree shakes in strong wind and tempest. But the mind of knower of the Essence returns quickly to its tranquil state. Happiness also makes ones forget God. The Pandavas remembered God in sorrow during their great trials. The reason is that they had gone into exile for the sake of dharmareligion, for the sake of truth. Religion and truth are the four walls of the temple of God. That is why, Kunti Devi asked for the sorrow that may keep her mind in God. In such a state one has His darshan. This darshan rids one of extreme sorrow. In other words, one is freed from birth and death.

"God gives only as much sorrow to the devotee as he can bear. It serves two purposes. It destroys one's pride. Soon after, it takes the mind immediately up to majestic heights. Secondly, it serves as a lesson. The whole of India has been saved till today because of the lesson it learnt from the sorrows of the Pandavas. This alone is the teaching of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

"Thakur's devotees also experienced sorrow and grief. Swami Vivekananda was taken by the trials of his mother and brothers — even when he was so great a receptacle. For a time he had almost lost his faith in God. He was unable to rid himself of grief with his own strength. So, he took shelter under Thakur. He said, 'Please tell the Mother of the Universe to arrange for food and clothes for them.'

"So it was that Kunti Devi prayed, 'Let me have the grief with which You remain with me.' "

The reading continues.

"Kunti Devi is confused.

"Kunti – O Lord, when you appear in a body, you follow its generic nature so well that even the knower of the Essence falls into the great error of thinking of you as one subject to the laws of karmas."

M. – Oh, how true! Since He has taken a human body He behaves exactly as a man. He is fully a human being and fully the incarnation of God. Aha, I had lived with Thakur, so it is possible for me to understand the scriptures in these matters. Chaitanya Deva's devotees said, 'Brother, we have been able to understand the *bhava* (disposition) of Gaur having lived with him.' I was with Thakur, for this reason I can fully confirm this fact. Sorrow, affliction, grief, desire, anger, greed etc. were all like those of a human being. One percent of all these, this human nature and ninety-nine percent a divine disposition. Mahimacharan was under this error.

The reading continues.

"Kunti – O Krishna, knowing that man will hear and remember your leela (divine play), when he is down and out with worldly trials, and thereby rid himself of it, you have taken birth."

M. – This too we have understood by keeping his company. This is an easy way. Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga are difficult disciplines. In the leelaformer we love him, feed him, put him to bed, accept both respect and pride like any human being. The gopis rid themselves of all grief and pain by only loving him in this human attitude. Thakur said to a devotee (M.), 'If your whole mind is here, what else remains to be done?' In other words, the mind is tied to Sri Ramakrishna. This devotee would just keep gazing at Thakur. It was then that he said so.

The reading continues.

"Kunti wants to get freed from the bonds of affection.

"Kunti – O the Lord of the world! if you go away from here the Pandavas may suffer and if you live here the race of the Yadus may come to harm. Please cut asunder my affection for these two races. And please grant that my attention may remain fixed at your feet, freeing itself from all other worldly matters."

M. – The mind becomes restless in whichever worldly matter you fix it. On the other hand, so long as there is mind it cannot but rest in something or the other. God has created the world making the mind outgoing. This knowledge of Kunti Devi is now confirmed. How much of battle, conflict, misfortune, exile, grief and pain she underwent. So she only sought shelter at the feet of the Lord — the only place to attain peace. She had developed sannyasa within. The real sannyasa consists in renouncing one's desires.

"Thus Thakur taught the devotees in their early age: You will live in the world like a maid-servant in a rich man's house. You will outwardly show love, attend to all duties but inwardly you will know, 'None of my relatives belong to me and nor do I belong to them. Only the Lord is their and my eternal friend.'

"Just see, He was there before our birth, no relative was there then — father, mother, wife, children, none. After death none of these will accompany us. Only the Lord keeps company before birth and after death till the son has returned home. If that be true why does man forget this after birth? This is the work of His maya. It makes one forget the reality and draws the mind to fix itself in the unreal (the world) — this is what maya does. So, he taught the devotees to pray: 'Mother, don't bewitch me in Your world-enchanting *maya*.' "

The reading continues.

"Krishna is ready to set out for Dwarika. He somehow consoles Kunti but the mind of Yudhishtira is overwhelmed by grief and affection — the grief of so many of his dying in battle. Says he: I will not be able to redeem myself of this sin even if I perform three *Ashvamedha* yajnas. No religious performance can rid one from that sin while one lives in the household."

M. – Thakur said, 'One can make up the extra expense of mind in the world only by embracing sannyasa.' Yudhishtira had developed sannyasa within. Vyasa and other rishis, Bhishma Pitamah tried to make him understand in so many ways but his mind still had no peace. Then he was in the household deriving consolation from Sri Krishna's words. He was in reality like a sannyasi then. Making Prikshit the king he instructed him for sometime on state affairs. The rest of his time he spent in thinking upon God with dispassion in his mind. He ate little, kept long hair and so on. His food was ordinary, his dress scanty; he engaged himself in thinking onf God the whole daylong. As soon as, he received the news of Krishna's passing away, he took to the great go. Thakur's devotees also lived in the household in the same state of mind at his behest.

The reading ends.

M. – Play will be enacted throughout tonight in the Star Theatre. You people must also go there. Sukhendu, Manoranjan and Balai have already left. You must see all this — it creates a great impression on the mind. When I was strong in body I generally went to witness them. Jagabandhu, the Doctor and Amulya sawee six plays keeping awake throughout the night — Janamashtmi (the birthday of Sri Krishna), Nandotsava (the festival of Nanda), Nanda-vidai (Sri Krishna taking leave of Nanda), Sudama, the test of Arjuna and Jaideva. The plays endIt ended at half past five in the morning.



Morton School, Calcutta
Friday, 22nd August 1924
6th day of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
Janamashtmi, 56 Dandas /, 56 Palas.

BLESSING AND CURSE

1.

Morton School. M.'s room on the fourth level. 3 p.m. Antevasi sits nearby on a bench facing north and reads out the letter of Swami Vivekananda to M. Thereafter, he reads out the letter of Swami Turiyananda.

M. (to Antevasi) – Swamiji writes: Some will curse and some will reward you on reading the Kathamrita. Just think, the one whose interests are hampered shall curse. It contains words of renunciation, you see. Those who have their mind in sensory enjoyments shall get annoyed. The mother will perhaps say, 'Oh! my son has left on becoming a sadhu. That very person has turned him insane by writing the book (Kathamrita).' Some woman shall perhaps say, 'That very man has ruined my well decorated and beautiful garden.' The husband can also say, 'My wife has spoiled on reading that very book.'

"Those whose desire for sensory enjoyments has ended shall say absolutely otherwise. They will say, 'The Kathamrita is assuredly the nectar — the nectar of life. It indeed has given us peace; it was burning.' Only they will only give their mind to God. Their desire for sensory enjoyments has ended. They don't have liking for anything else.

"Swamiji went through the same state (of curses), you see. So, he warned me beforehand that you will also have to go through it. After writing the Kathamrita, some people cursed me through so many letters.

"If one does works of merit, renders selfless service, it is bound to happen. One must go to work after gaining the power to bear all this. Just see, Christ was crucified. Is it a small matter to work for God, to render selfless service? The world shall stand in front to stop you. If you can bear all this, you must serve God. It is possible only when you surrender your mind, soul and body to God.

"So, Swamiji has warned beforehand. 'Cet Bon,' in other words, that's good — 'Sir, such indeed is happening since eternity.' "

4 p.m. The Saturday devotees have assembled on the roof — Lalit of Bhatapara, Bhavani, Basant and a new person. After a while arrives the heroic devotee Mukunda. M. showers the *kathamrita* (nectarine words) after making polite enquiries.

M. (to Lalit) – Yesterday we went to Kankurgachhi Yogodyan. It was a beautiful festivity there. So many people partook of the prasada. In coming years all these will become highly renowned places — all will be great centres of pilgrimage. All these will become like there are Vrindaban, Ayodhya and Dwarika. God has come in a human body, you see. All these are indeed the spots of salvation. On coming to such a place one is reminded of salvation, Godly matters come to the

mind. This shall bring liberation from the bonds of attachment. All these are now centres of pilgrimage.

The newly arrived person – I have started an ashrama. Human welfare activities in the name of Thakur shall be performed there.

M. – One must first frequent the sadhus. One shall be able to thus form acquaintance with them, and then take to holy work at their instruction. Otherwise, it happens like one falls into a certain movement. It does not last till the end.

"Earlier the kings would go to the rishis, you see; though they were younger rishis. (Showing his folded hands) They would go and stand in this way with firewood i.e. articles of puja in their hand. The elder rishis would say, 'Yes, I have followed son, you people want to ask something. It is good, do ask. But, first perform penance for one year. Take to truthfulness, brahmacharya and non-violence.'

"Did they (the rishis) disgraced them? No, it is not like this. They conducted themselves in this way for their good. Without penance, one can't put the right question. One has to say one thing, one says something else, that too unmindfully.

"When one makes an effort to meditate on God with a concentrated mind, one understands one's doubts. Otherwise, with a restless mind one resolves one thing today and an another thing tomorrow.

"One must associate with the sadhus. Then take to penance. Thereafter, take to work on receiving instructions from the sadhus.

"An ashrama has been founded at Sarshe. A brahmachari has started it. He performed a lot of penance. So, that day the sadhus of the *math* went there and established Thakur.

"You too take to penance. Do you agree with this, what do you say? Perform penance for one year. Then see, what do you decide upon."

Receiving such a hard advice, the new person is but speechless.

All remain silent for a while. Some of them think within themselves the words of the Gita — the course of work is inaccessible. This *maharishi* (great rishi) has graciously shown this man the way that may not bind him in work. But looking at the attitude of this man, it appears that he is not ready to start work after taking to holy company, penance and instructions of the sadhus. This man is not anxious for the purification of the mind. Why should the bhaktas take to the work that does not lead to the attainment of God's grace?

Now the talk about the India renowned Barrister Deshabandhu Chitranjan Das comes up. He is now engaged in the freedom of the land giving up his everything. Forsaking the earlier luxury of food, fun and lifestyle he has taken recourse to the hardships of an ascetic. M. is worried, lest this may hurt his body and unnecessarily harm him at the improper time. Chitranjan is an expert soldier in India's freedom struggle. M. is always worried how his priceless life can be saved.

Today too, in the assembly of bhaktas begins the talk on the renunciation and penance of Chitranjan. The bhaktas discuss his multi-faceted genius in various ways. In all these discussions, one hears again and again the

reverberations of his renunciation. M. listens to this discussion speechlessly. He now brings to light expresses his own opinion.

M. (to the bhaktas) – His renunciation is like that of the Buddha Deva. But will he be able to bear such hardships all of a sudden, at such an age? On the one hand, he is leading a hard life and on the other, a constant struggle for independence against the British Government! Such a push might break down his health. I have this worry. There is no well-wisher who can forcefully take him to retirement for some days. It would be good if this comes about. It seems there is none. The longer such people live, the better it is. Such things come in human calculations. Just see, Ashu Babu was such a genius. But his body went in such a helpless state. He went to Patna for two lakh rupees. There he met with this trouble. How much work such people do. But the money brought about all the confusion.

M. is silent for a while. He converses again.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Who are great in the eyes of worldly people? Those who have so much of wealth and money — houses and buildings, people, coaches, name and honour. And who is great in the eyes of Thakur? He who knows nothing else but God, like Narada and Sukadeva.

"Thakur renounced that money and fame for which the tongue of the worldly begins to water. He would say with the pungency of red chilies, in other words forcefully, 'I sweep name and fame with the broom.' On hearing the Marwari's proposal to give him ten thousand rupees, he became absolutely unconscious and fell down. Has anyone heard such a thing like absolute unconsciousness anywhere! He had such a deep-seated aversion!

"The other people become unconscious for want of money, and he became unconscious on the matter of receiving money. What an amazing character!

"When he regained consciousness, he said, 'Mother, do You want to enchant me during my last days with money? Mother, do that which shall fix my mind on Your holy feet.'

"He said, 'On hearing about his giving the money, I received as if a blow of axe on my head. This made me fall unconscious.'

"He could not even bear the breeze coming from the touch of a woman's body. So, he said, 'The sannyasis must not even see the picture of a woman. Even if she is a very great bhakta, one must not stay in her company.'

"Prabhu, please be gracious enough and grant your darshan to the king (King Pratap Rudra) for once — the king's minister and a great bhakta Rai Ramananda, and Vasudeva Saurvbhaum made this request to Chaitanya Deva. Hearing this, Chaitanya Deva said with a surprise, 'What do you people say? The king is the greatest of worldly man. Meeting him and enjoying sensory enjoyments are one and the same. Have I come to do all this forsaking everything behind?' The bhaktas requested him an another day. At this, he replied, 'If that be

so, I leave for Alalnath.' Saying so, he immediately left.' Then they all went, humbly prayed to him and brought him back. Such is the affair. Is it a small matter?

"Alalnath is a beautiful place — there is forest and solitude. I went to see it. It is five kosas (about ten miles) from the temple."

2.

What is M. thinking about? He again showers the nectarine words.

M. (to the bhaktas) – How much Thakur loved Keshab Sen! What a great man! He said (about Keshab), 'He is a divine man.' To such a person he said on his face, 'I cannot accept your words, you live with money, fame and honour.' Keshab Babu had said to Thakur, you see, 'You have attained sixteen annas (full complement) jnana.'

M. (to the new person) – Is there a way for us other than the holy company?

"I am reminded of something. A Nanakpanthi sadhu said it. He used to frequent Thakur at that time. It is forty two years back. I remembered one out of the two things and forgot the other. That too came to my mind just few days back. It is this. Somebody was performing the yajna of birds at Mansarovar. He hoped that this would bring all kinds of birds to him. So, the *hansa* (swan) would also come. The ParamahansaIt would also definitely be accompanied by the Paramahansay it. Paramahansa, in other words Narayana, you knowsee. It means this: By keeping company of sadhus, one can have darshan of God.

"The other is this. Two men were partners. One of them died. He left behind one son and his wife. The wife took the son to the house of the partner. There was a diamond worth rupees one lakh in the house. She also carried it with her. She said to the partner, 'Who is now our own besides you? Before his demise, he left a diamond in the house. I hear, it is worth rupees one lakh.' The partner on seeing it came to know that it is worth five thousand rupees, or at the most ten thousand. It can't be rupees one lakh in any way. He said, 'You may now keep it with you. Let the boy stay out in the office.' Four or five years passed. The boy learnt to do the work well. One day he told his mother, 'Mother, where is the diamond? Bring it and show it to me. Let me see and examine it. I have learnt how to examine.' On seeing it, he said, 'Its worth is at the most rupees ten thousand. It is not one lakh.'

"It means this. The guru does not say all the things to the disciple immediately. Reason? The disciple shall get frightened. So, he leads him slowly.

"If the partner had said that it is worth ten thousand rupees, the (other) partner's wife would not have believed him. She would think that he iswas deceiving her. She had faith only when he made the son say so."

M. (to the bhaktas) – That is why, Thakur would say: One cannot say

to the people of Calcutta to renounce everything. By doing so, they will stop coming at all. So I say, 'You people do this and that too. With one hand hold on to God and with the other live in the world.' I tell them, 'You people renounce mentally.' Then by coming here often, when one oneself understands/realizes that all these — wife, son and relations — are nothing, one shall leave of one's own accord.'

Now it is seven in the evening. Some of the bhaktas are leaving, some arriving. M. rises, walks some distance and says to Antevasi, "The printing paper has not yet reached. It is in Thakur Bari. I told in the printing press that I shall send it in the evening. If I can send it, I shall be able to keep my promise." Antevasi rises and at once goes to fetch the paper; then he sends it to the printing press.

The assembly of the bhaktas is seated on the fourth level. Now it is 8 p.m. The Doctor, Vinay, the Elder Jiten, the Younger Amulya, Manoranjan, Shukalal, Shanti, Balai, Amrit, Jagabandhu and others are seated on three sides of M. on benches. M. is seated on a chair facing north. All meditate for some time. Thereafter, M. converses on spiritual matters.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — That what is in one's nature shall come about. Sri Krishna said the same thing to Arjuna. Said he — 'I shall not fight,' vain is this, your saying? Your very nature has war within! Your nature shall compel you to fight — '*prakriti stvam niyokshyati*,' (Gita (18:59).

"There is no way out without doing it. So, one must take God with oneself and do it. This is the way. If He is with you, you always remember that one's nature makes one act. That being so, one keeps oneself separate thinking thus — I am His child, His servant. Then the work can't bind him."

M. (to Jagabandhu) — Where is the complete program of yesterday's theatre? Well, please read out both of these: 'Sudama' and 'Nandavidai' (separation from Nanda) — scene after the scene.

Jagabandhu reads — Sudama. First scene — the hut of Sudama. Second scene — Dwarika. Sri Krishna, Rukmini and Narada. Third scene — Krishna in the guise of child fisherman and Sudama. Fourth scene — the palace of Dwarika, gatekeepers and Sudama. Fifth scene — the royal court of Dwarika. Sri Krishna, Rukmini, Narada, the king's assembly, Sudama and others.

"Nandavidai. First scene — royal apartments. Existence, attainment, Kansa and Akrur. Second scene — the house of Nanda, Sri Krishna, Balaram, Yashoda and Rohini. Third scene — pasture land, Sri Krishna, Balaram, Akrur, the cowherd boys and others."

M. — We have also been able to see everything. These people have witnessed it; we must take its benefit. One gains even by hearing. Those who have power of imagination, they attain up to fourteen annas by hearing. Two annas remain the rest.

"So, Thakur would say, 'Hearing is better than reading and seeing is better than hearing. Higher than reading is hearing and higher than hearing is seeing.' These people have witnessed it and we have heard

it. This has enabled us to see, hear and read. Hearing is next best. We too have been able to do this."

M. (to Antevasi) – Let us do some reading of the Kathamrita.

M. asks to read out the first, second and third chapters of the tenth section of the Kathamrita, part III. Thakur describes his state during the course of conversation and says, "One attains ultimate jnana when one does not remember the *amavasya* (darkest lunar night) and the *purnima* (full moon night)."


M. – Thakur says — One does gain ultimate jnana. But Haladhari said, 'Man becomes capricious.' Haladhari's point of view is that of a worldly man having attachment for sensory objects. Those who have their aim as God-realization, who want to gain the state of Shiva (divinity) from that of jiva, should take Thakur's opinion alone. When the mind enters samadhi, when the salt-doll gets dissolved into the sea, one's awareness of the sea vanishes. It is this that the Vedas call the highest aim of man's life. Thakur also said the same from his life's experience. When the mind that entered samadhi comes down, it sees as if God Himself has become all — the world, its creatures and the twenty four principles. When it descends a little lower, it is in the state he told — *amavasya* and *purnima* become the same. In other words, the mind is held back. The outside affairs proceed of their own accord. Hanuman also had the same state — he could not remember the day, the date, the lunar date, the position of stars; he would only think upon Rama. The mind of the avatara descends lower than this. Rama rules the kingdom. Krishna is engaged in warfare.

"But Thakur was kept in that very state by the Mother. She would not let him descend lower. All his states are there to serve as an example. The whole world is covered with a thick fog of materialism. It is Thakur had such a state to show to the world the ideal of the eternal truth at this point of time that Thakur had such a state — that God-realization is the highest ideal of man. The divine character of Thakur is like a lifeboat for the bhaktas in this sea of the world.

"People don't put faith in all these states. To understand it, faith in the words of the Guru is essential. Guru means God, avatara — like Thakur. Those people who have visited Kashi, their words are the last words about Kashi. One must hear about Kashi from their lips. Kashi means God-realization.

"Mahimacharan does not accept the gGuru. He (Thakur) said this aiming at him. He reasons, talks of jnana — he is an egoistic fellow. So, he (Thakur) told him the marks of a jnani.

"But Sankracharya has called the Gguru as God. Said he, '*Advaitam trishu lokeshu. Nadvaitam guruna saha.*' (There is none other than Me in the three worlds. But as far as the Guru is concerned, the Advaitam Philosophy does not hold good).' The Veda also says, '*Yasya deve bhakti yatha deve tatha gurau* (he who has the greatest devotion in Him and equally in the Guru).' Thakur says, 'He who has firm determination, he has all. One puts faith in such a person.' "



Calcutta, Saturday, 23 August 1924
7th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
9th day of the dark fortnight
60 Dandas.

M. IN THE BHADROTSAVA OF THE NAVAVIDHAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

1.

Calcutta, Navavidhan Brahma Samaj. Today a great festival will be celebrated throughout the day. M. has been getting is getting ready since the morning to visit it once. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna had visited this temple several times at the invitation of his very dear Keshab Sen. So it is a very holy place for M. He often frequents it and listens to discourses there. The Brahma teachers Pramath Sen, Nandalal Sen and others had Sri Ramakrishna's darshans many a time and were blessed by receiving his affection and love. For M. this temple has become a great centre of pilgrimage because of the dust of the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. So, he comes here for darshan and listening to the lectures, in the hope that he may quench the thirst of his ears by hearing the kKathamrita of Sri Ramakrishna in these discourses. Says M., he used to sit there looking at their moonlike faces, like the thirsty chatak bird, to hear a word about Thakur.

Last evening M. has enjoined upon the devotees to assist in that very festival. Thus Jagabandhu takes Vinay, the Younger Jiten, Manoranjan and some others with him very early in the morning to the Samaj temple. Community singing and discourses go on continuously there. The devotees listen. According to the instructions of M. they also sift Sri Ramakrishna from the never ending volley of words in the discourses — they catch Thakur's bhava, language and words.

There is a great such concourse of people in the mandir temple today — inside and outside there is jungle of men. It is about eight in the morning. M. has just arrived. M. feels very uncomfortable in the crowd. So he enters the househouse through the familiar door and having sat there for a while again comes out. He is standing there. The devotees also come out for they have real affection and regard for M. Though the Samaj temple is also a sacred place, it is only second to M. They go there because they are asked by M. to do so. Now that they have M. with them, they leave the temple. The bhakti and reverence they have for Sri Ramakrishana is also through the medium of M..

M. stands at the book stall and reads the titles of the books. Coming across a small booklet entitled 'Chronological list of Keshab's Ddiscourses,' he asks Antevasi to buy it. It's price is two-annas. The purpose being that he would ask the devotees to read all the discourses which, which have a touch of Sri Ramakrishna. M. keeps the bhaktas always united with Thakur through worship, reading of holy books, recitation of the name, meditation and service.

It is now eleven. M. is sitting in his room. Nobody is with him. He is alone. Antevasi is in his cabin on the roof. M. calls him, 'Is Jagabandhu Babu there? Please come for a while.' Hearing his call Antevasi comes to his room. M. says to him, 'A lot of prasad of sweets and fruits has been received from the Thakur Bari. It has been distributed to all. The rest is for you and Rajni. Please take this portion immediately and give the other to Rajni Babu.' Antevasi does not find Rajni Babu either upstairs or downstairs. So M. says, 'If that is so, say *Soham* (I am He) and eat this too. Thakur used to do the same. He would keep some prasad apart for a devotee. If he did not come he would eat it himself saying, *Soham*.' (Everybody laughs).

It is 4 p.m. M. is seated on a bench in the verandah on the second level. Parvaticharan MittraMitra comes in accompanied by his elder son Durga. Parvati Babu's wife has written a biography of Naga Mahashay. Both husband and wife are staunch devotees of Naga Mahashay. In their home they are always engaged in the worship of Naga Mahashay or reading about him. Whatever is offered in the name of Naga Mahashay is partaken of by them. Their home is verily an *ashrama*. Parvati Babu has two sons besides his wife. He is the manager of the Hart Company dealing in horses. M. has been sending Antevasi to MittraMitra's house several times. Once he sent the message to go to the Math and have the company of sadhus at times. Mr. MittraMitra Mahashay told Antevasi, "Naga Mahashay is my all. I am not worthy of going to the sadhus." M. got worried on hearing this.

Even though Antevasi did not know the exact cause of M.'s worry, he surmised that Mr. MittraMitra was uninterested in the company of sadhus. Sri Ramakrishna prescribed that the devotee in the household must daily have company of sadhus, only then his *dhat* (nature, temperament, habits) will remain right. God first the world secondnext — this great truth will be realised. Now he was holding on to just the opposite idea taking it to be the truth. Such is the game of the *Avidhya Shakti* of *Mahamaya*. It turns the reality into illusion and shows illusion as reality.

The all- renouncing sadhus have discovered what is the eternal truth and what is the opposite of it. That's why, these people forsaking their parents, home, near and dear ones worship the true reality. By keeping their company one can get rid of the disease of the world. 'Milk' can hbe turned into 'butter'. The soot of the household does not then stain the mind. It is possible then to live in water keeping the mind on the land like a tortoise. Otherwise, love and affection takes one on the opposite path, without one knowing of it. That's why, Thakur always prayed, 'Mother do not bewitch me by yYour world-enchanting Maya.'

Parvati's statement that he is not worthy of sadhus is the Mother's basic power of *avidya* (ignorance) in a veil of humility. Unless you pierce this veil, or unless you protect yourself completely by taking refuge (in God), your ego will push you crudely into the lap of destruction. Sri Ramakrishna has shown the tact how to control one's egotism which is the product of the basic ignorance. By keeping company of sadhus and serving them the devotee can always beware of the great enemy that is egotism, which takes one to the opposite path and illusion.

By the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, Naga Mahashay was able to completely root out this egoism. Though living in household he was a great sadhu. His humility touching the bottom of the nether regions, or Brahman-like sheltered in the lap of *Anorniyan* (smaller than the atom). In the same way was Swami Vivekananda's ego united with *Mahto Mahiyan* (bigger than the biggest). Its form comprised the whole universe and its expanse touched Brahman. Like Bag Devi, a learned in Brahman and the originator of Devisukta in Riga Veda, Swamiji was the spirit of Brahman — '*aham rashtri*', the master of the world. Both Naga Mahashay and Swamiji were wonder creations of Sri Thakur. The former got dissolved in Brahman by making himself the smallest of the small, the latter so expanded himself so as to fill the Para-Brahman.

Both of these great men have seen Brahman. The humility of the one and the greatness of the other, are both '*Brahmabhodi Samudravata*' (encompassing Brahman like the ocean). Their ego is so easy, so delightful and so natural.

But the ego of the ordinary man does not leave him. So Thakur prescribed livingto live as a servant of Brahman. To be theis servant of Brahman, the living and powerful company of sadhus is needed daily.

Today again, M. asks Parvati to go to the Math at times to keep the company of sadhus. Has Parvati realized why this great *rishi* has such a concern for him? The goddess in the heart of M. is full of motherly affection for him.

The festival of Sri Naga Mahashay is to be held on the next fifteenth of Bhadra in Parvati's house. Parvati Babu's son gives an invitation for the festival.

2.

It is 5 p.m. Now Swami Yogeshwarananda has arrived with a companion. He has started a Math at Bangalore. He is the son and disciple of Mahatma Ramachandra Dutt, who was the *antaranga* (one who belongs to the inner circle) of Thakur. He has a reason for coming to Calcutta, it is to have M.'s darshan. M. makes him sit very close to himself as one very dear. M. is very happy to see him after a long time. M. happily enquires after the devotees of Bangalore.

Now M. now wants to know enquires about the Yogodyan of Kankurgachhi. Says he, "It would be very nice if it goes into the hands of the Math." After a long conversation, M. again talks to Parvati Babu.

M. (to Parvati Babu) – Just see, these people have given up everything and holding on to God.

"Thakur created this special class of people. They want nothing else but Him — like the Chatak bird. It is dying of thirst even then it will not take any other water. It wants only the pure rain water. These sadhus are like this. They want no other joy but that of Brahman. So, giving up woman and gold, everything, they stand on the way — on the vantage ground. It is very easy to go forward from there. It is a sure pathway.

"Howsoever clever one may be, one is bound to be stained, for one is living in a room of lampblack. Thus one must meet those from time to time who are not stained. Then that stain will not do no harm.

"The company of sadhus is very essential. It is essential indeed particularly when one is living in the household. Thakur said, 'Even a sadhu needs the company of sadhus.' Then isn't it necessary for the other (householder)? The watch of the sadhus gives the right time whereas that of the householder is wrong. [In the household] the veil of affection and love covers up one's view. One can't see one's face in the *arasi* (mirror). *Arasi*, that is the mind and intellect. The *arasi* of the sadhu is clean and clear. It reflects the Lord much better. Thus their watch is right. One should correct one's own by comparing it with their watch from time to time.

"Howsoever great a devotee may be, he cannot save himself from the stain of affection. This is what one realizes when one goes to a sadhu. Once one understands the state in which one is, it is done. Then the real humility comes from within. And one prays unceasingly for it with heart and soul. Before this, one's pride hides within one's humility. Without the company of sadhus the right kind of humility, modesty, is not attained. Have others achieved this humility? It is with God and it is with sadhus who are His real Self. He who is humble before sadhus is the best of men, a person to be revered by

the world. So, the company of the sadhus is daily essential. If one cannot do so, one should regularly go into their company from time to time."

M. (to Parvati) — You are free on Sunday and then there are steamers. One can go there from Bara Bazaar. And then how long does it take? By going to the sadhus you will realize, how great is Naga Mahashay. Even Sadhus have devotion and reverence for Naga Mahashay.

"Aren't sadhus our own? When we go to meet anybody, people say that he is some relation of ours. Even our near and dear one becomes a stranger to us, if we don't go to meet him."

Swami Yogeshwarananda — Thakur is ever the same. He resides within the heart of all. What will then the company of sadhus avail?

M. — Even so He wants people to keep the company of sadhus. Had it been otherwise, why did He create sadhus? The *dhai* (Grand-dame in the game of hide and seek) wants us to play for some time. Only then she is to be touched. Once she is touched the game is over, so she wants it.

"An ordinary man has no spiritual-intellect. He thinks that he is a man of the world — a clerk in the office, the father in the house and so forth. He forgets that he is the servant of God or *Soham* (I am He). He is reminded of this, when he goes in the company of the sadhus. Holding on to this idea he must proceed ahead, and he will realize that the changeless Thakur is within the heart. Then he should live holding on to it. God will reveal Himself when such is His will. Till this idea matures one needs the company of sadhus.

"And Thakur emphasized yet another thing: Faith in the words of the Guru. Guru that is Thakur, the avatara. He has said, 'A man must daily keep the company of sadhus.' That's what you should do. When you have faith in the words of Guru, there is no danger.

"This becomes possible when one keeps the company of sadhus — attaining faith in the words of the Guru. There is no way for us except the company of sadhus. That's why Thakur put so much emphasis on the company of sadhus. Though he himself was the greatest of the sadhus, yet he himself created the sadhus."

Enters Attorney Viren Bose. He suggests a visit to Dakshineswar. M. also wants to go there. A little before dusk M. leaves for Dakshineswar in Viren's car accompanied by Swami Yogeshwarananda and his companion. M. returns at 9.30 p.m.

The devotees were waiting for M. on the terrace of the fourth level — the Doctor, Vinay, Jagabandhu, Shukalal, Manoranjan, the Younger Amulya, the Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten, Balai, Shanti and others.

M. is on the terrace. Being old in body he feels tired. The devotees are seated on benches around him on three sides. M. is on a chair facing North. Now he converses.

M. (to the devotees) — During the lifetime of Thakur I never felt

inconvenienced. The feeling of distance completely vanished from the mind. I felt that it was like going from this house to that house, though the distance was five miles away. Aha, what an attraction he had generated in the heart! His love could uproot a mountain! His was not human love. Such was his love that it would put an end to all the troubles of life even while one was living with in a sea of sorrows. So it was nothing much if one lost all idea of distance. The devotee realized that Thakur was his *prana*, that he was his mind. Only the body was living in Calcutta. How could he feel any inconvenience then? When a person has his near and dear ones, wife, son, daughter, father and mother living in a distant home, and he himself coming to work in a Calcutta office, does he feel the distance, or is he inconvenienced returning home? Rather, in the thought of his near and dear ones, he does not feel the distance — when shall I go and see them, with he has this inspiration and this yearning.

"In this the devotees cannot be credited. Thakur attracts them with his love like parents attracting their children. So, the yearning of the devotee is due to this pull. It is only a reflected light, a borrowed attraction.

"Yesterday when I went to Kankurgachhi I was reminded of Rama Babu. Aha, what a love he had for Thakur! Leaving his wife and, his dear ones behind at some place, he himself stayed in that garden. Just this one thought at once brought tears to my eyes. What an intense love for God! Forsaking his son and friends, he had such a love for God!. Thakur lives there at Kankurgachhi. There it is his (Rama Babu's) samadhi. So he lives there taking him in his lap. Complete sannyasa, total dispassion.

(Laughing) "If anybody said to him that it was a bad place he used to get displeased. Isn't Thakur living there? I was once scolded. I had said that it was a very malarious place. Rama Babu immediately scolded me. Aha, what a love, how deep his *prema*! How lively is Thakur's installation there.

"How much love is needed to bring this about? That is why, he has bought devotees with his love. The avatara's leela gets clearly revealed to ordinary men when they see such a love of the devotees. The ordinary men call their members of the family as their dear ones. So they give away everything for their sake. Even one's *prana* (life breath) so dear to one is happily sacrificed for them. But the nature of the devotee, that of avatara's *antarangas* (those who belong to his inner circle), is opposite to it. They sacrifice their all, even their *prana*, for the sake for God, for the sake of avatara. These two contrary currents have existed since eternity — *Ppravritti* (worldliness) and *Nnivritti* (non-worldliness).

"By God's attraction the world falls off from the mind like the tail of the tadpole. Is it because it wills it to be so? No it falls off by itself.

"The vessel of the worldly men remains filled with trash, by matters of worldly enjoyments. The vessels of the devotees of the inner circle remains filled with divine nectar.

"Why does He do so — filling one with sensory matters and the other with *prema* (ecstatic love)?. The rishis have answered this question by saying that this is His sport. In other words, they don't know why. There is sorrow in the mind full of sensory matters and happiness, peace and joy in the mind full of *prema*. If you want to have the vessel full of happiness instead of the vessel full of sorrows, go and keep their company and serve them. They who are called sadhus, every *parshada* (intimate disciple) of the avatara is a sadhu, a *mahatma* (very high soul)."

M. keeps silent for a while then he resumes.

M. (to the devotees) — I saw something today when I went to Dakshineswar — the whole garden was flooded with *prema* (ecstatic love). All the trees, creepers, the buildings, the men — all of them made of this divine ecstatic love — they were all swimming in the current of *prema*. They did not die. They were all illumined — all sporting in joy.

Half past ten in the evening.



Morton School, Calcutta
Sunday, 24th August 1924
8th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The 9th lunar day of the dark fortnight
1 Danda / 8958 Palas.

YOU WILL COME ONLY HERE AND GO NOWHERE ELSE

1.

Morton School, fourth level, M.'s room. M. is sitting on his bedding facing west. Mukunda arrives. He is the Rector of Rampur Hatt School. Since his students days he has been very fond of M. Mukunda and Antevasi are sitting on a bench towards M.'s left. M. holds in his hands a list of Keshab Sen's sermons in chronological order. He turns over its pages. A glow of happiness is playing in his eyes and face. M.'s mind is immersed in the sea of the sweet memories of Sri Ramakrishna. While thinking of Keshab he cannot but think of Sri Ramakrishna. M. is not able to control his joy. He doles out this joy to the devotees. Today it is Monday, 25th August 1924, 9th of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), the 10th day of the dark fortnight, 7 Dandas and/ 31 Palas.

M. (to the devotees) – You see, I used to go to Keshab Babu's lectures for a long time. I didn't know him personally then. I had been going to him since I was a student. I was then a school boy. It must have been when I was in my second (9th of today) class (9th of today). Thakur himself introduced me to him. It was in his own house that my first introduction took place. Thakur had come to his house and I was also with him. Pointing towards me he said to Keshab in a tone of complaint, 'I say, just let me know why he doesn't go there (to Dakshineswar)? Though he says that he does not have his mind in the world.' He made this request and complaint, so that Keshab might ask me to go there. How amazing, just see! He commends me to Keshab Babu in quite another way. Why was he so eager for me to go there? Because I was his own, because he was my father. He was to bring together the scattered block and intertwine in one thread. Otherwise, he could not perform his Nara ILeela (God's sport as a man). The aim of his advent as an avatara was this to enact his leela in the company of his devotees. The Mother of the Universe had shown him twenty or twenty-two years earlier who are who were to be the companions of his leela. That's why, he cared so much for them.

"Besides, Keshab Sen and Thakur found another link. The family where I had married was connected with Keshab Sen. Keshab Sen's grandfather had many brothers. One line was that of Keshab Babu and another was of that family. They are all the Sens of Calootola...

"But Thakur had taken me as a man of Brahma Samaj from the beginning. So it was that when I used to go to him earlier, he talked to me about Brahma Samaj; 'How is Keshab Sen doing? I hear he is ill.' (With smiling in the eyes) I replied him the same way, 'I don't go there quite often. I also hear that he is not well.' Hearing this he became thoughtful — O, O it means, he does not go there.

"One day he said, 'You have the formless God here too.' In other words, he had experienced there all the aspects of God — God-with-form, God-without-form, all. And so many other aspects of God too! Hadn't he attained God in all the *bhavas* (attitudes)? And then, what

was attaining God for him? He himself was God, now come down now as a man. Now he was having his divine sport, you see. So he was talking to the devotees in their bhava. He had undertaken all kinds of sadhana, even as a Christian and as a Muslim. And not to speak of Hinduism — he had perfected himself in all the sadhanas of the Vedas, the Puranas and the Tantras, all. So he used to say, 'Here too you have the Formless.' You see, the men of the Brahmo Samaj are so fond of talking of the Formless. Thakur had taken me too as one of them. (M. laughs loudly).

"Once during the Puja days I had been going very frequently to Keshab Babu. Hearing this Thakur got worried. He said firmly but affectionately, 'You will not go elsewhere, you will only come here.'

"And why will he not say so, he is both one's own mother and father! The boy may go astray, so they are worried. The bhaktas are the dear and near ones of the Mother, you see — the *antarangas*. That's why, the Mother had earlier shown them to Thakur. She said, 'All these are my own people. They will come to you. By meeting them, by talking to them of God you will feel at peace.' At the time of the arati he would go up the roof of the Kuthi and yell out, 'I say, where are you people? Come on. My *prana* is burning with the fire of women and gold.' That's why, just by seeing them he recognised that they are his own people."

M. (to the devotees) — You will go nowhere else, you will only come here — by just saying so he saved us from such unnecessary detours. That's why, one can never repay the debt of the Guru, the ocean of motiveless grace.

"To test me he would ask me again and again, what was his worth. He wanted to see how far I had reached. How far the devotees had understood him. He used to hint again and again, you see — I am God, come as an avatara. He wanted to see whether the devotees were able to hold him.

"One day he said, 'Well, will Keshab Sen's group of followers last? What do you say?' I too am just like that. I replied, 'It could last if he visited you more frequently.' Thakur again asked, 'But why? So many people go there. How many come here?' I replied, 'Only of that type go there.' He had a hearty laugh on hearing it. He said, 'Those who only want God come here.' (M. laughs long)

"He used to adopt several procedures. When he saw that one did not work, he would take another immediately.

"How much did we trouble him! But he did not the least show temper or feel irritated. He knew human weakness, you see. How can one get rid of one's environments, one's upbringing?

"How much the devotees pestered him! How low he had to come down to teach them. One day he knelt in Raja Navakrishna's house to offer his obeisance. And how delicate is this body. How very delicate was his body. He did even this for the instruction of the 'English Men'. They pay obeisance by joining their hands. But one should offer pranam to the Deity by lying prostrate before It. Hearing that the

'English Men' sit inside the Kali Temple and perform japa and dhyana Thakur used to feel very happy.

"One day he said, 'Once I was going from this village to the other. Harido (Hridya) was with me. I saw a very big stone on the bank of the river. My Mother! the more I walked towards it the more I saw the stone moving away. And then it suddenly fell into the river with a thud.' When I heard this I began to laugh loudly. Can a stone move, can it fall into the river! You see, the devotee was a rationalist. Thakur laughed as he said, 'But Mathur said: Father I would not have believed it if somebody else said so. But I believe since you say it?' (M. goes into peals of laughter).

"(After a little thought) "Pointing towards a sadhu he once said, 'Look here, look here, how this sadhu has been meditating on Kali.' (Laughing uncontrollably) The rationalist replied, 'Of course, he would do so. So long he remains extrovert there is indeed Kali for him.' Hearing this he did not say anything else.

"(Recalling something) "On another day he said to some other person, 'Go and offer your pranam to Kali.' He replied, 'But I am seeing you. What shall I do there?' Thakur said, 'You must worship the one I worship.' "

M. is now out of his rather violent mood of joy. Gradually his normal gravity takes possession of him. He sits silent for a while in this mood. He started conversing again.

M. (to the bhaktas) – What is the meaning of the *Kkuhelika* (mist; obscurity)?

Mukunda – I think it means illusion.

M. – Only thinking will not do. We are positivist.

Swami Yogeshwarananda's name comes up during the conversation. He has come from Bangalore to have M.'s darshan. Yesterday he came to see him. M. went with him to the Dakshineswar temple in Viren's carn. He is the disciple of Rama Babu's disciple and of Swami Sureshwarananda.

M. (showing a book to the devotees) – Swami Sureshwarananda has written all this. But man has become very clever now. He doesn't want speculation. He now wants the authority. On hearing this the Paramahansa Deva (Thakur) said, 'He will accept only that.' And that too, perhaps, his authority.

"Rama Babu's son Suresh has started a *math* independently in Bangalore. It is not associated with the Mission. He is doing great work. Not only that, he has opened an another branch in Hyderabad.

"Yogeshwarananda came here. He said, 'I saw you in a dream.' He said, 'I have come only to see you.'

"The festival in Kankurgachhi is over. But he did not go there — lest they should put him so many questions. I told him, 'It would be better if you go there some other day. Go there once, offer obeisance to Thakur and run back. ADoes a man from that place

(Kankurgachhi) does not go there (Kankurgachhi)!.' "

2.

8 p.m. M. is sitting on the roof of the Morton School. In front of him are seated bhaktas on benches — the Elder Jiten, Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten, Vinay, the Doctor, the Younger Ramesh and others. The Younger Ramesh is the son of M.'s sister. He is studying in a college. He has a soft nature. He is bit unmethodical. M. instructs him.

M. (to the Younger Ramesh) – Try to be a little methodical from now. Buy a file for two pice. You have a file. Do you have a file, haven't you? (Ramesh says, 'No.'). Then buy one. Write down the telephone numbers on it — that of the Amulya Babu and of Dicken's Store.

The Elder Jiten – You will mature if you stay here for some time.

M. – Not just this. An idealist becomes a realist.

"A ship went to sea. It went very far when it's iron pieces all got began to detached. At some distance there was a hill of magnet. When asked, the captain said that there was a hill of magnet somewhere. It was that which was pulling. Similarly, those who have their mind always directed towards God become lax in all their worldly works. God is the hill of magnet. Isn't He? But till you have such a mind what else can you do? If not work, what?"

Mohan – Well, the Western people are so very inspired with work — in handicraft, science or business. Will they also attain *karma sannyasa* (renunciation of work) one day while working in this way?

M. – How is it possible? Unless they take to Karma Yoga (work without the desire of reward), how can they achieve *karma sannyasa* (renunciation of work). In other words, if they take to selfless work to attain God, then alone it is possible. Otherwise, they will go on adding to their work. When the feeling of *nivritti* (non-worldliness) comes to the mind one takes to selfless work. Otherwise, all works result in endless increasing of work. One shall fall into an endless cycle of birth and death. Swami Vivekananda said to the people of West, 'Work for work sake — not for self enjoyment.' These people do not know what work for God is. So, he (Swamiji) gave that instruction.

"It is said in simple words that one must renounce the reward of all work. This renunciation results inevitably in one being drawn towards truth, towards God.

"Work does not become *kshaya* (come to an end/unbinding) even if done with a feeling of doing good to others. It does raise one quite high, but it does not cease come to an end. Thakur said this one thing to Krishandas Pal and Vidyasagar Mahashay. Though such work is good but it does not bring God realization. Modifications of the mind do not cease with such work. So perpetual peace is not attained. If you want to achieve it God realization must be your ideal. It was to say this to Vidyasagar Mahashay that Thakur went to him and asked him to work for God. That would lead to God. realization."

Mohan – The aim of Gandhi Maharaj’s work is also doing good to others, attainment of independence for the country and arranging for grain and cloth for the poor. Will this purify the mind?

M. – The goal of Gandhi Maharaj is God-realization. He has named God as Rama. It is to have the darshan of Rama that he has taken to this work. It is not to serve the country. The latter is only the means, the goal is attainment of God.

Mohan – What will be the result of the sacrifice of those who have renounced their all for the sake of the country?

M. – The country will attain freedom, tThe people will be benefited, the poor will be provided with food and cloth — just that much. But it will not bring God-realization. Even so, this renunciation will take them very much ahead — they are much higher than ordinary people. By rising so high it becomes easier to attain God. Renunciation makes their path straight and prepares their mind. Later on, if they develop non-worldliness and get attracteddrawned towards God, they will also have His darshan. What sacrifices Aurobindo Babu has made after taking part in politics!. And at the end he made God-realization as his ideal, which brings peace, happiness and perfection.

Next day at midday, M.’s room. M. is seated on the bed spread. Antevasi is sitting on a bench facing north. The second chapter from the *Prabandhavali* (series of articles) on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda is being read out. Antevasi is writing it.

The Kathamrita is under print. M. is very busy. This morning he went to the Thakur Bari taking Antevasi with him. He spent the whole day there. As desired by M., Antevasi having delivered twelve rims of printing paper to ‘Vani Press’ has returned to the school building. M. returns to the Morton School at 3 p.m. Now the appendix to the Kathamrita is being written.

The bhaktas have arrived and taken their seat on the rooftop. The 2nd chapter is being written in the room. It is almost twilight hour. As soon as the writing is over, M. and Antevasi come and sit on the rooftop. Antevasi reads it out to the bhaktas. Having heard about half of it the Doctor, Vinay and the Younger Amulya go to the Cossipore house, and M. rises and goes into the staircase room with the bhaktas. The reading continues.

The Reader – (Sri Ramakrishna says to the famous Brahma preacher, Pratap Chandra Majumdar) Look here, ‘I and mine’ alone constitute ignorance. ... the jnani says:, wWife and son, family members and all are Yours. Loving everything and calling it ‘mine, mine’ is *maya*. To love all, this is *daya* (compassion).

M. – That’s why, Thakur said to the bhaktas: Live in your family like a maidservant. If you do so you will be saved from the maya’s reach, from the hands of ignorance. It is not enough to say by the word of mouth that you are a maidservant. You are to live like one. You have to work for the whole day but take no benefit from it. Your attitude should be as that of a maidservant of a household who has no right to take anything herself but only to work night and day. You must spend seventy five percent of your wealth etc. in the service of the deities, sadhus and God in the poor. You must serve the family with

twenty five percent.

"But if you do not constantly keep the company of sadhus this bhava does not sustain long. Selfishness covers it up. Thakur taught some bhaktas how they should live in their home like a maidservant. He has himself prepared them with his own hands to serve as examples. To one householder devotee, he said,: 'The Mother of the Universe has told me that She would get a bit of Her work done by you, the work of teaching mankind.' Besides, he even asked Her to grant him a *kala* (one sixteenth) of Shakti. Without God's Shakti it is not possible to teach mankind. (Laughing) But that devotee wanted to embrace sannyasa. He had realized in his early years that family life was hard. Thus he had a great desire to embrace sannyasa.

"One day at the twilight hour he came down from samadhi and scolded this devotee. There was nobody in the room. He said, 'Let nobody think that the Mother's work will remain unfinished. She makes big *acharyas* out of a piece of straw.' Hearing this, the devotee bowed to the wish of the Mother of the Universe.

"And then Thakur said, 'Mother, if you keep him in family grant him Your *darshan* at times. Otherwise, how will he go on, Mother?' "

A bBhakta – How did this devotee reach the end, he lived like a maidservant?

M. – He is still safe. He has yet to reach the end. (Laughter).

"It was to this very bhakta that Thakur had initiated into Tantrik sSannyasa. Baburam was also initiated into it along with him. The former was bothering Thakur again and again for sannyasa. But he kept him in the household by the Mother's command. But he arranged every convenience around him in the house. He was initiated into Tantrik Ssannyasa, the Mother of the Universe was requested to grant him Her darshan from time to time, what else did he not do for him? Was he not the Mother's own person? He was to teach the humanity through him! So it was that he had such care for him."



Morton School
Tuesday, 26th August 1924
10th of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The 11th day of the dark fortnight
11 Dandas / 47 Palas.

ENJOY YOURSELF, THE CHILD OF ALL BLISSFUL MOTHER

The MMorton School. The fFourth level, M.'s room. It is eight in the morning. M. is sitting on the bedspread. Antevasi is on a bench. He is being instructed.

M. (to Antevasi) – You have to send the copy of the Kathamrita. Please enter it on the peon book and send it. You have to deal with *rajasic* people in the *rajasic* way. By sending it with a peon book it will have greater effect. They will think that we are business-like and methodical. They will apply greater attention to it.

"It is very difficult to carry out work in the world — the right work. Only the work for God is the right work. But those who have no faith in God, those who work for themselves and enjoy it's fruit will have to be very methodical.

"Just note, how the people of the West work? There is not the least mistake in it. They work with their mind and soul. The external matters in their case are very right. There is only difference with the inner sSelf. The devotees work for God, but they work for their selfish end. We should only learn from them how to attend to external matters. They will also enter gradually within themselves. They will gradually begin to believe in God. In the beginning, it will be *sakama* (with worldly motives). Thereafter, it will be *nishkama* (without any desire).

"One should take whatever good one can find anywhere. Then alone the heart is broadened. Like the bee, one should gather the good and make a beautiful beehive. Then one should dedicate it to God."

Antevasi enters it in the peon book and sends the copy. M. asks for it and examines it. He says, "Just see, you have not put a full stop here. And the 'a' also has to be in capital letters."

It is 11 o'clock. The writing of the Kathamrita has to go on today too. M. will dictate but the yYounger Amulya will write. Antevasi also is also teaching in the schooll. So, he will have no time today to take the dictation. Pointing to the Younger Amulya, M. says, "He will write it." M. is contributing a series of articles under the title 'Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda' in a monthly magazine named Basumati. When the writing is over, M. asks Antevasi to again copy it.

In the evening, the bhaktas are assembled on the roof. The Elder Jiten, Jagabandhu, the Doctor, Vinay, Shanti, Balai, the Younger Amulya, the Younger Nalini, the Younger Ramesh, the Stout Sudhir and other bhaktas are seated in front on the three sides of M. on benches. M. is on a chair facing nNorth. After the meditation, they talk on different matters.

Jagabandhu (to M.) – Some people say that there is repetition in the Kathamrita.

M. – If a man does not like repetition it means that he has not gained

bhakti. Can there ever be the repetition of the words of Eternal Life? Only the Eternal Life, God, is without fault!

"Aha, what shall I say? You people have not seen the avatara. You would have been enchanted on seeing him. Everything about him is beautiful. How he rises or sits, moves or conducts himself, takes bath or food, sleeps or dreams, loves or scolds, observes silence or speaks — every thing beautiful about him. Beautiful, enjoyable and sweet. Every thing about him is sweet. 'Bring the umbrella' — even this is a waterfall of that *amrita*. Is it possible in a man!

"So long as there is the sense of form, of taste, of smell, of sound and of touch there is the mind. When the mind is there, one is aware of happiness and grief, good and bad. That's why, Thakur wept when Adhar Sen passed away. He said crying:: Mother, why have you bound me with bhakti? The mind stays lower in bhakti. One feels grief for the bhakta. One wishes that the devotee may remain safe. If anything happens to Keshab whom shall I talk to about You, Mother when I go to Calcutta. His intimate disciples had not yet reached him. An unparalleled personality! He can be compared only to himself."

M. (hinting at the stout Sudhir, to all) – There is no worry at all. This one can understand very well. He worries about our body. And He also worries about our atman. Just see, the earth, the water, the fire, the air, the sky and then the sun, the moon, the cereals and so on, all these are there for the body. And then, He sends the avatara for atman. There is no worry. Move about whistling. You are the child of the All-blissful Mother! Why are you joyless? Enjoy yourself, enjoy.

M. is silent for a while. Again he showers the *Kkathamrita* (nectarine words).

M. (gazing at the stars in the sky) – Just see, they are our neighbours. Are they not so because we don't know them? Because we do not know who is doing what in his house at Shyam Bazar, does it mean that he is doing nothing?

"That's why, they say so (about the yearning) for God realization — *Dadar o phlar* (the same trouble with the elder brother). You know that parable. A frog ate too much. Its stomach was bloated. At that moment, a dead cow was floating in the stream. Its body was also swollen because of the air that had entered it. The frog saw it and said, 'I see, it is *dadar o phlar*.' The frog thought that the cow's belly has also swollen by eating too much like it. (Laughter). So it had the same trouble as it had.

(Gazing at the stars, to himself) "I have the same state as yours. It is by His grace that I have realized that we are living in His *Brahmanda* (universe).

"The rishis say that even Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara are not able to find Him. The Devi Bhagavata says: Brahma went to have the darshan of the Mother of the Universe. The gatekeeper said, 'Wait a while. How many faced Brahma are you?' Brahma said, 'Four faced.' The gatekeeper said, 'O, O so you are four faced Brahma! Wait

for a while. The fifty faced Brahma has gone in to have the darshan. Which is your region? Perhaps, the smaller *Brahmanda*.'

"Such is the affair — higher, one higher than the other. But there is none higher than Him. He is His own creation."

Everybody is silent. The conversation continues.

The Elder Jiten – Somebody has written the life of Mohammed. What a beautiful description of his death!

He narrates some portions of his death. But M.'s mind is elsewhere.

M. – Aha, Thakur's description is indeed beautiful. The boy went to sleep. The breast of the mother got detached from his mouth. This is what is death — one falls asleep while sucking at the mother's breast. Why do people consider death as horrible? It looks like that from a distance. When one comes close, it is nothing at all. It is only the breast of the mother getting detached from the mouth.

"What is amateur religion? One attends the office wearing *choga-chapkan* (loose garment resembling a surplice). In between they all gather one day and arrange a small function in the name of God. Such amateur religion cannot avail anything.

"And about knowing Him by intellect? Mind and intellect are external conditions. That's why, the yogis take to *Ashtanga* sadhana (yoga of eight observances). One should observe *Yama*, *Niyama* and so on. Without them religion is not possible. All these are morals. Every religion contains them. The first step in religion is Yama and Niyama — morals. He who does not observe them, his religion is in vain.

"So one should call on hHim at a fix hours. One should look for Him within oneself. One should take to dhyana. Otherwise, why have the yogis taken to all this.

"I am very intelligent. I will beat him with my intellect. The crow also thinks that it is very clever. But it dies while eating the excreta of others.

"What is the use of a Mutual Admiration Society? You are great! No, you are great! Aha, what an intellect you have! Can one attain Him by intellect?

"Thakur said to a particular devotee, 'Just dive a little. By divingdiving, you will gain many gems and jewels. What will it avail if you just swim on the surface?'

"He is both inside and outside. You have been gazing outside. Now look within.

"Krishna said to Arjuna, '*Tasmat yogi bhava Arjuna* (Arjuna, become a Yogi).'

"If you do so, you will not have to take 'excreta'. 'Excreta' means the girdle of woman and gold. You will not have to live within it.

"What a man was Keshab Sen — how much of lecturing, running of the Brahmo Samaj, preaching and what not he did., eEven to him Thakur said, 'You are sitting in a dark room, getting a little light from the chink. And that's what you see. You have never gone out to stand in the open field. When you will go there, you see quite another thing — a flood of light.' 'In the field,' in other words to renounce all by forsaking woman and gold.

"What will you gain by thinking yourself to be intelligent? What is the reach of your intellect! A children's book talks of 'the marriage of the elder moth'. You are but a moth, why do you talk like an elephant?"

M. (to the devotees) – Many times I sit down thinking how fast I have put on so many years. I have become old. I have not been able to even meditate on Him for a little while. What can man understand by so little (intellect)?

"The mark of a yogi is that his mind is always at the higher level — never low down.

"It is beautifully said in the Upanishad. On Sseeing the LordLord, the face looks like a blooming lotus. On seeing it people stand wonderstruck.

"The *acharya* says, 'What has happened to you? On seeing you in this way, I feel you have attained God. Undoubtedly, you see Him within.'

"The *acharya* says to Satyakama, '*Brahmavidiva va saumya bhasi* .(you become serene when you know the Brahman).' "

M. (to Mohan) – The rishis clearly say, 'By His grace we have known God.' They say —

Vedahmetam purusham mahantmadityavarnam tamasah parastat,

Tameva viditva atimrityumati nanyaha pantha vidyate aynaya.

"*Nanyaha pantha vidyate aynaya*, that is to say, there is no other way to it. The play stops only when He has been realized. So one should meditate on Him. The rishis have realized Him by Dhyana Yoga (the yoga of meditation)."

M. is silent for a while. He showers the *Kkathamrita* again.

M. (to the devotees) – But Thakur attained Him in this way as well as in other. Like the rishis he lost himself in the Indivisible Sachchidananda continuously for six months. God then sent a Vaishnava sadhu for the preservation of his body. Beating him with a wooden ruler he would bring him out into some external consciousness and feed him a mouthful of milk and rice. That is how his body was preserved.

"And when he came down he would see the whole universe full of Consciousness.

"And he used to see so many forms of the Mother, the Mother of the Universe — he would see Her as a human being with a Banarasi Sari on her. Sometimes, he would see Her playing the Veena; sometimes She was standing midst people filling a whole room with little bells on Her feet and loose flowing loose hair. She came in Keshab's house in a Banarasi Sari before the latter's demise.

"Thakur had Her darshan through all paths — Jnana Yoga, Dhyana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Besides, in so many attitudes of Dualism, Monism and qualified Monism.

"Aha, what a clear statement of the rishis: *Vedahmetam* — I have known Him. *Tamasah parastat* — His dwelling place is behind ignorance. He dwells on the other side of the affection and illusion of the world. If you wish to conquer death, if you want to get rid of the fear of death, know Him. Death means both birth and death, for one inevitably accompanies the other. They both go together. You will have to go beyond it. This cycle of birth and death is the other name of death. Crossing over to the other side, you see God, the Eternal Bliss, Sachchidananda. There *ashiva* (non-divine) becomes Shiva (divine); death becomes immortality; fear becomes non-fear; restlessness becomes peace; momentary pleasure becomes unceasing joy; man becomes a god."

What is M. thinking of? He again showers the nectar of divine words.

M. (to the devotees) — Thakur said, 'So long as there is thread on the reel there is no way of getting away from birth and death.' Reel means the mind and thread signifies desire. One has to burn the worldly-desire, the desire for sensory enjoyment, the *ajnana* (ignorance) by the desire for God, the desire for immortality. It is then that one has His darshan.

"This time he has shown an easy way. Weep secretly in a solitary corner in earnestness for Him like a child crying for his mother. Thakur initially went by this very path. In the KaliyugaKaliyuga, hard austerities are not possible. That's why, this easy natural path."

M. is again silent, then he converses.

M. (to the Doctor) — What has happened to your car? Has he been caught? What botheration all this! On the one hand, it makes one's work so easy, on the other what a nuisance! Who has opened it and what has he taken away? Now one has to run after him. How careful one has to be about so many matters! Is worldly life so simple?

"If one becomes lax in it, one's mind also becomes lax in God. The more you take the mind outward, the more it is unnecessarily expended. It goes to woman and gold. And one dies as one pays its tax. When will one call on God?

"Those who do not have their mind in God, may give their mind in it. This will bring them peace. Everybody wants peace — God is Himself the Self of peace. Without peace there is no happiness.

"The devotees must follow the middle path. They should engage themselves in the world with one hand and hold God with the other. Thus they will attend to this side without unnecessarily expending their mind."

The chauffeur of Doctor Bakshi's car has removed some parts from the car and sold them. And he says that they have been stolen. The Doctor is in difficulty. So M. is also worried. How to conduct the household life, this he is telling to the Doctor.

M. (to the Doctor) – I see that many people bring a car from the company on hire. They bring it in the morning along with the chauffeur. At night, he takes it back. There is no problem in this way. Even if it is there, it is not a big one.

"It has this advantage that one has no time to say, 'Mine, mine.' 'Me and mine,' this indeed is *ajnana* (ignorance)!"

(Suddenly becoming grave) "Oh, what a great thing Thakur has said, 'Me and mine are *ajnana*.' "

The Elder Jiten – Yes Sir, this is right.

M. – If you kindly say this then alone it is right, otherwise not. (Everybody laughs).

"So long as your mind is in this side you will have to look to all — your car, your house, your practice. You will have to look to all these. He asked us to keep two swords — one of *jnana*, the other of *karma*.

"If one only attends to *karma*, one loses one's *jnana*. On the other hand, if one only attends to the other world this world goes.

"Even so if He graciously pulls one towards Him, one doesn't have to worry about this side. He says, '*Tasya karyam na vidyate*.' What is this *sloka*?"

A Particular bhakta –

Yah tu atmaratih eva syat atmatriptah cha manavah,

Atmani eva cha samtushtah tasya karyam na vidyate.

(Gita 3:17)

[But the man who rejoices in the Self, is satisfied with the Self, and centred in the sSelf, for him verily there is no obligatory duty.]

"Just see how one gets exemption. If you always keep your mind in God, you have no *karma* to perform. Once he (Lord Krishna) said to Arjuna, 'Without work you cannot even preserve your body.' But here he says that he who is satisfied with the Self has no work to perform. It looks like a contradiction. But in reality it is not so. How? For He takes the responsibility of him who is absorbed in *samadhi*. He says, '*Yoga kshemam vahami aham*,' (Gita 9:22). It means that He Himself takes the responsibility for the preservation of preserving the body of him who is absorbed in *samadhi*."

Antevasi – Does He take the responsibility only for the time when one is absorbed in samadhi? Does He not take the burden when one has external consciousness?

M. – He then takes the burden too. He also takes the burden of those who in their state of external consciousness spend their time only in divine talk and meditation upon Him. Hasn't He said, 'I provide gain and security to *tesam nitya abhiyuktanam* (those who are ever united).' (Gita 9:22).

"He is the father and mother of all in the world. He looks after all according to His law. But he who meditates on Him with one mind, He takes the burden of preserving his body in His own hands."

M. (to the devotees) – Till that state of *ananyachinta* (of worshippingthinking of Him alone) is reached, one has to look after both sides. Can man give up his efforts just by wishing it? He Himself rids one of one's efforts.

"This effort too comes from Him. And it is He who rids one of it. But effort alone does not solve the problem. That too happenscomes by His grace. Even so, He enjoins upon us to make effort.

"Thakur said, 'Meditation on me alone will do.' So one should meditate on him in time. And take to worldly work after telling Hhim about it. One should proceed this way. While one is doing so, one attains His darshan after many births and deaths — *aneka janma samsiddhah tatah yati param gatim* (Gita 6:45). (Perfected through many births one then reaches the supreme Goal). But to some He grants His darshan even in one birth, in this very life."



Calcutta
Wednesday, 27 August 1924
11th of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The 12th day of the dark fortnight
15 Dandas / 48 Palas.

READING THE KATHAMRITA IS THE HIGHEST COMPANY OF SADHUS

1.

Morton School, the bedroom of the 4th level. M., is lying on his bed. He is very tired in body. 'The Kathamrita' is under print — he has to work hard for it. Besides, he has backache.

It is about eight in the morning. M. talks to Antevasi about the printing of the Kathamrita.

M. (to Antevasi) – Please read the file of the second form of part fourIV to find out if there are any corrections to be made.

"And it would be better if you make a section as an appendix containing articles on Swamiji (V.N.). This will help the young men a great deal. When they see so many articles of Swamiji, they are frightened and do not like to proceed. Herein you have references to them. Gradually they will read all. They will become interested by reading all these and later go to the original writing.

"And another matter will come to their notice that how Swamiji has propagated the words of Thakur. This they will be able to see properly. Thakur's words are as it were mantras, formulas. Swamiji's words are their commentary."

Antevasi – By giving all this in the Kathamrita, will no harm come to its reputation that the Kathamrita only contains the words of Thakur?

M. – Why? It will go as an appendix. You see, every part has an appendix. This too will form an appendix.

"Its aim is to show how Thakur's words work on the devotees."

M. is silent for a while. Then he resumes the conversation.

M. – It will be nice if the fifth part of the Kathamrita is started. What do you say?

Antevasi – One must first realize the state of one's health before taking up a work in hand.

M. – Yes. I lost some of my hearing while writing one part of the book. It would be nice if somebody could help — I may lie down and speak, while he keeps on writing. This will also be meditation on Thakur.

"He would hand over a necessary book, or and open and or close the window for me. It would be very nice. You see, I have an old body. It needs rest. It no longer has the strength of youth. That's why, the need of somebody's help."

Antevasi – But before starting a work one should clearly see, understand, think over, whether the body can bear it. How much concentration it needs!

"And there is another matter to think over. — Those who are to be with you and to write, will they be available at the same time (when you need them)? And are they ready to do so the way in which you wish to do?"

"If the person is not of your mind, if the work is not done according to your convenience, you will have to do it all at last."

M. – Yes, once I start on something I am not able to focus my attention on left or right.

"I have thought it over that till the job of reprinting is over I will not go out. And when I have to live here, it's better that I do it. I thought in this way."

Antevasi – It is very essential to bring out the fifth part. Everybody is waiting for it. Sadhus of the Math also want it. Many bhaktas also asked for it. Sarat Maharaj has talked to me so many times about the fifth part. He said, 'If you people start it, it will be done.' This is all right but one must consider one's health before taking up a work in hand.

The bhaktas have assembled on the roof at the fourth level. The dusk is approaching. M. is in the chair facing North. The bhaktas are seated on benches. Jagabandhu, Shukalal and Manoranjan, the Doctor, Vinay and the Younger Amulya, the Elder Jiten and Balai, Shanti and the Stout Sudhir and some others are there. A little later, arrives Durgapada Mitra (the Healing Balm).

Madhu Babu of Sri Hatt has come with a companion. M. talks to them. He says happily, "There are many devotees in that region. It is a region of bhakti. Thakur's name is being spread in a good deal. It is said that there were sixty-four heads of monasteries of Chaitanya Deva. They all belonged to that region."

The evening light is brought in. Relinquishing all work, M. utters, "Haribol, Haribol!" while clapping his hands. It is followed by half an hour of Dhyana Yoga. Again, M. talks sweetly with Madhu.

M. (to Madhu) – One should keep company of sadhus. Thakur said, 'Daily association with sadhus is necessary just like food, rest etc.' By keeping company of sadhus the feeling of 'Sat' (Reality) awakens in the mind. When one goes to pilgrimage one should carry with this feeling of 'Sat' with oneself. Then one enjoys it.

"Otherwise, it is like visiting a place. One sees all only superficially — buildings and houses, the common man and so on. And when one goes there after having the company of sadhus, one sees within. This is indeed better. Then one comes full of life and joy. The subtle and hidden *bhavas* are all present in the holy places. They are all living. One comes across all of them. They are all everlasting bhavas. What are they?"

"(1) God is the Reality, this is one bhavaidea. (2) God is eternal, all

else is transitory, this is another idea. (3) Therefore, serve Him, think on Him with all your heart and soul; this is yet another feeling. (4) The body you have today, tomorrow it may not be. So long as this body lasts render service to Him with it, not to the devils; this is another. (5) Serve the wife, son and relations taking them to be divine and take yourself as a maidservant in a rich man's house. God has kept them all in the care of the maid. They belong to are Hims. Moreover, He has taken the form of all these relations. This is another idea. (6) All these relations are not mine, nor do I am theirs. Only God is their as well as my own. This one is another idea. (7) Before my birth these mother, father and relations were not there with me. After my death, too, they will not accompany me. Only God is always with me like the mother of a naughty boy — till the boy of the housefamily returns home. This is another. (8) God first, all else later on; this is another idea. (9) Why to stick to truth? Because by practising it, you will discover the great truth. What is it? That God alone has been my own since eternity, and all those whom we call our own in the world are strangers. This is another bhava. (10) How many great persons having forsaken wealth, relations, knowledge, intellect and kingdom, all, have embraced sannyasa for their own person — God — and are living on the holy alms of charity! They all roam about in places of pilgrimage. This idea also awakens in the mind. (11) I am the son of the immortal bliss, I am the servant of God or I am God — all these divine ideas rise in the mind in holy places by the holy touch of these centres of pilgrimage. (12) How many sadhus, bhaktas and great men live in these centres. One can have their darshan and talk to them — this idea is another.

"But all these feelings keep lying buried in the mind without the company of sadhus. 'I visit places of pilgrimage because dozens of others do so. One my return, I shall be able to say that I have visited such and such holy places' — all this is not right. Thus Thakur used to dissuade the devotees from going too often to places of pilgrimage. He would say: You have already been to Kashi and Vrindaban, haven't you? That is enough. One is a centre of jnana and the other of bhakti.

"The greatest of all pilgrimage centres is Thakur himself. He is God in a human body. He about whom you wish to be inspired by visiting a holy place, is before your own eyes. What use then to go to a place of pilgrimage? Thinking thus, he would not suggest visits to many centres of pilgrimage.

(To Madhu) "It is nice to stay for a few days in Calcutta and keep company of sadhus. Go to the Math by a steamer in the morning and return at 9 or 10 o'clock. First do this, then you may go if you like. What do you say?"

Madhu and his companion take leave of M. M. goes down to the second storey for his meal. Now it is 8 p.m.

The bhaktas now start an interesting conversation on the roof and engage themselves in a severe contest of arguments. The leader of one side is Durgapada Mitra (the Healing Balm). The Elder Jiten leads the other side. Both of them are elderly devotees. The majority of bhaktas favour Durgapada. Other bhaktas form the audience. It starts as follows.

The Elder Jiten – The Guru keeps pulling the string — he grazes you sometimes there, sometimes here and pulls you back. Thus one's desire for sensory enjoyments ends. One gains renunciation of sensory pleasures while one is engaged in sense enjoyments. That's why, Thakur talked of intercourse with one's wife etc.

Durgapada (interrupting) – If you like to eat grass you may eat it. But why do you pull others toward it? How do you know that all devotees feed on grass? Making a resolution of dying or killing, why not pull the fish immediately on the bank?.

The Young Man – You are right. If you have lost your tail why do you ask others to cut their tail? The bhaktas worship the flower honey. Why should you bring them on the grass — on this lowly article?

The Elder Jiten is silent. He cannot help talking. Now the conversation resumes.

The Elder Jiten – There is an old man living in our locality. But he is very fond of reading books. Why this fondness? Why read so much? What use is it? The musical notation should be brought to the fingers. Besides, hearing is better than reading. Thakur said all this.

Durgapada – Yes, all the words of Thakur are indeed Gospel Truth. But, he who has not heard all has to read, isn't it? Besides, reading these days is included in the hearing of the past. After hearing, one should think over it and then perform *nididhyasana* (profound meditation about meaning or implication).

"I am talking of myself. I was very fond of reading. I used to read many books. Because of this habit, I came across the Kathamrita."

"You read the Kathamrita. It is bringing the greatest company of sadhus on the earth — this was said by Deven Majumdar, the bhakta of Thakur. How can you then say that reading is not good?"

"Only he must bring the musical notation to the fingers who has heard a lot, read a lot. How then can you say, 'It is not necessary for you,' when the concerned person needs to hear? How can you patronisingly give your judgement on all these matters?"

Doctor Kartik – Thakur said that devotional text should be read. Reading by itself is not bad.

The Young Man (affectionately) – The old man reads only those books in which he is interested. The others read other books. Isn't it so, Jiten Babu? You talk of his firm *sanskaras*. Isn't it so!

The Elder Jiten – Does he read just one book — the story of the Duke and the Theft? That's why I said, 'Why read some other book even after taking *payas-mundi* (the pudding of cheese)?.'

Durgapada – Only if the *payas-mundi* was available to him!

The Young Man – One only talks of the *payas-mundi*. If one understands it by heart and soul, why does one go to graze the 'grass'

of sensory enjoyment, as he says? Here one comes, hears all and sees all. Why does then one go into it?

Durgapada – He (the Elder Jiten) alone has understood.....

The Elder Jiten again receives a blow. He is silent for a while. But by nature he is talkative. He cannot but talk. So many times M. has told him that it is better to keep quiet. But he cannot. He talks again.

The Elder Jiten (slowly to Shukalal) – An old sadhu is residing in a house close to us. He is a Vaishnava Bengali. The place of his guru is Ayodhya. He is very short-tempered. He talks unnecessarily: How much salary one is drawing, the doctor earns more — only such things come continuously out of his month.

Durgapada (laughing) – ‘One’s nature does not change even after death.’ And then condemnation of whom? We ourselves live with it and yet we condemn others! Moreover, we support it with different arguments!

The Elder Jiten is the bench clerk of the High Court. He is stout in body, peaceful and devoted. M. has asked him to go to the Math and keep the company of sadhus. But he doesn’t go. On the other hand, he comes to have M.’s darshan almost daily. Durgapada regularly goes to the Math. The sadhus of his age group Swamis Shuddhananda, Dhirananda and other prominent sadhus associate with him like bosom friends. He is the manager of the ‘Healing Balm’. So, the sadhus affectionately call him ‘Healing Balm’. If necessary he argues with old and revered sadhus too. But he is a man of faith and devotion. He can read and write well, and has a good hand. He has sincere and deep love for M.

This happy session of talk would have gone on for Jiten Babu cannot keep silent. He wanted to say something more. Just then M. returned after his meal. So there is a sudden ‘cease fire’. To draw up a treaty the Elder Jiten goes under the shelter of M. The Elder Jiten is very sad — he is deeply hurt in the battle of arguments.

The Elder Jiten (to M.) – Sir, just tell me what is my fault? Whatever I say, they protest against it.

"I said, ‘Everybody eats ‘grass’ (enjoys sensory pleasures). Even so the guru holds on some with a chord. They have no fear. But there are some who eat in a different attitude. When the guru holds one and makes him eat, this he does for developing renunciation within him.’"

Hearing this complaint M. keeps silent for a while. Then he takes their mind higher and within to the calm down both the parties.

M. (to all) -- Bhakti is the essence. Without bhakti there is nothing in argumentation and all that. A merchant sold all his possession to buy a pearl of great price. What is it? — bhakti.

Durgapada – Bhakti is a comprehensive term. It has degrees, grades and shades.

M. – Yes, one type is *ahetuki* bhakti ((pure, selfless love for God), Thakur said so. Yet there is also *sakama* bhakti (with desire). This is

good too. Sri Krishna says in the Gita: The distressed, the seeker of the knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the jnani are the four kinds of devotees. They are all noble, large hearted, but jnani I deem to be My very Self, *jnani tv atmaiva me matam*. What is the whole sloka?

Udarah sarva evaite jnani tv atmaiva me matam,

Asthitah sa hi yuktatma man evanuttamam gatim.

(Gita 7:18)

[Nobele indeed are all these, but the spiritually wise man I deem to be My very sSelf. For steadfast in mind he is established in Me alone as the supreme goal.]

M. – *Sakama* bhakti (devotion with desire) is also good. By devotion with desire, too, also one can have His vision. Then there is no other desire in the mind of some. Dhruva had a craving for kingdom and he called on Him. God gave him His darshan and granted him a kingdom. But Dhruva soon developed aversion for kingship — he then gained enlightenment. He repents saying to himself, ‘Alas, Aalas! he whom even the great yogis do not attain, came and stood before me but I only asked for kingdom.’ His darshan erased his craving for sensory enjoyment. Then he ruled the kingdom for a long time but with *Nnishkama* attitude (without any desire).

"The householders perform puja and homa, give in charity, visit centres of pilgrimage and take bath in the Ganga — this all they do with some desire in the mind. Even this is good. When they will attain Him, they will no longer have this attitude.

"What do the men of the world live with? They have various kinds of desires filling their mind. How then can they then have *ahetuki* bhakti? They cannot understand, what is it to desire nothing but God.

"For this another ashrama has been instituted — that of sannyasa. In this ashrama one understands a little, has a little glimpse of what *ahetuki* bhakti is.

"Thakur knew that there were no buyers for *ahetuki* bhakti. So he used to say, ‘There is something like *ahetuki* bhakti.’ He mentioned it."

2.

M. is again silent for a while. Then he resumes.

M. (to The devotees) – Thakur sang a song to Vivekananda —

I am afraid of speaking it and also afraid of not speaking.

O Radha, I suspect that I may not later lose the great wealth you are.

I know theat mantra and you have also been given that mantra

By which one can overcome all troubles. Now it is up to you.

"There wereas some talk of his (V.N.'s) marriage. He (Thakur) was afraid that he might lose him. So he sang this song.

"Even the devotees could not understand earlier what is *ahetuki* bhakti. Later on they did. It is such a high ideal."

The Elder Jiten cannot remain quiet. He was earlier downcast after he got hurt in the war of words. M.'s devotional balm rid him of that hurt, but he forgot that very blow. He opened his mouth again.

The Elder Jiten (to M.) – Ramayat Babu was angry today with Haridasa Babu (Ramesh's father) (Ramesh's father and husband of M.'s sister's daughter). Haridasa Babu had only talked of somebody else, that's why. He saw, that he is was found wanting when compared with Thakur's words.

M. feels hurt with such small talk of low degree. So, he keeps quiet for a while. Now, he replies.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) – The anger of the sadhu is like a mark made on water. Hit the surface of water with a stick — the sadhu's anger lasts only that long.

"What do people themselves live with? Even living in such a bad state they criticize sadhus! Don't they feel ashamed?."

"It is different with sadhus. Their anger lasts as little as it takes for it to come.

"Just see, what men do under the pressure of desire. But when the sadhus have such a state they can suppress it. The object (of desire) remains present before the householders, so they cannot manage themselves. This is the only difference between a sadhu and a householder.

"Thakur said to Keshab Sen: You people can see a little light through the chink of the room. But the sadhu stands in the field and sees the light. This is the difference."

After a while the Elder Jiten again talks.

The Elder Jiten (to M.) – Well, I think I may ask you something. It is coming to my mind but I can't understand it. I hear that an upheaval comes at the advent of an avatara. But how! I don't see any sign of it among the devotees. The people are getting even worse than before.

M. (smiling) – It appears that, you are greatly worried about it.

The Elder Jiten – No, but I cannot understand it.

M. – Can we understand all? You have time and space. And there are all these stars. Which of these can we understand? They are all fundamental things.

"Tell me, how can you we understand? To understand Him with our ounce of intelligence! Shame! Is He so small?"

"But this I have understood that He does all. We don't have to worry. If one has to worry, one must think of Him alone.

"Just take this death of forty three children in the orphanage when it fell down — all sinless children. They used to offer Namaz five times. Why did this happen? How can a human being understand it? Such an unfortunate accident also occurred in South India. Can we understand why such slaughter takes place? No. Has this made us the least wiser? Such things are heard only for a few days and then it is all quiet.

"Just as the ant said, 'I will come again and take away the whole hill of sugar,' this too is like trying to understand Him. God's actions cannot be understood.

"With what will one understand? Isn't it with this mind? Just as you can't see the whole image in a broken glass, similarly you cannot understand all with this mind.

(To a bhakta) "There is a broken glass. What kind of image can it give? Not the correct image, isn't it? It is the same with the mind. Trying to understand with such a mind! And it is with this mind that a man delivers lectures. One had rather sit down quiet and think over one's wretched state. And it is better to hear and then meditate on what the Gguru says. Instead of doing so, one talks big things to others. It's not right to practise guruship.

"The way Thakur scolded me on the second day of my visit to him I remember it till today. It left such a deep impression on my mind. He said, 'Just this, these Calcutta people only lecture.' He added, 'I say brother, you will not have to worry for anything. He has kept everything ready. Places of pilgrimage, temples, sadhus and scriptures. And then he has kept ready the moon, the sun, rains and cereals to preserve the body before you were born. And also the milk in the mother's breast! You have only to sit and call on Him.' "

M. is silent. He again showers the nectarine words.

M. (to the devotees) – He used to say again and again, "Mother, why do you make me reason?' One day he said, 'There is something here (within his body).' And he said on another day, 'I see the Mother just like I am seeing this fan.'

"One has a glimpse of all this by keeping the company of sadhus. Just by sitting, one cannot solve anything by one's intelligence. It is not the work of sitting on an armchair and behaving like a leader. The company of sadhus is essential — of those who have renounced all.

"A sadhu, in other words is he who tries to understand all these fundamentals, forsaking everything. What are these? These are that He Himself has created all this. We cannot interfere in it. Ours is only to call on Him. Those who do this are called sadhus. Did Thakur only enjoin upon us to keep company of sadhus? He created sadhus. These people want nothing else but God. Why did he make these sadhus? So that others may attain peace by keeping their company and serving them. The ideal of life is God realization — this they are holding on to. Other people forget this ideal amidst the various activities of the world. By associating with the sadhus, you are reminded of it. You can then live in joy. It is He who does all. Our

duty is to keep our hold on Him — if you understand just this you will always have peace and joy.

"So long as you have the feeling, 'I am doing, I am the doer,' you have grief and restlessness of the mind. If you can get rid of the idea of doership, you can attain a lot of carefreeness, peace and joy by living as His servant. But this is very difficult. So the company of sadhus. When you take to it, it becomes very easy.

"You can also understand the great importance of pilgrimage by keeping the company of sadhus. What will it avail if you only go to a holy centre? That is why I asked Madhu first to go to the mMath and associate with sadhus. Thereafter, he could go on pilgrimage and attain joy.

"People do not want to budge. Some of them (the Elder Jiten) just sit down to talk at random. They don't like to go to the mMath. You have found sandalwood. Further you have pearls, jewels and so many other things. Proceed ahead.

"Every arrangement is right. You have only to seek the company of sadhus. By doing it you will be eligible for the *paramananda* (the highest bliss)."

M. — The coming of the avatara has indeed brought so much awakening. So many groups of good people are embracing sannyasa. Besides, a longingyearning has also developed within the devotees. Just see, so many high class American and European people are responding to the words of Thakur.

"Thakur said, 'When a big ship arrives so many waves rise and strike against the distant shores.' The words of the avatara reach the ordinary man after some time. The teachings of the Buddha were propagated in the time of Ashoka. The teachings of Christ were also accepted by the people later on. It will also take some time for the common man to accept Thakur's teachings."



Morton School, Calcutta
Thursday, 28 August 1924
12th of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
13th day of the dark fortnight
18 Dandas / 51 Palas.

LAST BIRTH WHO HAS, UNSHAKABLE FAITH HE HAS

1.

It has been raining throughout the day. Even then the devotees have not stopped coming. M. hasd been meditating in his room since 4 p.m. At 7 o'clock he climbed down to the third level to wash his hands and face. Today it is Friday, 29 August 1924, 13th day of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), 14th day of the dark fortnight, 20 Dandas / 43 Palas.

It is not yet dark. It has stopped raining. The devotees go and sit on the roofterrace of the fourth level. The Elder Jiten, the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, the Younger Ramesh, Manoranjan, Jagabandhu and some others have come.

The Elder Jiten resumes the previous day's topic today too.

The Elder Jiten (to the bhaktas) – The Guru holding the tether makes the devotees graze on the grass and so forth, and gets them stripped off their desire for sensory enjoyments.

The Young Man (opposing strongly) – Why should the bhakta eat grass? He shall take the nectar — the nectar of the name of the Lord; the bhakta enjoys this bliss.

The Elder Jiten – But I do see that he is holding and making us eat the grass.

The Young Man – Yes, you may say so since you eat it. Why do you involve others? This is your personal matter — you can say it. How can you say so about others? Did Gurudeva (Thakur) eat grass? Besides, there are so many sannyasis and all- renouncing bhaktas — do all of them eat grass?

The Elder Jiten – They also bear all pains and sorrows that come on taking up a body.

The Young Man – Does it mean that they 'eat grass' — the way you say? Sri Ramakrishna also suffered from physical illness, Chaitanya gave up his body due to fever, Christ was crucified on the cross, Buddha gave up the body due to blood-dysentery — do you mean all this as 'eating grass'. This is not so. Your saying of 'eating grass' means indulging in sense pleasures, serving woman and gold. Is that not so? How then can you call this bodily suffering as eating grass? Instead, they have tasted nectar and enjoyed the bliss of Brahman.

Doctor Bakshi – Leave the avatars and other great spiritual personalities alone. Talk of others.

The Young Man – How can we even talk of others? How great devotees they are all! They drink nectar. How many all-renouncing and sannyasi bhaktas there are! If you say that you are talking of those who live in the household, how can you say it even about them?

Indulging in sensory pleasures and then renouncing is not within the capacity of everyone.

The Elder Jiten (with a feeling of disappointment) – What do I know brother, I see it only that way — he is making us ‘eat grass’.

Doctorr. Bakshi – You may say it (about yourself), but you shouldn’t say that all others too ‘eat grass’.

The devotees are thus engaged in joyful- conversation. It is 8:30 in the evening. M. has come to the terrace after dinner. Seeing that a cold breeze is blowing, he enters the staircase room. "Please come into the room, all of you," says he to the bhaktas, "there is such a cold breeze outside."

M. is seated on a chair near the staircase facing north. Some bhaktas are seated in front while others are close to him on his right. The conversation continues. The Elder Jiten ishas been hurt in the battle of arguments even today like the previous day. So, he begs for M.’s shelter.

The Elder Jiten (to M.) – I said that we have to rid ourselves of sensory enjoyment by thus enjoying it. The gGuru will hold the tether while you indulge in sensory enjoyment. Ending the desire for sensory enjoyments by indulging in it while holding the gGuru’s hand. Jagabandhu opposes it very strongly.

M. – Who says so — who amongst you? It’s all right, if the gGuru says so.

The Elder Jiten (baffled) – What do I know Sir, I have fallen into your hands. Please do what is good.

M. (smiling a little, in a jocular tone) – Do wh...t ...is ...go ...od.

The Elder Jiten is silent. He was defeated in the sport of words the previous day. The same has happened today. Even his appeal in M.’s court has proved futile. He is, therefore, deeply hurt.

M. (to the Elder Jiten, affectionately with a grave concern) – What else can you do? Do what he has said, what the gGuru has asked to do. The gGuru says to take rice-water. There is a patient suffering from delirium. By taking rice-water, one can be cured of delirium. It will be right if one takes rice-water.

"Besides, what he says — keep the company of sadhus. The company of sadhus dispels one’s desire for sensory enjoyments. The company of sadhus, staying in a solitary corner, visiting the places of pilgrimage, reading of holy books, charity and compassion — all these unwind the thread. The thread that has got wound on the reel gets detached.

"What one has been seeing since one’s childhood — the marriage of one’s brother, of sister, visits of the son-in-law and arranging a separate bed room for him to sleep. Learning by observing, this is the natural state. The thread that has got wound, now how should it be detached? — it is by [obeying] all that the Guru has said."

M. is quiet for a few moments. He starts talking again.

M. (to the Doctor) – What about the car? Have you asked him, — the driver?

The Doctor – No.

M. – It would have been right if you had done so. I have already told you. Either dismiss him or let him himself pay the amount.

The Doctor – He is an idiot sort of a person.

M. – Is it right to call him an idiot and tolerate whatever he does? Are you prepared to be deceived even a third time? You have already lost the blanket, and jewellery and so on. Even some parts of the car have been stolen.

"How angry was Thakur when somebody brought him seven betel leaves! He said to Yogen Swamiji, 'Go you rascal, go and return them immediately. You can get ten for one pice.' Yogen had brought only seven. Thakur at once sent him a mile away to Alam Bazaar.

"If one said that it was out of kindness, one could not be saved. What I have observed and learnt while living with him, it seems that it is not kindness but weakness. If one goes on putting up with such a thing one brings harm to oneself. Today it is one thing, tomorrow it may be quite another. If one goes on doing likewise one suffers personally."

The Doctor – Yes Sir. But it (the lawsuit) shall lead to the expenditure of one hundred and fifty rupees.

M. (sharply) – No, no. It is not a question of money. It weakens the mind. Speaking in human language, it is worth ten million rupees (to protect the dignity of justice and truth by filing a suit). And this kindness is worth only a rupee. How precious is that state of mind (which saves truth and justice)! It is priceless indeed. If you must say, it is ten million rupees.

"He who allows himself to be deceived here will also be deceived there (in spiritual matters). You won't be able to save yourself when attacked by women. One should live in household with that mentality.

"That's why, Thakur said that one who can keep an account of salt can also keep an account of sugar. What one can do here, one can also do there.

"It is not safe to call it kindness." "One could not be saved, if one said that it was out of kindness."

M. (to the bhaktas) – One has to be hard when one takes to work. This what is happening is not about worldly things — it's about the highest ideal.

"Whatever the obstacle one has in the way to God, one must get rid off it immediately. Why to do all this? To attain Him. It is enough if one does so; one must at once, in an unconcerned manner, forsake

that which pushes one far away from God.

"With such a (soft) state of mind one is deceived in every field."

A blanket and some jewellery have been stolen from the Doctor's car. Some parts of the car have also been stolen. So many people visited the chauffeur. Everybody suspects them.

M. (to all present) – What a quick decision! A kirtan was going on in the verandah. Thakur was listening to it sitting in the verandah. Some ladies (from the house of Pyari Mukherji in Uttar Para) came and asked whether they could sit in the room. Thakur immediately replied, 'No, not at all. Where's the place for you to sit here? It won't be possible here.'

"Why did he say, 'It won't be possible?' They are worldly people, this is the only reason. Moreover, his independence would be intruded upon. Once they are there, Thakur won't be able to enter the room. Thereafter, we saw that he went into the room to feed young devotees.

"Just see, what a quick decision it was! Quick decision is a sign of greatness.

"Those who have a vacillating mind, are unable to decide their course of action, have a weak mind. Thakur used to say on seeing Vivekananda, 'Just see, how he moves — just like a bare sword.' Only by becoming so, one can attain.

"You can visit your patients for some days by hiring a taxi. It will be more expensive but you will do a great work.

"This man (the driver) is not careful. The other day he went to Beliaghata. You were also there and also he (Jagabandhu). He hit a bullock-cart with the car. And he stood there just uttering, 'Ha.' He should have moved it back. Instead, he stood there uttering, 'Ha.' A fool."

2.

M. (to the bhaktas) – That is why, the household life is so difficult. Herein you have to keep your eye on all directions. One may be hit by a bullet coming from any direction — the lead shots are always being fired. Be careless even for a moment and you are gone.

"Thakur asked a particular bhakta to live in the family as a maid-servant. But at the same time he added, 'When you work you must know within that you are not the doer. But you'll show as if you are the doer.' Otherwise, nobody will accept. And he said, 'You may show terror when necessary. But, you must not inject poison.' If you can't do so, keep yourself away. Go and sit under a tree. He used to say, 'If you have the strength of ten thousand elephants, you may step into the household life.' Step into the world with two swords — one that of jnana and the other of karma. Jnana means that I am the son of the Lord. Father, mother, wife or son — none of these are mine, nor am I theirs. Only the Lord is mine as well as theirs the eternal friend,

one's own. This has to be understood. The sword of karma means to take to work tactfully. And to do it selflessly, to work for the Lord. What you sow in the nature, you have to work according to it. Otherwise, it is a bondage. You'll have to be reborn To reap the fruit of your actions you'll have to be reborn.

"The world will be stagnant if there is no interest in karma (action). The other name for the world is action. Action bears two fruits — one *garala* and the other *amrita*. *Garala* means poison, that which harms man; it brings harm to one's *prana* (life). And how does it harm the *prana*? It makes one fall into the cycle of birth and death. It doesn't kill one at a single stroke. But one has to be born again and again endlessly. It troubles the jiva this way. Sometimes one takes a birth that is generally taken as good by people — for example, as a human being, as a raja or such like that, or one may find a place in the heaven, goes to a higher region. There one finds even more of sensory enjoyments than on earth. He indulges in that which brings his downfall from there too.

"Then follow the lower (categories of) birth, as an animal, a bird etc. In this there is nothing but sorrow throughout. There are only two fruits of an action — good or bad. And there are also two forms of it — birth and death."

A Certain Bhakta – Is it possible to live with that much of reasoning?

M. – What's impossible in it? The gGuru, the avatara, has come and told how to gain that idea. Don't they say us to think that God is the master of all. We ought to meditate on this idea. One must always keep the company of sadhus. Don't the sadhus always meditate on this that God alone is the doer and the man a non-doer. One's ego does not go. So, they say, let this rascal remain as the 'servant-I'.

"He said that one must make an effort to keep the company of sadhus. And then, he has also defined a sadhu. Says he, 'He indeed is a sadhu by sitting close to him the feeling comes to the mind that the world is transitory; this jnana comes that He alone is the eternal friend of all.'

"It is by keeping the company of such sadhus that the mind can retain (the thought) that the world is a place of birth and death. I am not the person of this place. Nobody belongs to me here. God alone is everything to me. I am Brahman. We are the children of Immortality. If one can remember this, then the thought that there is no other duty for me in this world except repeating the name of God comes to the mind spontaneously. Everything brings harm, except God. And, everything becomes possible by remembering these two thoughts.

"Can a person who is going to be hanged after seven days enjoy himself even if all articles of enjoyment are made available to him? It is just the same state.

"That's why, Thakur said, '*Manushya* (a real man) is he who is dead even while alive.' While the mind of others tends to enjoy worldly pleasures, that of him goes towards renunciation of the world, renunciation of sensory enjoyments. He does not enjoy the worldly

pleasures the same way as a dead person cannot do so. He accepts only that much which is essential for preserving the body.

"That is why, the avatara comes to show the way how the mind is fixed always on God. A special class has been created, the class of 'sadhus'. Sadhus always remember Him. He has asked to keep their company giving up all else. This is the right thing for us do. And, to pray, 'O Mother, please don't enchantbewitch me by Your world-bewitchingenchanting maya.' The impossible becomes possible by doing so. A tiger becomes vegetarian while living in a house full of meat."

The next day is Saturday. Many devotees have arrived on their way back from the office. Earlier, a bhakta has arrived from Dehradun at one o'clock. He has read the Kathamrita and has come to have the darshan of M. for the first time. M. talks to him after inquiring about his well-being.

M. (to the bhakta) – Thakur would say, 'Meditating on me alone will do. You will not have to do anything else.' Do you believe it?

The Bhakta – Yes Sir, there is no doubt about his words.

M. – Thakur didn't say this to everybody. He would say so only to those whom he knew to be a member the family (his bhakta). While to others, the bhaktas of Brahma Samaj for example, he used to say, 'A *roti* (chapati, bread) of sugarcandy will taste sweet in whatever way you eat it.' But this *roti* has to be taken. Roti of sugarcandy, that is to say God.

"Meditating on me alone will do — he who has gained this faith is saved. He will not have to bear the sorrow of repeated births. One must know that the time is ripe for the son of the family to return home. The cycle of birth and death will end soon. *Tatprasadat param shantim sthanam prapsyasi shashvatam* (Gita 18:62). (By His grace you will gain supreme peace and the eternal abode). This is the highest ideal of man.

"One who has an unshakable faith in Thakur is in one's last birth. Thakur came just for this, just to say so. Said he, 'I swear unto you, whosoever will think on me shall inherit my wealth just like a son inherits his father's wealth. My wealth constitutes jnana, bhakti, discrimination, dispassion, peace, happiness, prema and samadhi.'

"But, it is very difficult to recognize him. He has hidden himself behind so many coverings. He was poor, almost illiterate and then a priest. Who is capable of recognizing him under so many coverings? Only those who have accumulated by the efforts done in the past lives will advance towards him unknowingly. 'Without seeing, without hearing the mind has merged itself in him?' The state of an earnest devotee is the same as that of a ship being attracted by a mount of magnet. All desires fall off."

It is two o'clock in the afternoon. M. says to Jagabandhu, "It would be nice if I have some news of the Math." Jagabandhu immediately leaves for the Belur Math.

It is about eight in the evening. M. is seated in a chair on the terrace facing

north. The Elder Jiten, the Younger Ramesh, Shanti, Balai, Manoranjan, the Younger Amulya and other bhaktas are also seated in front of M. on benches. Manoranjan and the Younger Amulya give two copies of the Udbodhan to M. They contain an article on Swamiji.

Jagabandhu comes and gives the news about the Math. He says, "I met Priya Maharaj at the steamer ghat itself. He is now the manager (of the Math) these days. I enquired everything from him while we were on our way to the Math." There is not so much of sickness now.

M. says, "Malaria has broken out in the Math these days. The sadhus suffer a lot due to sickness. Who is there to look after them. While in the family there are always some people. They look after one another."

M. is pensive for a while. Then he again showers the nectarine words.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Once cast a glance above. What a phenomenon is happening there! We are living in this infinite *math*. The *sansara* (world) comes from the root 'Srija'. It means to project. *Sansara* i.e. what has been projected by God, which has come out of His body. If that is so, the whole universe is a holy a place, a place of pilgrimage. That is why, it is a vast *math*, an infinite ashrama, an infinite *math*. If onlyone meditates on this alone, one shall attain perfection and see God.

"The idea that all beings in this vast world are the forms of the Lord, I am also one of His forms, Sachchidananda. — Iif one takes to this idea all work, meditation, moving about, everything indeed is done in the presence of God. By doing so, our smallness will end. The little 'I' will be dissolved in the *virat* (immense) — 'I am that Sachchidananda.'

"Only thinking makes one small or big. In fact, there is nothing big or small. God indeed is everything. 'Anorniyam mahato mahiyam' — He is the smallest of the small and the biggest of the big. What else is religion? It is to dissolve the small 'I' into the immense 'I'. Then, the small one becomes big. Ganga becomes the ocean.

"This is as if the alchemy — to turn a base metal like iron into gold. There is a poor man, nobody recognizes him. But when he relates himself to a big person, everybody starts recognizing him. The water of rivulet becomes the water of the Ganga when it falls into it.

"The sadhus live in the *math*. They think on God day and night. That is why, the *math* is a holy place. The same way God is there in the universe. He Himself has become all. Besides, He resides in every being as the *antaryamin* (the controller within). Because of this, the universe is also a great holy place of pilgrimage.

"This process is known as sublimation — to dissolve the smaller into the bigger to make it big. 'I am the child of God,' one must become God's child by thinking so — both in qualities as well as in actions. However, in appearance one remains a human being. I am the child of man — this base feeling should be transformed into the great feeling of 'I am the child of God.' This is what is called religion."



Morton School, Calcutta
Saturday, 30th August 1924
14th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
New moon day, 21 Dandas / 28 Palas.

ETERNAL FESTIVAL – BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD

1.

Morton School. 5.30 p.m. M. has closed his room from inside on the fourth level and is meditating on God. Swami Sardananda is seated in the car below. With him is Kapil Maharaj. Swami Sardananda is one of the participants of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's leela. He is the well-known author of the famous holy book, 'Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master.' He is waiting for M. to take him to attend the birthday celebrations of Sri Sri Naga Mahashay.

As Antevasi comes down the roof and goes near the car Swami Sardananda says, "Please convey my message to Master Mahashay. He is supposed to accompany us to the festivity of Naga Mahashay." As Antevasi knocks at M.'s door, and M. comes down and sits in the car. Before leaving, M. says to Antevasi, "All of you bhaktas may reach the place of celebration on foot."

Parvati Mittra Mitra's house is the sight of the festivity. It is situated in the Chhakku Khansama lane near Sialdaha station. Jagabandhu taking the Younger Amulya, Gadadhar and some others along with him reach the Harrison Road via Amherst Street. And now they proceed towards Sialdaha station.

From 'Udbodhan' have come Sarat Maharaj (Swami Sardananda), Kapil Maharaj, Asitananda, Asheshananda, Haripremananda and the old Kartik Maharaj. And from the Morton School there are Master Mahashay, Jagabandhu, the Younger Amulya and Gadadhar. Later come Doctor Bakshi, Vinay, the Younger Nalini, Amrita and Lalit by car. And a little later Attorney Viren Basu and Bankim Gadui, the singer, reach by Viren's car.

They all squat on the floor on the ground floor.

M. and Swami Sardananda merrily narrate Sri Ramakrishna's leela – the nectarine memorable moments about him and his divine sport. They talk of Thakur's child-bhaktas Paltu, Purna and others. They also talk of Kamarpukur and Jairambati, the birth places of Thakur and the Holy Mother, and also of their childhood leela. They also talk of Chine Shankhari of the same region, Prasanna Bhai, Dhani Bhai and Hriday's mother. They had received some indication of Thakur's divine emotion.

The pulpit for worship is set on the second level. A photograph of *mahasamadhi* of Naga Mahashay has been placed on a low stool. It is decorated with various fragrant flowers such as roses. How could Durgacharan (Naga Mahashay), the embodiment of humility before the deities, permit the bhaktas to take a photograph of his perishable body? What use will it be to worship my lowly body; the only image worth worshipping has been given by Sri Ramakrishna himself and he himself has performed adoration of it. Thakur said, "This image will be worshipped later in every home." That's why, there's no need to have the picture of my base body – giving this reason, he disallowed his bhaktas' efforts many a time to take his photograph. That's why, being helpless the bhaktas had to take his photograph only at the time of his mahasamadhi. A symbol of the gross body is a must for the bhaktas with their gross sight. Therefore, today a picture of Naga Mahashay's death has been placed on the altar.

Above, in a niche, there is a picture of Sri Sri Ramakrishna. That too is

decorated devotedly with fragrant flowers. A variety of eatables for bhoga have been placed on the ground in front of the altar. Among the five articles of food are *pulao* (rice cooked with vegetables), *payas* (pudding of rice and milk), so many kinds of fried and curried vegetables, sauce and high quality fruits and sweets.

The members of the Mitra family are highly devoted. Their home is just like an ashrama. One feels a current of devotion flowing as soon as one enters. No member of this grihastha-ashrama eats or drinks anything until it has been offered to the deities. As in a temple, bhoga and raga are perpetually held here. Festivities always go on in this ashrama. Mitra Mahashay and his wife have been blessed by Naga Mahashay's affectionate blessings since their childhood. The Mitra housewife, Vinodini Mitra, has written Naga Mahashaya's biography under the title of 'Naga Duhita' as a mark of her reverent offering to him. Both their sons are dutiful and full of devotion. The lives of all these four are united by one thread. Earlier M. had sent Antevasi a number of times to enquire after the welfare of this devoted Mitra family.

The sadhus and bhaktas are seated on the ground floor. It is the scorching heat of Bhadra. Therefore, a servant is fanning them. Mitra family is truly fortunate. On the one hand, they have been blessed by Naga Mahashay's unconditional grace since their childhood. On the other, M. and Sardananda Maharaj, Thakur's intimate disciples, have a special affection for them. Both of them along with their companions have contributed physically to this sacred festival. They both are seated on the ground floor. Parvati has come with the prasad of best sandesh, other sweets and fruits in a plate. He devotedly offers it to both of Thakur's disciples. Thereafter he also gives it to the assembled sadhus and bhaktas and requests everybody to take the prasad of meals. But all of them take leave appreciating sweet hospitality. However, he (M.) asks only Jagabandhu, Gadadhar, the Younger Amulya, Chandra of Udbodhan and Kartik Maharaj to go upstairs and take the prasad. The housewife of the Mitra family serves different kinds of dishes with her own hands to the sadhus and bhaktas to their fill. It seems that Naga Mahashay's divine service, reverence and love have taken a concrete form in today's festivity.

A few bhaktas on their way back visit Sri Ramakrishna Samiti of Parshibagan situated nearby.

Bhaktas have assembled on the terrace of the fourth level of the Morton School. It is 8 p.m. now. M. is seated on a chair facing north. The bhaktas are on benches facing west – the Elder Jiten, the Doctor, Vinay, Balai, Shanti, Jagabandhu, the Younger Amulya, Gadadhar and others.

Today M. is full of the joy of the festivity. This joy flows out like a spring and cools and enkindles the hearts and minds of the bhaktas.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Why to talk of the festival that lasts only for a day only or two? Let it be there always. The ever joyful is always full of joy! Who have such a state? Those who are always in samadhi, for example Thakur. For Thakur, there was always a festival going on day and night. He had the joy of God, the joy of Brahman in various ways. Sometimes, he saw that the Mother of the universe was enacting leela, Herself becoming all. At other times, he saw the Mother annihilating the universe assuming the form of the Mahakala. He said, 'One day I saw that the whole universe was a mound of dead and I was sitting within meditating.' That joy of the festivity is the real joy. As soon as the mind goes a little within, it sinks in the ocean of joy. And, there's no news then. Who is there to get news? The one that has to do so, that very mind, intellect and ego

no longer exist. There is no one or two, its all void there. Yet, the negative state is not there. There is existence – something which cannot be told by the word of mouth.

"That is why Thakur said to Vidyasagar Mahashay, 'Brahman has never become *ucchista* (defiled like leavings of food).' He is unspeakable. That which is on this side is absolutely void. It is not the universe. Thakur plunged himself in this immense ocean, the ocean of *Brahmananda* (the bliss of Brahman). A little later, as he stepped down he saw that He, the joy, Himself had taken the form of the universe. Said he, 'I saw the trees and plants, the building, the garden, the gardener, men, birds and animals, cats and dogs all permeated with joy. The joy itself had taken name and form.' He Himself has become the beings and the world. Now He is born, now He plays in different forms, and then He destroys all, gets annihilated. What a riddle! It is the right festival – the birth anniversary of the universe, a festival of its play, the eternal festival. But, they are all the festivals of joy. Entry to this festival is prohibited for ordinary people. That's why they celebrate such festivals. Those who have found the way to that festival, the festival of Brahman, are known as *mahapurushas* (high souls) – extraordinary personalities. Their life, their conduct and their great sayings all serve as the festival of joy. 'Eternal festival' – the festival of the birth of the universe."

M. is pensive for a while. Again he showers the joy.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Recently, they celebrated the Bhadra festival in the Brahmo Samaj for a fortnight. But, why only for a fortnight? Why not always? Is there a place where there is always the festival of Brahman? I hear that itthere is something like this in Amritsar. Community singing of hymns and the reading from the Granth Sahib always go on there – the festival of Akhand (Indivisible). And, in Jagannath temple too there are always festivities. Today there is the *chandan yatra* of the Lord, and tomorrow the *snan yatra*, yet again there is *rath yatra*, *jhoolan*, and then *dol yatra* and what not? Festivities go on throughout the year.

"Has man arranged all this? Lord hHimself has created all this for the bhaktas. What does a rich man do? He builds different buildings and houses for us and provides various items. The same way, the Lord creates various types of festivals at different places for the bhaktas. It is like the Ganga of joy. Just as one feels cool in body by a bath in the Ganga, similarly experiencing the joy of such festivals one gets rid of the dirt of the mind, sorrows and misery, and acquiring new strength, new joy and new courage becomes pleasant and vigorous. That's why, the Lord has arranged all this. By attending such a joyous festival one is reminded of God."

2.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Why don't you go and visit Amritsar for a while? How far is it? If you board a train tonight, you will be there in the morning day after tomorrow. The railway has made it so very convenient. Please go, and if you wish to reach earlier, go by air.

(Laughter). (Smiling) The lethargic people wish to go only by the wings of mind. (Everybody laughs). There is no trouble in it – no expenditure. You can do so even while sitting in an armchair and smoking a cigar.

(Pointing to the Elder Jiten) "Going to the place of pilgrimage just by mind won't do. You have to go on foot. Who can go there by imagination? He who has his mind absorbed in God and who has been visiting there quite often can go mentally. Lazy people don't want to move. They don't visit the Math although it is so near. What laziness!"

The Elder Jiten (with folded hands) — Sir, I am guilty. All of them go. Only I don't go to the Math. I come only here and I don't feel like going anywhere else.

M. — What use is it to say so? Why has He given you the intellect? You must force yourself to go. The mind always wants rest. And what to speak of the body? However, you can't enjoy the pleasure of a *jivanmukta* (being free in this very life) until you get rid of this inertness.

"You can't assess your own state unless you visit all-renouncing persons. By going to them you can compare where they are and where you stand. Even a sadhu needs the company of sadhus, said Thakur. That being so how much more essential is the company of sadhus for those who live in family. The sadhus live with God day and night. They offer the fruit of all their actions to God, and what do people living in family do? They are busy day and night in the service of wife, son and daughter. Most of their energy is lost for earning money and the rest of it is spent in bodily comforts and in keeping the ties of attachment. The company of sadhus regains energy thus lost energy."

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — Since He has established *maths* one must take advantage of it. Unless we see the life of an all-renouncing person, we can't assess what is our state in family. The mind says that one is doing very well. This self-deception is checked by visiting the Math. Then the mind gets prepared. It gets dyed in high and lofty colours. Then it will do even to visit by the wings of mind. So long as the mind is attached to the world, busy in the affection of wife, son, daughter and members of one's family, one should go in the company of sadhus physically. Going in imagination alone is not enough.

"First you have to put in a lot of effort. When the mind realizes that God comes first and the world next, as the sadhus have understood, then you are in the company of sadhus even when sitting at home. Then the body is no more an obstacle. The house and the *math* become one. However, it is a very distant matter. God prepares some in this way and keeps them in the household for the instruction of others. By taking them as example and having the company of sadhus at home, you will achieve this side as well as the other.

"By keeping the company of sadhus, the mind is ready a fourteen annas. Thakur's mind was ready a sixteen annas.

"In the natural course, the mind goes in the world. It remains absorbed with one's body. It is attached to those who are related to one's body. The mother feeds her son denying herself food but she can't do so to other children. One has a free hand for one's own sons and daughters but it closes its fist when one is to give to others. So long as one finds oneself in this bad state, there is no other way than the company of sadhus.

"The sadhus see Narayana (God) in all created beings. They serve Him within all. And what do the householders do? It is a far cry for them to see Narayana in others. That's why, one has to go to the sadhus and observe this. It comes about by practice. By constantly serving the sadhus, it may be possible that by receiving their love, you receive God's love too. Sadhus are a form of God. To see Narayana in your own son in the beginning will not do. You have to practise seeing God within everybody – first by seeing sadhus, serving them and keeping their company. Then you develop the habit to see God in all. Then you may see God in your own son too. This cannot be done sitting in an armchair. Only leadership is possible that way. You must serve sadhus and keep their company now and then. You must make the right use of your feet. You must go to the sadhus on foot. Unless you do so nothing can be achieved. There's a lot of difference between saying by the word of mouth and doing with the hands. The mind, the mouth and the hands have to be one.

"Men have one thing in their mind, another in their mouth and what they do with their hands is yet another. They act in a triangular fashion. This triangle has to be beaten down into a straight line. Only then, the mind and speech can be one. Thereafter, this straight line has to be beaten down into a point. It is this point that is samadhi – God. This indeed is the highest goal of man – the highest ideal of life.

"Whatever sadhan and bhajan is undertaken by man, its goal is to make the mind and speech one. The sadhus are engaged just in this. Whole time men. They are melting gold with full concentration of mind leaving behind their family, home and parents. The Math is this workshop. It is a factory to produce *brahmajnanis*.

"Whatever the obstacles there are on the way to God they get removed by keeping the company of sadhus. We have no way but to keep the company of sadhus. Ridding yourself of your lethargy and ego you should go to the Math. There's no substitute for the holy company. Reason? Even a sadhu needs the company of sadhus. That being so how much more it is necessary for the householders. 'Howsoever clever a man may be he cannot save himself from the stain of soot when he lives in the home of soot,' so said Thakur. To wash away this stain, you must go in the company of sadhus. There's no other way to wash it. 'I and mine' – this is the soot. 'Mine' is known as ajnana, ignorance. This ignorance vanishes with the company of sadhus. It converts itself into 'You and Yours', the 'I' becomes 'Yours'. This is called living in the world like a maidservant. Holy company alone is the way to it."

M. is silent for a while. He again narrates Thakur's leela.

M. (to the bhaktas) — One day a man of pictures came. He has many pictures in a box. A ring is tied to a thread. He holds and pulls the ring, and the pictures change in the box. He shows them to the children charging a pice from each. There are two or three glass-boxes in this box. The children look at the pictures inside the through this glass. The glass magnifies the pictures a great deal. The man speaks in a sweet tone of a song. He says, 'Here comes the city of Calcutta. Now see the Bombay city.' After each statement he utters, 'Ha,' to keep the beat intact. For example, he says, 'Look here, this is the queen's court, ha.' He shows a number of pictures in this manner.

"Suddenly he says, 'Now have the darshans of Badri Narayana, ha.' Thakur had a child like nature. As soon as he heard this, he stood up with curiosity and began to see through the glass and lo! he fell unconscious absorbed in bhava samadhi. Who was now there to see the picture? Regaining consciousness, he asked somebody to pay the man. Someone paid him an anna or two pice. Thakur said angrily, 'What? hHe has given you the darshans of Badri Narayana. Is it worth only two pice? You should give a rupee.' "

M. (to the bhaktas) — Thakur's mind was fixed in That (God) day and night. A little inspiration and he would go into samadhi! Like a dry matchstick. Rub it a little and it catches fire at once. Whatever he saw or heard would inspire God in him. Brother, what a mind! One doesn't come across another like him.

"The other peoples' minds is like a wet matchstick. Rub it, it won't catch fire. Rub it hard, it breaks. The mind remains wet with sensory pleasures, woman and gold. It dries up on renouncing them. Thakur has told the way to dry it. 'Always keep the company of sadhus,' said he.

"He also said, 'It is the mind that binds and it is the mind that liberates.' Sadhan and bhajan constitute our endeavours to prepare the mind. Once it is ready you can sit down and enjoy yourself. The mind is then ever in bliss whether in one has troubles, or is in prosperity. The Pandavas were happy even in exile."

M. (to Mohan) — Thakur used to prepare the bhaktas' mind in such a way that the impression formed on their mind once would never get obliterated. It is so many years (38 years) ago that he departed. But bhaktas (M.) can still see his divine sport even today, as if they it happened only yesterday or it is still being enacted before their eyes.

"Today as I was coming through Amherst Street, I remembered about Sarat Maharaj's house. It was at the crossing of Harrison Road in the southwest angle. He was also with me in the car. Now a road has been made there after demolishing everything. But, I still retain that picture in my mind. Suresh Babu's house that overlooked the road has also been demolished. But I can see Thakur dancing there even now. And, how I see him pacing with us and talking in the outer room of Ishan Mukherji's house in the Machhua bazaar! As if I have just been there. He danced in Keshab Sen's house and he danced in Adhar Sen's. Aha! What a divine dance, rare even for gods! This dance which enchanted the heart and soul of man was performed on

the first floor room of both these houses. It is still swimming bright before my eyes. I feel as if I am still standing there."

Doctor Bakshi — It is work that brings all confusion.

M. — That's indeed true. Even so, there is no fear if you do it at the Guru's command. It cleanses the mind. It (that work) purifies consciousness. It is very hard to do work, it is extremely difficult. But it's easy to work at the word of the Guru. The Guru knows what is good and what is bad.

(Laughing) "A certain person was perfected in *pishacha* (ghoul). He used to get everything done through a ghost. The ghost would finish all work ordered by him in no time. Then he had nothing in hand. The agreement with the ghost was that if he did not give work to him, he would break his neck and eat him up. The man seeing no way out took refuge in his guru. The guru said, 'Well, go home and fix a bamboo in the courtyard. Then say to the ghost – climb it up and down.' The ghost went on doing so day and night. The man was thus saved. All work is like that.

"The right thing to do is to obey what the Guru has said. Your mind will be prepared by doing so. He has asked to daily keep the company of sadhus – you must do it. And one must daily perform japa, dhyana, worship and reading of scriptures. Moreover, pray to Him. One must live in a solitary corner at times. The mind gets prepared by doing so. Then one has joy. There is no way other than the words of the Guru. Guru means avatara, Thakur."



Morton School, Calcutta
Sunday, 31st August, 1924
15thFifteenth of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The first day of the bright fortnight.

THEY ARE OF THE BOMBAY MANGO VARIETY

1.

Morton School. Bed room on the fourth level. It is 4 p.m. now. M. says to Jagabandhu, "You must go once to Parshibagan. Please go once, if your health allows and bring the news. I hear that Sarat Babu is very ill. His end is near."

Jagabandhu leaves immediately. Sarat Chandra Mitra, the founder of Parshibagan Sri Ramakrishna Samiti, is very ill. He was initiated by Swami Vivekananda. Though married, he lives exactly like a sadhu. He always believes in his guru's word and has engaged himself in the service of the living Shiva.

His physical condition is very critical. Thakur's intimate disciple Swami Sardananda has come to see him along with Swami Rameshwarananda. He has brought Sri Sri Thakur's *charanamrita* (nectar of divine feet) from 'The Mayer Bari' (Holy Mother's home). He puts a few drops of it in Sarat Babu's mouth and moves his hand over his forehead.

Jagabandhu whispers in Sarat Babu's ear, "Master Mahashay has sent me to enquire after your health." Sarat Babu expresses his pranam to M. with his eyes. After listening to the message, he becomes still and solemn. Sarat Babu's reunion at Sri Ramakrishna's feet is very near.

Evening has set in. M. is seated on a chair on the terrace facing north. Close to him are seated Jagabandhu, Gadadhar and others on a bench. M. claps and utters, "Haribol, Haribol." After this, he meditates joining his hands in his lap. In the meanwhile, the bhaktas assemble coming one by one — Durgapada (Healing Balm), the Younger Jiten, Balai, Manoranjan, the Younger Ramesh, Shanti, Hari Parvat and some others. They are seated on benches.

After the meditation, M. eagerly talks to the Younger Jiten. He is very worried about the welfare of his family. At night, he (Jiten) stays with Jagabandhu in the school building. His home is situated in Ranaghat. He went there after hearing the news of sickness. He has returned today.

M. (to the Younger Jiten) – He (Jagabandhu) has writtenwrote a letter to you only today. We were greatly worried since there was no news from you. I hope everything is fine there?

The Younger Jiten – Yes sir, it is all fine now. It has been a great shock.

The Elder Jiten (entering and offering his pranam) – What are you all talking of?

M. – We are just talking of His leela. We are all instruments in His hands. That's why, Thakur used to say, 'Everything in under Him.' Even japa, meditation and tapasya are under Him.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Malory and Irvine died on the Everest. So big is the British Government, but it couldn't save both of them. Nobody could reach there to help them. Just see, how poor is the man's condition! How many machine guns and what not they have, but they

couldn't save them. This is the capacity of man! And doesn't this man says that there is nothing as high as the Everest. What a wonder! What does he say? How high is it? Five miles at the most!

"Just cast a glance up there. How high are they (the constellation of stars)? Just look at the sun — how many millions of miles far it is! The stars are still higher. And they say that the Mount Everest is the highest.

"As for expert opinion — and they who are great and expert astronomers they say that — the stars which are visible are each one a sun. They have planets and satellites revolving round them, just like our solar system."

M. (to a certain bhakta) – Thakur used to say, 'If one dies on his way to Kailash, he won't be born again.' Kedar and Badri are also on the way to Kailash. Those who die on this way, they too will not have to be reborn. Malory and Irvine died on the Everest. It is also said to be on the way to Kailash.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Thakur would tell a story. A sadhu seeing a waterfall — so much water falls from there, you see — would daily go and sit close to it from morning till evening in wonder. The sadhu used to say, 'O! see, what it is doing?' It is just about a single waterfall! And, what about the phenomenon happening above? The sadhu would sit there saying this the whole day. And he would return to his hut at night to take some fruits and roots.

M. (to Mohan) – One day Thakur said, 'A small hole was made which got plugged soon — Mahamaya showed me this. I make a little hole with my nail and it again gets plugged. Suddenly, once the hole became a big one. Through it I could see so much on the other side. It was an infinite endless affair.'

"Arjuna seeing a little glimpse of it shuddered all over — he began to tremble. So it happens. How does a man say, 'I am a jnani, a learned!' Thakur was wonder-struck on seeing all this.

"(She) doesn't let anyone see anything on the other side — all that is happening above. She has made men keep a low vision. Struck with wonder he says: Who are you, Mother? You have created this amazing process of birth, disease, bereavement, sorrow, poverty, old age and death. And then affection which has bound men together while living with all this. Hail Mahamaya!

"The Veda has defined Mahamaya — that which makes the real unreal and the unreal real is Mahamaya.

"According to the Veda, She is *Devatmashakti svagunanirgudam* (Divine Power having Her own inherent qualities). She presents the good as bad and the bad as good — this is Her work.

"That's why, the company of sadhus is always needed. It keeps one in the right *dhat* (disposition, temperament, habits). Sadhus always try to observe this sport of the Mother, you see. One should remember this and live in family.

"For how long does one remember all such phenomena that is going on day and night before our eyes? Mahamaya makes one forget everything. What a tremendous incident took place in Japan! Five lakh people have been devoured at a single stroke — they have been swept away by the tidal wave. For how long shall we remember it? If we could remember it, the world would not move on. Nobody would then work. Besides, the flood of Italy and then the accident in Malabar — for how long are they remembered?

"These days they say that the Atlantic Ocean was once a big continent and that a race known as Atlantis inhabited it. Where have they all gone? Why is it all done? This is to awaken people. However, it doesn't happen.

"During the funeral procession, the Hindus say, 'Say Hari, say Hari, only the name of Rama is eternal.' The Muslims say, 'There is but one God and Mohammed is our prophet.' What message does it convey? It teaches that all are seated on the verge of destruction. These are but only small destructions. The big destruction has yet to come. And it says, 'O jiva, your body will perish. But, your the soul is imperishable. Serve this very soul.'

"And thousands of creatures perish, why — who will create them? This makes one understand that all is His will. Every morning I hear from my room the cattle bleating and moving away. And after a while, I see that having been slaughtered they being are carried by the porter on his head.

"During my childhood I used to go to Kalighat. I was then eight or ten. Seeing the he-goats being slaughtered, I thought that I would stop all this when I grow older. I had my ambition then, you see. Now, as I have grown old I can understand, 'O my mother, everything happens by His will.' "

M. (to the bhaktas) – If you ask, why this slaughter? Why does He do all this? The answer is — what will it do by living as an animal? If the mind is not towards God, of what use is this life? That is why, the system to sacrifice animals was introduced. Only this comes to the mind. And, there was also a system to sacrifice those among men who were full of animality. It means this that the body is of no use if the mind does not remain towards God.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) – Why so much care for the body which is not going to last? This is Mahamaya's work. She makes one forget all. That's why, Thakur said, 'Mahamaya should be satisfied first.' Aha! What a beautiful song that friend of ours (Bholanath Muakherjee) sings —

"O, the Mother of the Universe! What is going to happen? Why, why have You put me to so much of worry. This body will perish, it will perish soon. For him who lives in divine joy, this body is like a reflection on water.

"When will this body perish is not certain. Why then so much consideration for it? One should think on that which will last — that

atman, God."

M. is silent for a few moments. Then he resumes the conversation.

M (to Jagabandhu) – Jagabandhu Babu! Haven't they printed the Kathamrita today?

Jagabandhu – Sir, the printing press is close today.

M. – That's why, you haven't brought some (proofs).

The Elder Jiten (to M.) – We aren't able to understand why it is all this.

M. – So long as one has one's mind in the body one can't understand it all. Now, how to get rid of this body consciousness? By tapasya (penance). That is why, tapasya is needed. By tapasya, one gets rid of body consciousness. By calling on Him secretly in a solitary corner, He drives away the body consciousness.

"This feeling, affection and so on come from our body consciousness. When one's son is ill, one says, 'Oh! how he is suffering!' It means that he also has the same attitude — suffering at illness and satisfaction at comfort. That is why, he can understand his son's suffering.

"Even so, the avatara coming as man doesn't feel the same way. In whatever way God keeps the avatara at any time, the latter has the same feeling. He has no body consciousness."

2.

M. is silent. Again he talks after a few moments.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Doctor Babu has not come. (To Hari Parvat) Do you understand Hari Babu! In my childhood, I saw a Paramahansa who sold *halwa* (flour pudding). It was where there is now Arya Samaj. He would always wear a smile on his face and sing. He was never sad. That's why, everybody called him Paramahansa. He had a sweet shop. He used to give extra quantity of *halwa*. (Laughter). Hari Babu! You too should give an extra bucket. (He deals in buckets). (Everybody laughs loudly). Aha! It was nice to see Thakur's bhava wherever it was.

M. – Durga Babu, what did Sudhir Maharaj (Swami Shuddhananda) say to you that day?

Durgapada – There's no important matter discussed these days other than the service at the math. That's why Sudhir Maharaj said: 'The Story of the Mother' is going to be published soon. It contains sadhan, bhajan, tapasya and all these. One will receive a unique new light from it.

M. – Listen today to what he says now. Sudhir Maharaj has said to him (Hari Parvat): , 'For many a days,, the juniors have been receiving a formal inspiration. They say, 'Scatter in all sides and carry out tapasya. Give up all other work.'

"Will it there be not be vairagya! How long will they like it? Father, mother, home and all they have left behind, haven't they? That's why, the one that is inside is always burning. After doing work for some days, one must take to tapasya. It keeps the *dhat* right. Otherwise, it becomes all like a household. After going to a solitary corner, one develops a love for one's ideal. One may then come back and take to work. In this way, the quality of work also improves. Otherwise, it gets monotonous. Work and tapasya done alternately is good for the organisation.

" 'Go, son! Leave immediately. You have made the *math* your home. After leaving one chair, you have taken another. Move out for tapasya.' Saying this, Rakhil Maharaj sent a person for tapasya from Madras Math.

"An old group goes and a new one takes over. By doing so, work and tapasya both are performed. Tapasya is also a work. And, is it a small work that is done in the *math*? It is service to Thakur. What a great deal of work is there to do! Besides, there is relief work, dispensary and what not.

"When Thakur was ill, the devotees were dead tired because of hard work for months together. Thakur then said, 'Listen, please keep a mat and a pillow here. One can lie down when one feels like it.' Otherwise, they won't come. See that even in the service of Bhagavan, in the Guru's service, it is so. That's why, it is also said in the Bible, 'Jesus knew what was in man!' Christ knew the weaknesses of man generated by his body consciousness.

"When a son or a dear one falls ill so many people come all around the bed in the beginning. O, mother! After the illness lasts a few days, nobody visits the patient. This much about the body! How could it be otherwise? Isn't there the instinct of self-preservation?. This body can't do much."

M. (to Hari Babu) – Even so, their (the sadhus of the Math) work is nice — it is altruistic work. But, one can't say the same thing about the bucket business. What do you say, Hari Babu?

"(To the bhaktas) "He has started trading in buckets. Does the work spare you, just see? Work done with a selfish motive binds one and when it is done selflessly, it helps one to attain Him.

"What is done at the guru's behest does not bind. Only what one does by one's own will binds. Such is Mahamaya's work. She doesn't let one know which action is selfish and which is selfless. I might be thinking that I am doing selfless work but perhaps there lurks the desire for name and fame within. But the guru knows all. Suppose there is a rope with a thousand knots. Nobody can loosen a single knot. The magician loosens all just by shaking his hands like this. The same with the gGuru. He can loosen all knots of the heart. Thakur with his own hands has loosened all the knots of the bhaktas' hearts."

M. (to himself) – *Anandaddhyeva khalvimani bhutani jayante.*

Anandena jatani jivanti. Anandam prayantyi abhisamvisantiti (TaittiriyaTaittiriya Upanishad 3:6). (All creatures are born from bliss, after being born they remain alive by bliss and after leaving this world they enter into bliss). What an enigma!

M. (to the bhaktas) – Creation, preservation and destruction — of all beings and creatures, of the whole universe — God does it in joy. Destruction is done in joy — how can a man understand it! Man can understand that creation and preservation are done in joy. That God creates, preserves and annihilates in joy in this world, if anyone can understand it he is free in this very life. Only His grace makes it possible to understand this. God is the very sSelf of bliss. That being so all work done by God is full of bliss. He who knows it is free in his lifetime. That is to say that good and evil, sorrow and pain of the world cannot have any impact or tension on him. Such a man is very rare.

"In this way, night after day, day after night and then weeks, months and years pass by. And that is how the lease ends But, His Mahamaya doesn't let anyone understand this. And whom She lets understand cannot take to any work of ajnana (ignorance).

"He has covered Himself with a veil — the veil of affection and attachment. Such is the affair! He who understands that God Himself sports becoming all these forms, for him the killed and the killer are the same. He has no fear then. The song goes: Having seen the unique love on Your face, what is there to fear from the sorrows, catastrophes and annihilation of the world."

M. (to the bhaktas) – It is the union and separation of the five elements that bring about the creation, preservation and dissolution. The five elements are the creation of His power of maya. In fact, they are nothing at all. But He presents them to be existing and real. He has kept us in illusion just by these five elements. Even the avatara bound by the five elements 'gasps' as he 'ducks' in the 'water'. So Thakur said, 'Bound by the five elements even the Brahman laments.'

"That's why, one cannot recognise the avatara. Doesn't he subject himself to everything — sorrow, and grief, birth, old age and death — just like any other man?. One cannot understand it. On the one hand a man, a complete man. On the other God. And in between maya. How can a man see all these three simultaneously? The ordinary man has only one sight. With that sight he can see the avatara only as a man. This is the reason why he cannot give him regard.

Avajananti mam mudha manushim tanum ashritam,

Param bhavam ajananto mama bhuta maheshvaram.

(Gita 9:11)

[Fools disregard Me as one clad in human form, not knowing my higher nature as the Great Lord of beings.]

"The spiritually great men live on another plane. Though they have seen God but they cannot all recognise the avatara. That is why, only

twelve rishis — Bhardwaj and other rishis — could recognise Rama as the avatara. The other rishis said, 'Yes, Bhardwaj and others may say that you are an incarnation of God. But we can only take you as a man of great spiritual knowledge, the knower of the atman, a saintly king all perfect in values.' Just see, the spiritually great, the rishis, could not all recognise him. It was the same with Sri Krishna. Only Deval, Vyasa, Garg and some other rishis recognised Him as avatara.

"That's why, at times Thakur used to say, 'The *achina gachha* (the unrecognized tree) is of a certain kind. Everybody cannot recognize it.' Some bhaktas would gaze at Thakur trying to know what was happening within him. By his grace they could recognise him as avatara. Seeing this Thakur used to say, 'If the whole mind has concentrated here, what else remains there to achieve?' This means that one has had seen God — Thakur's darshan is the vision of God.

"There is a sutra in Patanjali Darshan, '*Ishwara pranidhanadva*' (samadhi can also be attained by deep concentration on God). You may follow the ashtanga yoga (eight steps to yoga of Patanjali) such as yama, niyama etc. or you may think upon God, meditate on Him. You can see God by both these methods."

M. (to the bhaktas) – The Lord is *Kalpataru* (the wish yielding tree). Whatever you seek, you find. Even so, there is a difficulty in it. By asking mindlessly, the tiger may devour you. Do you know the story? (Laughing) A traveler was tired after a long walk. Sitting under a tree, he said to himself, 'I could lie down if there is a bedding here.' And a bedding was there at once. Then he thought, 'How nice it would be if there is a woman to stroke my feet.' And a lady came there in no time. Then as soon as he thought of tasty food, that too was there. You see, the man was resting under *Kalpataru*. That's why, whatever he wished for appeared there. He had all comforts to be relaxed. He took a long rest. Suddenly he said, 'What if a tiger comes?' And a tiger came and ate them all. Therefore, asking Him also entails a lot of danger. So, Thakur told that one should ask God, 'You may do whatever is good for me.' You should pray, 'O God! grant me the right thinking.'

Hari Parvat – A Muslim fakir/faqir used to stand on the steps near Nakhoda mosque gate at Chitpur Road — silent all the time. He would eat if he was given anything. He would never ask. And he would not try to procure food. He had desire for food. He would take if somebody gave it. I saw him some 24 or 25 years ago. In his last years he could not keep standing. He sat down. People would say that he had the nature of a python.

"I saw another person. He used to live under a tree outside the toilets of the Math. He was a Ramayat sadhu. He would sit repeating, 'Sita Rama, Sita Rama.' Baburam Maharaj loved him very much. When he was hungry he would utter, 'Sita Rama, Sita Rama,' loudly. Baburam Maharaj would then say, 'I say, go and give something to the sadhu to eat, he is hungry.' "

M. – How many vows the sadhus take to attain God! He Himself

looks after all when given the whole burden on Him. The Lord has thus clearly said in the Gita, '*Yoga kshemam vahamiaham*' (9:22). (I provide what they have not and security in what they have). Those who think of Him alone and nothing else, to those He sends people to look after them.

"Subject to the python's instinct means to be completely dependent on God. One eats only what heone gets, it otherwise one dies. His will prevails in both ways. His grace in both. It is not that His grace is there when He provides and not when He does not. When this awareness comes that it is He who preserves and it is He who kills, and that in both He showers hHis grace, only then comes this python like nature. I am saved if He saves me and I die if He kills me, His grace is there in both."

Hari Parvat – I met yet another sadhu in Liluya. I was then eighteen or nineteen. One day I and Harmohan (Mitra) were crossing Ganga on our way to Salakha. Along with two friends from there, we went to Haridas sadhu's hut. Harmohan knew that sadhu. Evening was approaching. He himself prepared *payas* with great zeal and served it to us. And he also offered us bael fruit to eat. The sadhu was very happy seeing of us eating and snatching it from one another. Seeing the moon spreading its numerous rays in the sky, the sadhu said: Listen to a story —

"A few sadhus were passing through a deep forest. It was already dark. They were unable to find the way till at last they reached the bank of a pond. The water was reflecting the moon; it was shimmering. They were so happy seeing it that they even forgot to see the moon. Their mind was absorbed in the reflection. Suddenly, they heard a crow cawing above. Following the sound, they saw the crow and along with it the full moon shinning in the sky. Now they forgot the reflection. They gazed at the moon fascinated. The crow had vanished from their sight."

M. – Aha! it indeed was the guru. The guru became one with the ideal deity. Having joy in the reflection means that the *jivatman* (the individual soul) is enjoying the world. As soon as the course of *jivatman* is turned towards Parmatman (God) everything else is forgotten. All becomes God. All becomes one. The yogis have this state. The real moon is Parmatman. Who then cares for the reflection of the moon?

3.

M. – Hari Babu, didn't you go to the (Belur) Math?

Hari – Sir, I think I'll go tomorrow. I have not been able to go? And when I go everybody enquires after you. I can't tell them anything. So, I have come today to get the news.

M. – Good, it's very good. Please go and tell me about it on your return. At what intervals do you visit?

Hari Parvat – I go after a month or two.

M. – Let it be, it keeps the temperament right.

Hari Parvat – Sudhir Maharaj asked about you the other day and said —

M. – What did he say? Tell me. I want to know.

Hari Parvat – Sudhir Maharaj and others had not embraced sannyasa then. They used to visit you. Once you said to them, ‘The devotee who lives in the family is like a ripe mango of a local variety. But Thakur’s intimate sannyasi disciples are (a special variety) say, the Banacha, the Bombay mango or the Langra mango.’

M. – I see!

Hari Parvat – Perhaps you used to talk so much of sannyasa then. They asked whether you have the same view now.

M. (remains silent for a moment, then recalls) – You could not answer them. After Thakur’s departure it was mostly his householder bhaktas who talked about him. That’s why they visited them. Seeing this I said, ‘All these householder bhaktas you see are like ‘ripe mangoes’. They are all nice to look at but they are of a local variety. But even if you see Thakur’s sannyasi bhaktas as ‘unripe,’ you see that they taste sour on eating, yet they are the Bombay mango, or the Langra mango. When they are fully developed you’ll see a world of difference between the local mango and the Bombay mango.’

"How much time the sannyasis have! Where is the leisure for the family men? If at all they find some time they spend it in an amateur concert party. (To the bhaktas) Don’t you know about the amateur concert parties?

"They spend a day in the concert when they have leisure, the other two days they attend their office. Such is the householders’ religion — like religion within brackets.

"They go to the office well-dressed. And they carry out a little of religion at leisure. What does that avail? Therefore, Thakur said to Vivekananda, ‘Where do the householders find time?’ The householders are part-time men while the sadhus are whole-time men of religion."

M. (to a certain bhakta) – This body will not last. So, why so much activities for it? Why such a noise about it? Why so much of snatching? Why such long lectures? (Laughter). (Pointing to the Elder Jiten) Just keep quiet — shut up! (Laughter).

M. (smiling) – It is good for the householders to take a vow of silence at times. Even this they can’t do. Hari Babu, you saw a sadhu in Kashi who was observing the vow of silence. He was here some timedays back. He had a nice disposition, a smiling face.

Hari – Mokshananda and Khagen Maharaj (Shantananda).

M. – Yes, yes! He narrated a beautiful incident. Seeing him in such a

state his mother would herself set an asana (seat) for him after sprinkling the Ganga water, and say, 'Come here son! Sit here and perform japa-dhyana.' And she would say, 'Whenever your mind wavers on seeing girls then remember me. If you remember me, you will not be harmed at all.'

"Aha, what an idea the mother instilled (in the mind)! When suchlike mother passed away, he could not stay back home. The father had already departed. Aha, what a great mantra!

"Aha, how many great men are to be seen with the coming of the avatara. In the oasis in a desert, there is water, shade, trees, creepers, fruits and vegetables. On seeing all this it seems that there are people to enjoy them too. In the same way when an avatara has come, it comes to the mind that there are men to enjoy his wealth also — jnana, bhakti, discrimination, dispassion, peace, happiness, prema, samadhi and mahabhava. All these people have come arrived, they arrive come and they will come in future.

"When the avatara comes the whole atmosphere is surcharged with spirituality. Then it is very easy. There is pole deep water even on dry land. So many spiritually great are seen today!"

Enter Dr. Bakshi, Vinay and the Younger Amulya.

M. (to the Doctor) – What's that *sloka* from the Gita — scarcely one calls on Him?

The Doctor –

Manushyanam sahasreshu kashchit yatati siddhaye,

Yatatam api siddhanam kaschinmam vetti tattvatah.

(Gita 7:3)

[Among thousands of men, scarcely one strives for perfection. And of those who strive to succeed, scarcely one knows Me in truth.]

M. – There are also people who are eligible for it. The sannyasis are highly eligible. (To a certain bhakta) The problem is this — unauthorized interference. It is for this reason that Sri Krishna scolded Arjuna. He said, 'Your nature will not be able to bear it (sannyasa), brother!' He wanted to embrace sannyasa forsaking everything out of attachment and fear. Therefore, Sri Krishna persuaded him in so many ways to fight.

"First, he said, 'You are a *kshatriya*. It is your duty to fight. The war for justice is a war for religion.' Then he said, 'People will give you all bad name. They will say that Arjuna fled away fearing Bhishma, Drona and Karna.' The third thing he said that infamy is the same as death. He said, 'If you conquer this war of religion, you will enjoy the kingdom and attain heaven after death.'

"When Arjuna did not pay heed to any of his advice, he scolded him. Said he, 'If you don't hear me, you will perish' — *na shroshyasi vinamkshyasi* (Gita 18:58).

"First, he talked to him about sannyasa. When he saw that he was not interested in it he told him about the Karma Yoga. And he scolded in the end. Such is the affair!

"Is it enough to say, 'I won't do?' What there is in your nature, you will have to do. *Prakriti tvam niyokshyati* (Gita 18:59)."



Morton School, Calcutta
Monday, 1 September, 1924
16th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The second day of the bright fortnight
18 Dandas / 39 Palas.

GOD WITHIN, PRIEST WITHOUT

1.

Morton School. Roof of the fourth level. 6 p.m. M. is seated on a chair facing north. Close to him are seated Jagabandhu, the Younger Nalini, Gadadhar, Lakshman and others on benches. The nectarine words are being showered.

M. (to Antevasi) — Where is the place for doership? Just see, for the last few minutes how difficult it was to breathe inside the room. As we came on the terrace, it made so much of difference. The natural, healthy feeling has returned. What happens to your sense of doership if there is no air for an hour. All will be dead. That being so, what for is so much of 'I,' 'T'?

"Just see, if one doesn't get food in time, one's mind and intellect cease to work. In so helpless state is man! Yet he says that he is the doer. Can you tell why he who is so conditioned by water, air and food has so much of ego? Otherwise, the world will not last. Therefore, Mahamaya has arranged in this way.

"It takes the mind contrary to truth. The Truth is, God is all. And the untruth, I am all. This clash between the two is the world. Even this is generated by God Himself. At times, He makes some chosen person understand that He is all. Then he cannot run the household.

"Why this arrangement? When birth after birth the man is crushed day and night by the wheel of the world, he wishes for peace and happiness. They tell the way to this peace and happiness whom God shows the truth. Sometimes He Himself comes down as a human being and shows His fearless, peaceful and joyful face to some people. Having seen it, the bhaktas merrily sing His glory untiringly night and day, full of bliss: We have seen Your unique loving face. Now what fear of sorrows of the world under Your reign.

"Only the other day, God came down as a human being in Dakshineswar. He has graced us by revealing His real Self. The bhaktas fell into suspicion – he was a brahmin priest on one hand, and thea loving Father and God on the other."

M. is silent for a few minutes. Again he showers the nectar of words.

M. (to Mohan) — This mind of ours is conditioned and controlled externally by all these – water, air, food etc. and internally by our past habits. Only the guru can save us from this precarious state. Guru that is God come as avatara. All external and internal conditions are under his control. Nobody else has the power to do so. Therefore, the consistent proposition is to take shelter at his feet. Only then will come peace. Then life and death will look like the body changing its coat. Then alone one becomes '*vigatabhi*' – fearless. '*Abhayam vai praptosi Janak*' (O Janak, you have now attained the state of fearlessness). Yajnavalkya said this to Janak when he noticed this state of his.

"Whatever sorrow and fear there is, it is because one calls one's body as 'me'. Whereas if one calls God or the soul as 'me and mine' one becomes fearless, peaceful and joyous."

M. is silent again. The conversation resumes.

Lakshman — Somebody has invited me for meals on a *shraddha* (death anniversary ritual). Should I partake of it?

M. — Thakur would not allow it at all. He said: It is not at all right to eat at a *shraddha* — particularly that of a person who has died recently. If you eat there you also share the sins of the deceased. Since that food is offered to the ghost (of the man), it is impure. On the other hand, if it is offered in the name of God,, it may be eaten. This is a transcendental point of view. Even if you see from a physical point of view, how heartless it is! A person is dead. Instead of mourning for him one puts so much into one's belly.

A Certain Bhakta — Is there an alternative if one doesn't perform a *shraddha*?

M. — This is an injunction according to the scriptures. So it must be performed. However, if one being a jnani does not do it, it is not wrong. If one prays crying before Him, God, the deceased will be redeemed by it. '*Tasmin tushto jagat tushtam*'. When God is satisfied, all are satisfied.

M. (to the bhaktas) — One should serve one's father and mother. Otherwise, one has to live in hell for eternity. They drown one in molten iron being heated in cauldron on blazing fire. So say the scriptures. Such is the affair!

"Even so if one renounces everything and embraces sannyasa there is no sin for him. Then God Himself God carries away all his sins. If one doesn't do so, one must serve one's parents. One has to go to hell if one does not serve them.

" '*Sarva dharman parityajya mamakam shar- -nam vraja*' (Gita 18:66). *Sarvadharmam* means surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone — that's what the Lord says. He further adds, '*Aham tvam sarvapapebhyo mokshayishyami*' — I shall absolve you of all sins, so I promise. Next he says (to a certain person), what's that? "

The Bhakta — *Ma suchah* — grieve not.

M. — '*Aham tvam sarva papebhyo moksha yishyami,*' means that the Lord, Sri Krishna, had taken all the burden of Arjuna. The burden of these three — of his body, mind and soul. Besides, He takes upon Himself the burden of all one's actions, of the previous life as well as of this life. This is called self-surrender — to live in the world as His slave.

"If the father and mother can take the responsibility of their son at home, why can't God do so for his bhakta? What's the doubt in it?"

Who has even given the concern the parents have for their children? God, of course. He takes the burden of the whole world and of the bhakta He takes it personally. The universe is moving according to the rules He has made whereas the bhakta moves according to His direction.

"Grieve not! Why did the Lord say so? The mind is calculating, you see. Vice and virtue have become one with one's ego. I have committed the sin and I will perform meritorious acts – such is one's thinking. That's why, grief and fear result from one's worry at committing sins. Therefore, He said to Arjuna, 'Grieve not. Leave all to Me and enjoy yourself. Be assured,' – just as the child who has his father and mother.

"(To Lakshman) "The service of sadhus that you have taken up will do it. It is only when the Lord is satisfied that the service of sadhus becomes possible. When the mind is inclined to serve sadhus it is understood that God is satisfied. The sadhu is a form of God. '*Jnani tv atmai eva me matam*' (Gita 7:18) – the jnani is verily My very Self. 'Jnani' is he who has understood that God alone is the doer and I non-doer. How learned are these sadhus. But they have renounced their all for Thakur. If you serve them with a concentrated mind, He will take all Your burden."

2.

It is already evening now. The lamp has been lighted. M. meditates leaving all work. The bhaktas also meditate with him. The bhaktas coming later also join sitting down quietly. The Elder Jiten and the Younger Jiten, the Elder Amulya and the Younger Amulya, Vinay and the Younger Nalini, Shanti, and Manoranjan and the Stout Sudhir, Balai and Upadhyay, Jagabandhu and Gadadhar, and others are seated there. Doctor Bakshi comes a little later. After a little while M. goes downstairs to the third level, saying, "Please keep sitting and carry on with your meditation."

It is 8 p.m. now. Having taken his dinner M. returns from the third level. As soon as he takes his seat, he asks, "Has the Elder Amulya Babu come?" "Yes, Sir," the bhaktas reply. The Elder Amulya has lost his baby daughter. She was only two.

M. (overcome with grief, affectionately to Amulya) — Oh! Can one forget it? Is it enough to say that all this is nothing? We are not even capable of it. We all live with attachment and affection. When the child comes out of the womb, it is brought up from day to day. How much of laughter, how much of joy, how many kisses and feeding him! The child smiles in sleep, the parents only want to see him to forget the world in the joy of their affection. How much they do to bring him up. Can one forget this all of a sudden? All these affectionate memories are a part of one's marrow. One has always been enjoying oneself with them. Now, all of sudden the mart of joy comes to an abrupt end. How can one erase these memories?

"That is why, Thakur was so pained on knowing that the bhaktas would suffer from all these pains. So, he used to say that theis world is a blazing fire. He used to pray for them, crying, 'How can they live in this burning fire? So Mother, do grant them Your darshan at times.'

"A song says, 'Grieved by the sorrows of jiva, God has come to dispense love leaving out everything.' Songs by Chaitanya Deva say so. Chaitanya Deva said, 'Nitai! How the great festivities in the name of the Lord are celebrated here (in Navadvipa)! How enjoyable are so many other celebrations! But if I stay at home, people would think that I am indulging in worldly pleasures. In that case, they won't follow me. So I must leave renouncing all.'

'Aha! He left renouncing everything to redeem the jiva of his sorrows. It is after so long I have been able to realise that how much grace the avatara has for the bhaktas. He took upon himself all troubles for their good.

"Girish Babu had written a play, Jana by name. It talks of a mother who has gone crazy at her son's death. Her brothers console her. But, she protests saying, 'See, even Sri Krishna could not console Arjuna at Abhimanyu's death.'

"Thakur once said, 'There's no stranger here. Everyone is our very own. Here is a deep secret. If you have to forget someone's bereavement, always recall his defects. It lessens the grief.'

"A certain person (M.'s wife) was bereaved at her son's death. I heard Thakur consoling her, saying, 'O lady, he who came to you as your son was an enemy of yours of your previous life. So, he took birth from your womb so that he may defeat you. He is your greatest enemy.'

"The world is like a burning fire. Thakur used to be very worried thinking how the bhaktas would be able to live amidst it. That's why he sometimes said, 'You may lose fourteen seers of semen, but you should not have any son.'

"Such is the sport of Mahamaya. Even this intense grief too vanishes after few days. And the old sanskaras get awakened. One forgets even this inconsolable grief and takes to sensual pleasures again.

'Therefore, he (Thakur) used to say to the bhaktas, 'You will not sleep together in one bed.' Since it is not usually suggested, 'Don't have more children,' so he would suggest, 'You should not share the same bed.' "

M. (to the bhaktas) — Is it so easy to say that this all is nothing?. Is it nothing to lose the one, whom you have fed, dressed and brought up for so long? It is not so. If this is nothing, then going to office, eating and drinking are perhaps also nothing! If one says that the former is nothing, so the latter then is also nothing. — It is to realise this that one takes to tapasya, keeps the company of sadhus and lives in solitude. How would it do to say that all this is nothing?

"So long as Sri Krishna was there, the Pandavas could not understand that all this was nothing. That's why yajnas and so much else were performed. As soon as Sri Krishna left, they understood that all this is nothing. Then after crowning Prikshit they left for the great go."

M. is silent for a while. The talk resumes now.

M. (to a certain bhakta) — This grief of the Elder Amulya too will be forgotten. Such indeed is the work of Mahamaya. He will first forget a little when he takes some water. So, many persons are now going himgive water sweetened with sugarcandy (*pana*). This all is the work of wind, you see. Grief and sorrow all manifest because of wind. This condition is the result of the concentration of wind. Pana is very useful, I hear. Thereafter, some cereal. Intake of cereal lessens grief. Then sleep. It also controls the wind. There are other things also. Thereafter, as one forgets gradually one begins to again enjoy again according of one's old sanskaras (impressions of the past). One takes to the same fun, frolic and then produces children. Such is Mahamaya's play.

"Bereavement makes many people mad – particularly that of father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister. And some other things also bring grief, such as lack of money. I have heard that a foreign bank failed and a man turned mad. You see, he had high social contacts with the families of the Lords. He turned mad thinking how he would now bow before these people. Many a time people shoot themselves or commit suicide by some other means.

"Therefore, one should ward against it from the beginning? Before taking to japa-dhyana one should think over it daily. One should say to oneself, 'What if I lose it?' If one does so, one is not so much inflicted with grief. If you are ready beforehand, it won't strike your mind as a bolt from the blue. Just see, Arjuna turned mad. Even Sri Krishna could not console him."

M. draws an imaginary picture of 'Jana'. Jana is overwhelmed with grief. She has lost external consciousness, her eyes do not bat, they are blood red. Her brothers console her.

"(The first brother in a grieved tone) — Sister, gain your consciousness. The jiva is bound with the fruit of actions. No one can get rid of it. Your son was alive during the years granted to him. His time of life had ended, so he departed. All creatures tread their own paths. So long as jiva is not free from the fetters of his actions, he has life and death. At last when liberated, he lives in his real Self. Sri Ramachandra also underwent the trials of life in exile as a result of his karmas. The Pandavas were deprived of their kingdom and had to face the hardships of exile. Sri Krishna's whole dynasty was destroyed before his eyes. Remembering about them, restrain your bereavement.

"The Second Brother — Just see, animals and birds, trees and creepers, men all take birth and die. Such is the law of nature. You, I and everyone else are subject to this rule. So you must also accept this rule. Have composure. Take some food and water. Why are you trying to destroy your life in vain? Be calm sister, be calm.

"The Third Brother — The Lord Himself is enacting this play becoming jiva and the world. You are also He, your son too is He and we all are He. It is due to His maya that I say, 'I and mine.' This is indeed ajnana (ignorance). The jnanis see the souls in everything and

every creature. The soul does not perish. The body is perishable. Death is nothing but leaving the old garments and putting on the new ones. Your son's real Self is atman. It never perishes. The jnanis help the jiva to attain his own real Self eschewing unsubstantial grief. Therefore, merge yourself in the thought of the Self and throw away your grief. Be your natural self. Remove your mind from the body and establish it in atman.

"Another Brother — We all are created by God out of hHis kindness. He by His grace provides us with the things we pray for and then He takes them back by His grace. He is all good. We due to our ajnana say, 'This is mine and that is yours.' In fact, all belong to Him. He had given your son to you as a loan. When the time was ripe He took him away. God is yours near and dear one too. He is also the near and dear one of your son. The Lord has taken back what was His, so it is not right to mourn. See sister, our father and grandfather have all departed. All have to go sooner or later. Your son has gone somewhat early – this is the only difference. If you really love your son, you should do what will bring him good. If your son having given up this body has taken up a much better body, you should be happy about it. This is how the great people do. Get rid of attachment. Look at it with jnana.

"This consolation of the brothers went in vain. Jana kept sitting silent, dumbfounded like a stone. Does this nectar of the words enter the ears of Amulya, grief-stricken on his daughter's death?"

After some time, Doctor Bakshi leaves by car for Cossipore along with Amulya. Vinay and the Younger Amulya also accompany them.

All remain silent for a few moments. Then they start conversing again.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — The only remedy for it is sannyasa. There's no other remedy than deep dispassion. The sovereign remedy is to go far away. To go very far from all these sights and scenes for a few days. A new atmosphere leaves its new impression. Otherwise, the old sanskaras come back. And then one becomes what one was earlier. There is the feeder (food for the mind), that's why.

"Thakur used to tell us this. There are two pits in a field. One of them remains filled with water while the other becomes dry. The dry pit has no supply from any feeder while the other has it.

"The same is with sannyasa – it has no feeder. When there is the feeder, the mind remains involved in the same sensory pleasures. How does that saying go? 'I am the same goddess you fear.' Then there is the slush and mud.

"That's why the rishis have established the sannyasa-ashrama. That's a higher plane. Grief and sorrows cannot collect there.

"Attachment, affection, grief and sorrows are bound to be there in the *grihastha-ashrama* (in the household life). If you always want to live comfortably in joy you must embrace sannyasa. This is what the rishis have been announcing loudly."

M. remains silent for quite some time. The Elder Jiten breaks the silence.

The Elder Jiten — The opinion of Kavirajs (that it is good to take sannyasa and run far away) is good. There's nothing impure in this opinion.

M. — It cannot come about just by saying so. Practise what the Kaviraj says. Go far away in a secret and solitary corner. Otherwise, all grief etc. will come back.

"On seeing the room (of the deceased) your grief will again revive. The mind will say, 'Aha, here he used to play!' And also on seeing the pillow, bedspread and other belongings of the departed, grief will well up. But new scenes and sights bring a change to the mind.

"Just see the environment. The mother is inflicted with grief. The girls come and say, 'O, please tie your hair. Don't do like this, it shall bring harm to the husband.'

"See, there is no one who says, 'He was your enemy. It happened for your good. Why to continue living in family? You have a golden chance now. Find your way.' No one will say these soul awakening words."

M. (to a certain person) — It seems that the animals get over their grief sooner. They have to fill their stomach by working for it. Who is going to offer them sugarcandy water?

What is does M. thinks silently? He resumes.

M. (to the bhaktas) — Homeopathy is safer than allopathy. The responsibility of the doctor is not that much. Their (allopathic) treatment is very drastic. Let there be so little of anything, they would at once apply surgery. (Laughing) If you have a knife in your hand, you feel like giving a little cut. If the head of the family has a strong common sense, he can guide the doctor.

"Just take the case of the girl who has died recently – what a bad condition she had! To begin with her foot was septic and on the top of it to operate on her! She had to take two blows. So her heart turned weak.

"That is the reason why Thakur could not eat anything offered by the doctors.

"I heard that she could be treated by applying an ointment. Instead, they operated on her!

"There are so many ways God takes one away – by flood, by earthquake, by disease and by the doctor's hand. Just take the case of the girl who has gone, what shall we say about it? That He has taken her away through the doctor's hand.

"They are so eager to extract even a primary tooth. If one waits for a couple of days the pain subsides. Instead of doing so, they advise its extraction. And then they extract the wrong tooth, i.e. the one that is not diseased. They have no time to think for it.

"A friend of mine had elephantiasis. The doctors advised an operation to amputate. Even the senior doctors said so. They charged thirty two rupees as their visiting fee. Thereafter, he got well on applying the ointment given by an indigenous doctor.

"Homeopathy is still better than Ayurveda. This is the best.

"It will be better for our Doctor Babu to take to Homeopathy. It lessens the responsibility."



Morton School, Calcutta
Tuesday, 29 September 1924
18th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The third day of the bright fortnight.

HAVE STRENGTH OF TEN THOUSAND ELEPHANTS BEFORE ENTERING HOUSEHOLD LIFE

1.

6 p.m. M. is seated on a chair on the roof of the Morton School facing south. There are benches close to him on front and on his three sides. HeThe bhaktas are seated there — Jagabandhu, Manoranjan, Gadadhar, the Younger Ramesh and others. Conversation goes on.

M. (to the Younger Ramesh) — Just cast a glance once, see what is happening above. Infinite, all infinite. There is no end, no bank of it. For tens of thousands of years they are there, yet none has been able to know even one star. Nowadays they say that any of these stars is even bigger than the sun. Nine planets, the earth and so on, are revolving round the sun. Such suns are also infinite. Any numbers of planets are revolving around it. They are numberless, infinite. And limitless, infinite is this universe.

M. (to Antevasi) — It is said in the Vedas that all this is going on by His power of maya. The rishis had seen maya... '*Devatmashakti svagunanir-gudam,*' (Divine Power has Her own inherent qualities).

"Thakur also saw it with these very eyes that this power of maya creates the whole universe and then it lives becoming the universe. It is inside and it is outside too. He saw that this very maya creates the worldwhole universe. And It Itself devours it. Said he, 'All is under It.' He said that so long as there is the body there is the world. Till then one is under it, within its domain. Speech, action and thought are all His maya. Even meditation on Him is maya. What is beyond maya cannot be spoken with the word of mouth. There one can only go with the Lord of maya.

"The world reflects itself because there is the mind. When the mind perishes the world perishes. However, one has to take recourse to one mood to understand it — *shanta* (attitude of calmness), *dasya* (attitude of a servant), *sakhya* (of a friend), *vatsalya* (of a parent) and *madhura* (of a lover), so says Thakur. Or '*Soham*' (I am He) — this too is an attitude. One should take up that favourable attitude which one likes. One has to have a relationship. Why did he ask us to forge a relationship? The answer, such relationships are already there among us, you see. So one has to change their course to God. The man calls those who are related to him by body as his near and dear one. 'Near and dear one,' that is to say one's own. But in reality only God is one's own.

"The earth on which one falls down also uplifts one when one holds on to it. Form, taste and the rest bind one, yet they are the means to liberation. Maya brings bondage, and then holding on to it one gets uplifted.

"Everything on that side is 'beyond speech and mind,' all formless.

The guru enjoined one to reach the Formless by holding on to the One with form. Reason? The mind cannot perceive anything unless it is concrete. So one should be intimate with God in the attitude of father, mother, friend and such other sweet relationships. The man understands such relationships naturally.

"Holding on to His form and meditating on it, one has the vision of His form. If the bhakta so desires, the Lord also shows him His formless Self. Besides, there are worshippers of the Formless too. But this is very difficult. In the Gita He says, '*Avyakta hi gatir dukham dehavadbhir avapyate,*' (Gita 2:5). (For the goal of the Unmanifested is very hard for the embodied to reach).

"Thakur said, 'Just as the snow falls like cotton shreds, so as one has the vision of all His forms.' "

M. (to Mohan) – In spite of all the frailties of man he can have His darshan by His grace. Just see, what a weakling he is yet he talks so big. Let him go a little higher he will not be able to breathe. Go a little high up by an airplane you will find that there is not enough oxygen. Then you feel you are dying. Such is the affair.

"This creation of His is a miracle. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are all unable to understand this sport of His. 'Where is its end?' So saying they all roam about. But they do not find it.

"So the Lord said in the Gita (7:14): This sport of mine is 'divine,' 'made of gunas,' and 'difficult to cross over.' You can free yourself from the maya, only by holding on to Me. There is no other way. Thakur said, 'Unless the Mother makes one pierce this mystery, nobody has the power to understand it.' "

M. is pensive for a while. Then he resumes.

M. – Yes, somebody referring to Thakur said, 'We are like the fish in the sea.' On hearing it Thakur said, 'No, the simile is not correct. Say, the fish in the sea of Sachchidananda.' Do you know what is that sea of Sachchidananda like? Water, water everywhere. Above and below, right and left there is water everywhere, in all the ten directions. All is Sachchidananda! It is in this infinite and boundless sea the jiva swims about like a fish.

(To a particular bhakta) " Have you been able to understand something? Besides, what is the necessity to understand? That Boundless, Infinite comes down in a form for the sake of the devotee. He came only very recently in the human form. Its heat is still there in the atmosphere — so recently he came. And he left only the other day. If you are able to know him your work is done.

"So Thakur taught the devotees by praying, 'Mother, I don't want to know all this. It is enough if I have pure devotion at Your lotus feet, pure unalloyed devotion.'

"That which is infinite becomes finite for the devotee — that which is boundless becomes limited for the bhaktas, that which is extremely difficult becomes very easy for the bhakta. What is the use of

reasoning so much? Take to the easy path — ‘*Mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te,*’ (Gita 7:14) (Only those who take refuge in Me alone, they cross over this illusion). This is the easy path. Thakur also said, ‘Hold me.’

"Who can understand even an ant? How did it get life? Who created it? If one cannot understand even this, why talk so big?

"How can one understand, tell me? Is it like saying two and two make four? These are not finite things. So don't try to understand the infinite by your finite intellect. What to do then? Just this, take the prescription. What is it? Mother, I don't even want to know all this, grant me pure devotion at Your lotus feet — pray in this way."

It is twilight hour. In the meanwhile a number of bhaktas have arrived — Shanti and the Stout Sudhir, the Doctor and Vinay, the Younger Amulya and Balai, and so on. M. has ended his conversation. He says to all, ‘Let us now offer Namaz.’ Saying so, he keeps to his asana and begins to meditate. The bhaktas also meditate.

After a while, arrives the Elder Jiten followed by a pundit. The latter has a shawl on his body printed over with sacred names and wooden sandals on his feet that clatter. Many others accompany him. The clatter of the sandal disturbs meditation.

After the meditation, M. gets acquainted with them. Among the new comers, one has his house in Bankura and works in Asansol, and another lives in Vishnupur.

The pundit is rather restless. Everybody is anxious to listen to M. But before he opens his mouth, the pundit begins to talk. He discusses with the resident of Bankura on *sadhya-sadhan* (how to practise spiritual discipline).

The Pundit (to the resident of Bankura) – Giving up all one must be an introvert, otherwise one can achieve nothing. What can one understand by being an extrovert?

The Bankura Man – Why? The Paramahansa Deva says, ‘Live in the world like the maid in the rich man's house. She takes to all the work of the world. Her mind remains attached to her children at her home, and so on.’

The pundit does not know civilized conduct. He continues to talk nonsense. The Bankura man is hesitant. He doesn't answer him any more. Consequently, the current of argumentation weakens. The bhaktas do not like their conversation. They become impatient. They long to hear M.'s spiritual talk. Now M. slowly begins to shower the nectarine words of Thakur.

M. (to the new comer) – Thakur cried and cried and prayed to the Mother, saying, ‘I do not want to know, Mother, what the Veda, Purana and Tantra have.’ Said he, ‘Mother, how can a man know You unless You make him do so. Nobody can know You.’

"If it was possible for man to know God by his intellect, why did the spiritually great say so much? The Veda says, ‘*Naisha mati tarkena paniya*’ (you cannot attain Him by intellect and reason). And after that it is, ‘*Yamevaisha vrinute tena labhyah,*’ ‘*Avak mansagocharam*’ (He is available only to him whom He accepts, He is beyond speech

and mind). How can one know Him? Thakur said, 'You cannot measure one seer with one sixteenth 1/16 of a seer of intellect.' The song goes, 'Who can know You unless You tell him? The Veda and Vedanta are unable to give Your whole picture. One gropes in darkness and dies in it.'

"These are all the words of the spiritually great. Besides, you have, '*Pravachanena na labhyah,*' '*Na bahuna shrutena*' (Katha Upanishad 1.II.23). (He cannot be known through much study, nor through much learning). This too is from Vedas.

"He is not a finite thing that you can buy — He is infinite! How will you be able to know the infinite by your finite intellect? What is this effort like? Like that was of an ant. It thought that this time it was taking only a grain of sugar and that the next time it would take away the whole hill of sugar in its mouth.

"There is only one way to know Him. Lord Krishna even gave it, '*Mam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam taranti te*' (Gita 7:14). (Those who take refuge in Me alone, they cross over this illusion). By holding Me alone you will know Me. Crossing over the illusion means to know Him. The same thing he has said in another way, '*Tatprasadat param shantim stanam prapsyasi shashvatam*' (Gita 18:62). (By His grace you will gain supreme peace and eternal abode). It is only by God's grace that you can know Him, and gain permanent peace and shelter forever. There is no other way."

M. (to Mohan) – By learning you cannot gain Him. '*Pravachanena na labhyah,*' '*Na bahuna shrutena*' (Katha Upanishad 1.II.23). (He cannot be known through much study, nor through much learning). Neither by discourse nor by hearing you can attain Him. He is not even attained by the mind alone. '*Yanmanasa na manute*' (Kena Upanishad I.6). (That which man does not comprehend with the mind). All these are words of the Veda.

"Many great pundits used to go to the Paramahansa Deva. They would sit before him with folded hands.

"The room was full of people when Thakur was talking to the Mother of the Universe. He was saying, 'Mother, what is there in learning? Who can know yYou by his learning? For shame!' (Smiling) Sometimes he would laugh and say, 'These pundits do soar very high but their sight remains fixed to the charnel-pits,' — that is to say in the world, in woman and gold.

"Padma Lochan, Narayana Shastri, Shashadhar Chudamani, Vaishnava Charan, all these people used to come to Thakur. He himself went to see Vidyasagar. Gauri Pundit of Indesh also came to see him. He also met Dayananda Saraswati."

M. (to the man from Bankura) – If you pray to Him, He tells you how He can be attained. Or He may send somebody telling him: that gGo and convey to him — this is how you must do.

"One devotee was calling on Thakur most earnestly. He was calling on him in his heart. This was not known to anybody. Thakur sent an

other devotee saying, 'Go and tell him how to do it.' And he himself went to another devotee. Why? For he was calling on him yearningly, he was crying. The devotee was wonder-struck on seeing. Said he, 'It was I who had to go to you. You have come yourself.' Thakur laughed and said, 'Yes, sometimes even the needle attracts the magnet.' One must pray to Him with a longing heart. When you do so He lets you know."

2.

"Thakur told a story. There was a fakirfaqir. Many devotees used to visit him. He felt a desire to feed them and arrange for their lodging. So he went to King Akbar. He was offering Namaz at that time. At the end of the Namaz he prayed, 'O Allah! Grant me wealth, riches and kingdom.' Hearing this the fakirfaqir was about to go. Seeing him doing so, Akbar beckoned him with his hand to keep sitting. Then he came and asked him, 'Why were you going back?' The fakirfaqir replied, 'I came to ask for help. I saw that you yourself were a beggar. So I decided, what could a beggar ask of another beggar? That's why, so I was going to leave. I have decided that if I have to ask for anything I shall only do so from Allah.' "

M. (to the man from Bankura) – It only means this that one should pray to God. If it is a prayer from the heart, He fulfills it. Possibly, He may send someone, or He may tell in the mind in the form of an idea.

Is it that lest the devotees may get confounded in the maze of the pundit's arguments, M. refers to it?

The Bankura Man – Well *baba* (father), are we moved by the fruit of our karmas or by the will of the God?

M. – The Paramahansa Deva did not believe in the fruit of karmas or some such thing. He used to say, 'Pray to Him. If He wills all obstacles will be removed.' He used to say it with a song, 'If all will happen by what is written by destiny, who will then call uttering Durga, Durga?'

"Buddhism has a lot about fruit of action and so on. These are all philosophical speculations. If you call upon Him yearningly, He sets everything right. We heard this from Thakur's mouthlips."

The Man from Bankura – How can I know that I am calling upon Him rightly?

M. – It is for this that Thakur enjoined upon us to keep company of sadhus. By keeping company of sadhus you will know how much dependent you have become on Him, or whether you have been calling on Him rightly.

"If you want to learn law where will you go? To a judge, an advocate or a registrar, isn't it? It is the same with the sadhus. They are authorities in the matter of God. You will understand all by visiting them. You will then not have to ask anybody else."

The Pundit – All doubts get cleared. When the needle is mud stained, the magnet does not attract it. The mud is wiped away by the company of sadhus. Vivekchudamani has this, '*Shabdajalam maharanyam chittabhraman karnam*' (the dense jungle of the maze of words causes the mind to ramble).

M. – I used to see the Paramahansa, he was always praying like the unceasing flow of the oil. He would say, 'Mother, pray don't bewitch me by Your world-enchanting maya.'

"The book of the English (Bible) also has it. Christ says, 'Pray without ceasing, always pray like the ceaseless flow of oil!'"

The pPundit quotes from the scriptures in between. It, however, does not reach M.'s ears.

M. (to the man from Bankura) – Somebody said to the Paramahansa Deva one day, 'So everybody should be told to worship Brahman by infusing Brahman into the idol. It is no use worshipping just a clay idol.' Thakur immediately rejoined, 'Just see this. You people only lecture. I say brother, you have no need to think over this matter. You don't have to rack your brain over it. He has already made every arrangement for what one may need. You don't have to turn your head on this matter.'

"God has already arranged for the food of all the three bodies, the gross, the subtle and the causal. For the gross body the food is rice, lentils, flour and so on. For the subtle body it is physical knowledge, art, science and so on. And the food of the causal body is prayer, reading the holy books, repeating the name, meditation, going on pilgrimage etc. By means of all these, one attains yoga with the *mahakarana*, that is God.

"Just see this. For growing paddy, He sends the sun, the moon and the rain. Inspiring the man's mind, He has made him establish schools, colleges and other centres of education. Besides, temples, maths, ashramas and sadhus provide food to the causal body.

"He has arranged everything rightly. You don't have to worry about it. You have only to call on Him — in some way to have His darshan. Weep and say to Him in a secret nook, say to Him yearningly, 'Lord, grant me your darshan.' Not putting up a signboard but in a way that nobody comes to know of it.

"Aha, is there any limit to His grace? It's ever raining on us. How did this Math (the Belur Math) come into existence? It is by His grace that He has made it so that the devotees may go and keep company of sadhus.

"You see, I cannot always go to the Math, old man as I am. So my friends go there and on their return tell about the sadhus. Such is His limitless grace.

"One day on returning from the Math a person told me that a certain Maharaj (monk) reads the tenth chapter of the Bhagavata in the Mother's shrine. Such and such Maharaj brings water on a bamboo

sling from the Ganga. Another grinds sandalwood for Thakur's puja. Yet another sweeps the courtyard with the broom. The Paramahansa Deva also used to sweep with a broom. One day I went and saw that Thakur was sweeping the path to the north of his room. Seeing me, he said, 'The Mother walks here so I sweep this path.' Hearing all this about the Math I gain a lot. One can compare what they do for the Lord and what we do for Him.? It awakens us. The sadhus do everything for God, always, renouncing their home and everything."

The Pundit (to M.) – Where do you stay, in Dakshineswar?

M. – To stop the current of this irrelevant talk of the pundit, M. does not answer him and encourages the man from Bankura to go to the Math.

M. (to the man from Bankura) – So when are you going to the Math? You have only to spend six or seven pice to go there. And you may not stay there for long. Just two hours are sufficient. What is theno need to talk to people? Just go and first offer pranam in Thakur's shrine. Then take some *charanamrita* (holy water). After that offer your pranam to the sadhus when you meet them. Whether you take jugs full of nectar or just a little of it from the top edge of the *durva* grass, you become immortal. (Laughter). You have had so much of acquaintance, so much of reading and hearing. Now if you don't meet them, it won't matter. You will gain just by the darshan of sadhus. Their darshan alone can bring an awakening. Who are sadhus? They who always call on God with a yearning for Him in their heart.

The Man from Bankura (humbly) – Sir, I shall try.

M. – Just see this. The Paramahansa Deva when asked a person (Paltu) to go in the company of sadhus, he said, 'I shall try.' Replying to it, the Paramahansa Deva said, 'What is it, I shall try?' He said, 'If I am not able to do so, it shall entail telling a lie.'

M. – There is no harm if you tell a lie concerning a good work. You should say, 'I shall certainly go.'

"Lord Krishna said to Arjuna, '*Kshudram kridaya daurbalyam tyaktva uttishtha paramtapa*' (Gita 2:3). (Cast off this petty faint-heartedness. Wake up, O vanquisher of foes) — give up faint-heartedness. Arise, what is this?

"The superior bhakta has a strong determination. He resolves to himself that he is definitely going to do it. '*Klaibyam ma sma gamah partha na etat tvayi upapadyate*' (Gita 2:3). (Yield not, O Arjuna, to feebleness. It does not befit you)."

The Pundit – My elder son, thirteen years old, has embraced sannyasa and left.

Hearing this M. is satisfied. He now happily answers the pundit.

M. – Nice indeed, why don't you say so? You are indeed a big man. They say that one finds a pearl *gajamukta* (*gajamukta*, fabled to be found in the elephant's head) in the lion's cave. What a great family

you belong to! A sadhu has been born in your lineage!

The devotees take leave. The Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, Gadadhar and Jagabandhu are standing near M. M. again instructs the bhaktas.

M. (to Doctor Bakshi) – I say Doctor Babu, how will it be if you take to homeopathy? If you do so, it will greatly benefit many poor persons. Mahendra Sarcar seeing that allopathy could be more harmful learnt homeopathy at an advanced age.

"And there is another thing. Ornaments were stolen, the bag was stolen from your home even when you were there. This is not right. How can it go on if you remain so lax? One must have strong determination. If you have the strength of ten thousand elephants in your mind you may take to household. While living in the world one has to be careful in all matters. One has to live like all others. If you cannot do so, then go and live under the tree. The path is straight. How will it do to say that you will live in the household and yet not conduct yourself according to the rules for of the ashrama?

"A bhakta said to Thakur, 'The cat took away the fish from my plate, yet I could not stop it.' The bhakta had thought that Thakur would say, 'Well done, well done.' My mother! On the contrary, he said excitedly, 'Why, you could have given it a slap. This would not have killed the cat.'

"You cannot run the household if you are lax. People will deceive you. A bhakta must have two eyes on his back too, and he has to be, '*Dhriti utsaha samanvitah*' (Gita 18:26). (Endued with firmness and zeal).

"When you are living in the household you have to accept all this. Thakur did not have a family life but he knew all about the household matters. That is how, he was able to take the bhaktas on the right path.

"He used to prepare the mind. You must keep this passive and negligent mind vigilant. How can he who is so indifferent in such ordinary matters of family life meditate on Brahman? By effort this weak mind becomes hard like a thunderbolt, it becomes *sharvata tanmay* (one-pointed like an arrow). It can then shoot down the bird of ignorance.

"It is for preparing the mind that all these sadhan and bhajan are there. You can prepare such a mind even while attending to the household work. So it was that Thakur said, 'He who can keep an account of salt can also account for sugarcandy.'

"First, one has to prepare to the mind. Thereafter, fix it on Him. Then you are carefree. You can then live in the household becoming His own — like a maidservant.

'This So much you have to do by your own effort. The rest of the burden He takes upon Himself. Why has He given man intellect and endeavour? By making a good use of these, one does not have to worry about the rest. He sees, He makes one do it by granting the

right intellect and power. Hold the horse from the front and the back,
and then rise on it."

Ten in the evening.



Morton School, Calcutta
Wednesday, 3 December 1924
18th of Bhadra, 1331(B.Y.)
The fourth day of the bright fortnight
11 Dandas / 37 Palas.

DUE TO FEAR IT GOES ALL IN VAIN

1.

Morton School. The staircase room on the fourth level. M. is seated among bhaktas. The terraceroof is wet because of the rain. It is not possible to sit outside. The bhaktas have been assembling before it is evening. First to come were Manoranjan, Vinay and the Elder Jiten. Vinay is accompanied by his youngest brother, Kiran. The latter has two friends with him. They are all living in the Students Home and studying in the college. They are followed by the Stout Sudhir, Balai and Shanti. After them arrive Durga Babu (the Healing Balm) and Gadadhar. Jagabandhu stays here itself.

It is already evening. M. meditates along with the bhaktas. After the meditation is over, the Doctor and the Younger Amulya arrive. The Kathamrita is under print these days. So M. and Jagabandhu are ever busy reading the proofs. That is why, M. is tired. After the meditation is over, he goes down to the third level having engaged the devotees with the reading and listening to the Kathamrita. Manoranjan is reading: Sri Ramakrishna has come to the Balaram's house. M. has come from the Shyambazar School during the lunch break to have Thakur's darshan. It has been circulated about M. that he takes the good boys to Sri Ramakrishna for his darshan. Today it is Thursday, 4 September 1924, 19th of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), the sixth day of the bright fortnight, 58 Dandas / 37 Palas.

It is half past eight. M. has just come up after his evening meal. As soon he comes, he begins to talk even without sitting.

M. (to the devotees) — What else! We are completely dependent. Nothing at all happens according to our wish. Now just take the body. Something within goes wrong and it no longer functions. So it is. That being so how can I say that we are not dependent.

"It is for this reason that we worship Mahamaya. It is by Her will that everything happens. So She has to be satisfied; just this and what else?"

"The medical men know it well, what our body contains. They have dissected it and seen all. How much there is inside it! Heart, lungs, liver, spleen, auditory nerves, optical nerves – labyrinth of nervous system. They function in so many ways and that is how the body functions. Just take one of them, the liver for example. Let it stop working. Then everything stops functioning. What an affair this is, just see. How much of complications just to keep the body moving!. And then, there are also these, the mind and the intellect. What a wonder!"

The Elder Jiten — Where have these two gentlemen (mind and intellect) come from?

M — They (the Westerners) say, from outside. But only the men of this country have understood it right. Kapil says in Sankhya that they have come from this body itself. The leading scientists of that country (the West) have accepted this – Materialist theory.

"I also feel like this (that is, they have come from outside). Had the mind and intellect been there inside, why could one not have the memory of what one was before?"

"I feel that there is nothing like the so called *jivatman* (the individual soul). Had it been there one would have had the memory of the past. There is only Parmatman (God). They say that the mind and intellect go with the subtle body after death. But we cannot understand it.

"The body is a special kind of machine. By seeing the body one can tell what it contains within. Aren't the two eyes like two mirrors? One can know all. So, it is that the body shows the inner marks of man. What kind of an individual one is can be known by his conduct – whether he is restless or not, whether he talks nonsense or not, and whether he is too talkative.

"There is someone who wanders on the roof and gazes at the roof nearby. It means that this is his nature. That is why, he is made to do so. But this man does not know it. Another man also notices it but cannot understand it. He thinks that it is because of his wickedness. No, his nature is such. It is that which is goading him.

"There is another who while going on the road sees on both sides of him only the objects of sensory enjoyments. Yet there is another man who has everything to see, but would not cast his glance on any. He is walking on the road and has all objects of sensory enjoyment around him. He does not raise his eyes at all to see anything. When his eyes perhaps fall on something while finding his way, he just sees it for a while and then shuts it down suppressing his mind. He is disciplined.

"The yogis have disciplined themselves in this way. They are not aiming at anything – their aim being their inside. Thus the definition of a yogi is the one who is not the slave of his mind. The mind is his slave.

"This is the mark of a yogi. His mind is self-controlled. He has no other aim – he aims none but God.

"What is the need of tapasya? It is only to control the mind. One's tapasya can be examined on seeing how much the mind has been controlled.

"A man (M.) strolls on the roof. He never casts his glance at anything, anywhere. Once the ladies of other homes asked his wife, 'Your husband strolls on the roof but why doesn't he cast his glance here and there?' Another woman said, 'He does see but with slanting glance.' (Laughter). The wife replied, 'No, that is his nature. He does not see anybody.' "

The youth Rakhali is employed at Mother Kali's estate in Dakshineswar. He is here. The Younger Nalini had gone to Dakshineswar today for the darshan of Mother Kali. He has returned with prasada in his hands. M. along with the bhaktas take some prasada. Then they talk on various matters about the Dakshineswar temple.

M. has been wishing for long that the *nahabat* (concert in which Sanai is the

main instrument) may be played upon in Mother Kali's temple. It is after a long time that this wish has been fulfilled by the efforts of the receiver of the temple – the devoted Kiran Chand. Now the *nahabat* is sounded four times every day as it used to be in Sri Thakur's time.

M.'s joy knows no bound. The treasurer of the temple has sent Rakhhal today to invite M. and to tell him that the Mother has heard his prayers. She hears the *nahabat* four times daily these days. He might also come and listen to it. M. hears from Rakhhal that the management of the Mother's estate has now been arranged. The worship and offering of holy food to the Mother is being orderly performed. Sadhus, bhaktas and God-in-the-poor are being served in the Kali temple as before. Hearing this M. is overwhelmed with joy. He happily sings about the greatness and glories of God.

M. (to the bhaktas) — The man doesn't possess the power to understand God's work. His leela is indeed wonderful. Man thinks of something, it happens otherwise. Just see, how the responsibility of Dakshineswar has come on Kiran Babu. Some individual filed a suit. Who knows what was in his mind? Why did the High Court make enquiries of the Belur Math concerning this case? Possibly, the judges thought that perhaps the Belur Math was interested in it. Then at the recommendation of the Belur Math, it came into the hands of Kiran Babu, in other words in the hands of the Math. That is why, all this is being done now – sounding of the *nahabat*, good arrangement for bhoga (offering of holy food). Now the devotees frequent it more often.

"And just take the Belur Math, how it came to be established? It came about with the money given by the western devotees. What a jungle it was all around! How much of malaria! E.I.R. decided to build something there – to start a factory near the Math on the bank of the Ganga. So they cleared the jungle. This also reduced the malaria a lot. But they built nothing. In between, all this work took place.

"So nobody can understand His work. Thus Thakur used to say, 'You should pray: Lord, do that which is for our good.' What can a man understand? He has to say something but he says something else. Only He knows what is for our good. It is He who has created this world, this universe.

"And take our mind and intellect. Such and such is so learned, so intelligent. See, what happens to his arrogance when he does not get food for seven days? One can't tell where his intellect vanishes. And the cereals, has man made them? No, it is He. That is why, the rishis call cereals as Brahman. Besides, the vital breath, the mind and the intellect, they are also Brahman. They are smaller Brahman. They all came from that which is the *brihat* (big) Brahman,. To preserve the creation.

"What is not wonderful! Take the affection of the mother and father. Had it not been there, the world would have been uninhabited. The milk in the mother's breast, just think over it what a wonderful affair it is! As soon as the mouth touches the breast it yields milk. As the child develops within the womb, the breasts begin to prepare milk. Thereafter, the air, the water – what is not a wonder? We are always swimming in the sea of wonder.

"But the man does not observe it. He thinks, but it always happens. Who does it, how does it happen, why does it happen – he has no time to look into these questions. Such is maya! On the one hand, night and day the man goes on saying, 'I, I,.' Yet he doesn't care to look a little underneath, what is this 'I'? From where has it come? Where does this 'I' go when he is slept?

"This each and every man is a mud ball. Why should he have such pride? These mud balls say, 'We can create a better universe.' What a conduct of His!

"This 'I' is there now but it becomes different in sleep, in dream and in deep sleep. It remains hidden. Only in samadhi does it leave. But when one comes down it again shows itself. Then there is nothing wrong in it. Then one sees that it is only the servant, the child of the great 'I'."

The Elder Jiten — There is no control over the mind. Sometimes it is God-with-form, sometimes the formless God.

M. (smiling) — Dr. Mahendra Sarkar was a very witty person. He used to say, 'What is the mind with-form like? Just this, when the mind is in the body – (it says) for example, my body, my hand, foot and face. (Everybody laughs). On the other hand, when it sees the house – (it says) for example, this is my room, this is my house. (Everybody laughs again). When it thinks of the Formless and Attributeless, it is formless.' (Laughter).

"So one should pray to Him who is the master of the mind. One should say, 'O Lord, pull my mind and fix it at Your lotus feet' – *dhiyo yo na prachodyat* (may He enlighten our intellect).'

"One must make an effort. However, that alone is not enough. One has also to ask the mMaster. When He wills the mind is controlled. One who knows what the mind is, has control over it."

2.

Next day, it is eight in the morning. M. is seated on a bench in the room close to the staircase on the second level of the Morton School – he is facing north. In front of him is Antevasi. Both of them are reading the proofs. Many proofs of the Kathamrita have been received. Besides, the devotees are also arriving. The copy is in the hands of Antevasi. M. reads the proofs and in between instructs from it.

M. (to Gadadhar) — Just see, they say that one does not attain jnana without karma. So, Swamiji arranged for work in the *math*. Everybody hasn't the same *dhat* (buildup, temperament) – it is different with different persons. He who has *karma* in his nature cannot meditate if you ask him to sit and do so. So one should take to work without the desire for its fruit. Then with the pure mind it will be possible to meditate on Him. That is why, this arrangement.

"It is generally to be seen that one does feels bad if one has no work. If one takes up some work, perhaps this does not happen. They say, idle brain is the devil's workshop."

Mr. Dowling comes in. He has met M. a number of times. He was first introduced to M. in the Belur Math by Swami Abhedananda. M. talks to him.

M. (to Mr. Dowling) — Sri Ramakrishna said, 'Meditate on me and me alone, and I will do the rest for you.' Who can say these words? This evidently proves that he was the God-incarnate.

"Then he said, if you can't meditate, then do pray incessantly. If that is also not possible, then do *nishkama* work, that is, work for God and not for your own enjoyment.

"Karma or work is the means. The end is God. Meditation is also karma. This also you are to do unselfishly. It is, of course, a higher type of work. But that also binds one equally if one does not do it surrendering the fruits thereof to the Lord."

This talk causes great disturbance to proof reading. Antevasi is feeling irritated but M.'s mind remains peaceful. He talks happily about Thakur and reads the proofs in between. He is perhaps thinking that it is Thakur who is sending the devotees. It is the same thing to serve the Kathamrita of Thakur to the devotees and to read proofs of the Kathamrita. Both give the same result, that of attaining bhakti at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna.

And there are some who come to consult him about the management of the Morton School. Them too M. instructs with a peaceful mind. Whatever he may be doing, it appears, he is doing with a feeling of service to the Lord. Is this serenity of his because of this?

Now it is evening. It is incessantly raining outside. It has continuously been raining for the last two days. Even then there is no end to the visit of the devotees. The Elder Jiten, the Younger Ramesh and the Younger Amulya have arrived. They are followed by Manoranjan, Vinay and Balai. Jagabandhu and Gadadhar are residing here itself. Everybody is sitting in the staircase room of the fourth level. M. is in a chair facing north, near the staircase. A little while later arrive Doctor Bakshi and the Younger Nalini. To dispel the fatigue of work of the whole day, M. absorbs himself in singing the praise and glories of Sri Ramakrishna.

M. (to the Younger Ramesh) — Is everybody all right at home?

The Younger Ramesh — No Sir. Some are suffering from malaria.

M. — Nobody sees what is the real cause of malaria. They say that it is the mosquito which brings it. But the mosquito is not the cause. The reason why such a state is brought on, is the cause.

"Have you not read what is known as fallacy in logic? When there are two invariable circumstances in it, many a time they look like cause and effect. But in reality it is not so. Both of them are the common effect of the same cause.

"Take for example, night and day. Night is followed by day and day by night. Seeing it one can say that day is the cause of night and vice versa. But in reality that is not so. Both of them are the effect of some other particular cause. Similarly, both mosquito and malaria are the effect of another particular cause. One is not the cause of the other — the cause is indeed this water and jungle.

"Shukalal Babu has his house in a very bad locality. Beliaghata is on the other side of the canal. There is a lot of stink there. The water of the canal breeds mosquito.

"Now the theory is that the mosquito brings malaria. But many a time they change the theory. May be that after ten years they say something else. So one should not put one's faith sixteen annas (full complement) in any theory. One should believe it one, two, three or at the most four annas – not more than that."

M. (to the Younger Amulya) — What news have you of Doctor Babu? Has he told the driver?

The Younger Amulya — Yes Sir. He has dismissed the driver. He will probably file a suit in the court. He has damaged the car and yet he is creating a dispute.

M. — It is better to consult some experienced lawyer whether the driver is liable for this damage.

The Elder Jiten — To dismiss and the maidservant one has to pay one rupee more. One should pay something more also to the servant while dismissing him. When this is not done he causes a trouble. The work then increases manifold. By paying it decreases.

"Fighting a case is a great nuisance. Such a big lawyer is Srir Ras Bihari. And he has said, 'Don't go to the Court.' "

M. — That's right. But what he has said is not ideal. It's only right from one point of view. But, how valuable is a lawsuit! One shall develop such mentality (of getting deceived). What to do about it?

Enters Doctor Kartik Bakshi. M. again contradicts what the Elder Jiten said – 'fighting a case is a great nuisance.'

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — One cannot rid oneself of the karma just by wishing so. Why does one have to go to law? There is a special great spiritual significance in it. If one has the mentality of avoiding recourse to law, one will not be able to outwit the onslaught of anger and lust with this mentality. So Lord Krishna said to Arjuna, '*Kshudram hridaya daurbalyam tyaktva uttishtha paramtapa*' (Gita 2:3). (Giving up this faint heartedness, wake up, O vanquisher of foes!).

"Why did Arjuna not want to fight? He was beset with affection, with fear. Any work that one avoids because of fear is not renunciation of work. One the other hand, it adds to one's work."

M. (to the devotees) — A constant fight goes on between man and work. He who does not want to roll up his sleeves and fight, cannot get himself rid of work.

"That's why, there is a need of the guru. How to develop the muscles can only be learnt from the guru.

"Indifference to work cannot last. It is possible only after God realization. Then the renunciation of work comes about. However,

some still stick to work for teaching humanity, for example the avatara and so on, for the good of the world. They wish to live with devotees. They wish to live with a slight illusion. The reason? It is God's will. It is like the play of children. It cannot harm them. All that the perfected persons say is the last word. There is no but in it.

"There are only these – *karma kanda* (ceremonies, rituals, acts) and *karma yoga* (yoga of selfless work). The *karma kanda* is useless work. And *karma yoga* is that work which purifies the mind, makes one attain God – it is work without the desire for any reward."

3.

It is eight p.m. M. has gone to the third level for his evening meals. Before going he opens the Bhagavata at the chapter, titled, 'Company of sadhus and renunciation of work,' to read.

A bhakta begins to read and the others listen to him with concentrated mind. Just when the reading of the chapter is coming to an end, M. arrives and asks for the text read before to be read out again. This reading also ends. It is 8.30 p.m. M. converses.

M (to the devotees) — Why does one do this reading of the book? So that one translates it into daily practice one reads. There is no other reason for it. By reading the book one comes to know what is to be done. Then leaving the book one has to practise it. It is easy to read, difficult to practise. Practice involves a lot of hardship – there is a lot of trouble in it. If that frightens you, you can never do it. The gold has not been melted. The life has gone in vain in eating, dressing, resting and sleeping.

"Thakur said to Adhar Sen: Finish it early. Man's life is like coming to city from the village for work. As soon as the work is over one has to go back. Before the game is over, one should do such work so as to gain bhaktia for the Lord. When one attains bhakti one can have God's darshan by His Ggrace, in this very life. If that does not happen, even then there is no harm in it. The same devotion will help in the next life. One will start then from where one left it to reach the goal. The goal is God realization.

"Fearing will not do. Whichever work lies in front of you, it must be done tightening your belt and in a *nishkama* way."

M. (to a particular young man) — That is why I asked Doctor Babu that he should consult a good advocate taking Lalit Babu with him. That Doctor Babu has fallen into a lawsuit, should he not pursue it? If you ask why to do it, the reply is that it will purify the mind. He whose mind has been purified can control lust, anger etc. This struggle ever and ever goes night and day within the man. He who is afraid of work faces defeat in the battle of life.

"There is work because there is the body. If there is no body, there is nothing at all. It does not help just saying that all this is nothing. You say it as you have heard it. Has it become a part of your life? That being not so, how can you say that all this is nothing?"

"The world is also an illusion, the work is also an illusion and the

body is an illusion too – it is to understand this that there is provision for all this work. Now these are the words of the mouth, you have to take this work in hand. That is, you have to do it selflessly to purify the mind. It is then that on having His darshan by His grace, you know that all this is an illusion. This is a very high idea.

"To defeat an illusion with another illusion! One realizes then that both of them are nothing.

"He who does not perform his prescribed duties cannot conquer his lust and anger. You cannot, therefore, realize God if you neglect the work before you. It is not right to neglect any work whether big or small.

"The other day I read this in a newspaper. A Buddhist monk was teaching a pupil. He got angry and instantly gave him a blow of his fist. This resulted in the boy's death. The judge gave a thought and awarded him rigorous imprisonment. In his judgement he said, 'We know that you are a monk but to safeguard the sanctity of law we award you this punishment.'

"He (the monk) had not been able to control his anger and this was the result. It is the same with lust. If one is not able to control it, children are born.

"Just see, what is work like. The monk had gone to take to *nishkama karma* having renounced all. In other words, he had gone to reduce his work. And now he added to his work. When work increases in this way one fidgets about up and down in the sea of work.

"It is like a steamer in the canal. Suddenly when, it comes to the sea, and then it tosses about (he swings his body) like this. Why so? Because the steamer has gone into the sea.

"Thus one should do only the work enjoined upon by the Guru. One should follow that whatever He tells having come in the form of the Guru. And secondly, one should think deeply on all his instructions. He makes you understand if you do both of these.

"What use is it simply to memorize? There are many who have memorized a lot. But they never put a little into practice. They don't try to bring it to their fingers. What use it is it to repeat the memorized musical notation?

"You must pray to Him. You must love Him."

M. (to the devotees) — There is no way but the word of the Guru. He who does not put faith in the gGuru's injunction tosses about in the sea of *sansara*.

"So Sri Krishna said to Arjuna, 'You are a Kkshatriya. Fighting battle is in your nature. You will have to fight.' '*Prakritih tvam niyokshyati*' (Gita 18:59). (Your nature will compel you). And then, he also said, 'If you do not listen to me, if you do not fight, you will perish.' '*Chet tvam ahamkarat na sroshyasi vinankshyasi*' (Gita

18:58). (If from egoism you will not hear Me, you will perish). It means that your soul will perish, you will have a downfall. You will fall into the sea of *karmas*."

M. (to a particular devotee) — One should give one's care to the children at the right time. So many do not attend to them in time. This increases their work at the end. A number of problems have to be attended to at the end. If he had been looked after well in time he might perhaps have developed as an efficient person. Since this was not done, he has turned out as a fool. Now you have to pay for his foolish deeds. So, do it now. Why were you not careful in the beginning? Your misery will increase with anything you neglect or avoid. On the other hand, if you give too much care or try to exceed the limit, it also gives bad results. Thus attend to all your duty adopting the middle path.

Doctor Bakshi — It is indeed good if one lives with *japa* and *dhyana*. This too is God's work.

M. — It is good no doubt, so practise it. But can one do it? If one can do it, it is indeed very good. Tasting the *shanta rasa* (the serene mood) — this is what the rishis did. The rishis were living for Him to the exclusion of all other work. They would go to any distant place. There are six attitudes in which you can establish a relationship with God. The *shanta bhava* is one of them. Since it is not possible, there is the way of *karma* (activity).

The Elder Jiten — It has also been seen that without doing work one does not form a great character.

M. — No. It is right to take to work intellectually. To arrive at a principle in this way is one kind but this (the Doctor's lawsuit) is not the same. It is joined by the highest ideal. That is of one kind and this of another kind. What is it like? It is like taking out a thorn with the help of a thorn and then throwing both of them away.

"Even Christ who was such a serene personality said that you should fight when there is need of it. Earlier I thought that all the work of Christ was resistance based (non violence). But when I went deep into it I came to know that it was not so. Even he asked to fight when there was a need of it.

"When they came to arrest Christ, his disciples stood up taking up arms. One of them cut the ear of a man of the opposite party. Then he said, 'No, don't do it.' And then the ear again got attached by his will — so it is said.

"Why did he let all this happen? So that the principle was asserted. To cite an example, he let this little protest take place and then said, 'Aha, be at peace — don't do it, please don't do it.' The holy books contain everything."

M. (to Gadadhar) — You do see, one has to work. If one doesn't work one gets involved in still more work later on. It is even said that it leads to destruction.

"Lord Krishna worked forsaking sleep – completely giving up food and sleep.

"Who but the avatara has the capacity to unravel the mystery of work? Sri Krishna said to Arjuna, 'Do that which is in your nature and do it without any selfish motive.' Arjuna did not want to take to action of battle, naturally suited for him, because of fear and attachment. Sri Krishna threatened him and assured him, and made him fight the battle. That is how he was established in *sattva*. Giving up the kingdom he departed for his last great journey. He performed all, the battle of Kurukshetra, the Rajasuya Yajna. That is how he got well established in the fact that the world is an illusion and Brahman the reality. Then he gave up his body ins the snows of the Himalayas.

"The kingdom for which he waged such a big battle, he left after getting it for the final great journey. Why? He attained the jnana that all was an illusion, only Brahman was the reality. Why should then he stay there any longer?

"So, if one works taking refuge in the Guru or the avatara, one quickly gets rid of work. The mind is then purified, all the desires of the mind are destroyed and one attains jnana. This is what is known as liberation. This is indeed is the general rule.

"Thakur has now shown another path which suits the present time. Said he, 'Weep and say in a solitary nook: Lord, grant me Your darshan.' This is an easy path."

All the devotees take leave to depart. M. enters his room. The Younger Jiten and Antevasi also enter the room. M. talks to the Younger Jiten.

M. (to the Younger Jiten, with a smile in his eyes) — That is why I told Doctor Babu that if he did not perform his duty (file his lawsuit), he will increase his work. Possibly he will have six or seven more children. '*Tasmāt sarveshu kaleshu mam anusmara yudhya cha*' (Gita 8:7). (Therefore, at all times think upon Me alone and fight). Always remember Him, and along with it keep on working. This is the path.

Morton School, Calcutta
Friday, 5 September 1924
20th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The seventh day of the bright fortnight
54 Dandas / 20 Palas.

O, O — YOU ARE A DEVOTEE OF GADAI

1.

Morton School. Fourth level. M.'s room. It is 2 p.m. M. and Jagabandhu are reading the proofs. M. is seated on his bed facing south. In front of him is Jagabandhu on a bench. Soon arrive the Saturday visiting devotees of Bhatapara — Lalit, Bholanath and others. A little later the treasurer of Dakshineswar and Gadadhar arrive in the company of Dr. Kartik Chandra Bakshi. The Doctor is preparing to file a criminal law suit as desired by M. The Doctor's car driver damages the car unduly again and again. He does not care even when warned. Because of this unjustifiable conduct of his, M. enlightens the Doctor in so many ways to file a case against him in the police court. M. instructs the Doctor in this connection — what is the *grihastha ashrama* (household life), what are its responsibilities and what is *karma yoga*. On these topics.

M. (to the Doctor) – While living in the household you have to do such things, even though they may be disagreeable. Otherwise, leave the home and go and stand under a tree. There is no need of these there. He does wrong again and again before your eyes. It is a sin not to oppose it when you have the power to do so. Had it not been so why was the battle of Kurukshetra fought? Sri Krishna tried in so many ways to avoid the battle. He just asked for five villages to provide the Pandavas with food and clothing, for them who had the right to the whole kingdom. These villages were Paniprastha, Soniprastha, Indraprastha, Vyagraprastha and Tiliprastha. All these are situated around Delhi within a radius of fifty miles. But Duryodhana said, 'Without a battle I shall not give a piece of ground even as small as a point of a needle.' Seeing that the ultimate limit of patience and justice were being trespassed, Sri Krishna said: The battle is mandatory. Not taking resort to it is a sin. If you do not oppose this wrong act by fighting a battle, you will destroy the value of justice and community. This battle will lead to so much of massacre, loss of wealth, disturbances in the country and other complications. But it will not do to think in this way. You will have to fight for truth and justice.

M. remains silent for a while. He resumes his instructions to the Doctor.

M. – If a work comes your way unasked you have to do it. By attending to it without any selfish motive you purify the mind. When the mind is purified, there is no fear then. The mind then remains stable in every condition. Reason? Gain and loss both belong to God. I am only His instrument, His servant — this feeling firmly takes hold of the mind. On the other hand, if anybody expects some profit for himself, he can fear a loss too. It brings restlessness to the mind. He who has a pure mind, pure *chit* (conscience) is a man of steady wisdom. He can maintain the same peaceful disposition in pleasure and pain.

"The household is the place for *nishkama karma* (selfless activity). If one lives in the household in a *nishkama* way, one attains liberation

in it. God alone is the Master of this ashrama and I am working for Him as the maidservant — with this feeling always awake in the mind one should attend to all work.

"*Sakama karma* (work with a selfish motive) is also good but it does not give such high results. *Sakama karma* has also been called 'high and generous' by Sri Krishna. Why? Because such a worker also has faith in God.

"*Nishkama karma* is difficult indeed but even a little of it leads to the attainment of the fruit of liberation. Says the Gita, '*Svalpam api asya dharmasya trayate mahatah bhayat*' (2:40). (The practice of a little of this dharma protects one from great fear). Even a little of it leads to success. God Himself comes to raise the devotee. By Himself performing selfless work, He teaches the bhaktas.

"Don't worry. Just take to it with determination. Otherwise, the same mistake will persist in the mind. Laziness will prevail on justice and truth. Laziness is the great enemy on the path of dharma, on the path of *karma*. One has to slay this demon of *tamas*.

"This *tamas* cannot be forgiven. Not to file a lawsuit fearing botheration, in other words, is accepting defeat from *tamas*. It is accepting the power of *tamas* and yielding to it. With such a mind one cannot attain God.

"The function of *sattva guna* is to protect the values of justice, to proclaim the victory of dharma. By your going to law the value of dharma and justice shall be protected. What a great relative value it has!. It raises the mind, it firms one's faith in God."

The devotees arriving from outside are seated on benches. Jagabandhu, Vinay and Gadadhar stand listening to this encouraging speech of M.

The Doctor's eyes are fixed. Without saying a word he offers pranam and rises. He is going home, his brother Vinay is with him.

M. again reads the proofs while Jagabandhu holds the copy. At times Gadadhar also takes the copy. The proof reading over, M. shuts the door and rests.

The evening is approaching. Jagabandhu is sitting with Vinay and the Younger Amulya in the lower storey. Durgapada Mitra, the Elder Amulya and Swami Sadbhavananda, the founder of the Vidya Pith, come and sit close to them. After some time, all of them go to the fourth level and enter M.'s room. The daily visiting bhaktas are also coming in. The last to arrive is a new bhakta. M. converses happily.

M. (to Swami Sadbhavananda) – Just see, what a flood of the new mood has arrived! All this is the nectarine result of the advent of Thakur. How many moonlike beautiful boys have come to the *math* for God realization having forsaken their home, their parents, their all. In this state (Bengal) almost no sannyasin could be found. Now all are embracing sannyasa.

"When God's power is at work it all begins to happen in a new way. One begins to feel a special unknown attraction. The devotees begin to gather together because of this attraction. They form the

messengers of the avatara. No work resulting from man's intellect has any such divine attraction.

"On the one hand, there is a rustic, almost illiterate brahmin. And on the other, there is a worldwide religious movement in his name. Even the learned of the world have taken shelter under him. It proves what he was. If the movement had been man made it could not have spread so far.

"On one side Europe and America, on the other Kamarpukur and Dakshineswar — so far away from each other! And the movement has just started. It will spread for a long time. The impossible will become possible in his name; wonders will happen."

The devotees are coming in gradually. There is no more seat in the room. M., therefore, rises and goes to sit on a chair facing south-east in the staircase room. The bhaktas sit facing north in two rows on benches to the east- and west. The next to come are the Elder Jiten, the Younger Nalini, Balai and Manoranjan.

Tulasi Maharaj has just returned after a tour of Dhaka. Swami Sadbhavananda talks on this topic.

Swami Sadbhavananda – Tulasi Maharaj had a discussion with the pundits of Shakti Hospital in Dhaka. The pundits put some questions to Tulasi Maharaj. He asked other pundits to answer them. A battle of arguments started among the pundits and he sat enjoying it. One of the pundits defeated the opponent pundits in the battle of arguments by taking his side.

M. (happily) – Just note — God Himself, Thakur himself, made the pundit speak that way.

"It was long ago. Thakur was then perhaps alive. I went to Kamarpukur. The puja of the Kali was to take place there. An old Bbrahmin was the assistant priest (one who recites the scriptures) — he was over eighty. Knowing me to be a devotee of Thakur, he contemptuously began to utter, 'Gadai Gadai!' Said he, 'So you are a bhakta of Gadai! How have you become his devotee after studying so much? He had read no scriptures — a fool!'

"What did I do then? A thing or two I had learnt from Thakur, I hurled at him. I said, 'The vultures and kites fly quite high but their sight remains fixed at the charnel-pits or to the spot where the carcasses of cows and oxen lie. The pundits are like them. They may talk big but their concern is only with woman and gold, sensory enjoyments.'

"And I said a particular thing too, I am remembering it now. I said, 'It is within the almanac that this time it will rain twenty *addas* (a unit of measurement) but by squeezing the almanac not a drop of water falls. In the same way, the pundits utter any number of slokas. But they have not imbibed them. An ordinary sorrow overwhelms them with pain. What does it avail to talk long? The heart remains filled with jealousy and enmity.'

"And I said, 'It is easy to commit the musical notation to memory but

it is very difficult to play on fingers. Giving up sensory desires if one calls on God, it can be imbibed, it comes to the fingers. The pundits only say the slokas they have memorized.'

"I heard later that after I had left, that pundit regretted. He said, 'He indeed said the right thing.'

"One should say all this at such places."

8 p.m. M. climbs down to the third level for his meals. Before he leaves, he opens the chapter titled, 'The Liberation of the Elephant,' and hands it over to be read. Jagabandhu reads it out.

Today it is Saturday, 6 September 1924, 21st of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), the Radha-ashtami of the bright fortnight, 10 Dandas / 25 Palas.

After the meals, M. explains the leela of 'the Liberation of the Elephant.'

M. (to the bhaktas) – He who is the creator of avidya (nescience) can free one from the hands of the alligator of avidya. And none else has the capacity to do so. Howsoever big a man may be, he is nothing more than a puppet in the hands of the Mahamaya. Ego is the elephant. So long as it survives we are subject to avidya. Thakur prescribed that we should tie it at the feet of God. Then avidya gives way. So the constant prayer, 'Mother, don't enchantbewitch me by Your world bewitcenchantinghing maya.' "

2.

Next day, seven in the morning. The Satprasanga assembly (meeting that holds discourses on spiritual matters) is having its session on the ground floor of the Morton school. It is a weekly religious gathering of the students and the teachers. It has been established by M.'s efforts. Sometimes he himself attends it. He is attending today too. He is teaching a devotee teacher how to give lectures. He suddenly says, "Yes, he is going to speak today." The teacher rises in spite of himself. The subject he is to talk on is: Was Ramachandra an avatara?

The teacher says –

"Sri Krishna says in the Gita that God taking up a human body comes down to the earth in every age. He is called an avatara. He has three main functions. First, to protect the sadhus. Second, to destroy the wicked and third, to establish righteousness and dharma.

"If you consider the incidents of the life of Sri Ramachandra, you will see that all his actions conform to the above measure. Thus Rama is an avatara, in other words God in a human body.

"Man's intellect alone is incapable of deciding who is an avatara. Only the spiritually great, the other avataras are capable of it. How difficult it is to establish avatarahood can be fully realized by comparing the different sayings of the present day avatara, Sri Ramakrishna.

"Sri Ramakrishna has propounded the following great sayings to give in proof of his avatarahood. '*Achina gachh*' (the unrecognized tree), 'the troupe of bauls,' 'one who roams about in the homes of people in

the garb of a humble poor,' 'one who goes to eat with the bhaktas at their invitation,' 'Sachchidananda coming out of within (his body) said: I come as avatara age after age.' (To Narendra he said) 'The whole of this (universe) has come out of him (Thakur).' 'One day the Mother showed the forms of various avataras. Among them this (his form) was also seen.' 'O mind you are thinking of Him. But it is like roaming about like a mad person in a dark room. One cannot find Him even in the six systems of philosophy.' And then, there is a very clear statement. He said to Narendra, 'He who was Rama, He who was Krishna is now Ramakrishna.'

"The above sayings convey us that it is not within the reach of man to recognize the avatara by himself. Only if when the avatara makes one recognize, only then one can know him.

"Ravana was the enemy of Rama but he was a jnani. He said (1) If one meditates on the form of Rama in the heart, lust and anger are destroyed. Then even Rambha and Tilottama look like the funeral ash. That is why, I do not go near Sita assuming the form of Rama. (2) At the time of his death, Ravana sang a hymn of praise to Rama knowing him as an avatara. (3) Nikasha was Ravana's mother. The whole of her family was killed by Rama in the battle. Even then she had the strong desire of saving herself. When she was asked about this strange conduct of hers, Nikasha replied, 'I want to see more of Rama's leela as a human being. That's why, I wish to live. So, I am running away.' (4) Vibhishana forsook his wife, son and the rest and took refuge at Rama's feet knowing him to be God. (5) Narada and Hanuman sang hymns of praise to Rama calling him as avatara. (6) In the Dwapara Yuga, Sri Krishna assumed Rama's form before Vibhishana and Hanuman during the Rajasuya Yajna of the Pandavas. Both of them worshipped Rama calling him avatara. (7) Guru Nanak and Chaitanya Deva proclaimed Rama as avatara. One of the bearer of Sri Chaitanya Deva's proclamation of Harinam (the name of Hari) is the name of Rama. 'Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare!' (8) Sri Ramakrishna saw Ramalala (baby Rama) as living and awakened. He used to walk with him, sleep with him, he bathed him, fed him and even gave him a blow — not in bhava but in fully conscious state. (9) Bhardwaj and others worshipped Rama knowing him to be avatara.

"All these words and conduct of the great spiritual personalities are a proof of Sri Ramachandra's avatara hood. The greatest proof is Sri Ramachandra's own words, 'I am the avatara.'

"Sri Krishna's own words are also an another proof of the difficulty of recognizing the avatara. '*Avajananti mam mudhah manushin tanum ashritam*' (Gita 9:11). (Fools disregard Me as one clad in human form). Man cannot know Me by reading the Vedas and other scriptures (Gita 11:48). Arjuna said, '*Asitah Devalah Vyasah svayam ca eva bravishi mae*' (Gita 10:13). (Asita, Devala and Vyasa say so, and now You Yourself say it to me). You Yourself say that You are the avatara. And the rishis also have said that you are avatara. Your own words are the biggest proof.

"Because of all these reasons, the highest proof that Rama was an

avatara is Rama's own words — 'I am avatara.'

"The rishis and the tapasvis in the Dandak forest called Rama as the highest of men. They said, 'We accept you as a jnani, not as an avatara. You are the best of men of numerous parts.' This is not an obstacle in the way of his avatara. The avataras are, of course, the best of men.

"Whatever he may be, whether an avatara or the best of men all can learn a lot from Rama's life — bhakti for the father, love for the brother, care of the subjects, determination to be truthful, filial dependence, firmness in duty, heroism, self control, renunciation, dispassion and all such qualities."

The sadhus are holding to hold a meeting in the Belur Math today afternoon. So M. sends the devotees there to have the darshan of so many sadhus together. Swamis Sivananda, Sardananda, Nirmalananda and other sons of Thakur were there in the visitors room. The house was full. They commented on Thakur's character from different angles. At the end, some bhaktas asked questions. Durgapada Mitra (Healing Balm) put a question, "In what sense did Swamiji (V.N.) call Thakur the greatest of the avataras?" Swami Nirmalananda answered, "Swamiji has himself explained it. Manifestation of so much of *sattva guna* is not visible in any other avatara. So Sri Ramakrishna is the greatest of avataras." Durga Babu having taken recourse to reasoning hurt all the members in the meeting. The devotees convey this to M. when they reach the Morton School. He feels upset and says, "Shame! Shame! Going to the ashrama of the sadhus and reasoning with them. What a great ashrama it is! Men who have renounced their all reside there. What do people say and what do they do, they do not know. One should go there and with folded hands ask one question, 'How can one attain God?' Otherwise, one should sit there quietly and have darshan of sadhus. Instead, starting a discussion!"

The devotees Jagabandhu, Vinay, the Younger Amulya, the Younger Nalini and others while returning from the Math had gone to the Radhakanta Saha lane to hear devotional songs at the behest of M. They arrive. The verses of the songs were written by Vaishnava Mahajan. M. heard them all. He said, "If you just remember this, all is done. Chaitanya Deva has said: On having the rare birth of a man one should repeat and sing the name of God. All else is illusion. Everything will be left behind. The highest duty of man's life is God realization. By repeating His name you will gain joy in this life, and *paramananda* (the bliss of God) in the next."



Morton School, Calcutta
Sunday, 7 September 1924
22nd of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The 9th day of the bright fortnight
43 Dandas / 20 Palas.

THE KATHAMRITA, AN UNPARALLELED SCRIPTURE IN WORLD HISTORY

1.

Morton school, M.'s room on the fourth level. It is eight in the morning now. M. is reading the proofs of the Kathamrita, part III with Jagabandhu, part III. M. is seated on the bedspread facing west. Jagabandhu is seated to the south of M.'s cot, on a bench facing north.

Today it is Monday, 8 September 1924. M. is wearing a Punjabi shirt and a dhoti with a white border. M. is reading and smiling in his mind. His eyes and face bear a holy smile. He begins conversing.

M. (to Jagabandhu) – Just see, how enjoyable and attractive is Thakur's manner of speaking. Yet, he has not eschewed pointing out one's defects. (Overwhelmed with a humorous mood) One day he said, 'Do you know what is Balaram's disposition? That you may dance, you may sing, you may enjoy and have fun but by yourself!' In other words, money would be spent on calling a musician.

"One day he said, 'This is the disposition of Balaram — of a brahmin's cow. It should eat little, yield a lot of cow dung and give milk in torrents.' (M. laughs loudly).

"One day Balaram Babu had arranged a horse driven coach for Thakur to go to Dakshineswar. There were so many coaches moving on the road. Somebody said, 'There is the coach coming.' Thakur said, 'Get away. This is not our coach since it is moving so fast, *dhup dhup*. Our coach will be rickety, *lachar pachar*.' (Laughter).

"And one day a coach was hired for one rupee a quarter. Thakur said, 'So less! When they bring Vani Shah's coach they pay three rupees two annas.' Balaram Babu said, 'It can happen.' While the coach was on its way it wouldn't move ahead after a while. The coachman beats the horse mercilessly. The horse does not move even then. Thakur said, 'I say, what has happened?' The coachman said, 'The horse is resting for a while, my master.' (Laughter). The horse was from the charnel-pits — it pulled with full strength, even then the coach refused to budge. How could it move, tell me? The horse was in such a great exasperation. (Loud and long laughter).

"And then look at the other side. Nobody else was allowed to talk ill of Balaram Babu in the presence of Thakur. One day he scolded Golap Ma as she was talking ill of him. What words he used for reprimanding her I cannot remember. (After thinking for a while, smiling) Yes, I remember. He said to Golap Ma, 'It is not just bringing eight annas worth of rasagullas and distributing them. How much Balaram has to spend! In Cuttack, in Orissa, Kothar and Puri. And also he also spends in Calcutta, Vrindaban and so many other places. All that in the service of the deity. Is it done because you say so?' And he added, 'He lives in Calcutta so that he can come here to visit me.' Sometimes he said, 'Balaram has to bear so many expenses.

I hear, he will go to some other place, to some estate. There he will not have to spend so much.'

"On the one hand he found fault, on the other he praised him. He would do so himself. The others were not forbidden to praise anybody. But if anyone talked ill of others he could not be saved. Just as the mother protects her children, similarly Thakur protected the bhaktas."

M. is reading the proofs while Jagabandhu is holding the copy. In between he converses. Some bhaktas are coming, while the others leave. During the conversation, the subject of three kinds of evidences of Thakur's words comes up. So many people write about Thakur. Among these writings, how far each is valuable is commented upon.

M. (to Antevasi) – The first class of evidence is that which is recorded by the writer on the same day after seeing with his own eyes, and hearing with his own ears what Thakur said or did. The second class is that which is recorded much later though it was heard and seen by the author himself. And the third class is that which was collected by hearing from others. Along with it there is another class of evidence which one comes across at times. It can be termed as fourth class of evidence. The writer has mixed up what he himself heard and saw, but did not write it immediately, he has mixed it up with what he heard from somebody else.

M. (to Antevasi) – The Kathamrita is the first class evidence. What I saw Thakur doing with my own eyes and what great sayings I heard from my own ears, I recorded them in my diary on the same day on returning home. Sometimes I wrote for days together, for there were long conversations on some particular days. I have recorded all these divine sights and divine words in the Kathamrita. In the main part of the book, I was present in all the scenes narrated therein.

Antevasi – The reminiscences of Ashwini Dutt and the story of Baranagar Math etc. have also found a place in the Kathamrita.

M. – Not in the main text. They are written in the appendices. In the main book, there are all such direct evidences that I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears.

"It is very valuable for the lawyers. They are cultured men, you see. Haven't you seen what Ashwini Dutt has written? He says, 'Am I so fortunate as M. that I could write about Thakur giving the day of the week, the date and the position of the stars?' Before writing about Thakur he has offered his apology by saying so. Please bring the Kathamrita."

M. reads out what Ashwini Dutt, a devotee of God and a patriot, has written about Thakur. It forms the appendix to part I of the Kathamrita.

M. (to Jagabandhu) – Just hear what he says. He writes, 'But I have not come with a fortune such as M. that I should be able to write the day, the date and the time of the darshan of his holy feet and record exactly all that fell from his blessed lips. I am writing as far as I can remember. It is possible that I may assign the talk of one day to some

other day. Besides, I have forgotten so much.'

A Certain Bhakta – Swami Bhumananda said, 'Master Mahashay has given three kinds of evidences to dishonour Sarat Maharaj's Lila Prasanga (Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master).'

M. (wonder-struck and sad) – What is this? How does he know why it was written? I don't accept what he says. Let him say what he wants. Who can stop him?

M. (to a devotee) – No other Aavatara had [a record] like this. It is not in the world history .

"Swami Vivekananda knew it. He wrote to me, 'The move is quite original and never was the life of a great teacher brought before the public untarnished by the writer's mind as you are doing.'

"The other books which are coming out are all confusing because they contain second and third class evidences.

"This book is the first record in the world containing such an account of the conversations and life of an avatara.

"The coming out of the Kathamrita has done another big good. In future, whosoever writes a diary or a book shall be greatly benefited by knowing about these three classes of evidences. While writing on any subject, they will be very careful while offering their opinion on it.

"Since 'the Kathamrita' has been written on the basis of first class evidence, the lawyers, the scientists and then the wWesterners will be able to appreciate the real value of this book."

M. (to Antevasi) – Just read the page where these three classes of evidences are talked about.

Antevasi (reads) – (The main portions are).

"First — Direct and recorded on the same day... this kind of version is obtained by direct seeing and hearing — along with the year, the date, the day of the week and the lunar date.

"Second — Direct but unrecorded at the time of the Master... this kind of version is also very good. The record of the other avatars is generally of this kind.... Herein there is a greater possibility of mistakes than what is recorded immediately.

"Third — Hearsay and unrecorded at the time of the Master... what one hears about the life from the devotees, all belongs to the third class.

"At the time of the writing Sri Sri Kathamrita M. relied on the first class evidence..."

M. – All these volumes (of the Kathamrita) were written after so much of seeing and hearing. I had to read the Law of Evidence. They do not know it. If there is a slight mistake in the evidence the whole

value of it goes down.

M. (to Antevasi) – Haven't you read the Law of Evidence, and the Criminal Procedure Code?

Antevasi – Yes Sir, I have read them the way one studies in colleges. I read in broad outlines.

M. – You have seen it. A slight mistake is detected in the evidence and it almost spoils the whole case. The lawyer says to the judge, 'My Lord, he is not reliable.'

"The force that direct evidence has is not there in what one has heard from somebody. That is why, the judge asks, 'Did you see it yourself?' By seeing and hearing oneself there is a greater force. And if one says, 'I have heard it so,' it has no force.

"I visited the court so often. By seeing and hearing all this I have arrived on this conclusion. (Laughing) W.C. Bannerji once said, 'My Lord, he is an English speaking witness.' Such persons enjoy more respect. They are very reliable because when it goes into the hands of a translator some difference creeps in. It is not exactly the same."

2.

Mohan – Today Yajnavalkya is going to be staged in the (Belur) Math. The sadhus will themselves enact. But Ananga Maharaj has forbidden us to go there.

M. (smiling laughing) – What is the name of our new friend who comes here and is studying Homeopathy.

Mohan – Upadhyay.

M. – He did the right thing. He had to see somebody, so he went. A person told him, 'No, you will not be able to see him.' He replied, 'No, I will not listen to you. A great disciple of his has asked me to go and see him. Why should I listen to you?' Aha, how simple-minded is this man! He said, 'Why should I listen to you?' (Laughter).

"The gatekeeper did not let Thakur enter the shrine of Kali. Thakur gave him a blow of the fist and entered inside. The treasurer wrote to the proprietors, 'The younger Bhattacharya Mahashay does not listen to anybody.' Mathur Babu sent a message, 'Nobody should say anything to him.' He is just gave a blow of the fist and entered. (Laughter)."

M. (to a certain person) – When people spend the night at the Math they get very worried. Besides, this is the rainy season. That's why they say so. There is no objection in case of those who return.

A Certain Bhakta – I am afraid of them, they have a critical look. Some entertain any sort of feeling about us.

M. – What should they then talk of later on.

The bhakta – Yes Sir. When such a feeling rises in our mind on

seeing them, surely they must be thinking anything about us.

M. – Let it be as it is. But you have to get your work done anyhow. Are all people alike in the world? The right thing is to do your work without seeing the fault of others. If you go to eat a jujube, its thorns can hurt you. One should proceed after thinking over all this. One must not see the fault of others. And, one should pray to Thakur to grant you the company of holy. The sea is not going to be still. You must bath as it is. When you have the yearning Thakur himself straightens your path.

It is dusk. M. is seated on the bedding in his room facing west. He is meditating. The door of the room is shut and bolted from inside. The devotees are sitting on the roof. Some of them sitting in the next room are enjoying M.'s silent touch of meditation in silence quietly. After a long meditation, M. begins to sing. What a sweet melody — as if he has poured his heart and soul into it.

Song — The Mother ever remains absorbed in the supreme bliss in the company of Shiva.

Song — Tathaiya, Tathaiya dances Bhola.

Song — Shankra, Shiva Shankra.

Song — This time I have given it the right thought.

Song — Who knows what Kali is like. Not even the six systems of philosophy can make one see Her.

Thereafter, he hums songs of God's name — 'Shiva Shankra Bhola,' 'Sachchidananda Shiva,' 'Atman Rama Shiva.' Now he goes and joins the meeting of the bhaktas on the terrace. He sits on a chair facing south. In front of him and to his right and left are seated bhaktas on benches. Two rows of benches to his right are north-south. In front there is a row. To his left is a double-bench. That too is placed north-south. In the second row to the right of M. are seated from south Manoranjan, Jagabandhu, Durgapada Mitra and Balai. In the front row from west are seated Shanti, Doctor Bakshi, Vinay, the Younger Amulya and another bhakta. To the left of M. are seated on the double bench from south the Younger Jiten, the Elder Amulya and the Elder Jiten.

M. goes to his room after a short while. Antevasi also accompanies him to his room. The Doctor also follows them. Handing the Brihadarnakya Upanishad to Antevasi both of them come out through the next room. The Doctor then talks to M. He is involved in a lawsuit. Even when warned the chauffeur drove the car and damaged it. Its repairs have cost rupees one thousand.

The Doctor – Sir, the lawyer has drafted this letter.

M. – Please read, let me hear it.

M. (after the reading is over) – Neglect of duty intentionally will not do. By doing this perhaps you may succeed — 'why did you not pursue it? There is nothing [in this draft] which can prosecute the offender.'

Today the sadhus play Yajnavalkya in the Belur Math. So, M. says, "Let us read it here too. You may all listen to it." The Elder Jiten read out all the third chapter from the the Brihadarnakya Upanishad — the dialogue between Janak and Yajnavalkya and the Janak's assembly. Now they talk.

M. (pointing at the sky, joyfully) – This is our drop scene. (Laughter).

M. (to the devotees, gravely) – I have not been able to understand anything that has been read. I have understood only one or two things. One is ‘death’ and the other is ‘*amrita*’ (immortality). Now try to understand what substance Thakur has given us in plain and easy words.

Nine in the evening. Most of the bhaktas have left. Some are sitting — the Elder Jiten, Durgapada, the Younger Jiten, Balai and Jagabandhu. They again talk of what was read earlier.

Durgapada (Healing Balm) – Those who have read the Kathamrita will not like all this. Why should they read it? One can understand nothing in it. I have read all the Upanishads once.

M. – No. One must read it. Then alone one will have greater faith and reverence for it (the Kathamrita). If one doesn’t read the Upanishad one wonders what it contains. After reading, one realizes that one gets at a little of its essence after a lot of labour. And Thakur’s words contain the whole essence.

Durgapada – Having read all the Upanishads, I have seen that there is nothing much in them. On the other hand what Thakur has said in plain words, there is also nothing like it there. These days those who read the Upanishad say that earlier people used to eat the [flesh of] bull (in the *Putra Mantha Yajna*), and such other things.

M. – Does everybody feel the same way? The antiquarians take them one way, the historians and philosophers in their own ways.

"Thakur used to tell a story. A fair was being held at some place. There were a number of idols of gods and goddesses. Every votary was looking at the image he was concerned with. There was a woman at one place. She was hitting a man with the broom. This picture only attracted one person. He stood there calling all others to come, and showed it to them, saying, ‘Come on, come here, just see how amusing this is.’ (All laugh). One sees everything in the bhava (mood) that one has."

Durgapada – Well, these all (Upanishads and other such books) are so difficult.? How did people understand them?

M. – That is reason why the country went into a deep sleep because of *karma kanda* (rituals). That is why, the avatars come again and again. Sri Krishna came. He brought the essence of all Vedas and Upanishads in one place by saying the Gita. What is the essence of work, this too he told. God Himself comes down in every age to reveal the inner meaning of all the scriptures. Lately, Thakur came and did this work through ‘the Kathamrita’.

M. (to Durgapada) – Did you go to the Math recently? Tulasi Maharaj has come, did you have his darshan?

Durgapada – No Sir, I couldn’t go again. Only the other day we had a conversation in the Math.

M. had earlier come to know from the bhaktas that Durga Babu had entered into a discussion with Tulasi Maharaj in the Belur Math that day, during the assembly of the bhaktas. Since then M. is extremely upset and worried. Durga Babu has himself talked about it today. M. cautions him for the welfare of the devotees.

M. (to Durgapada) – One should go to the Math in all humility. One should not engage with sadhus in arguments and reasoning. One should only ask them, ‘How can God be attained?’ Just this question.

Durgapada – Somebody asked just this. Tulasi Maharaj replied, ‘Have I seen God that I can tell you how He can be attained?’

M. – These people do not tell all things to everybody. If you ask them singly they may graciously tell.

Durgapada – Thakur said, ‘As many religions so many paths — all religions are true.’ I asked, ‘Is fetishism a religion, is it true or not, like the Nuri puja of the Santhals?’

"They perform Nuri puja so that they may have better crop of paddy and the cattle remain healthy. There is no conception of God therein. Can it be a true religion where there is no God?"

M. – How is it possible? Even in puja (worship) with a motive, there has to be God. How is religion possible otherwise?

Durgapada – They do not accept this.

Mohan – But Max Muller said, ‘Those who perform Nuri puja also have faith in a superior being. He sends rain, paddy, prey etc.’ He also said, ‘It is a human necessity to believe in such a person.’

Durgapada – What proof is there that they do believe in a superior being?

Mohan – What proof is there that they do not believe so? Max Muller accepted this principle from the statements of his reporters. These people understood by staying with them that the Santhals also believe in a superior being, though they did not say so. That’s why he said so. This kind of acceptance is also essential.

M. – When one accepts a powerful man it is religion, whether one says it by the word of mouth or not. It is enough if it remains within. Thakur said: The baby cannot call his father as father. He has love for him within, only he cannot say so. He has bhava but not words.

M. – Thakur went to Suresh Babu’s garden in Kankurgachhi. He sent for Pratap Majumdar. He had then returned from the West. Thakur asked him, ‘How did you find the people of that land?’ Pratap Majumdar replied, ‘They are atheists. They believe in a power.’ Hearing this Thakur said, ‘Then they are not atheist. Those who live by science and if they believe in a superior power how can they be atheist?’ It is not right to brand a man atheist if he believes in the acts of Shakti (power) and Its existence. They are not particularly acquainted with that power — they are undeveloped. This is the only

difference.

Mohan – Some of the scientists in that land name that power as ‘unknown X’. It is this who is omnipotent. But the man will not be able to reach It. That very power in intellect etc. is the ideal of all men. Though one cannot reach It but the man’s duty is to walk parallel to this power — like the two rails on the railway line. But the man will never be able to reach it. The man is a minute creature and that power is so immense. They call it the philosophy of infinite progress. If the man does not keep Him as the ideal and does not walk parallel to Him, the society will go down. It is very essential. Max Plank, the German inventor of the quantum theory, is the chief propagator of this group.

Durgapada – This belief of theirs cannot be called religion even if they believe in the existence of this power and its necessity. They believe in effort but not in grace. Tulasi Maharaj does not accept grace.

Mohan – Shankra says in this mantra, ‘*Yamevaisha vrinute tena labhyah,*’ that the *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) who has a firm determination to attain Him will only do so. The atman will manifest itself before him. Here too, it is not grace but effort.

M. – But we have heard from Thakur’s lips that there is no way but His grace. Yes, we have heard this too that if there is a deep longing to attain Him, if one makes an effort with a resolve to do or die His grace may descend. He said: This effort is also His charity, His grace. Effort and grace are the same thing — only there is a difference of mode. At the end, effort takes the shape of grace. The result of effort is grace.

M. does not like such reasoning. The devotees argue with sadhus — he cannot bear it. He says that this leaves the man behind.

M. – For us there is no other way than the company of sadhus. The beginning, middle and end of Thakur’s words is just this — company of sadhus. One should keep company of sadhus. One should go to them with reverence. One should pray beforehand: May I not argue with them. I will have their darshan, offer pranam and render them service. On seeing them the consciousness wakes up, you see — having renounced all these people are standing on the path while we are involved in family life. Many of our friends used to go to the Math in the morning for their darshan and for offering them pranam. It appears, they don’t go now.

Durgapada – Where should they go?

M. – Why, to have darshan of sadhus.

Durgapada – There is no fascination in it.

A Certain Bhakta – There is no personality. Where should we go? All they say is given in books, in scriptures. Even if that being so, people need a personality.

M. – It is a place of advanced spiritual personalities. One should go there knowing this. Swamiji (V.N.), Rakhai Maharaj, Baburam Maharaj lived there had it as their place. Even now there is Tarak Maharaj.

Durgapada – In that case Dakshineswar is better. It is Thakur's place. He enacted his leela there for thirty years.

M. – No. That is there. It (the Math) also is a special place. His (Sri Ramakrishna's) words live here in a concrete form. Thakur said, 'Having renounced all one should call on Him.' Here this is what all are doing. The sadhus are the images of complete renunciation. One must see them. Otherwise, one falls a far behind. Are the sadhus of the *math* living there at their own will? Having made them give up all, Thakur has brought them there for our education — (for us) who live in household. One must visit the Math.



Morton School, Calcutta
Monday, 8 September 1924
23rd of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The tenth day of the bright fortnight
37 Dandas / 27 Palas.

YOU WILL HAVE TO NARRATE THE BHAGAVATA

1.

M. goes to the Panchanan Ghosh Lane taking Jagabandhu with him. It is five in the afternoon 5 p.m. Today, Tuesday, 8 September 1924, 24th of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), the 11th day of bright fortnight, 35 Dandas / 48 Palas.

M. is to go to Sri Ramakrishna Samiti in Parshibagan. Its founder Sarat Chandra Mitra Mahashay, a great devotee of Thakur, is lying ill. His life is in danger. He is a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and an intent practitioner of the great *mantra* of his Guru, '*Atmanah mokshartha jagat hitaye che*' (for the liberation of the Self and the good of the world). When the Brahmavadin club was shifted to Allahabad, Sarat Chandra became its chief custodian. And by serving it with faith and reverence, looking after the work of the Guru like his Guru, he has established it as a living institution. Initially this club was established in Madras at the behest of Swami Vivekananda. Finding time from work, he came to Calcutta and established the Sri Ramakrishna Samiti in Parshibagan and engaged himself in the human welfare services in so many ways. That Sarat Chandra, the beloved of Sri Ramakrishna spiritual family, will take shelter at the fearless, ever joyful and blissful feet of his Guru and ideal deity after giving up his physical body, is the guess of everybody.

M. is moved because of Sarat Chandra's illness. So he enquires after him daily by sending some helpers to him. Today, he is himself going there to see him. M. walks in front of the Science College towards the south. Sri Ramakrishna Samiti is immediately after it. As soon as M. enters the Samiti building, Sarat Chandra's youngest brother Kumaravrat Satyesh welcomes him and having saluted him takes him inside the room. Sarat Chandra is lying on his bed. He offers pranam to M. by closing his eyes. M. finds all about his illness from Satyesh while affectionately holding the right hand of Sarat Chandra in his hand. His illness is deadly. He cannot be saved in this journey. Having raised Sarat Chandra's spirits by affectionately holding his hand for half an hour M. comes out quietly in a grave mood. His eyes are brimming with tears. Says he indistinctly, "He is a unique and firm pillar of the exposition of avatara-leela of Thakur and Swamiji. Throughout his life he served and proclaimed him. The whole of his life he spent as a sannyasi though living in the household." He stands in the front of the Science College and bids goodbye to Satyesh Chandra and the other devotees.

Seven in the evening. M. is seated on the roof of the Morton School with the bhaktas. He says to the bhaktas, "Some of you should go to the Bhutananda festivity. We have received an invitation."

Vinay, Jagabandhu and the Younger Amulya leave. The Bhutananda festival is celebrated every year in the house of the proprietor of the 'Healing Balm'. Durgapada Mitra, the manager of the Healing Balm, has invited the devotees of the Morton School. The house has been decorated with numerous flowers and electric lights. At one spot, a lot of powder has been sprinkled all over so that footprints may be available. Manoranjan and Balai have earlier assisted been to in this festival. The members of the family cordially served prasad to the devotees. The bhaktas returned at ten o'clock. Durgapada Mitra sent prasad for M. The heads of the house have great devotion for the gGuru. They celebrate this festival every year.

Next day at eight in the morning M. dictates the appendix to part V of the Kathamrita in a meditative mood, while Jagabandhu writes. M. is seated on

his bedspread in his room facing south and Jagabandhu is on a bench in front. The fourth section of the article entitled, 'Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda' ends. M. says, "Swamiji heard it all from Thakur's lips, so he placed it before the world in his best words and manner. People are not so impressed by mere words. But Swamiji had practised them all! By hearing them from him they impressed a thousand times more — he made them enter the heart. Fox Sisters, the devotees from America, said of Swamiji when they came here, 'We did not go to hear him. We went because we liked him and we were attracted by his snow-white pure character.' And they said, 'There was a special power in his words that would powerfully attract our mind and uplift it to a divine blissful state.' "

Antevasi – Is this power given by the avatara, by Thakur?

M. – Yes, hHis power indeed. Religion is propagated only by the power of the avatara. So, God comes down as an avatara. Thakur is the avatara this time. He said, 'This (his body) will not be able to do any work of rajas.' He was completely pure sattva you see, that's why. The Mother would get Her work done through him (Narendra's body). That's how Swamiji went to the West. Swamiji had the desire to remain merged in samadhi like Sukadeva. Thakur said, 'Do the Mother's work. She will give you this too and also She will grant you a state higher than this.' On his return from America Narendra said to me in Balaram's house, almost crying, almost crying. Said he, 'I wanted to live it out singing but it did not come about. He made me dance these so many years like they do to a monkey putting a cord in it's nostril. I wanted that there would be an ashrama in the Himalayan silence and a good library. I shall meditate there, read and spend my time singing songs. But where did he let it happen?'

"An ashrama is established at Mayavati, but Swamiji is not there.

"It is the same with other bhaktas also. To a certain bhakta (M.) he said, 'You will have to do this much (touching his ring-finger to the thumb) of the Mother's work.' In a way, the work has gone on for fifty years leaving out food and sleep. And yet She does not permit leisure. To the same bhakta he said, 'The Mother told me that you will have to narrate the Bhagavata. The Mother has kept the Bhagavata pundit with a bond in the household.' When this bhakta insisted on sannyasa he scolded him and said, 'The Mother can make big acharyas out of a piece of straw.' Religion spreads by the power of avatara, not merely by learning, intellect and discourses. The latter's influence lasts only for a few days but the effect of that power lasts very long. Thakur got that bhakta a *kala* (one sixteenth) of power by asking for it to the Mother.

"The leela of the avatara is amazing. It is beyond the intellect of even Brahma and Indra. Even Brahma couldn't recognize the avatara, Sri Krishna. After the calves were stolen, he practised tapasya for many years before he could recognize that the Indivisible Sachchidananda had Himself taken up the form of Sri Krishna. On the other hand, the milkmen and milkmaids of Braja were able to know Him by His grace. Just by loving Him, all these cowherds and cowherdesses though rustic, unlettered and uncultured recognized Him. That's why, Sri Krishna said to Uddhava, after he had killed Kansa, '*Gachchhoddhava Brajam Somyam* (Uddhava, please go and let me

know how they are). I cannot pay back the debt that I owe to them unless they free me from it. When I had no riches, they gave me all they had and loved me — snapping all the bonds of society, of father, son, daughter, wealth and people.' "

Antevasi – A number of times there remains a doubt during conversation. Is it right to say it then?

M. – No. When there is a doubt one must first verify it. Then one may say it. If there is even a little defect in the statement it loses its value to an extent. Haven't you read the Law of Evidence? If even a small defect is found the whole evidence is rejected. That is why, it is difficult to talk. Whatever the bhaktas (M.) say, Thakur himself sitting in the throat makes them say so. Otherwise, preaching religion is not possible. Thakur said, 'What is this rascal saying? He who is the embodiment of *rasa* (sweetness) he calls Him sans *rasa*.' He laughed and said, 'Do you know how it is? It is like someone saying that in my uncle's house there is a whole cowshed full of horses.' One can talk on religion at His commandment, and then alone it does the work and people listen. This power only the avatara has.

Antevasi – The Bhagavata contains a beautiful narration of the avatara leela. They tally with Thakur's sayings. In the beginning neither Indra nor Brahma were able to recognize Sri Krishna. They recognized him only after doing penance. Thakur talked of 'the unrecognized known tree,' 'the troupe of bauls.' Besides, he said about himself in Chaitanya Deva's song, 'I say, you people have not recognized him (Chaitanya Deva), he who wanders from home to home of people in the guise of a poor humble mendicant.'

M. – Tell me, how people can recognize him? The avatara leela is possible by taking refuge in Yogamaya. She casts all the magic. If the Mother removes the veil then alone one can recognize. Just take the case of Thakur — he was a temple priest on six rupees a month; he was indigent and broken in health by malaria! And then he walked naked. Sometimes, he would tie a tail to his body and walk about jumping. And he would take a pole on his shoulder. In addition, at the time of the puja he would put all the flowers on his own head. He fed the cat with the *puri* (kind of thin fried bread) of *bhoga* (offering of food made to the deity). On the other hand, see that because of his grace all these poor boys became world teachers. He had recognized the devotees and he made them recognize him. Thus it is clear that he is an avatara. On the one hand an indigent priest, on the other he is worshipped throughout the world.

Antevasi – The rishis in the Dandaka forest were jnanis. They did not recognize Rama as an avatara. Did this stand in the way of their salvation?

M. – Why would it be so? Totapuri was a man of *Nirvikalpa* samadhi. And this brought him salvation. Having recognized him as the avatara, he tasted the sweetness of the avatara leela of the Lord and of also his ecstatic love too. A person attacked the rishis saying that they did not recognize Rama. Thakur protested loudly, saying, 'Do

not say so. Let one take what one can digest.' He protested, otherwise it would be monotonous. Even so, he showed some both God-with-form and God-without-form. First he showed Narendra God-without-form. Later on he showed him God-with-form. The day he accepted the Mother's form, Thakur very happily said to the bhaktas, 'Naren has accepted the Mother.' But he recognized Thakur as avatara much later.

"I said, 'Can both jnana and bhakti be present in the same person?' Thakur replied, 'Why not? One can see both the sun and the moon in the same sky.' He mentioned Prahlad's name. He had both. He even showed us these by his grace. The gopis had both Brahmajnana and bhakti. They who belong to a big 'abode' have both of these. Thakur had shown the devotees (M.) both — Brahmajnana and bhakti."

Antevasi –

Avajananti mam mudhah manushim tanum ashritam,

Param bhavam ajanantah mama bhuta maheshvaram. (Gita 9:11)

[Fools disregard Me as one clad in a human form, not knowing My higher nature as the great Lord of beings.]

"If that be true it appears that the rishis also come in the category of 'fools,' as they only worshipped the formless, attributeless Brahman."

M. – They did not disregard Rama. They took Rama as a jnani. They revered him. Here it is about the ordinary ignorant persons, not about the rishis. The rishis said to Rama, 'Bhardwaj and others call you as avatara, but we are the worshippers of the formless, attributeless Brahman. We take you as a jnani.' The jnanis do not accept the avatara, you see. But they accept God. So they cannot be called 'fools'. Did Narendra disregard him when he said to Thakur, 'Let Girish Ghosh say so. But till I do not know you as the avatara, I shall not accept you (as such).' He did accept him as a jnani and also as the Guru. Swamiji is a worshipper of Brahmajnana, one of the seven rishis — so said Thakur. By Thakur's grace when he understood him as avatara, see what a hymn of praise and arati he wrote. One cannot find such in any holy book.

2.

Morton School. Five in the evening. M. comes out alone and walks down the Amherst Street towards the south on the eastern foot path.

Swami Kamleshwarananda arrives at half past five. He is the head of the Gadadhar Ashrama, a branch of Sri Ramakrishna Math, situated in Bhavanipur. He has great affection for M. At times he takes him to the Gadadhar Ashrama and makes him stay there.

Accompanied by him Antevasi comes to the road to look for M. They meet him near the crossing of the Macchhua bBazaar. They all return to the Morton School.

M. sits down on a bench in the courtyard of the Morton School facing the road. To his right and left there are two benches. On the right hand bench

sits Swami Kamleshwarananda and on the left Antevasi.

Sudhir Chatterji, a student of the Morton School, comes to return a book. Seeing him peeping from the footpath, a young teacher beckons him to come in. As he enters, he whispers to him in his ear to offer his pranam. The boy offers pranam by touching the feet of each one of them. M. blesses the boy happily and says, "O beautiful! you are a good bhakta! It is good to offer pranam to a sadhu. Paramahansa Deva said so to Keshab Sen. What is good in it, tell me?" The boy replies, "It brings devotion to God." M. says, "Well done, you have understood it quite well!"

The sky is overcast. It is drizzling. It is about six o'clock. Everybody rises and goes to sit down on the eastern edge of the verandah on the first floor. The sannyasi sits on a chair facing west. To his right, sits M. on a double bench. In front of him on a second double bench, sits Jagabandhu and some other bhaktas. The conversation starts.

M. (to the Sannyasi) – You had a great privilege there — you read out the Bhagavata to Hari Maharaj in Kashi. One understands the meaning of the scriptures soon by reading out to *mahapurushas* (great spiritual personalities). Such an opportunity comes only by luck. Please narrate it to us too, if you remember it.

The bhaktas arrive in no time — the Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten, the Younger Amulya, Shanti, Vinay, Doctor Bakshi and others.

Swami Kamleshwarananda is a sannyasi of devotion and love. M. is a very special chosen disciple of Sri Ramakrishna avatara. "Mother, keep the Bhagavata pundit in the household with a bond." That is how, M. at the behest of the Mother of the Universe and Thakur has been singing the avatara leela night and day without sleep for the last forty years, having received 'a *kala*' of Shakti from them. Thakur saw M. in the community singing group of Sri Chaitanya as his intimate disciple. And he said, "On hearing your reading of the Chaitanya Bhagavata I came to know who you are." Thakur said something else about M. — Thakur, the avatara as the father and M., the disciple as the son. The sannyasi contemplates all these facts about M.

And he also thinks over the fact that among the disciples M. was the first who went to the holy Kamarpukur, the birthplace of Thakur, at his behest. By his grace he had darshan of the holy Kamarpukur as an illumined place like the illumined Vrindaban. He had seen the trees, the creepers, the birds, the animals and the people all bathed in light. He saluted anybody or anything he met on the way. Seeing a tomcat enveloped in light, he prostrated on the ground to salute it.

By the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, he also had darshan of the holy Dakshineswar as an illumined place. Every grain of dust there was surcharged with spirituality, as he said. That's why, knowing the trees and creepers of Dakshineswar too as the participants of the avatara leela, he visits them as if going to the gods and rishis standing in front. That's why he hugs them in tight embrace with a heart overflowing with emotion.

The learned sannyasi adept in knowledge of spiritual truths is reminded of all these facts. And he is also reminded of the fact that he who was Sri Chaitanya Deva is now Sri Ramakrishna. He says to himself that M., the author of the Kathamrita, is like Vyasa who wrote the Bhagavata. And he is like Narada in his singing of the glory of Sri Ramakrishna night and day. So this sannyasi brings joy to M.'s mind by offering the flowers of the hymn of by Brahma from the Bhagavata, so beneficial to the place, time and persons.

Swami Kamleshwarananda – The child Krishna worked wonders. Brahma was amazed and to test his power he took the cows and cowherds to a solitary place and made them sleep in the sleep of maya. Sri Krishna to crush Brahma's pride created another herd of cows and cowherds exactly like that and sent them to Gokul. A whole year passed thus. Brahma wondered, where from these new cows and cowherds have emerged? Wonder struck he sat to meditate and came to know that Sri Krishna was the Supreme person, the Absolute Being. So he worshiped Sri Krishna with a hymn (Bhagavata 10/14/3, 32, 34, 36 and 37).

"O the Invincible one, they who desire to gain Brahmajnana and after obtaining it wish to lead their life listening to the tales of Your glory written by sadhus to the exclusion of everything else — they alone have control over You. Seated at their own place, they only listen and sing of Your grace with their body, mind and speech. They don't go to anybody else.

"Lucky indeed are Nanda, the cowherds and the residents of Braja! For the Eternal Brahman, full of Supreme Bliss, is their friend and helper.

"Brahma says: I desire to take birth on earth in some forestland. I would consider myself supremely fortunate if I could have Vrindaban as my birthplace out of all other forests. Reason? The residents of Vrindaban have become replete with Krishna having meditated night and day on their friend Krishna. The land of Braja has been transformed into a great centre of pilgrimage by the dust of Your and their feet. I shall be blessed by finding that dust of the feet on my head. Even the Vedas pine for that dust of the feet.

"O Krishna! till a person gets filled with Krishna by his body, mind and speech, his inclinations of affection and so on, like a thief, steal away his everything, and he is thrown into endless grief. Till then his house forms as though a prison for him, with both of his feet bound in the chains of attachment.

"O Lord, Your advent on the earth as an avatara assuming a body is only for the joy of those who have taken refuge in You. You are by Your nature beyond all worldly complications."

Has M., the divine interpreter of the avatara leela of Sri Ramakrishna chosen as such by the Mother of the Universe, merged into the divine play? His face is bright, his two eyes fixed and peeping within. He is still for a quite some time.

After a long time, M. says, "Do narrate a little more."

Swami Kamleshwarananda in a joyful and inspired manner sings sweetly Arjuna's hymn of praise after he had the vision of the universal form of the Lord. Some excerpts are as follows:

Kasmat cha te na nameran mahatman gariyase brahmanah api adi karte,

Ananta devesha jagannivasa tvam aksharam sat asat tat param yat.
(Gita 11:37)

*Tvam adi devah purushah puranah tvam asya vishvasya param
nidhanam,*

*Vetta asi vedyam cha param cha dhama tvaya tatam vishvam ananta
rupa. (Gita 11:38)*

[And why should they not, O great-souled, bow to You, the greatest, the Primal cause even of Brahma, O Infinite being, O Lord of gods, O Abode of the universe; You are the imperishable, the being and the non-being, that which is the Supreme.

You are the Primal God, the ancient *Purusha*; You are the Supreme abode of all this. You are the knower and the knowable and the Supreme Abode; You, O the Being of infinite forms, pervade this universe.]

"Arjuna says, 'O Krishna, O the great-souled, You are adored by Brahma, the Primal cause. You are infinite, the Lord of gods and refuge of the universe. You are beyond the manifest and the unmanifest, imperishable Supreme Being. O, the Being of infinite forms, You are the Supreme Abode.' "

After a while, M. converses.

M. (to the sadhu and the bhaktas) – The Person for whom Brahma and Arjuna sang hymns of praise, He Himself came to Dakshineswar. He enacted leela with the bhaktas. Krishna's child-leela took place in Gokul, his in Kamarpukur. Call them Brahma or Arjuna, what you may, how could they recognise Him without His grace. For everything is subject to His maya! 'All is under it,' so said Thakur. On the top of it, this time he came completely disguised. He did not even pass by the edge of splendour — completely pure sattva. Besides, he was a humble and indigent person. He could not even hold the cloth on his body. He could not take two steps with a clod of earth in his hand. Such was his renunciation! And, he was only an ordinary temple priest. Who are they, brother, who loved him in that state?

"Brahma said beautifully that he longed to live in Braja in a new body. Why? Because he would be blessed by taking on his forehead the dust of the feet of the residents of Braja who have become replete with Krishna by constantly thinking on him. Brahma has said beautifully, 'The body of the avatara is for bestowing joy to those who have taken refuge in Him.'

"So we are blessed. We have lived with him, we have loved him, we have received love from him, we have placed his feet in our hands, we have taken his prasad. Our eyes have seen him, our ears have heard his story and we have had his darshan both with-from and without-form. The dead have become immortal. The frightened ones have received fearlessness — we are blessed. You too are blessed for having loved on hearing his story, without seeing him. You have come to the path having renounced your all for his sake. None of his devotees are householders even though they may be living in the household — Thakur said so."

It is about eight in the evening. The sadhu will take some sweets. M. asks

him, "I say Lalit Maharaj, will you take some sweets?" The other day he said that the eatables made with *ghee* (clarified butter), do not agree with him. The sadhu says, "Yes, I shall." M. says to Jagabandhu, "Then please go to the Purana Bazaar and bring some sweets." (On seeing the sweets) Manoranjan says, "High quality sandesh and are rasagullas are available here." The sadhu eats some sweets and takes leave.

M. rises. As he goes to the room on the fourth level, he says to Antevasi, "See, how strange it is! Even Brahma could not recognize the avatara, Krishna. He came to know during his meditation. This is because *rajoguna* is so prominent in his nature! When in meditation, that is in *sattva*, when he joined his mind with God he was able to understand that the Person he was meditating upon was the same child Krishna."

"If one looks in this way one can understand who are they, how great they are who were able to recognize Thakur and are spending all their life holding him! Even Brahma longs for the dust of their feet. Thakur, the avatara."



Morton School, Calcutta
Wednesday, 10 September 1924
25th Bhadra, 11th day of the bright fortnight
1331 (B.Y.), 26 Dandas / 426 Palas

M. IN THE GODIAGAUDIA MATH FOR THE FIRST TIME

1.

The GodiaGaudia Math is situated close to Pareshnath temple. A festival is being celebrated here. A teacher from the Morton School has gone there to attend it as desired by M. It is now 3.30 p.m. Another teacher, Jagattaran has also accompanied him.

Today it is Thursday, 11 September 1924, 16th of Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), the 13th day of the bright fortnight, 22 Dandas / 26 Palas.

There is a big gathering on the festival spot. On one side there is community singing of hymns, on the other the distribution of prasad is taking place. The devotees are seated partaking the prasad of *khichri*, *tarkari* etc. Both the teachers are asked to take prasad. Thereafter, they go round the festival site. Outside on the walls of the *nata mandir* (concert room) several great sayings from the Vaishnava scripture have been inscribed. Both the teachers read them. They are very inspiring. The sadhus of this *math* wear gerua cloth and the brahmacharis wear white. All of them are holding a small bag containing the rosary. They all the time count beads. Here only Gauranga is worshipped, and the scripture is commented upon.

Nearby there is the temple of Pareshnath. It is a Jain place of pilgrimage. A lot of money has been spent on both the temples. It's a place worth seeing in Calcutta. Both the teachers see this place and return to the sight of the festival. One of them offers pranam to Gauranga and takes leaves. Jagattaran stays back.

The bhaktas are assembled on the terrace of the Morton School on the fourth level. Durgapada Mitra, Doctor Kartik Bakshi, Vinay, the Younger Nalini, the Younger Raomesh, the Younger Jiten, Shanti, Jagabandhu and others are there. They are waiting for M.

It is 8 p.m. M. returns from Thakur Bari. He hears all about the festival of GodiaGaudia Math from Jagabandhu. Now he converses.

M. (to the devotees) — It would have been good if you had also gone there. One should go to the Lord's festival even if it involves some inconvenience. This helps to increase one's devotion. And if along with it there is prasad also it increases still more. (Everybody laughs). No, this is not a matter to laugh at. The human body is made up in this manner. If a little food goes into it, the atman within wakes up. Without a little food the body does not last. And if more of it is taken it presses upon the body.

M. (to a young bhakta) — Thakur has put such glasses on the eyes that all religions look like my own. He does not let me see any difference between the Hindu, the Muslim, the Christian, the Buddhist, the Jain, and also the Shakta, the Shaiva and the Vaishnava. He Himself is playing in different forms. One takes more of it, which suits one. But one must not look down upon any religion and disregard it. He enjoined upon us to have faith and reverence. Why? Because all of them belong to Him you see, that's why. He who only loves his own religion and finds fault with others does not really

love God. This one should understand.

"Does He only look after these few religious creeds? He looks after the whole universe. He creates this universe, preserves it and then also destroys it."

M. (to all present) — Thakur told us, 'Once I felt the desire to go to a limitless tract of land to see how the animals and birds live there. While returning from my native place I got down the bullock cart and ran towards a field. I saw that in the middle of this vast expanse rows of ants were moving up holding a piece of paddy in their mouth.' Later, narrating this incident he said to the bhaktas, 'Just see, how He preserves the whole universe. He has arranged all kinds of food for all – for the gross, the subtle and the causal bodies.'

M. (to Mohan) — I received another light. And it is very important indeed. I have received an evidence of those who went to the Mount Everest expedition. They say that they saw a black spider at a height of twenty one thousand feet. There is no vegetation there. Those people could not find in spite of their research any means of subsistence. Those who went were highly educated and scientific men. They undertook extensive research to find out what the black spider ate to live. But they could not tell anything.

"And at a height of seventeen thousand feet they saw so many insects. As they dug a little of snow, they found numberless insects wriggling under the snow.

"Just see, what a wonder it is! What can one understand of this strange universe? There is nothing to eat anywhere, even then they are alive. What can you say about it? The Evolution theory does not work here. One will have to create another.

"How does it go on? Just see, the water has turned into ice, yet the water underneath is warm. And the fish live in it. The Everest is only this much and yet they are not able know to about it. What can they know about this infinite universe?"

M. is silent for a while. He talks again.

M. (to the bhaktas, pointing out to the sky) — He has become all these – Mars, Venus, all these. These are the planets of our sun. (Pointing at the numberless stars) Do you see these numberless stars? Each one of these stars is a sun. They also have their satellites. Numberless, numberless they all are – all infinite. What can man understand by his wisdom, by his calculation? The Everest belongs to the Himalayas – the Himalayas compared to the Earth is one by eight hundredth part of it.

For the last many days M. comes to the roof and sees the stars for a long time at two at night – for over two hours. He also generally says to the bhaktas, "Just cast a glance above, what a phenomenon is happening there. Till today nothing has been known about a single star above. That being so, the man's pride and the sense of doership do not last?" M. sometimes says to his grandchildren, "Why you do you not see the stars? Tell me, when will you come to the roof to see the stars?"

Antevasi is very tired today. So he is lying on a bench nearby towards the south. The Younger Jiten has been to the Math. Coming back, he gives some prasada to him. M. takes off the slippers from his feet and accepts the grain of prasada with devotion. He says, "Why do I take prasada? Thakur said that the Mother would be angry if one does not take it."

2.

Next day, 6 p.m. M. is strolling on the roof on the fourth level of the Morton School with a stick in his hand. In between, he talks to the two young boys Tota and Bhola, his grandsons. These two brothers are flying a kite near the 'Tapovana' (forest for penance) to the north of the rooftop. He talks to the children in a broken conversation, "Yes, why don't you put on the shoes? Put on the shoes and fly your kite." He talks as he walks three or four footsteps – he is pensive. And then he says, "Well, you do not come out at night to see the stars. When will you come, tell me?" He begins to stroll again north-south, and then says again, "How beautifully are these stars hanging, like the electric bulbs swinging in the *Nnata Mmandir* (concert room)! You should come at night and see these?" And he again begins to walk and says, "The stars have their home far away. It is more distant than the sun you see. And they are bigger than the sun. What are they doing, tell me a little about it? They sing the praises of the Lord, what do you say?" Both the children reply, "Yes, they do." M. says, "You will also offer namaskar to the Lord both morning and evening. Offering namaskar is also puja."

Now, M. comes to the southern part of the big terrace. Here Antevasi is resting lying on a bench. As M. approaches he stands up. Now he talks with M.

Antevasi — Rajni Dey of Sri Hatt has sent a letter.

M. — Just read it what does it say. It is Good, it is good that he has reached his native place. This is very good.

(After hearing the letter) "It is good that he has gone. Who would have looked after him during his illness? That's why he has gone. This time of the month of Bhadra is bad. His mind is like that of a sadhu, he is a sadhu like man. Please write to him in my name, 'When you get well, come to have the darshan of Sri Dakshineswar and Sri Kamarpukur. During spring Sri Kamarpukur is nice. This auspicious desire of yours [to visit these holy places] is very good. Recover completely before you come.' "

Rajni came from Sri Hatt for the darshan of M. He lived with Antevasi in the school building itself. After staying for several months, he fell ill. Now, he has gone back to his native place.

M. now talks with Jagabandhu.

M. — Well, what happened in the GodiaGaudia Math yesterday?

Jagabandhu — The devotees and God-in-the-poor were served. We also took prasada sitting with them. Jagattaran was with me. He distributed some pamphlets on God written by him.

M. — Where they are, haven't you brought any?

Jagabandhu (bringing them from his nearby room) — I have brought them, here they are.

M. (putting them in his pocket) — Very nice, I shall see it later.

Jagabandhu —The sayings of Chaitanya Deva are inscribed on the wall of the *nata mandir* (concert room). For example, 'The real nature of man is to be ever the slave of Sri Krishna..,' 'mMercy for the jivas, interest in the name of the Lord is the food of Vaishnava,' and so on.

M. — I should go there once. I can go by Doctor Babu's car. Well, it is already evening. Let me offer Namaz?

M. sits down to meditate even on the bench. He is facing south. Close to him is seated a bhakta. After some time the Younger Raomesh, Upadhyay and others arrive. They also sit on the benches and meditate.

M. (after meditation, to Upadhyay) — I have not seen you for many days. Where all did you have company of sadhus?

Upadhyay — Why? I came here last Sunday.

M. (Laughing) — That is true. But what after it? Do come and sit down here.

Pratap Upadhyay is somewhat hard of hearing. He rises and goes to sit on M.'s bench.

M. (to the devotees) — Tulasi Maharaj (Swami Nirmalananda) will feed sadhus and brahmacharis in the Math today. It would have been nice if some of you went there. Now it is too late. It is very good if one enjoys such an opportunity while living with sadhus. It is only when one has good sanskaras that the joyful Self within wakes up. The external joy pulls out the internal one. Besides, the internal joy also attracts the outer joy. Did I know all this earlier? Thakur showed all this so tactfully. It is very good to enjoy such an opportunity with the sadhus.

"Now what shall we do? Let us send our mind there. Aha! what sacred formula Thakur has taught us – it is enough even if one sends one's mind there. The mind gets dyed in the colour of the place where it stays for a long time. Can one find such occasions always? One should go to such places and serve sadhus. He who serves can also become a sadhu.

"Just see, how many arrangements are there for preparing the mind. The images, the idols – all these are to prepare the mind."

Droplets of water fall down from the sky.

M. says to the bhaktas, "Let us go and sit in the staircase room. It is raining."

M. takes his seat on a chair in front of the stairs. He faces south. In front of M., there are two rows of benches lying east-west. To his left hand there is another row. The devotees are sitting on all these benches. The earlier current of thought is still flowing within M.'s mind.

M. (full of emotion, to the bhaktas) — Thakur would see something special. That is why, he did not like anything else.

"He said, 'Rakhal says: I don't like family life because of you. He keeps on thinking what will happen to his wife.'

"He also saw something special. So, he says, 'I don't like sensory enjoyments.'

"He says to a bhakta (M.), 'What need is there to go at home? Stay on here.' The bhakta says, 'There is such and such illness at home.' He replies, 'Well, if there is such an unfortunate happening, the people of the locality will come and attend to it. You stay on here.' He saw something special when he said so.

"Who but the *Sat-Guru* (real preceptor), the Lord, can say so? He would always see that only God is real and all else perishable. So one should go on staying with the Lord. That you call your own is perishable, it will not last. It is yours only for two days. God is your own till eternity. That God now has come down now in the form of Sri Ramakrishna."

"Christ was once living somewhere with his devotees. The devotees had rounded him from all sides. A person came and said, 'Lord, your mother has come.' He was then in a divine mood. Surprised he said, 'Mother, what are you saying? You people are my mother, brother and friend, all these.'

"Aha, what do these people see something special and go mad for it? That is why, Thakur was mad ever saying, 'Mother, Mother.' How can other people understand it?"

Doctor Bakshi, Vinay, Vinay's brother, the Younger Jiten and some others have arrived. Antevasi whispers to the Doctor that M. was desirous of going to the GodiaGaudia Math. So the Doctor says to M., "The car is here. Let us go to the GodiaGaudia Math."

M. — Yes. I was thinking of going there to have the darshan of Gaur. But it is raining.

M. goes downstairs. The devotees also take their leave. It is 8 p.m.

M. comes and takes a back seat to the right in the car. Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten, Vinay, Vinay's brother and the Doctor are also with him.

The car moves on the road of Sahitya Parishad via Maniktala. It stops at the gate of the GodiaGaudia Math near Pareshnath temple. M. comes out of the car and enters the western gate of the *math* facing towards east. Outside there is a very thin drizzle. M. utters softly, "Gaur, Gaur." The shrine is to his left. M. has the darshan with folded hands. Today it is the day when Sri Gauranga puts on finery. The idol faces south. It has a crown on the head, an orange coloured Banarasi silk cloth on the body, and a folded white shawl on the shoulders which is hanging on both sides to the ground. Only Gaur is worshipped here.

M. putting the cloth around his neck offers pranam by lying prostrate on the ground. A brahmachari, holding a bag of rosary for japa, asks Antevasi with great curiosity, "Who the man is?" Antevasi says, "Sri M., the writer of the Kathamrita." The brahmachari says joyfully, "I also guessed the same."

M. enters the *nata mandir* (the concert room) by the north-western gate. It was lying north-south. There is a cotton carpet on the floor. M. sits on it

facing south. The bhaktas sit to the right and left of M. M. has a folded shawl of raw cotton on his shoulder. It covers his back. Behind him is seated Antevasi.

On this cotton carpet, the Bhagavata is being read in its southern side. A Vaishnava in gerua clothes is explaining. He is facing west. In front of him on a small flat table has been placed the Bhagavata. On the three sides of it a number of Vaishnava bhaktas, brahmacharis and sadhus are seated. They all have a *tilak* (holy mark) on their forehead, a tuft of hair on the head and a bag of rosary in the hand. Some of them have shaved the hair of their head. The speaker has a big tall body. He is 35 or 36. On his face he has a beard touching both his ears. He has hair on his head.

He is explaining the essence of ggurudom.

"The guru is a form of the Lord –

Guru Brahma, guru Vishnu, guru devo Maheshvarah,

Guru sakshat Parbrahman, tasmai Sri gurve namah.

[The guru is Brahma, the guru is Vishnu, the guru is Shiva. The guru is Para-Brahman Himself. I bow to you Sri guru.]

"There is absolute need of the guru-bhakti (devotion to the preceptor) to realize God. When a devotee has such a firm bhakti, he attains his ideal. But if for any reason, he is an obstacle on the way to God realization one should give him up too. Bali, the king of *asuras* (demons), left his guru, Shukracharya. On the other hand, this also has been said, 'Even if my guru goes to a pub, he still is my guru of everlasting bliss.' "

Having heard a little of these comments, M. rises. M. again has darshan of Gauranga and pays him his obeisance. At this moment two householder devotees of the *math* recognize M. and request him humbly to take prasad. M. says, "Yes, do give me some in my hand. They bring some *bundi* and *malpura* (sweetmeat fried in ghee) in a small earthen plate and give it to M. in his hands. M. receives prasad with folded hands and touching to his forehead passes that small earthen plate to Antevasi.

Outside there are continuous showers of rain. M. gets into the car and the bhaktas also go in. The car returns by the saome road by which it had come. M. says near Maniktala, "I feel very inspired on seeing them. I am reminded of the assembly with Chaitanya. He used to live in Puri surrounded by such devotees with shaven heads. One is inspired with enormous bhakti. But is there real purity everywhere? One should take as much as one finds it to be pure."

The car comes and stops at the Amherst Street. On the footpath in front of the Morton School, Balai is walking up and down waiting for M. M. comes out of the car and enters the courtyard. The Younger Jiten gives prasad to everybody. The bhaktas take their leave and M. climbs upstairs with Antevasi. He says, "I want to see all kinds of bhaktas at one place. They all call on Him. This is the real life. Becoming bee one must only take honey."



Morton School, Calcutta

Friday, 12 September 1924

27th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.), 19 Dandas / 2 Palas

Ananta Chaturdashi (14th day) of the bright fortnight.

EVERYBODY IS SUFFERING FROM DELIRIUM

1.

Morton School, the parlour of the second level. M. is seated on a bench. It is seven in the morning. Jagabandhu and the Younger Jiten are reading the proofs of the Kathamrita. A devotee doctor has come from Dhaka. M. enquires about his family.

It is 8 o'clock now. M. is talking to Antevasi standing near the western window of the northern verandah. Antevasi is keeping a diary of M.'s conversations.

Antevasi – I have palpitation of heart — even a little strain brings this palpitation. What can it be?

M. (in a sympathetic tone) – Why shouldn't it happen! What a strain you have! Is it a small work that you are doing? I know, I also had the same. My heart became such. All this happened when I was keeping all this (the diary of the Kathamrita).

"You see, the mind always remains fixed on one thing alone. Is meditation only of one variety? This too is meditation."

"There is a cure for it — just sleep and keep away from it (the writing of the diary). And take as much of milk as you can digest. Thakur told me this.

"I kept myself away from it for many days. So, the speed of my pulse was then irregular, intermittent. The doctors could not diagnose.

"But whenever the strain increased, it also went up. It would come down when I was resting. That's why, I can run about even today."

M. climbs up to the fourth level at 9 o'clock.

It is 2 p.m. now. M. is seated in his room on his bedspread facing west on the fourth level. A devotee has arrived from Behala. His name is Rajen Roy. He is accompanied by his son. He should be thirty or thirty two. Rajen Babu has had Thakur's darshan. Now he is sixty seven years old. He has written Sri Ramakrishna Bhagavata. He reads out a few excerpts of it to M. Hearing a few, M. gives his opinion. He says, "Somebody has written a history book. I have suggested him to quote someone's authority. Authority adds to the value of the work."

It is five in the evening. The Saturday devotees have been awaiting M. for long. Some of them who had to take a train have even left. M. comes and takes his seat on a bench facing west. The devotees are sitting in front of M. and to his left on benches — Bholanath Mukherji, the Younger Nalini, Lakshman and others. The Younger Nalini has brought some *murmure* (roasted rice) and fried gram. These are offered to Thakur and then taken as prasad by all. M. puts a grain or two of *murmure* in his mouth. He has no teeth.

M. had given a prescription to Antevasi to sleep well. He is sleeping in his cabin. Hearing the conversation of the devotees, he comes out on the roof. M.

now instructs him.

M. – Do you hear Jagabandhu Babu, do you know why there is palpitation of your heart? It is like an elephant entering a thatched hut. When an elephant enters a thatched hut it causes a commotion.

"What I talk is not my own. All this is his. Thakur himself sits in my throat and talks. Now how they are pressing upon your mind. They have formed a heap like a hill or like an island in the sea. Numberless insects fall into the sea and form a coral island.

"You hear so much of conversations and try to remember all — this after that and then that after it. Is it a small strain! On the top of it keeping awake at nights to write! Writing daily, continuously for months, year after year. You sleep at eleven and then rise at three in the morning for meditation upon Him. (He counts) Just four hours. This is the time for sleeping that is spent in writing. How much pressure you have on your mind!. And from the mind on to the brain, and from there to the nerves.

"Aren't you trying a little to record his words? Even to write one or two of his sayings is so difficult — all his words are so powerful, you see! Besides, you try to retain so many of these in your mind. They being like a mound press upon the mind. The pressure is transferred to your nerves. That's why, the nerves shake. That's why the heart palpitates.

"The same thing happened to me. Was it during Thakur's lifetime or later on? It was during his lifetime. One day I sat unconscious on the path in Badur Bagan — in front of Vidyasagar Mahashay's house. Thereafter, a person sent me home by a coach. Yes, when Thakur heard about it he said, 'Sleep and take milk. And stop writing for some days.' What I have told you is Thakur's prescription.

"When Thakur went to see Keshab Sen, he said, 'An Elephant has entered your thatched cottage.' You are also in the same state. Keshab Babu was then very ill."

Lalit Roy of Bhattapara enters. After offering his pranam he takes his seat. Now the conversation starts.

Lalit – At some place there is flood and at others scarcity of water.

M. – It is all due to the negligence of the workers. The Veda says, the rishis saw that the Lord had appointed Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh for creation, preservation and dissolution respectively. But they have so many others working under them. For example, there is the Viceroy. He has so many assistants. Does every work get done properly? Aren't there are so many mistakes? Similarly, all this happens — too much of rain and too little of rain. It is because of the fault of the subordinates.

It is drizzling. M. takes everybody to the staircase room and sits there. He says to the Doctor and Vinay, "You may now rise. If it begins to rain heavily the car will not move, since there will be standing water on the road. It is better if you leave now." The Doctor and Vinay depart.

M. now enters his room. As he goes he gives the Bhagavata to the Younger Nalini and says, "One of you may read and the others listen to it."

The shades of the evening are approaching. Jagabandhu goes out to buy some milk. Having offered his pranam to the Mother in the Kali Temple of Thanthania, he goes to the Sheetla cloth house. He returns from there buying some milk on the way. The sky is clear now. It has stopped raining.

Eight in the evening. M. comes to the roof and takes his seat on a chair towards the south. He faces west. To M.'s right is seated the Elder Jiten on a bench. Shanti, Balai, Jagabandhu and some others have also arrived. They are all sitting in front of M. on benches to his left and right. M. is conversing. On his return Jagabandhu hears as follows.

M. (to the bhaktas) – He who knows that he is the son of such a big man, will he be attracted by anything ordinary? How can he? For he sees that his father's riches are matchless. The whole universe indeed belongs to his father and then there is such abundance of Sachchidananda. So, he is not satisfied with the lower things. Millions and millions of moons and suns are evening lamps in his father's house. He sees this and says, 'How many jewels there are in the dancing hall of my *Chintamani* (God).' Therefore, what other people are mad after is so mean for him. He only wants jnana and bhakti — he wishes to taste the nectar of Sachchidananda. Why should he accept anything else? For nothing will last. That which will last is only He, Sachchidananda.

2.

A cart is going through the Amherst Street. It is making such a dreadful noise. The Elder Jiten draws M.'s attention towards it. The devotees comment on the noise in different ways. Turning the current of this topic, M. converses.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Sound? It is just this. How far can it go? How far it is in the atmosphere, I know it. There is sound only within 45 miles (in the atmosphere).

"Thakur told us that there is another kind of sound which is only heard by the yogis. Its medium is neither air nor ether. It is not in this atmosphere but in *chidakasha* (the regions of consciousness). The yogis have the yogic ears and yogic eyes. With their keep, the yogis can hear that sound in deep night. Thakur used to run about on the embankment of the Ganga at two or three in the morning like a mad man, hearing that sound. It is called the *anahat* sound. It is not produced by striking one thing on the other. That is why it is called *anahat* (without striking). The ordinary sound is produced by striking on the atmosphere. The other sound is produced by itself."

What is M. thinking for a short while? He resumes his talk.

M. (to the Elder Jiten) – I went to the GodiaGaudia Math yesterday. It was very inspiring. It was as if I had been to Chaitanya Deva's room. Many bhaktas were sitting there with shaven head and the Harinam 'bag' (containing the rosary) in the hand. They were listening to the Bhagavata. And then, I had the darshan of Gauranga. Chaitanya Deva used to live in Puri in the company of bhaktas in the same way.

"Thakur used to tell, 'The cow that is very selective in eating yields scanty milk. And the cow that eats anything that it gets gives buckets full of milk.' If one were to say that the milk of the latter smells a little, he also told its remedy. Boil it a little, there will be no smell then. It means that one should accept only after examining it by his knowledge. One must test it on a test-stone."

The Elder Jiten (speaking along with M.) – One must test it on a test-stone. (M. laughs).

Enter Kiran and Kanai. They are Vinay's younger brothers. Both of them salute M. by lying on the ground. Kiran is holding a book of history of Bengal by Rakhal Bannerji.

M. (to Kiran) – Let me see what it is, which is this book.

M. reads the first page taking the book in his hands. He then turns its pages. He converses again.

M. (to the devotees) – Research is carried out these days, you see. It is very valuable. If one quotes the authority, it is still more valuable.

"Just see, what the man is doing. What an intellect He has given man! All the old history is read from the copper plate. One should hear and read something about it in the beginning. Then alone the intellect is sharpened. If one is cultured one can quickly catch the essence (Brahman).

"One has to sharpen of one's intellect a little, and what else! This intellect is also an illusion. That (the work done through the intellect — worldly knowledge) too is illusory.

"So one should read and write to sharpen one's intellect. Then one can quickly catch the essence (of Brahman). So, Thakur said, 'He who can keep the account of salt, can also keep the account of sugarcandy.' "

Kiran is studying in a college while staying in the Student's Home. He and Kanai will now return.

M. (to Kiran) – When will Hamendra Maharaj return (to Vidyapith)? Tulasi Maharaj (Swami Nirmalananda), is he to go there too? Bodhananda has lived in America for a long time.

Kiran and Kanai prostrate themselves to salute M.

M. – Aha, why in this way? (Folding his hands) This will do. Why take the trouble for doing all this?

Kiran and Kanai leave.

M. (thinking for a while) – Bodhananda was a college student then studying for his F.A. He went to Vidyasagar Mahashay for some donation. Celebrations were to be held in Kankurgachhi Yogodyan. So he would beg some money to buy something for Thakur. Vidyasagar Mahashay said, 'It is good but if you wish to give something, give it by your earning.' (Laughter). It means that these

people are not in favour of such celebrations. They would prefer to give to the poor. They have no faith in all this.

"So he procured some rice by begging and sold them. Then he bought some fruit — mangoes — and took it with him. Vidyasagar Mahashay gave nothing. For he had no faith in such a thing.

"They say that P.C. Roy was also like him. He went to see Sarat in Parshibagan. They (members of the Samiti) told that he came and saw the clinic but did not even go to the place where Thakur was.

"What else could he do? Is everybody alike? There are different natures. Vidyasagar and P.C. Roy — they are not insignificant persons. If they feel this way, one should know that He has made them like this. It is division of labour — so many persons are put in every department.

"There is an another department too. There they want only God, nothing else. So one should not look contemptuously at anybody.

"Rajendra Dutt was like this. The shoes that he gave to Thakur are being worshipped in the Math even now. They are being worshipped for the last forty years.

"He also said, 'I don't believe in bhakti or anything like it.' Saying so, he would tell a story. A babu had a garden. There were two gardeners in it. One of the two would say as soon as he saw the babu, 'O, how handsome you are, what a gentleman!' and so on. On the other hand, the garden became a forest, a jungle. The other gardener would not say anything like it. He would quietly weed out the garden. Now whom shall the babu like more — the former or the latter? (Laughter). Such was his opinion.

"But the sandals given by him are being worshipped in the Math for the last forty years!"

Antevasi (in a whisper) – How fortunate!

M. – Once I had once a talk with Akrur Dutt. His son was a classmate of mine. Once he fell a little ill. I went to see him. The boy introduced me to him. He began to treat me as one of the family.

"He was also a leading homeopath of Calcutta. He had taught Dr. Mahendra Sarkar. When? In 1871. It was fifty two years ago — only fifty two years. They all belong to the same group."

M. (to bhaktas) – Is it the full moon day today? Whose puja is undertaken at the time of the full moon day?

Balai – The puja of Satya Narayana.

M. – How much people enjoy themselves in God's name! If you have a little indigestion, why should others not enjoy themselves?

The Elder Jiten – Why does it happen, sir? Why is there no full moon day everyday? Why is there Amavasya (the darkest day of the month)? Why is there no innate enjoyment?

M. – That is there. It comes when you have had His darshan. What happens then, let me tell you.

M. begins to sing in a deep, serene mood — he sings the song on ‘Samadhi of Universal Annihilation,’ written by Swamiji (V.N.).

Lo! the sun is not, nor the lovely moon. All light extinct. In the great void of space float the shadows, the image of the universe etc.

"‘Shadows’ means this world of happiness and grief. Happiness, grief and trouble will always be there. So long as the body lasts, they will not leave. They only go when hHe keeps one in that state, described in the song. There is no ‘I’ there. Therefore, there is no grief and pain. Not even happiness — this happiness of the senses.

"So long as when lives with devotion and devotee all this is also there. So it is that the devotees have grief and pain. Even so, one should see to it that ‘I’ may not become the doer. Let it remain the ‘I’ of the bhakta, the ‘I’ of the servant — the ‘I’ of the child."

The Elder Jiten (before M. has finished speaking) – ‘*Udara mudara tara tarate mishaye*’ (the first tone, the medium tone and the major tone get mingled with the major tone).

M. (feeling irritated) – Why does man talk so big? One has this body then how does one talk of big things? Living within it and talking so big?

"If one were to say, why such talk comes out of the mouth,. The answer to it is that one is suffering from delirium. One says, ‘I will drink a pitcher whole of water.’ How does one say so? This is also like that. Everybody is suffering from the delirium of lust, anger and so on. This is the aberration.

"If you say, why doesn’t one always talk sense,. The answer to it is also the same — that delirium.

"What a wonder! Some little thing happens and the man thinks that he has attained all. This also is delirium. It is like the ant which thought while carrying a grain of sugar in its mouth that it would come back and carry away the whole hill of sugar." (His eyes smiling)."

M. thinks for a while and then he resumes.

M. (to the devotees) – I once had an attack of cholera. I was then teaching in the school located on that side (Shyambazar School). Thakur had fallen ill then and had come to Shyampukur. I was then in the outer room of the Deputy Mathur Nath’s house. There were students also in his house, you see. So, I was there.

"The students were serving me. I asked a student one day, ‘Which is your native place?’ He replied, ‘Madhupur.’ I said, ‘Do you have any hills there?.’ He said, ‘Yes.’ I again asked, ‘Is there a waterfall?’ He replied, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘Will you take me there? I would keep my head under the waterfall. And water will fall on my head. Will you take me

there?' He said, 'Yes.' (Laughter).

"The boy had understood rightly that I was talking like this because of my disease. Otherwise, why should he say ditto to everything (that I said)?

"There was another boy, a brahmin. I asked him, 'A lot of eatables are cooked in your house. Will you give me some to eat?' This was also like the talk on asking for something watery. (Laughter).

"Another incident. I was one day lying in the outer room. There was none beside me. A person came in. I asked him where he lived. He replied, 'Sylet.' I said, 'Are oranges available there?' He replied, 'Yes.' I said, 'Will you give me some?' He was speechless on hearing this. He was living in Beliaghata. May be he come to know of my real state [of health] by meeting somebody.

"Such indeed is our state. How man talks big living in it? I feel amazed on seeing this."

The Elder Jiten (slowly) – No way out, sir.

M. (smiling) – Yes! such is the state while one is awake. And then, what happens while one is asleep, just see! Thakur used to say, 'Even if someone urinates in the mouth one does not know of it, one has no awareness.' And then, to talk big. (Laughter). He perhaps thinks that he is taking tea and he even drinks a little. (M. and all others laugh).

M. is silent for a while. He resumes.

M. (to the devotees) – How can we understand Him? (Pointing to the sky and stars) Reason, for all these are there. See, just see what a wonder! They also have the same state as we have vis-a-vis That (God). 'The elder brother is also suffering from indigestion!'

"I have told you. You have to verify whether it is true. When you go there (in the higher regions) (laughter) you will see that 'the elder brother also has indigestion.'

"This is what I think that it is the same there. You may then compare." (Laughter)."



Morton School, Calcutta
Saturday, 13 September 1924
28th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The full moon day, 16 Dandas / 39 Palas.

M. IN JAIN TEMPLE AND AGAIN IN GODIAGAUDIA MATH

1.

Morton School. Ground floor. The Sunday *satprasanga* (spiritual talk) meeting is over. M. sends Shanti for Antevasi. Antevasi has gone to the mess that is on the other side of the road. It is half past nine in the morning.

The third part of the Kathamrita is under print. Proof pages 185 to 200 have been received. Antevasi reads the proofs along with Shanti. At eleven o'clock Antevasi enters M.'s staircase room with the proofs. M. is seated on the cot facing west.

M. gives many copies of the Kathamrita part two to Antevasi. They are not complete. So, some extra forms had to be printed. Antevasi adds the missing pages to the book. He is seated to the south of M.'s bed on a bench. This job ends at two o'clock.

Antevasi enters his tin cabin on the roof to take rest. Soon after comes the bookbinder. Antevasi takes him and enters M.'s room again. M. says, "Kindly keep a record of the missing forms and of how many each is missing."

It is 6 p.m. A student from the Presidency College comes in. He is a student of the second year. He lives in Bhattapara. M. comes to the roof, asks him to wait for a while and goes down to the second level to have a wash. Soon after comes in Suren Ganguly holding a packet of *dhup* (incense) in his hands. Whenever he comes, he brings some *dhup*.

A few moments earlier M. has sent Dilchanda, the helper, to ask the boy to come downstairs and meet M. Antevasi has understood that possibly M. is going out somewhere or going to have a stroll on the road. So, he goes downstairs taking all of them with him.

M. is standing on the footpath outside the gate with the devotees when the Doctor and Vinay reach there by car. The Doctor says, "We have been to the GodiaGaudia Math yesterday."

M. walks towards the south on the eastern footpath of the Amherst Street along with devotees. He now stands on the turning of the Machhua Bazaar. He says, "Lets go to the GodiaGaudia Math today so that we may have darshan of 'Prabhu' again." This is what is decided. He comes back and gets into the car in front of the Morton School. He asks Surendra Ganguly, "Have you been to the GodiaGaudia Math? If not, you may go there once." He asks the student, "Do you know some Lalit Roy Mahashay in Bhattapara?" The boy says, "Yes, Ssir." M. says, "Please convey my namaskar to him and come here again." The student says, "Yes, Ssir" and then he leaves.

M. takes the back seat of the car to the right and the Doctor sits to the left. Vinay is with the driver, Jagabandhu sits behind on the baby seat in front of M. The car goes via Maniktala and stops at the gate of Pareshnath Temple, the place of pilgrimage of Jains, in front of the GodiaGaudia Math. Raja Badri Das has built this temple and has spent a lot on it.

M. enters from the south. Now turning towards the west he goes towards the temple. To his right there is a stone idol of a child. He looks at it and says, "Oh, it is so beautiful!" Now taking off his shoes below, he goes up the steps of the temple and comes to the verandah. There is whitech marble all around.

Inside the temple to the east there is the marble idol of Pareshnath. M. folds his hands and standing in front of it offer his pranams. Then he has its darshan through the southern window on the side of the path of circumambulation. Coming in front of the idol he prostrates himself to offer his pranam. It appears that this obeisance is for the teaching of the 'Englishmen' bhaktas. 'To teach religious life to others by one's own conduct' — this is the eternal way of the spiritually great.

Coming down the steps M. walks towards the south. Just at the right hand turning there stands a boy 14 or 15 years old. As soon as he sees M. and the bhaktas he offers pranam by touching their feet. Antevasi tells that the boy is the student of the Morton School in class three (The seventh class of today), Malay Das his name. M. talks to him affectionately, "Don't you go to the GodiaGaudia Math?" The boy replies, "Recently there were celebrations, I went then." M. says again, "So you only go on celebrations? You should visit sometimes also otherwise?"

M. walks towards the east. Seeing a stone sculpture he says, "All these are foreign made images." Entering the first path in the middle of the left garden he sees another stone idol — that of the gatekeeper. It as if guards the temple and the garden day and night. Proceeding a little Antevasi says, "There you see Raja Badri Das's statue." M. stands close to it to watch it.

Then M. comes to the *pukur* (tank) walking straight from the northern side. He is to go to the second temple after going round the *pukur* from the north side. This too is a Jain temple. In the north-eastern corner of the garden, boys and girls are playing so happily. Seeing this M. says, "Good, here they also let the people play." M. sees many plants and creepers in flower pots in the north-eastern corner of the garden. Says he, "Do they give out carbon at night, Doctor Babu?" The Doctor says, "Carbon dioxide." M. goes near the gate but he finds it closed. So, he takes a detour and comes out on the road from the southern side.

There is another garden to the east with a temple in it. M. enters this garden. He asks Jagabandhu, "What are these small cluster of rooms to the right and left?" Jagabandhu replies, "They are all rest houses for the pilgrims. One can also cook and eat here. The rooms to the right are for men and those in the left for women." "Where did you see people eating the other day?" M. asks further. Jagabandhu says, "Just here, in the rooms towards the right." M. asks, "Were they only Bengalis?" Jagabandhu says, "Yes Sir, they were only Bengalis."

M. enters the temple by the northern steps. It is a very high building. Here the lotus feet of the Guru are worshipped. The bhaktas join M. in offering pranam by lying prostrate on the ground. They utter indistinctly, "Gurudeva, Gurudeva, Sri Guru!" A few moments later, M. comes down from the south-east corner. In front of him is the temple guard. He folds his hands and devotedly offers pranams to M. He has a Rajasthani turban on his head. He is one-eyed and some fifty years old. Antevasi asks him, "Brother can we go in?" "No Sir," the guard says.

Everybody puts on the shoes on coming down. Then they all walk starting from the bank of the tank via the last western path, first to the north and then to the east. M. leads followed by Jagabandhu. The Doctor and Vinay follow them.

The second temple., its plinth is very high. M. is tired so he sits below the steps on a bench. After some time, standing below the steps, he tries to have darshan of the idol. But he does not succeed. So he says to the bhaktas, "Please go, go and have darshan." M. sits below and meditates on God. When the devotees return, he says, "I shall try to see?" Saying so, he begins to climb the vertical ladder slowly holding the railing and facing west.

Jagabandhu, the Doctor and Vinay climb again with M.

This temple also faces east. M. stands in the verandah in front of the idol and offers his pranam. Jagabandhu says, "Please come in." M. enters the *Nnata Mmandir* and standing very near the idol has its darshan. This too is a Jain temple. Here too, the idol is that of Tirthankar Pareshnath Mahavira. It is a white marble idol but naked. On the wall there is an electric light.

There is a donation box near the doorway. Two workers are seated on both sides of the entrance. The priest is to the south and an Oriya gardener to the north. Some account is being settled. The priest has a book in his hand. While he was entering, the gardener says by a sign of his hand, "Stand here and have darshan — in front of the donation box?"

M. comes down the steps. He prostrates himself to offer pranam below the steps.

A devotee wonders, why he offers pranam again and again lying prostrate on the ground, old and tired as he is.? Is it for the teaching of the devotees that he is inflicting so much bodily pain upon himself? However M.'s face does not show it. I see that here also it is exactly the same sweet and, joyful emotion full of love playing on his face, while he is before Bhavatarini in Dakshineswar or while he is offering pranams in Thakur's living room. Does he see Sri Ramakrishna, the symbol of Sachchidananda, in Mahavira also?

M. walks toward the gate. On both sides of the gate there are brick benches. M. sits facing west on the bench of the eastern side on the southern part of it. On the northern part of this bench is seated Jagabandhu. On the western bench sits Doctor Kartik Bakshi facing east on its southern portion and Vinay sits on its northern part.

M. is tired but is full of joy. It appears as if he is immersed in the sea of the love of Sri Ramakrishna. He says slowly to a bhakta, "Thakur has given me such spectacles that everybody appears to be my own. Where is a stranger? Who is a stranger? All of them are He. He is the Indivisible Sachchidananda. And again He is both the creature and the world. And it is He who comes as man in every age. Now He has come to Dakshineswar. Who has the capacity to recognize Him? It is by his grace that he has made his real Self reveal to the devotees. The devotees are speechless on seeing him. His is a blinding light. On the one hand, he is a man, a priest and then naked. And on the other — Sachchidananda. Seeing this aspect one likes nothing else. The reason, one sees him in all these. That is why, he has brought us here. All these are his different manifestations. That's why, it looks so much as one's own."

Nearby there is the temple of the Guru. One can see the clock striking seven. M. comes to the road outside the gate. He walks towards the west. To his right is Pareshnath's temple. To the left there is another temple. The arati is being performed here. Says M., "The arati is being performed." Saying so, he stands. The black sleepers go off his feet. He has the darshan of the arati from the road with folded hands. Having had darshan for some time, he begins to move — in front there is the car. M. and the devotees get into it. The car reaches the gate of the GodiaGaudia Math.

2.

GodiaGaudia Math. The car is standing in front of the southern gate. A Vaishnava sadhu switches on the 'door light'. The Doctor coming out of the car first opens the gate. M. comes out of the car holding a packet of *dhup* (incense) in his hand. This incense has been given to him earlier by Suren

Ganguli. M. enters the outer room by the southern door. He gives the packet to the sadhu who has switched on the light, saying, "Please offer it to Gauranga." Then he has the darshan of Sri Gauranga, standing in the gallery in front, having come out of the western door from the north of that room. Seeing a big crowd there M. moves to the right and peeps from time to time to have darshan of the deity.

The idol of Sri Gauranga is one yard tall. It is made of wood and painted beautifully. Earlier one day, it had been in clad in *rajavesha* (finery). Those clothes are not there today. The arati is going to be performed. It is half past seven in the evening. A brahmachari is the priest. The arati is performed to begin with incense, water from the conch-shell, then with the chanvar (hand fan made of yak hair), five lights and incensed flowers — one after the other. Two *kholes* (tomtom like musical instrument) and a number of pairs of cymbals are played upon. One player of the *khol*, overwhelmed with emotion, plays on the *khol* in various ways. As the arati ends, M. and the devotees prostrate on the ground to offer pranam.

M. is desirous of seeing the founder of the *math*. A sadhu asks him to wait a little. M. goes into the room and sits down on the cotton carpet. The sadhus and the brahmacharis read verses of salutation. It is warm inside the room. M. begins to perspire.

In the beginning a hymn of praise to Chaitanya Deva is recited, followed by the traditional pranam to the Guru. Then they recite the verses of Narottam Dass. Jagabandhu and Vinay go to arrange for the darshan of Prabhu. A sadhu takes M. and the devotees with him to the second level.

The living room of Prabhu is so beautiful and decorative. It has a door to the west. To the south there is another door for going up the roof. There are two windows on the eastern side of the room and one on the north, but they are closed. The walls of the room are plastered blue. The room is lit bright with electric light.

On the table to the east there are books, a looking glass and a match box. Nearby there is an expensive cushioned chair. To the north of the room there is the bed of Prabhu with a mattress and an expensive hand woven mat of straw over it. Over the bedstead hangs a mosquito net. On the bedroll there is a round pillow, and also a pillow to the west. To the west of the bed there is a switch near the door. A calendar of the Bhagavata press of Nadia is hanging against the wall. Above there is a ceiling fan. The floor of the room is covered with a cotton carpet with a telephone on it. In front of the bedroll, there is a small expensive carpet. 'Prabhu' is sitting on it facing south. Close to his hand there is an electric table lamp, and Chaitanya Charitamrita and other holy books have artistically been placed east-west to his right hand. A pen, an ink pot and other writing material are also there near the hand. Behind him, under the table there is a bundle of mattress and other items of the bedding.

Prabhu has his head shaven. In his hand, he is holding a bag of Harinam [containing the rosary]. On his forehead, he has a holy mark made with sandalwood paste and round his neck a five stringed garland of *tulasi*. The garland is almost black. On the body, he has a '*pavnai*' banian. The sacred thread round his neck is visible though the banian. The dhoti is ochre coloured. He has also tied ochre coloured piece of cloth to the left shoulder bringing it up through the right armpit.

He is thin but tall. He has a dark complexion. He is over fifty. He has no teeth in his upper jaw. He is telling his beads as he sits on the carpet.

M. and the devotees first offer their pranam to Prabhu by folding their hands followed by prostrating on the ground. M. sits in front of Prabhu in the middle of western and southern door. Prabhu responds by folding his hands

to offer them namaskar. Vinay and the Doctor sit close to the western door facing north. And Jagabandhu sits to the right of M. In front of the southern door, an elderly man is seen sitting with his head shaven. To his east there is a young man of fair complexion. He is thirty. He has a wristwatch and a silk shirt on his body. And at the eastern door stands a fat Vaishnava devotee. He is above forty. His face is round. The sacred thread is going round his belly. He is also bholding a Harinam bag. In front of him to the south of the table sits a young brahmachari. He also has a shaven head with a tuft of hair on the crown. He has rolled gold spectacle on his eyes. He is very fair. The sacred thread is shining on his belly. All are quiet. They are engaged in Brahman. They have the Harinam bag in the hand and are mentally performing japa. To the south of the table, there is a young brahmachari. He also has rolled gold spectacle over his eyes. Many sadhus and bhaktas stand outside the door. They are all curious to hear the spiritual dialogue with the writer of the Kathamrita. Now the conversation starts.

M. (to Prabhu) – I once had your darshan two years ago.

Prabhu – Yes, you kindly came (he continues to perform sweet japa mentally). There was Mahendra Babu, a teacher of your Morton School. He is a now here as a sadhu. Now he is on pilgrimage. These days he has gone to Rameswaram in the south.

The young brahmachari with spectacle – Three of our sadhus have also accompanied him.

M. – He will perhaps go for the darshan of all the places visited by Chaitanya Deva.

Prabhu (smiling) – Yes.

M. – Aha, seeing you all one has some glimpse of the time of Chaitanya Deva. The *math* you are running does so much good to people.

"The Paramahansa Deva used to say, 'Nobody's watch gives the correct time. Only the sun is right. But everybody says that his watch is right.' Even so, one has some glimpse of God by seeing you people.?"

"The city of Calcutta is benefiting so much. One is inspired on seeing you all. What comes to the mind on seeing you people? Just this that these people call on God having renounced women and gold."

The bBhakta with the wristwatch – Those who have their mind in God do not like anything else.

The sStout bBhakta – Even when they live in the world of sensory objects, they are not like others.

M. – Somebody asked Chaitanya Deva that though he has heard a lot from him, he cannot internalize them (put his words into practice). Chaitanya Deva replied that it is because he has intercourse with his wife. That's why, he cannot internalize them.

"How much you have renounced to be able to call on Him! That is bound to bring inspiration on God on seeing you."

One of the inmates of the ashrama gives so many reports and other

literature on the *math* to M. Having offered them pranam, he accepts them.

M. (to Prabhu) – Did Bhaktivinod Mahashay meet the Paramahansa Deva?

Prabhu – Yes. They met once at the house of Ramachandra Dutt.

M. – That's right. Ramachandra Dutt was an intimate devotee of the Paramahansa Deva.

Prabhu – There is a special reason for founding this *math*. Seeing that Chaitanya Deva's ideas were being misinterpreted by Auls, Bauls, Sahajiyas, Kartabhajas, Navrasiks and such others groups, this *math* was established to propagate his correct ideas.

M. – A great good has been done to Calcutta. One shall get inspired with Chaitanya Deva on seeing you people.

"What are other people living with, what are they doing? Some are engaged in learning, some in name and fame and others are living with other pursuits. But you people are different. You people are always engaged in God.

"The Paramahansa Deva used to say, 'The kite and the vulture soar quite high but their eyes remain fixed to the charnel-pits.' In the same way men talk so big, talk so much but their sight remains on the charnel-pits, that is on women and gold."

Prabhu tells the beads of the rosary held in his hand. His lips move and in between he also talks.

Prabhu (to M.) – Those who call on God sincerely live in cities as well as in villages and hamlets. Even though the divine emotion in villages and hamlets may be genuine, such people are not to be found everywhere.

3

Today he feels like giving some comments — on GodiaGaudia Vaishnava way of thinking.

Prabhu – Prabodhananda, a sannyasi of the Ramayat group, has written something on Sri Chaitanya — he lived in SriRrangam. At the end of his essay, he says, 'Without the grace of Sri Chaitanya, one cannot gain devotion and ecstatic love.' He has worshipped Chaitanya Deva taking him as God personified. This is the aim of life.

"Kapil, the author of Sankhya philosophy, could not understand it. The believers in Sankhya say — mix *Prakriti* with *Purusha*. This is the supreme effort. But, the Vaishnava acharyas don't accept it.

"Gautama Buddha said, 'The supreme effort is cessation of conception and perception in this way.' He has also named it as the supreme aim of man. In his religion, one has to do away with worldly desires. This world is nothing, the bhaktas are also nothing either. This belief has also not been accepted by Prabodhananda.

"The Patanjali philosophy lays down this — the ultimate aim of man is salvation of the Self. This belief is also not accepted by the Vaishnavas. Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, dhyana, dharana, samadhi and so on are of no avail. They all are of no use unless one serves God. By serving Him, one develops love for Him. This love is the ultimate aim. To control the inclinations of the mind by pure yama, niyama etc. cannot be the ultimate aim. The Vaishnavas do not accept this idea too.

"And those who worship Ganesha or Shakti with some personal motive also do not take the right path. They too want objects of enjoyment. They want salvation by this kind of worship. Salvation is also a personal motive. Such worshippers with some personal motive remain busy in (worldly) wealth.

"Besides Sankracharya said, 'The highest aim is to go beyond form, taste and the rest.' He named it samadhi. He has called it the attainment of Brahman-disposition by the jiva. What is samadhi? That too is with a selfish motive.

"Sri Chaitanya has determined what is the real nature of the jiva — 'the real nature of jiva is to be ever the servant of Krishna.' Whether one agrees to it or not, the jiva is ever the servant of Krishna.

"Having gone deeply on all paths, Prabodhananda has laid this principle. There is no other way for the jiva except the one Sri Chaitanya Deva has indicated."

Prabhu talks very much in the language of the sadhus. His pronouncement is very clear. As the air passes between his teeth, his pronunciation sometimes becomes defective. He is quite well read. In between, he recites slokas. Sometimes a very simple and easy idea falls into the jungle of words and becomes obscure.

Prabhu – What is said in Vedanta, in Upanishad — '*Yato va imani bhutani* (from where these beings come from),' and so on — has not been able to show the way to Sri Chaitanya Deva. This is how Sri Prabodhananda has thought out.

M. – Ramaprasad said, 'I carry both bhakti and *mukti* (salvation) over my head?'

Prabhu – No, this is another kind of idea. He is [a devotee of] Shakti, not a Vaishnava (devotee).

"Prabodhananda does not accept an empiricist as a Vaishnava (devotee). How will he know about God? The Vaishnavas do not accept even the idealists. How can the lowly jiva be one with the Lord?

"Sri Chaitanya Deva has determined, what is the supreme aim — to gain *ahetuki* (pure and selfless) devotion for Him in every life. This is the last thing."

Prabhu's ideas on determining the principle continue from seven thirty in the

evening to quarter to nine. Sometimes he talks in a very inspired manner. In between when he forgets a sloka he asks the devotees sitting near him. They bring them it up.

Having recited a sloka he explains it.

Prabhu – This too is a sloka of Prabodhananda. It means — live in the world surrendering yourself to the Lord and keep company of the holy. When His grace dawns, He will lift the mind from the world of senses.

Prabhu recites another sloka of Prabodhananda.

Prabhu – In the second sloka Prabodhananda says, ‘He who considers a brahmin on account of his birth the same as a person of brahminic actions is not eligible for bhakti. He remains an ignorant person.’

"Take for an example a father having two sons. One of them is jailed because he is a thief while the other engages himself in the worship of the Lord. He who does not see difference between these two, the devotee boy and the non-devotee boy, who cannot understand the difference between pure gold and the impure gold, he who is overwhelmed by seeing the outer splendour, such a person can never have devotion for Krishna. This should be understood."

M. (humbly folding his hands) – You have been speaking today for a long time. You must be tired. Please give us leave today.

The current of dialogue stops. Prabhu tells the beads. A good result of japa is visible. Even when discussing very exciting topics the face of Prabhu bears the natural mood.

M. and the devotees rise and come out. The householder devotee with a wristwatch stands outside talking to M.

The devotee (to M.) – Come here sometimes. You will be able to understand if you do so. How can one understand without a commentary?

M. – What use is lecture? One gets an awakening just by seeing you people.

Another disciple – Is commentary of no use? One cannot understand properly without it.

"Lord Chaitanya Deva has said, ‘One must always comment on Krishna’s story.’ "

M. – Yes, one has gained so much just by seeing you people. How much more should be gained by hearing you.

Prabhu (reciting a sloka from the Bhagavata) – Here it is said that those who have taken this path, those who are always engaged in Him should be heard. If one hears it from others, they will bring in worldly matters with it.

M. – Please bless that we may gain devotion at the lotus feet of Sri Chaitanya Deva.

M. comes down the stairs with the devotees. He goes out. Peeping through the western door of the outer room, he sees a sadhu sitting on the floor and reading out the Bhagavata. He is 27 or 28, fair in complexion and graduated in B.A. All other sadhus seated in front are listening to him. Some of them are in gerua clothes and others in white. All of them have shaven head, with a tuft of hair on the crown and are wearing the sacred thread. They are holding the bag of string of beads. Their lips are moving. Both japa and listening to the Bhagavata go on simultaneously. It is very inspiring.

M. has come out. A number of sadhus living in the *math* and the bhaktas come out with M. to bid goodbye.

M. takes his seat in the car along with the bhaktas. Joining his hands, he again offers namaskar to the sadhus and bhaktas.

The car starts. M. is feeling very much out of sorts — old as he is. He feels somewhat normal in the open. He says, ""Baba, this conversation has heated my head. The pundits perhaps always do so. I had the desire to have the darshan. Can one get everything? One should take as much of honey as it is available at a place. Aha, my mind was so inspired with Chaitanya Deva on seeing them — [as though] he is absorbed in Hari's name in Puri along with the bhaktas! This is our principle gain."

The car moves. Along with it the mind of a devotee is also moving. He is thinking, "Sri Ramakrishna had seen M. in the singing party of Chaitanya with his physical eyes. And then hearing him read out the Chaitanya Bhagavata he had said, "I have recognized who you are." And he had added, "You are a member of the inner circle, a person belonging to this place — of the same substance as father and son. You will have to do a little of the Mother's work. You will have to narrate the Bhagavata to the people." And then he said, "Sachchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute) has come into this body. Christ, Chaitanya and I are one." And he also said, "Mother, you granted him a kala of Your Shakti! Well, it will be enough to do Your work (of teaching humanity)." How many scholars have become sadhus with the help of M.! How many knowers of scriptures have got the essence! What was M.'s aim in visiting GodiaGaudia Math today?! To realize the bhava (mood) of Chaitanya Deva is his right by virtue of his karma. Is this perfected devotee of Chaitanya moving the lower dice instead of the higher one — a humble way of teaching humanity?"



Morton School, Calcutta
Sunday, 14th September 1924
29th Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.).
The first day of the dark fortnight
25 Dandas / 29 Palas.

M. IN THE MATH, TEMPLE AND KHADI EXHIBITION

1.

Morton School. Four in the evening. M. is sitting in the verandah on the second level. Antevasi is close to him. Dr. Bakshi has arrived by his car. He offers pranam to M. Antevasi whispers to the Doctor, "M. has the desire to witness the Khadi exhibition. Just ask him if he likes to go." M. agrees. Today it is Monday, 15 September 1924, 30th Bhadra 1331 (B.Y.), the second day of the dark fortnight, 15 Dandas / 34 Palas.

The exhibition is being held in the Mirzapur Park. M. goes there accompanied by Dr. Bakshi and Jagabandhu. He meets Ganen brahmachari near the western gate of the park. Ganen takes M. inside and shows him all.

There is a tent to the south of the park. Various kinds of spinning wheels can be seen there. To the east, there are three more tents. In the first tent to the south, there is a loom. The second one is the shop of the organization. In the third tent, one can see yarn and cloth brought from different centres.

M. sees all this with the curiosity of a child. M. has great praise for the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. The spinning wheel provides cloth to the poor to cover his body. Even if the cloth is ordinary, it brings some income. The greatest gain of the spinning wheel is that it supports the mind. It keeps the mind engaged in work. Otherwise, the ordinary man feels confused. He becomes addicted to laziness. It has another advantage — it concentrates the mind. Because of all these reasons M. has all praise for Gandhi Maharaj. Though the spinning wheel looks a ridiculous object in the modern machine age, it helps man to attain his humanness. So M. is in favour of Mahatma Gandhi's principles of the spinning wheel and the khadi, who has resurrected this ancient India's machine — the spinning wheel.

Courtyard of the Morton School. It is seven in the evening. M. has come back from the Khadi exhibition. The devotees bring four benches and place them to make a square. M. sits down on the eastern bench. He has bhaktas on his three sides — the Elder Jiten, Jagabandhu, the Younger Romesh, Vinay's younger brother Prabhas and others. Abhay Babu, Vijay Krishna Goswami's disciple, is also there. Hardly have they exchanged a few words when it suddenly begins to rain in torrents as the clouds have burst.

They all rise and go to the verandah on the second level to take their seats on the benches in front of the staircase, facing towards south. To the left of Abhay Babu is M. To the left of M. is the Elder Jiten and others.

Abhay Babu is an old man of quiet disposition. He sings a song at M.'s behest. It is followed by three songs sung by M. All the songs are Thakur's.

Song — *O Mother, the bewitcher of Hara, You have enchanted the whole world...*

Song — *When shall I be lost in samadhi...*

Song — *The name of Radha...*

M. begins to converse now.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Samadhi means that now one has no more need of it (the world). Without attaining samadhi one cannot rid oneself of it. So long as one lives, there is the world. Samadhi means to give it

up and be one with God. Then there is no longer the world. While one lives on a slightly lower level one has to accept the world. And when one accepts the world, one accepts everything in it. One cannot then say that it (the world) is nothing.

"But how does one gain samadhi? It is possible only by His grace. By merely striving for it, one cannot attain samadhi. Thus God's grace is necessary. It is only then that sincere effort is made with perseverance. It is only then that there is a possibility of the dawn of grace. One cannot say that grace is bound to come. Who can say it? Is he the master of this world? If he is not how can he assert it? All one can say is that we have to follow this path because the rishis and the avataras went through it.

"Since samadhi is not attained, what to do then? There are all kinds of forces working in the world. So many of them are benevolent while the others are malevolent. Thakur taught us to take the good ones. To live with all these — company of sadhus, service to sadhus and singing the name and glories of God. So he said, 'Hold God with one hand and work in the world with the other. When the time is ripe you will be able to hold Him with both hands.' The company of sadhus is only the way to holding Him with one hand. Without His grace it is not possible to rid oneself of the world, to attain samadhi. In this state, one should live in the splendour of sattvaguna — of bhakti, bhakta, association with sadhus, japa, dhyana, puja and reading of holy books, all these.

"Thakur has made the bhaktas' path still easier. He said, 'Hold me, meditate on me. Just by knowing who I am and who you are will lead you to success. You will not have to do so much.' Knowing me, that is I am God, that I have come as avatara and that you are my children dependent on me. You will not have to think too much then. It is like a lifeboat in a boundless sea of the world."

M. (to a bhakta) — The awakening results from the combination of two things — one external and the other internal. Which one can you give up? Both of these two constitute life.

It has started raining. Conversation has also ended. The Amherst Street is full of water. M. is worried how to make Abhay Babu reach his home in the Sukia Street. It is decided that he should be sent by a rickshaw. Now it is difficult to get a rickshaw. One of the bhaktas goes out. He brings two rickshaws from the Harrison Road, while he himself gets wet. Abhay Babu goes by one of them, accompanied by the Younger Romesh. M. has instructed the Younger Romesh to see to it that Abhay Babu has reached inside his home before he leaves for his house. Jiten Babu goes by the other rickshaw. Prabhas stays behind with Jagabandhu in the Morton School taking his meals in the mess in front.

2.

Mirzapur Park. It is about five in the afternoon. M. sees the Khadi exhibition today again. This movement is very dear to M. Yesterday too, he was there. But today he has walked down to it daringly. He is accompanied by Antevasi. He sees everything very keenly. Different kinds of khadi — yarn and cloth of various colours — have been brought from different places of Bengal.

It appears from M.'s disposition that behind his curiosity has awakened as if some ancient deep emotion on seeing the exhibition. He likes to visualize the shape of the ancient Bharat — the Bharat of the rishis. Sometimes his imaginative mind wanders in the Bharat of the Puranas. Kanava Muni's ashrama described by Kalidasa is a very favourite and holy resting place for M. He not only enjoys its sweet description himself, drowning it in nectar, but he also makes the bhaktas partake its sweetness. He generally visits this *tapovana* fragrant with the smoke of yajnas moving about in the chariot of his mind. Sometimes he gets absorbed in meditation along with the meditating vegetation in the still atmosphere of the *tapovana*. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna has brought him to this earth along with his divine power of imagination — to enable him to write the immortal scripture of Kathamrita, like Veda Vyasa, and to sing the praises and glories of the Lord day and night like Narada. A new life is being injected in India and the world with the Ganga of the Kathamrita, written by him. Many a time M. says, "Just visualize this image of the ancient Bharata — the rishis absorbed everywhere in meditation. They take fruits and roots growing in the forest to sustain life. And then, the ordinary man almost turning into a sannyasi by what he learns from the life of the rishis even though living in the household. The kings serve the rishis as their obedient servants, while they are all *rajarishis*. Like the rishis, they make the ancient ideal of Bharat enter at every level of the society — that the highest aim of human life is to realize God. The ordinary man earning his livelihood by simple farming, and the splendour of divinity prevailing at every level of the society."

Abhyam sattvasamshuddhi jnanayoga vyavasthitih,

Danam damah cha yajnah cha svashyayah tapah arjavam.

(Gita 16:1)

[Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga, almsgiving, control of the senses, yajna, study of scriptures, austerity and straight forwardness.]

The Bharat of M.'s imagination is disturbed nowadays. No food grains, no cloth, no education and no house. Mahatma Gandhi is engaged in bringing back the ancient serene Bharat in a modern way. All genius men, mahatmas and the great of the land are supporting him in this holy resolve. So M. repeatedly visits this great yajna of the spinning wheel and Khadi founded by Gandhiji, with the offering of hope, assurance and prayers. This exhibition of the spinning wheel is the *Triveni* (holy confluence of the three sacred rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati) of the India's past and present. Accepting his pain of old age, he has come today to this sacred conjunction to have a holy dip. Numerous groups of men are spinning the wheel quietly. M. also has the darshan of this great yajna without speaking. Imagination and reality, both are manifest in M.'s eyes and face.

M. returns on foot by the eastern footpath of the Amherst street. He comes and stands at the turning of the Harrison Road. He has to cross to the other side. A person seated on the footpath is selling the monthly magazine Basumati. Antevasi says, "This is the Basumati." M. says, "Yes, it contains my article." The newspaperman asks, "Who is he?" Antevasi tells him, "He is M., the writer of the Kathamrita." He offers him pranam folding his hands. This number of the magazine contains — Sri Ramakrishna's avatarhood and his teaching to Swami Vivekananda that to carry out sadhana with women as partners is a dirty path.

The courtyard of the Morton School. M. is seated on a bench facing west. On all three sides of him are seated the devotees. It is about seven in the evening. The devotees have already been waiting for M. He had gone to the Mirzapur Park to witness the Khadi exhibition. Dr. Bakshi comes by his car.

He (M.) again wants to go out today. He says, "It would be nice if we once visit the Vivekananda Society."

M. often says, "I wish to witness all the scenes together — what different people are doing for the Lord and how do they call on Him in different parts of the city of Calcutta."

Today again M. goes out by car with Doctor Bakshi and Jagabandhu. To start with, he offers pranams to Mother Kali of Thanthania. The car is parked on the footpath in the Cornwallis Street. M. gets into the car. A middle-aged gentleman comes and very devotedly prostrates himself before M. to offer him pranam — in a most humble manner. Neither M. nor the devotees recognize him.

The Vivekananda Society is situated at 72, Cornwallis Street on the eastern footpath. Climbing up to the second level, M. goes directly into the Thakur's shrine and offers his pranam by prostrating on the ground. Swami Ramananda, the head of the ashrama, coming to know of it takes M. with him to the parlour and offers him seat on an inclined bedroll. He shows him all respect and gives him a warm welcome.

M. is seated near the western door facing east. Vishreshwar Mukherji, a devotee, comes and offers him pranam. They go and stand in the verandah, while they talk. In front is the Cornwallis Street. M. sees the library. Going beyond the Thakur's shrine he again goes to take his seat in the sitting room to the north. Soon the arati of Thakur starts. Sitting in that very room M. witnesses the arati. When it ends he takes some prasad and departs. He has been here only for half an hour.

The car goes towards the South through the Cornwallis Street. It reaches the Dand's hostel to the north of the Cornwallis square. M. says, "Shall we go to the GodiaGaudia Math again? Let us listen to the reading of Chaitanya Charitamrita. (Thinking for a while) Have we been able to give up all? Have we been able to give up the Brahmo bhaktas? Why should we then give them up? We must accept all. Angularities will always be there. Should that be the reason to give them up? All are calling upon Him — the same one God."

The car is going through the Beadon Street. It stops at the GodiaGaudia Math — on the western footpath of the southern crossing. M. enters the *math* on foot. Why did he stop the car from reaching in front of the *math*? One must come with humility to have darshan of the deity and sadhus; it seems that it is to teach this to the bhaktas he has taken up this *bhava* (mood). Has he gone to the GodiaGaudia Math for the third time to teach by example that one should take all (every religion), and that everybody is calling on Him, the same one God?

Going into the parlour, today too M. occupies the seat on the cotton carpet facing west, in front of the almirah on the eastern wall, as he did yesterday. But the room is warm today because the door of the room has been shut. M. feels very uncomfortable due to airlessness. The north-eastern door of the room has been shut and women are made to sit close to it. Staying there just for five minutes M. comes out with the bhaktas. Some of them request him to stay there a little longer. A person accompanying the women is an agent. He says, "Why have you allowed them to leave in the midst of the ladies?" Another person says, "But that's why we asked him to stay on a little longer." That is the only one door to go out of the room. Kirtan is going on in the room today.

M. has not enjoyed himself today as he did yesterday. Yesterday the sadhus had together performed the arati first. Then they offered their salutations and heard the Bhagavata. The attendance today is mixed. That's why, the yesterday's *bhava* (fervour) is not present today. On the one hand it is hot, on the other the *bhava* is different. It is for these two reasons that M. had

left.

Coming out M. stands there in the open breeze. A person comes and says to the Doctor, "We are very happy to see you today along with M. If you have any questions to ask, please do so from Prabhu." That person is a devotee of this ashrama, known to the Doctor.

While walking, M. talks to a sadhu. Reaching the ashrama press, both of them stand there and talk for a few moments. It is all about the ashrama — the daily routine of the ashrama, the books published so far and so on. M. comes to know from the same sadhu that Chaitanya Charitamrita is going to be read after some time later. It is to hear this that M. has come today. But since it is to take some time more, he leaves.

3.

The car stops in front of the Morton School. M. and Antevasi alight from it. And the Doctor leaves for his home in Cossipore. It is about half past eight.

Not finding M. there the devotees wait for him, down in the courtyard — in the square made with benches. M. sits down on the eastern bench and faces west. In front of him is the road. The devotees are sitting on three sides of M. in front of him — the Elder Jiten, Balai, the Younger Nalini, the Younger Romesh, Jagabandhu and so on.

Soon arrives Nath Babu, the old Brahmo devotee. M. makes him sit close to himself with utmost consideration. He is above eighty but his body is stronger than that of M. He was Keshab Babu's attendant. He saw Thakur several times with him. He begins to talk as he takes his seat.

Nath (to M.) — I have a complaint. I went to see Mahesh Bhattacharya in Belur. He was then residing in a house to the north of the *math*. A sannyasi came and asked me to visit the Thakur's shrine and have his darshan. I said, 'But why? What shall I see in Thakur's shrine? They just worship an image there. One offers eight annas or a rupee, and offers one's namaskar, just that.'?

(With a great surprise, force fully) "I say Mahendra Babu, they have made our Paramahansa Mahashay as God. So many rasagullas (a sweetmeat) I have taken from his hands! How much love I received from him! Can I forget it? Now I see that making God of him they have placed his image on the altar. I say, what have they done at last to our Paramahansa Mahashay!"

M. (lovingly) — As you say, some eight images have been placed together in one room — that of the Buddha, Gandhi, Sri Ramakrishna and others. Why have they done so? It is because, you people like to see them. That too is like this. They worship him with the same feeling. You do it with this feeling,. They have that.

"Don't you remember, Paramahansa used to say, 'Every stomach can not digest *pulao* (fried rice).' You people are men of *pulao* (devotees of the formless God)."

The old Nath Babu is fully satisfied and leaves laughing.

M. (to the bhaktas, laughing) — Why should anybody reason with them? Thakur used to silence people like this.

"They cannot take away Thakur's love [from their mind]. He (Thakur) treated them as an equal, you see. That's why he spoke like it. His is the feeling of a friend. Thakur used to say, 'As is one's feeling, so is one's gain.' It's enough if one has love for Him. This is the real thing. Thakur would say so many times, 'The essential thing is the ecstatic love of Sachchidananda.'

"He used to say particularly to these men of the Brahmo Samaj, 'Whichever way you may eat the sugared bread, it will taste sweet — whether you eat it straight or at an angle.' Thakur has so many kinds of bhaktas. Many are becoming his bhaktas, many more will become in future. Can we know them all?

"Aha, blessed are these people! How much they have seen him! How much love they have received from him! May be they do not know that he was God come down in a human body in Dakshineswar. But he knows that these people have given him their love. Thakur himself said, 'If you take chili unknowingly, you will still feel its pungency.' This is exactly like that. Everybody cannot feel the same way [about Him], they cannot do so. Whichever way He manifests Himself to a person, he can only feel that. There are various kinds of receptacles. Even so if He wills a small receptacle can become a big one.

"And then there are all kinds of bhaktas — the visiting bhaktas, the bhaktas of the outer circle, the bhaktas of inner circle and so on. The bhaktas of inner circle have taken him as God — that is how they felt about him. Is it their own choice? He revealed himself to them like that. He gave these people the power to recognize him. So they say, 'He is God.' They proclaim freely, 'He who is *Akhanda* (Indivisible) Sachchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute), beyond mind and speech, whose praises are sung by the Vedas, He who creates, preserves and dissolves has now come as a man three and a half cubits tall.' How could they recognize him, tell me? He came this time hiding himself with so many coverings. Rama, Krishna and Chaitanya had worldly splendour. But in him there was only sweetness. Externally he was a humble brahmin, a priest on six rupees a month, indigent, the members of his family had not enough to eat and, inflicted with malaria. Besides, he would sometimes roam about naked like a mad man, holding a long pole in his hand. And add to it, he would make a tale of cloth and frisk about with it like Hanuman. Who has the power to know him with so many veils?

"He had recognized himself and to whom he reveals recognizes him. It is no cleverness on the part of anybody. Even those *gopis* (milkmaids) to whom Thakur would bow to offer pranam and about whom he used to say that even a grain of the love they had could turn the man upside down, even they could not recognize him at first. The second time too they could not recognize him. They thought that Krishna was their beloved. In the first *rasa* (dance with Krishna), every *gopi* finding Krishna as her beloved one, felt proud that she was the best among other women because Krishna was her most beloved one. But Sri Krishna was dancing with every *gopi* at the same time. However, the fun part of it is was that every *gopi* thought she alone had got Krishna as her husband and that none else had

him. When she felt this pride Krishna disappeared at once. Then she realized that Sri Krishna was not only her husband but the husband of the whole world. It was by his touch that they gained this knowledge. Earlier they were not able to know him. Later on, when they cried and cried, their pride vanished and in the second *rasa* they had his darshan. They recognized him fully that he was her husband, and the husband of the world, that he was her master and the master of the world.

"Are these Brahma bhaktas small men? They have seen the Lord in a human body, they have touched him, talked to him. Nobody can say that since they are not at one with us, they are men of no import. The Mother cooks for everybody what suits his digestion. They couldn't digest more than that. If you put more in the stomach it would burst, put it too much it would snap. Arjuna was such an eligible devotee, of such a high order yet he could not bear (Lord Krishna's Universal Form). He began to tremble. His head began to spin. Then the Lord assumed his normal looks and Arjuna was normal.

"The devotees began to tremble when Thakur too showed them his real Self. Then he resumed his human form — becoming a brahmin priest. The devotees were amazed.

"They are indeed blessed who received his love, who gave him their love, who saw him, touched him and talked to him — all such men are worthy of our salutations. These Brahma bhaktas are also worthy of our namaskar. Reason? They received Thakur's love in whatever mood it may have been."



Morton School, Calcutta
Tuesday, 16 September 1924
31st Bhadra, 1331 (B.Y.)
The third day of the dark fortnight
6 Dandas / 57 Palas.

WORLD PEACE BY JOINING SCIENCE WITH PHILOSOPHY

1.

Morton School. Eight in the evening. M. is seated in a chair on the terrace facing north. In front of him on all three sides are seated the devotees.

Today it is Wednesday, 17 September, 1924, the first of Aswin, 1331 (B.Y.), Wednesday the fourth day of the dark fortnight, 19 Dandas / 5 Palas.

The Kathamrita is under print. That's why M. is so very tired. On the one hand, he is old and on the other, there is such a burden of work on him. That's why he is tired. Beside him are devotees — the Younger Nalini, the Younger Jiten, the Younger Romesh, Balai, Manoranjan, Jagabandhu and others.

The sky is overcast. It has not started raining yet. Very soon arrive Doctor Bakshi and his brother Vinay. To shake off his fatigue M. begins to talk on Godly matters. He says, "The mind rises in divine talk. One then does not feel fatigue so much. Sometimes one forgets the body."

M. (to the Younger Nalini) – Did you not go to the GodiaGaudia Math? It is so near, you should visit it. One must go there quickly, have darshan of Gauranga, offer namaskar to sadhus and then come back. They also repeat the name of God, you know.

M. (to the Younger Romesh) – You should also go there once in your morning walk. Wake up at six o'clock and go there. You may come back early in the morning and then again go there. (Everybody laughs loudly).

M. (to the bhaktas) – Can you see the stars in the sky?

Mohan – Yes, sir.

M. – Now have you been able to realize how insignificant is man? How does this doership come? One should see all this. Then one's idea of doership vanishes. When one realizes that only God is the doer and the man is a non-doer one is saved. Then one may know that Mahamaya will not make him work in the play any more.

"But the sense of doership does not leave. Such is His enchanting power. Think you may in thousand ways, the sense of doership returns from somewhere or the other. So Thakur showed the way, 'Live keeping the rascal as the servant-I.' Here too, the pretence of doership remains outside, the inside is hollow."

Mohan – Can one live as a servant by trying to do so?

M. – No. Unless He wills it cannot be done. The main thing is His will. Even so, he who tries with heart and soul succeeds. By imploring and weeping the Mother removes a lot of the veil. One is able to see the inside at times. This does the trick. One has to make an effort. 'I am going to do it,' such should be the determination. And

then one should make an effort.

"When this problem is solved, there is no other serious problem left in the life. Then one ever lives ever joyfully even in this world of happiness and grief. All troubles are generated by one's independent claim. So Thakur said, 'Everything is under Him.'

"So long as the body lasts one is in His jurisdiction. Till then one should live as the servant. One has to graft the 'I' to Him, that's all."

M. thinks for a while and then resumes the conversation.

M. (to the bhaktas) – Everybody who peeps into his life becomes speechless. He sees His hand. In what a wonderful thing the body and mind reside, what a strange intellect is working behind it and what an amazing power it is?

"Outside there is the world, inside there is the mind and in between the senses. Besides, how many varieties there are of the mind, how many states it has — one of them being the memory.

"I was one, or one and a half years old. I am reminded of an incident of that period — of my childhood. I was standing in the kitchen one day and seeing the sunset from a corner. My mother and others were busy in domestic chores. It left its impression on my tabularasa."

M. (pointing at the sky) – The yogis can go to all these regions. (Fixing his gaze quietly on the sky for a long time) They would take their subtle mind there. The gross body would body keeps lying here. It is like going out on an excursion, like one goes out in a train.

"It is a science. It is by means of it that the world of man has learnt about those regions. It is perhaps not so prevalent now. But what has happened once will happen again.

"The state of man's mind changes with different conditions. It is the same with the society. The society also changes the state of man's mind. That's the reason why the rishis have divided time into Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. And they have also described the characteristics of all the periods in a broad manner.

"Science alone cannot erase all these doubts. On taking the evidence of the yogis it immediately solves the problem.

"Many scientists have tried to follow the path of the yogis. By joining physics with metaphysics all problems can be solved. And the union of science and philosophy shall bring world peace.

"In this country physics has not been made much use of. The rishis have gone up with the help of metaphysics. The West is also nearing metaphysics now with the help of physics. They have taken up physics. Till they take up metaphysics this confusion will subsist, as it generally happens in material civilization."

M. (to the Younger Jiten) – Where? Has Jiten Babu not come?

The Bhaktas (together) – But he is seated here.

M. – He is concealed in darkness.

The Elder Jiten – Can I ever stop talking nonsense? I was trying a bit today.

M. – No, you people only talk of Him. Even when you express some doubt, in principal you talk of Him.

2.

Today it is 18 September 1924. M. is seated on a mat facing south on the terrace of the Morton School — in front of Antevasi's cabin. Near by are seated Priyanath Brahmachari, the Doctor, Vinay, Jagabandhu, Siddheshwar and others. Siddheshwar Neogi is a student of the Morton School studying for his matriculation. His uncle (father's younger brother) is a sadhu of the Belur Math. He has a good disposition. Sometimes, he comes to visit M. M. converses.

M.(to Siddheshwar) – Is everything well?

Siddheshwar – No, sir. I suffer from headache these days.

M. – Had you been coming here, I would have cured it earlier. Now look here. You should go out for long walks. Go to the Mirzapur Park and just roam about. (M. with his eyes smiling) There is a way to cure the disease. (With a simulated graveness) You are all my own. This is something very secret. (In a very thin tone) Examining everybody's faeces. (Everybody laughs noisily with a burst of laughter).

"Logic — in English logic there is the Law of Difference. According to it, if you change your food you get rid of the disease. What you cannot digest you can find by examining the faeces. What you cannot digest give it up. Sickness comes from taking (wrong) food."

Mohan – Doesn't it come from external causes?

M. – That is in exceptional cases. Like one falls from the roof. Will he not be ill?

M. (to Siddheshwar) – When there is pain of the head one should not practise too much meditation. One should then repeat His name a lot. One should hear His name and keep company of sadhus. And one should roam about seeing His leela. (Pointing at the outer world with his eyes) By seeing all one is reminded of Him alone. One should roam about and sleep well. Didn't you go to the Khadi fair being held in the Mirzapur Park?. Just go there once to see it. When you have headache don't let your mind go inwards. All this is His splendour. See it all, walk a lot, eat and sleep. And come to me sometimes.

Today it is 19 September 1924, Friday, the third of Aswin, 1331 (B.Y.). It is six in the evening. M. is going out for a drive in the Doctor's car. With him are Jagabandhu, Vinay and the Doctor. The car goes through the Amherst Street, Maniktala Road and stops at the north-western corner of the Cornwallis Square. M. comes down the car with his companions. He sends the Doctor to his house in Cossipore and himself enters the Cornwallis Square from the gate of that corner along with Vinay and Jagabandhu. They walk

towards the east. Holding the railing of the tank in front of the rest house, he sees the tank. Then he proceeds towards the south. Then coming out of the gate of the western corner he crosses the Cornwallis Street and walks towards the south by the western footpath. Having crossed the Maniktala road he sees the lecture hall of the Christian missionaries situated at the corner of the road

It is evening. The Durga Puja is to be celebrated within a few days. The shops are decorated with various kinds of articles. There is a flood of electric lights. The merchandise is dazzling under the glow of this light in the shops. All are full of joy at the coming of the All-Blissful Mother. Why has He arranged all these festivals? All are scalded by the fire of the world. Too much of sorrow breaks the man. So He has planned this joy of festival from time to time. This permits people to forget their grief and enjoy themselves holding the Mother. It is to protect the world that such moments of merrymaking are there. Besides, they tell us that the world is transitory and God is eternal. It is with all these that He protects the world.

Pointing at a shop he says, "Just see, how many people are here while there are none there."

M. proceeds towards the south. He points towards a single storey old house situated behind the thatched houses on the main road to the south of Srimani Bazaar and says, "I used to come here to study. I was five then. My teacher was a nice man. Quite often he would pick me up in his arms and leave me home."

Pointing towards a big building on the other side of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, he says, "I came there to partake of a feast when I was four with my mother by a palanquin. It was Dr. Gobind's house then." Pointing at a single storey house in the opposite direction other side of Sankar Ghosh Lane, he says, "When I was about eight I used to study there. The school had shifted to this building after the school had differences with Vidyasagar Mahashay. When I was about ten I saw Vidyasagar Mahashay for the first time. He was walking away clattering his shoes. Everybody said that there goes Vidyasagar."

In the meanwhile, M. comes to Thanthania and stands in front of Mother Kali. He returns at about nine at night with the bhaktas to the Morton School after offering the pranams to the Mother and having Her darshan.

Today it is 20 September 1924, Saturday, fourth of Aswin, 1331 (B.Y.). The seventh day of the dark fortnight, 32 Dandas / 28 Palas.

The roof of the Morton School. It is two in the afternoon. Many bhaktas of Saturday have arrived — the Stout Sudhir, Bhavarani, Bholanath, 'Kalo' and others. They come one day in a week on their return from the office. Antevasi is lying on a bench in front of his tin cabin. He is talking with the devotees. M. has shut himself in his room and resting.

At five o'clock M. comes out and sits on a chair on the terrace facing north. He makes kind enquiries from the bhaktas and reads the proof with Antevasi. The Kathamrita is under print. Antevasi holds the copy while M. corrects the proof. He says to Antevasi, "Please read more loudly. Let others also hear."

Jiten Mukherji comes in about six. He says, "My wife has also come." M. goes and standing in the staircase room exchanges a few words. The couple offers pranam and departs.

M. comes and again takes his seat on the terrace. Antevasi sees the proofs all by himself. M. says to him, "You may teach them. They will help you in your work."

M. (to the devotees) – Why has it been arranged this way? So that the bhaktas may forget their worldly sorrows and grief by hearing His nectarine words. Man's mind always remains restless by these things, you know. The ordinary man forgets God during his happy times. That is why, He has provided sorrow. It reminds man of Him. By remembering Him one does not get drowned completely in grief and sorrows. One gains strength to bear. The devotee thinks, 'This grief is also given by Him. So I must bear it. He is benevolence Himself. Undoubtedly this sorrow will bring me good.'

"One gets a taste of eternal joy by sublimating one's grief (joining it with God). How can this be done?, The way to it has been shown by Thakur to people with his nectarine words of his lips to the people. Didn't he say, 'I am the avatara.' And he said, 'It is the Mother who talks through this mouth.' He who has put faith in his words is saved.

"Just see, what an affair! He who has bound one with maya, comes as a man and tells the way how to free oneself from it. Says he: Live by contracting a relationship with God — I am His servant, His child, such feelings. One develops love for Him by doing so. One is saved thus.

"This is a very easy path. To create a double personality — one, worldly and the other, divine. The real self of man is divine. The rishis say, 'The man is the son of the Immortal Bliss —,' child of God.' Understand this and it is done."

The next day M. takes part in the worship at Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj throughout the evening.

3.

The terrace of the Morton School. 2 p.m. Two young men are sitting on a bench in front of the tin cabin and reading the the Kathamrita, appendix — 'Incarnation of God and sadhana taking women as companions.' Having talked to the two boys for a while Antevasi handed it to them to read. It is appearing in the monthly magazine Basumati these days. Both the young men are studying for their M. A. in college — one in the Bangwasi College and the other in the South Suburban College. They are desirous of M.'s darshans.

At four o'clock M. comes to the terrace. The boys offer pranams to M. One of them has very much the face of a devotee — he is eighteen. M. talks happily with him. Then he talks to his companion.

M. (to the latter) – Will you study logic? It is called science of reasoning. By reading it one can catch the defect in one's reasoning. One should first know the shortcomings of one's thinking. There are so many complexities in one's intellect, like a thread in the reel.

"He who has the power of great thinking can easily catch one's defects. Without it one does not succeed in one's undertaking. Suppose you have to grow paddy on a plot of a land. You are first to take out all the rubbish from underbelow the earth with the help of a plough. Then if you sow again with the help of the plough you would get a good crop.

"It does not work if you plough superficially just on the surface. May be there is a brick some three cubits below.

"It is the same with man's mind and intellect. If you clean the intellect and then place the seed you will reap the fruit a hundred-fold. Otherwise, the plant will sprout but will die.

"Now how to clean the intellect? Thakur said, 'By keeping the company of the sadhus.' That is to say, keep company of those who have a clean intellect and who have erased all their sensory desires. By doing so yours will also become like them. The rubbish of the mind means desires — sensory desires."

M. (to both the young men) – If the minds of some does not go to the sadhus, it means that they have a lot of sensuous desires. Perhaps, it is the beginning of their human life. Thakur used to see Narayana in all. Yet he could not sit long with such people. He used to feel as if his breathing is going to stop. Those who lived with him had always to live with dhyana, japa and talk on God — all these.

"Did he hate anybody? No. He had such a pure mind that it could not live with lower things — *shuddha-papa-viddham* (pure, untouched by sin)."

M. – There was a challenge of the modern civilization. It is only in this way that the devotees could gain awareness of where they stood. Even his bones and skin were pure.

"One should pray to God, 'Grant me jnana and bhakti.' Swami Vivekananda prayed to Mother Kali to grant him jnana and bhakti. He had gone to Her to ask for something else because of the trials of life he was facing. But he asked jnana and bhakti — he could not ask for anything else."

The student from Bangwasi college – To call on God for jnana and bhakti is also *sakama* (with a motive).

M. (laughing) – I see that he is somewhat logical. It seems you have read logic? Thakur said, 'The *hinchā* spinach is not to be counted as a spinach, nor sugar candy among sweetmeats.' It is the same with it. Jnana, bhakti, discrimination, dispassion, ecstatic love and samadhi — the desire for these is not to be counted among sensuous desires. The reason? They free the *jiva* (the embodied soul), while the other desires bind him.

M. (to the young men) – Well, have you had the darshan of Swami Abhedananda? Please go and have his darshan once. You will offer him pranam. Today it is his birth anniversary. He was in America for twenty five years. He has served Thakur for almost a year. What a great man he is! It is such a good day for going there. You may not get such an opportunity again. Go and have his darshan.

The boys offer pranam to M. and set out to have darshan of Abhedananda Maharaj. He is living in the Vedanta Society. It is situated at 11, Eden Hospital Road, behind the Medical College.

It is late in the evening. M. is seated and meditates with the bhaktas on the terrace. After a while arrive Doctor Bakshi with his brother Vinay. At about eight o'clock M. leaves for Vedanta Society by Doctor Bakshi's car. He has been invited there. With him are the Doctor, Vinay, the Younger Romesh and Jagabandhu. Gadadhar and the Younger Nalini also wanted to go there. But M. said to them, "No, you must stay on. You have already had his darshan during the day. Don't go again. Rather if some devotees come, please send them there."

The Vedanta Society is in a big flat on the first floor. In the lecture room are seated M. and Swami Abhedananda on a thin carpet spread over the floor. On the carpet there is an oil cloth. M. faces North while Abhedananda Maharaj sits in front of him facing south. Though requested a lot by Abhedananda Maharaj M. does not take a chair. Is it to teach humanity?

A number of sadhus and bhaktas are seated around them. Some others are standing. They are all curious to see them seated together and to hear what they say.

A young man is seated behind Abhedananda Maharaj wondering. He thinks, how much love there is between these two co-disciples! Both of them are men of high spiritual attainment, intimate disciples of the avatara. While one is a sannyasi, the other is a householder. But both of them see within themselves Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna as their worshipful deity. All the sadhus and bhaktas have the darshan of both of these divine bhaktas' sacred meeting, so full of divine love. And they hear their affectionate conversation, so full of deep and unworldly love.

Swami Abhedananda – Master Mahashay, please tell a little about Thakur. Knowing that you were to come, all these have been waiting so eagerly for a long time. Thakur himself engaged you in his lifetime in narrating his Kathamrita.

M. – Subodh Maharaj said to a pleader in Puri, 'You talk of God-realization, but do you call on Him? Do you ever sit in *dharna* (lying at a temple imploring something) as they do in Tarkeshwar?' What will it avail if you only speak about it? You have to develop a yearning for Him. It will happen only then.

"Here is a great saying of Thakur, 'His darshan follows yearning just as sunrise follows the dawn.' The avatara comes only to teach yearning. (To the bhaktas) How do you like it? Isn't it good?"

"One day the Younger Naren was talking about some other matters in the Cossipore garden. Hearing it Thakur said, 'Son, don't talk such things here. I don't like them. Do talk on God.'

(To the bhaktas) "How do you like it? Isn't it good? There is no end to his words. If one has to tell in one word all that he said, it is keep company of sadhus. (Pointing at Abhedananda Maharaj) Here is the concrete manifestation of his words."

M. rises and goes into every room of the ashrama. Library, the room for cane work, the dormitory and so on. Seeing all these he comes back and stands in front of Thakur's shrine. In front of him stands a little girl, three years old.

Swami Abhedananda says with a smiling face, "Offer pranam, offer pranam to him. He is Narada Muni in person. Have you never seen Narada Muni in some play? Here is the real Narada Muni."

M. is dressed in a white dhoti and a white shirt of long cloth with a white shawl on his shoulder. On his forehead there is *kesar* (saffron), his hair flowing that too white and his white beard coming down to the chest. He has always the name of Sri Ramakrishna in his throat.

Now, both the brother disciples are in a tight embrace. Now M. departs. He has prasad in his hand.

M. returns to the Morton School after one hour and a half. It is 10 p.m. The regular visiting bhaktas are waiting for him on the roof. M. comes and sits on a chair facing north. Says he, "It was very nice there. I didn't feel like coming back. Lest the Doctor Babu should be delayed I have come back?"



Morton School, Calcutta
Monday, 22 October 1924
Sixth of Aswin, 1331 (B.Y.)
The ninth day of the dark fortnight
42 Dandas / 48 Palas.

GIVING TO THE SEVAKS IS GIVING TO GOD

Morton School. M.'s room on the fourth level. M. is tired and lying on the bedding. The devotees enter the staircase room one by one. Dr. Bakshi, Yatin, the Stout Sudhir, the Elder Amulya, Balai, Vinay, Jagabandhu, the Younger Nalini, Manoranjan, the Younger Jiten, 'Phuldha' and others have come.

M. comes and takes his seat on the chair facing south. He says, "Let us have some reading of the Bhagavata." A particular bhakta goes to M.'s room and brings the Bhagavata from his table.

M. says, "Read from here." The Stout Sudhir reads. As desired by M. reading is done from the beginning. It is eight in the evening.

At first the reading of the story of Sukadeva takes place. It is followed by the description of the age of Kali.

M. — Aha, please read the description of the age of Kali again.

The reader reads — Difficult this age of Kali — this age of Kali deprives the man of his strength and vigour. In this age, the whole strength of the mind is wasted in sensory enjoyments. The will power becomes very weak. Man forgets God and so on.

M. shuts his eyes and listens to the text. His hands are joined together in his lap, his face is serene and grave. After half an hour, he goes to the third level for his meal. The reading is over. After fifteen minutes, M. returns. Now he describes something about his own character.

M. (to the devotees) — Last Saturday, I undertook an adventure. I left alone for Dakshineswar. Thakur's birthday fell on Sunday. I was very excited to go to Dakshineswar.

"How many of his memories are connected with Dakshineswar! When I am reminded of them, I forget that I am old. I had him early in my youth, you know. So, I feel in my mind as though I am still the same young man. Such a big impression it has left on the mind.

"The mind has developed in such a way. At the end, it loses consciousness of the body. His memory is indeed life. It is nectar itself. It is joy, it is peace, it is happiness.

"I went by bus up to Alambazar. And then walked down. I felt a little nervous when I was in Alambazar.

"I saw the castor oil machine of Natavar Panja. Then I came to the Endedah Road, the mosque and the house of the Yadu Mullick. Next a big gate and Gazitala. Thereafter Ananda Niketan, Thakur's (Devendra Nath Thakur's) house.

"On the way, I became very nervous. A friend was going on cycle. He asked whether I had some companion with me.

"Then as soon as I saw Yadu Mallick's garden and the main gate of

the temple, I regained courage. I don't know who came out of my mind. The past memory awakened in the mind. I was again the earlier young man. There was no body consciousness. I found that it was all in the mind.

"These spots are all old landmarks, you see. Earlier when I used to come I remembered them and leaving them behind one by one I would finally reach under the shelter of Thakur's feet.

"How easy it is now! And how much trouble I would take to reach there earlier! If my youth returns now, I will tell how one should go.

(After a little thought) "Once I went there. I was perspiring. It was very hot. Seeing me Mani Mullick said, 'Oh, you are perspiring so much!' Thakur laughed and said, 'Now that so many English men and others are coming, I feel there must be something in what I say.'"
" (Laughter)."

M. (to the Elder Jiten) — I somehow reached there but could not muster the courage to come back. It was getting very late. Nakul Said, 'Please stay on.' I said, 'All right, I can take prasad from the Radhakanta temple.' Soon I saw a rickshaw. I said to Yogen Babu's son, 'Can you hire it? It has to leave me there.' Yogen Babu is the treasurer of the Kali Temple.

"Two babus had gone there from Belegghara. No, no they were from some 'Prince of Wales' garden.' (Remembering) Yes, yes from Belgechha.

"As soon as I asked, the babus said, 'How is it possible! We are already late.'

"The rickshaw puller was half willing. But hearing them, he said, 'No I can't go.' Now what to do? I said to Nakul, 'Can you arrange a rickshaw for me?' He made them understand. And lo! they at once made many apologies and said so many other things.

"As soon as he associated me with Thakur they began to beg pardon. And they said so many things – we have committed a sin. We did not know. We have committed a great crime. We beg pardon of you and of Thakur. They said to the rickshaw man, 'Take care that you don't accept him a pie.' And they saw me off right up to the gate.

"Till I was not introduced in the name of Thakur, it did not happen. But as soon as this was done how much respect they gave. Anybody can round the whole of Bharat easily just by mentioning Thakur's name. He will not have to face the least trouble.

"Earlier that day I was once nervous. That also did me good – I had its experience.

(After thinking for a while) "Dakshineswar is now very beautiful. Kiran Babu is a devotee, so is the treasurer.

"Whatever is the due of the *sevaks* (attendants, servants) must be given to them directly or indirectly.

"Pandas (men of priestly class) keep standing in the Puri temple with a light in their hand. They light the temple from inside for the visitors and accept some money from them. It is so dark inside, you see. I had put my hand in the pocket to give them a pice and I paid an eight anna pice (fifty pice)! Such is one's instinct that I stretched my hand to take it back. But why should he give it back to me? I asked him twice or thrice whether that eight anna pice would be spent in the deity's service. The panda said, 'May be it is not. But we also serve him. By giving to us you have given to him.' I was immediately reminded of , 'O my friend, as long as I live, so long do I learn,' this great saying of Thakur. There is no end to learning. The next day I offered a rupee offering obeisance by lying on the ground and I returned.

(To the Elder Jiten) "Love me, love my dog!

"I feel that it is enough to feed the paupers and the helpers. Even if one does not offer food to Jagannath it is alright."

M. (to the devotees) — So, one should feed the beggars when one goes to a place of pilgrimage. The educated perhaps do not do so. If one does not wish to do a thing, one can always find so many excuses. It is a very different thing to give out of love.

"What my dear friends do? They go to the sea shore for a walk. So many sevaks and beggars stand there. If they were to give a pie or a pice how much will it come to? (To a person) How many pies are there in a pice. (Somebody said three pies). Yes, three pies. How much happiness it brings, how much they are satisfied! Instead of doing so, one throws a cop coin with a flourish to Jagannath and thinks that it is done."

M. (to a devotee) — He said the same when Guhaka invited him to his house. Guhaka said, 'Please come to my house. I shall serve you. I have been calling on you for so many days.' Rama said, 'Brother, I cannot go there. I am in exile. But you may do this. Both of my two horses are very tired. Please feed them. Feeding them will be feeding me.' The horses had been pulling [the chariot] and brought him there, you see.

"The babus say so many things: 'The Pandaspandas create so much nuisances. They are not good people. They treat cruelly and do so many other things.' I say, what if they do a little of it. How much service they render. A stranger comes to an unknown place all of a sudden. He knows nobody. He (the Pandapanda) greets him with so much respect. And he obeys his various orders — I say man, we want such and such prasad to eat. Immediately he brings it carrying on his head. And with how much respect and effort he entertains him. What if he does a little nuisance."

M. (to all present) — A *zemindar* (landlord) had served food to the sadhus in Puri. One of them got a little less in his leaf-plate. He at once shouted, 'I shall go away, I shall not eat. You have served me so little.' (Laughter). Immediately many persons intervened, saying, 'You are going to get, you are going to be served more.' They cooled

him saying thus.

"Yes, if he doesn't demonstrate his self respect to a bhakta to whom else can he do so? They don't get everything to eat.

"See, there are some who angrily drive them away. However, several persons cooled the anger of that sadhu."

M. (to the devotees) — Another scene was enacted in Puri. The maharaja of Dharbhanga had pitched a tent on the seashore for carrying out japa, austerities and so forth. One day, he worshipped all unmarried girls. Rows and rows of these maids were seen going there. One of them was carrying a girl child in her arms. The maharaja gave each one of them a piece of cloth and a rupee. He belonged to a very highly spiritual ancestry. That is why, he did so. He did a lot in this way. They who are beginning their spiritual life talk otherwise.

"One should stay a little away from a the place of pilgrimage. One remembers one's visit to it if it involves some inconvenience. The place where I lived in Puri (he lived in Shashi Niketan) is at some distance from the temple."

The Elder Amulya — The raja of Vardhaman also gives in charity.

M. — This is very good.

The Elder Amulya — Even so, he is a little westernized.

M. — Never mind about it. He has no other defects, you see. How much they worships the deity – in Kalna, Vardhaman and so many other places.

The Elder Amulya — He himself has not done anything. He is only doing what his father did.

M. — But this shows that he is a good man. When he allows all this, how is he not a good man?

"On the one hand, he has learnt statecraft. Besides, he is a poet and also a philosopher. He will do all that when time comes.

"When a bhakta called Balaram Babu a miser, Thakur scolded him and said, 'Why, what did you say? How much service to the deity he renders!' Himself sometimes he would poke him. (Laughter). But if somebody else said it, he would immediately reprimand him."

Today M. is in a somewhat happy mood, he is frolicsome. He comments upon the external practices of religion. Though there are some defects in their practice they should be adhered to. One must carry these out in earlier stages. Without practice, the essence does not percolate within. They are all like the husk of the paddy. If it is unhusked when ripe there is no damage to it. But remove it when it is raw, you will not get rice.



4th of Falgun, 1331 (B.Y.)
The 14th day of the bright fortnight.

THE SON OF THE FAMILY WILL RETURN HOME

1.

Morton School, the roof of the fourth level. It is dusk. M. is seated on a chair facing north in the assembly of the devotees. He wears a woollen shirt of gray colour and muffler over his head. All round him are bhaktas on benches. The Doctor, Sukhendu and Manik are to the west. Shukalal, Balai, Jatin and Vinay are seated to the south. Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten and Krishna are to the east. To his north are seated the Elder Jiten and a new babu.

Vinay and Sukhendu have been to the *math* [Belur Math]. M. hears all about the *math* from them. In between, he talks of the great importance of the *math*.

M. – Those who like the sadhus of the math, you may know, are also sadhus — some openly, others secretly. But, they are all sadhus even though they live in family. Why do they have love for them? Because of their renunciation. They have come leaving behind their home, their near and dear ones, their learning and intellect, all these. Why? Because, even the maternal, paternal and other love appeared tasteless when they were intoxicated with Thakur's love.

"Thakur's love, that is love for the Lord. Thakur himself said, 'Sachchidananda has come in this body.' And he said, 'One day I saw Sachchidananda coming out of within and saying: I incarnate in every age.'

"Just see, how the leela of the avatara enacts itself. He said it so clearly, even then people don't believe. So hard is the veil of His maya. Unless He removes it, it is impossible to rend it. Thakur used to say, 'When you cry with extreme earnestness, He listens. One has to cry giving up all.' Such a straight path He has shown, yet nobody wants to go to Him. One's sanskaras stand in the way."

A Babu – There is a picture of Thakur in Shah Sahib's house.

M. – What is there to wonder at? Everybody is calling on the same God. His names and forms are different. But, in reality He is one. Thakur said, 'He who calls on Him with a sincere heart, shall have to come here.' And he prayed to the Mother, 'Mother, all those who come here with a sincere heart, grant them their desire.' If anybody wants God sincerely, Thakur's bhava will surely reach him. That is why, there is a picture of Thakur in Shah Sahib's house. I hear that there was a picture of Thakur in Pavahari Baba's house too.

A Devotee – But why couldn't the rishis recognize Rama? They said, 'Bhardwaj and some others call you an avatara but we are worshippers of the Indivisible Sachchidananda.' Didn't they call upon Him sincerely?

M. – Everybody does not have the same state — there are degrees of sincerity too. Besides, there is no proof that all the rishis had realized God. May be, some had His darshan later. Possibly, they had realized

then that Rama was Param Brahman. Rishi is a common appellation, like the word sadhu. Among sadhus, there are perfected persons as well as the imperfect ones. But they are all called sadhus. The same is with the word rishis.

"We hear that Totapuri had come to Thakur after receiving the divine commandment. To preserve the worldly custom, Thakur received training from him. And it is from him that Thakur gained Nirvikalpa samadhi. But, Totapuri could not recognize Thakur as avatara. On the other hand, Thakur recognized him. Later, Totapuri could know by Thakur's grace that he was an avatara, . Thakur that Thakur was not only a pupil of his (Totapuri) in the knowledge of Vedanta. Therefore, he could not leave Dakshineswar in spite of so much of efforts, till Thakur let him depart. So, he was there for eleven months. While he nowhere stayed for more than three days.

"Besides, it is all His will. If He wills that they must not recognize him as avatara, how can it be otherwise? You see, even Brahma and Indra could not recognize Sri Krishna in the beginning. They thought that he was some powerful spiritually perfect person, full of yogic powers. But later on, they knew in dhyana that Krishna was avatara, Param Brahman."

A Particular Bhakta – Why did Thakur call rishis '*bhayatrase*' (awed)?

M. – These people perfected themselves on the basis of the principle that Brahman is the reality and the world an illusion, and that *aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). They had His darshan. The world is the sport field of Mahamaya. There was always a fear that they might not be later thrown away in it. The rishis and munis are also made speechless by Mahamaya — that is to say hesitant because of awe. Keeping this feeling in his mind, Thakur always used to pray, 'Mother, don't enchantbewitch me by Your world enchantingbewitching maya.' It is for teaching mankind that he used to pray thus.

"And just see this. He says, 'He who is Param Brahman, Indivisible Sachchidananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute) has become the world and the creatures by assuming name and form. The Mother Herself is Brahman, my Mother Herself is the world, and I the son of my Mother. Whom should I fear then?' These are different words in different states."

Now as desired by M. the reading of the Kathamrita is taken up. Dr. Bakshi reads. Thakur says that Sachchidananda had come within him.

M. (to the devotees) – Just see this. He himself says that he is the avatara. It is not that a few persons have sat down together and made an avatara of him. Arjuna also says the same in the Gita — '*Svayam cha eva bravishi mae*' (10:13) — You Yourself say that you are the avatara. Asita, Devala and Vyasa also say that you are avatara. Since You Yourself say, 'I am avatara,' so you are avatara. It is the same with Thakur. He indeed is God, He who creates, preserves and destroys; Hhe is Sachchidananda avatara; Hhe is the Mother, he himself is the son. And he is the guru of the bhaktas, guru

of the world.

A Particular Bhakta – Why did Brahma want to live in Vrindaban as a man? Vyasa Deva has written about this.

M. – To enjoy the sweetness of the sport of the avatara, to taste pure bhakti, prema bhakti. Brahma and other gods are no doubt Brahman. But they are worshippers of the glory of the Lord. There is no sweetness in it.

"Had Thakur not come at this time, nobody could have understood all this. The intimate devotees of Thakur are satiated having tasted this rasa (sweetness). So, they are able to understand it by His grace. It is a great bhava (feeling) to come in a human body and talk to Bhagavan as man and love Him — to live with Bhagavan in a human body in the same attitude in which man lives in the world. It is for this reason that Brahma willed that he should live in Vrindaban as a resident of Vraja. Thakur, the being of infinite moods, came as avatara and enjoyed the ecstatic love with the bhaktas — this too is a bhava."

M. (to all present, referring to unmarried brahmacharis) – Those who have not married have a great chance. Great spiritual personalities are still there. Those who use their intellect too much will be deceived. One must get initiated now. The birth anniversary has just gone. By getting initiated early, a link is formed. Later, one has a claim (to be initiated into) brahmacharya.

2.

It is M.'s desire that Antevasi, Vinay and other brahmacharis may now go to live permanently in the Belur Math. They (the devotees), on the other hand, wish to live with M. during his lifetime. They are all under M.'s shelter — they have been sculpted by M. So, they raise a number of objections. M. doesn't listen to any, anxious as he is always about their future good. He has taught them for their religious life in dhyana, japa, reading of holy books, service, penance and so on. He has created no group of his own. He accepts only one group, the group of the Belur Math. He says, "Its better to live within the group in the beginning. You advance quickly." So, he meets all the objections of his sevaks.

M. (to the sevaks) – If you have to find excuses, there are many — 'I am unwell,' 'who will look after the house?' and so many others. How do they say — he is never in want of an excuse, whatever is the subject.

"Thakur used to say, you see, 'There is one plough and so many oxen in the house. This is what is called a house.' The Christians say, and it is also in the Bible, 'I have a newly wed bride. How can I leave her behind?' (Laughter). There are so many excuses and objections.

"One sees so much, hears so much yet the awakening does not come. Such are the sanskaras. When it does not come now, one has to know that one's *karmas* are not yet over. And it will not come in any birth. There are so many facilities now. The avatara has now come down. He has made curds with milk. He has churned it, made butter out of it and giving it in the hand, he says, 'Son, have this. Eat it.' How

much of love, what an arrangement! The babus are not willing even then to eat it. The companions of his leela are still there. Such a golden chance will never come again. Using one's intellect too much will lead to deception.

"Yes, they, the people of the Math, say, 'You are not keeping fit. How then is it possible?' Alright, you are not well. If one has a body, there is bound to be some disease. But it gets cured. Manindra has been initiated into sannyasa in the Math. He was suffering from fever for so many days. Besides, he had a wound on his foot. Even so, he embraced sannyasa. Why not, why will he not ask for it? How can one get such an opportunity again? They know one's antecedents. So, they initiated him the moment he asked for sannyasa.

"But if you say in the beginning (you are ill), they will also understand (there is no real longing for it). They will say, 'Yes, it (fever) is there?' If you say, 'No, I must be initiated,' they will also then give it."

M. (to all present) – Thakur used to say, 'There is only a thin line. On one side of it, there is heaven and on the other hell.' This is a thin line of demarcation.

"What is that line? It is tyaga — renunciation, renunciation of women and gold. To go and stand in the path giving up women and gold. That is the vantage ground. The path is straight from there — a straight road."

M. (to the brahmacharis, indirectly) – It is before your own eyes. The people who were roaming about, about whom the members of their family and the people of their country used to say that they would never come to any good, have joined that (Math), and without any effort they have immediately become gods. They are no longer their previous selves.

"And you also see, how much trouble there is in family life when one marries. When I had to face troubles one after another, Thakur would point out to them (Narendra and others) and say, 'Why does he have so many troubles? It is for your teaching.' He would add, 'Just see, what a terrible place is the household! If one lives in it, it's bound to happen — howsoever clever one may be, even then.' Such a daunting place is the household. So, he said that the household is a 'burning fire'."

M. – Some people say that there are so many things to do there (in the Math). The whole of the time goes in it. One cannot practise sadhana and bhajan. And then, the work one gets there, may not suit one. Relief work, hospital work, school, college, newspaper — such jobs make the mind restless.

"Let one do such a work for a while, it does not matter. The son of the family will ultimately return home. One may attend to some work. That should be done as Thakur's work, under instructions of the guru. That is selfless service. It purifies the mind. Without selfless service, one cannot gain spiritual knowledge."

M. (to the brahmachari) – One sees this as well as that. Even then one does not want to budge. He is in for deception. They say that the crow is a very clever bird but it dies while eating other's excreta.

"(After thinking for a while) "What does it matter if the problems of the worldly people are difficult. The avatara is there to solve them. Only recently Thakur came. He was more concerned for the householder devotees. They get involved too much — theirs is a complicated case. The avatara has just come. What is's the worry?"

The Elder Jiten (laughing) – Brothers beware! The cow-dung cake is burning while the cow-dung is laughing.

M. (getting irritated) – Thakur scolded Krishandhan once. He said, 'You are taking this even as a joke!' It is's a question of life and death. It is a solemn moment of life. And one laughs even at this! He was silenced at once with one reprimand.

Everybody in the assembly is silent. Having received the reprimand, the bhaktas peep into their minds to realize its precarious condition. So, they are speechless and thoughtful.

M. climbs down to the third level for his meal. Today he does not engage the devotees in the reading of the Kathamrita or the Bhagavata as he used to do. However, their minds are full of reactions on the nectarine words received just a few moments ago.

M. returns just within fifteen minutes. Now he is seated in the staircase room. It is cold outside.

The Stout Sudhir goes every Wednesday to attend the Adi Brahmo Samaj prayer. He has just returned from there. Thakur visited the Adi Samaj, so it is a holy place for M. M. likes the reading of the Vedic text in Vedic intonation. Besides, he is also fond of the songs composed with phrases from Vedic mantras. So, he likes to hear about the Adi Samaj.

Sudhir – Today the acharya asked me, 'Why you people worship Thakur's image?'

M. (smiling) – Yes, they do not believe in avatara. So, this question. Thakur used to say, 'If you go to eat *ber* you have to take its thorns also.' You should listen to the reading of the Vedas and come back. Even if you lecture to him, he will not listen. You must come back.

"Doctor Babu went to lecture in the Cossipore garden. It resulted in a trouble* .

"The avatara has to come to change the sanskaras, faith and customs. Advaita called Him out, 'Lord, please come.' So Chaitanya Deva came. Later on, he used to say sometimes in bhava, 'You yourself asked me to come here.' If one desires that they (customs etc.) should be changed, one has to call on Him."

M. thinks upon something for a while. Then he resumes his talk on the aforesaid topic of the great importance of *tyaga* and *vairagya* (renunciation and dispassion).

M. (to the devotees) – From the sublime to the ludicrous — in our

rhetoric it is called pathos. What do the householders live with? Forgetting Him, they are engaged in sensory pleasures. Some of them while doing all this, still find a little time out of it to call on Him. Eating, marrying, bodily pleasures continue in full. While sitting at the table one says, 'Bring me this, bring me that. Why have you not cooked that thing?' He takes his constitutional walk in the morning and evening. Besides, he goes out in the evening chewing betel with a stick in his hand to take fresh air. While doing all this, one must shut one's eyes (in meditation) for a while.

"And then, think of these people, the sadhus, who giving up their all are standing on the road. They call on Him night and day like a desolate mother. The son is dead. The mother thinks of nothing else but him. Similarly, they are not at peace within till they attain Him. They go here and there, look for Him from one place of pilgrimage to the other. They sit deep in the forest in the Himalayas and weep for Him. They had everything — education, intellect, respect, all this. But they gave up all for Him. Like the chatak (bird) they only want the pure (rain) water. They do not accept sense pleasures. They have forsaken all as if it was the dropping of a crow — that which the householder runs after. They are whole time men and the householders are part time men.

"There is no knowing where he will go and where he will stay. Who will look after him in illness, he does not know. The medicine for the sadhus is Ganga water and the doctor God Himself — *oshadham Janhavitoyam vaidyah Narayano Harih*. How they long for God! Religion of seriousness! Religion isof practice! Some indeed care so much for it. To give up all and stand on the path, he says his 'but'. But Thakur says, 'When one takes a step forward for Him, He comes a thousand steps forward and takes him.' *Tat prasadat param shantim sthanam prapsyasi shashvatam* (Gita 18:62). (By His grace you will gain supreme peace and eternal abode). By giving up womaen and gold one gains immortality. Fear not, go ahead. He is waiting for you. He will raise you by holding your hand."

So long as the brahmacharis under his (M.'s) care do not take the vow of complete renunciation in a formal way, M. cannot be at peace. Similarly, until the householder bhaktas perform their worldly duties like a maid servant, M. cannot get rid of his anxiety for them. Why has this great man this anxiety? Isn't this motiveless grace?

The Lord who binds man with the maya for the sake of the worldly sport also tells the way to freedom to quite some of them; He frees them. Sri Ramakrishna, the self of immortality, came and freely distributed the essence of immortality. His selected child M. is also eager to distribute immortality to man without any reason. He has engaged a number of persons as messengers of peace in this restless world. It looks as if it is for this reason that M. has such an anxiety for the bhaktas.



Morton School, Calcutta
Wednesday, 17 February, 1926
5th Falgun, 1331 (B.Y.), Ashwini Nakshatra
The 5th day of the bright fortnight
17 Dandas / 33 Palas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When Revered Swami Nityatmananda was deeply involved in composing Bengali Sri Ma Darshan from his daily diaries, at that time Revered Swami Sardeshananda was also living at the Tulsi Math in the holy land of Rishikesh. Swami Sardeshananda, the privileged tapasvi blessed with the service of the Holy Mother, helped Swami Nityatmananda in many ways for accomplishing this great and noble resolve. The sevakas of Sri Ma Trust and Swami Nityatmananda are ever grateful to him for this unrepayable debt.

Publisher's Note

It gives us immense pleasure on presenting before our readers the tenth volume of M., the Apostle & the Evangelist. Like his Master Sri Ramakrishna, M. tells us (Chapter 14) straight to the point, "First try to have His darshan somehow. After it, you may do what you like... The hero who says that I see nothing but the eye of the fish can only shoot the target." He again echoes his Master when he says (in Chapter 20), "The musical notation has to be brought to the fingers. What is the use of merely speaking it? ...Do something."

Srimati Ishwar Devi Gupta discovered these invaluable pearls in 1958 in the Bengali Sri Ma Darshan. Thereafter, she started the Herculean task of translating them into Hindi as a prayerful offering for her own sake and for the Hindi knowing brothers and sisters. Subsequently, these were translated into English by Sri Dharm Pal Gupta which are now appearing as these volumes.

Sri Ma Trust offers its sincere gratitude to all those bhaktas and friends who are helping in any way in financing, production, publication and distribution of the volumes. Special mention must be made of Dr. Kamal Gupta, Sangeeta Kapoor, Vinay Mehta and Nitin Nanda. May our readers, friends and associates attain supreme bliss and peace this is our heartfelt prayer at the feet of the Lord.

Publisher

Ganga Dashehra,

Sunday, 11th of June, 2000.

The Author's Blessings

Ever blessed Srimati Ishwar Devi Gupta,

Devi, your Hindi translation of Sri Ma Darshan, being your holy offering in your devotions, is not only most beautiful, simple and artistic; it is equally lucid, expressive and true to the original.

The work of translation is a dull affair, but because of your identification with the subject matter of the book, your translation has come out so lively and pleasing.

It was indeed a difficult task to translate into Hindi this book on 'Vedanta in daily life,' in your sickly state of health, after learning the Bengali language.

The main subject of Sri Ma Darshan is to show how to live the divine life, as described in the Vedas, in this world of happiness and sorrow.

In the modern materialistic age, the times of Sri Ramakrishna, the avatara of the age and the image of the Vedas, Professor M. brought the Vedanta of the forest to the homes of the householders and relived it in his own life in the 19th and 20th centuries, exactly as it was practised in the forests in the age of the Vedas, in the lives of the rishis.

Sri Ma Darshan is a living narrative of the life of maharishi M. Besides, it is an interesting, living annotated commentary and dialogue on Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita, the authentic text written by Sri M. which narrates the lila of Sri Ramakrishna in this age of science.

By making a loving present of this great text to the Hindi knowing devotees, you have started a great *jnana-yajna* (sacrificial rite of spiritual knowledge).

Devi, seeing this great effort on your part, it spontaneously comes to my mind that Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishna has taken possession of your heart and mind.

I pray sincerely and humbly at his holy feet that he may inspire you to translate the remaining fourteen parts in the same simple, sweet and pleasant language.

This will bring great blessings in your life and make it sweeter. Besides, it will surely raise and spiritualise the life of the community.

With all good wishes.

Swami Nityatmananda

Sri Ramakrishna Math

Rishikesh, Himalayas

Sharadiya Durga Navaratri, 1965

Prayer

Om Thakur, our beloved Father! This day we open this centre named Sri Ramakrishna Sri Ma Prakashan Trust (Sri Ma Trust) to propagate your holy name to all people of the world in our humble way for the peace and happiness of all. Yourself, accompanied by the Holy Mother and your beloved disciples like Swami Vivekananda and revered 'M.', do bless us; be always with us; do guide us in the right direction.

By this unselfish work, by this labour of love may we realise your real nature, God-incarnate on earth!

May we have peace and happiness real; may all beings of the universe be peaceful and happy; may the entire universe be the abode of peace and happiness, real and eternal!

I am your humble son and servant,

Swami Nityatmananda

Civil Lines, Rohtak

December 20, 1967

Preface

Like Rice Inside the Husk

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna used to say to his intimate disciples, "Whatever is here is all for educating you, for making you attain the essence of Brahman..." 'Whatever is here' means Sri Ramakrishna's conduct. And he would often say, "Just by coming here you will attain." In other words, by coming here, there would be direct contact with his words and conduct. His conduct, seen from another point of view, was the conduct of the Mother of the Universe. He and the Mother were the same.

Thakur used to say, "Ma, I am seeing that in this body, mind, intellect and all, it's You who are residing. It's You who are getting everything done through this body, mind and intellect."

Sometimes he would say, "Ma, I am the house, You are the housewife, I am the chariot, You the charioteer; I do as You make me do, I speak as You make me speak."

For M., Sri Ramakrishna's conduct comprised his appearance, speech and practices all these. That's why he always followed the Master in his conduct. And he would exhort the doubting bhaktas whose minds had been affected by modern foreign education to do likewise. As for himself, till his late years he considered even the minutest details of Thakur's conduct as priceless wealth.

In the Dakshineswar Temple, M. would do exactly as Thakur did before the Mother Bhavatarini or Radhakanta he would put his cloth round his neck and lie prostrate on the ground before them. And like Thakur, he would put the holy vermilion mark on his forehead, take *charanamrita* (sacramental water), pray humbly with folded hands, make an offering of a coin and so on.

Seeing him do so, the modern educated young men would be wonder-struck. Some of them leaving aside hesitation would say in his presence, "What use is all this? This sort of thing is done by the uneducated rustic widows. What use is it for the educated?" In reply, M. would humbly say, "This is what is known as bhakti."

By imitating the avatars in the performance of rituals, their influence keeps getting imprinted unknowingly on the mind. This influence, these repetitions when followed and repeated again and again become powerful. The adverse influence of the earlier *sanskaras* (tendencies and impressions) and of the earlier education, which has taken hold of the mind, comes in clash with these practices of the avatara. This gains a renewed speed by the contact of whole-time men, who have taken the vow to follow the life, teachings and the practices of that God-man and devotees. Man's own effort combined with the teachings and ever imitation-worthy actions of the all-renouncing sadhus and bhaktas help rid him of his previous *sanskaras*.

Thakur used to say, "Don't try perforce to give up your conduct born of your *sanskaras*. When the time comes, they will free you themselves." Man's life is the sum total of various tendencies born of *sanskaras*. These tendencies are first inherited from the parents and the other near ones. Then, they are formed by the company one keeps and the education one has received. Besides, there are the *sanskaras* of the previous births, which come in the shape of *prarabdha*. Only the practices and teachings of a great man can save one from the powerful and mighty education evil effects of these false teachers. The avatara is the greatest of great men, such as Sri Ramakrishna.

This very conflict between the two powerful forces constitutes the bhakta's life, the divine life. Man cannot always remain submerged in higher thoughts. Food, sleep

and so on, the natural functions of man pull him down to lower levels; By force they immediately take him in the opposite direction of his weak good thoughts. Sri Krishna said so to Arjuna: *prakritisvam niyokshyati* [Nature will compel you. (Gita:18:59)]. Nature is nothing but the aggregate of the former sanskaras. It can only be conquered by God in human form. That is why the rituals of the avatars or the great men must be imitated.

Thakur said again and again, "You must bring the musical notation to your fingers." Sri Ramakrishna had brought to his fingers to perfection the notation of the music of human life. This is what is known as *sadachara* (the right conduct) in the Vedas. In religious life, they are of utmost importance, especially in modern times in the beginning, when one takes to spiritual practices.

If one peels a raw mango, the mango is lost. If the husk is taken off before paddy is ripe, there is no grain; one does not get the life-sustaining rice. Of all the rituals, the rituals of the avatars are worth following, worth imitating.

Rituals, mythology and philosophy, i.e. the practices, the history of the life of the ancient great souls and the narration of the essence of the Self all these three are needed in religious life. By discarding rituals and the lives of the ancient great men, philosophy will only terminate at the intellectual level, it will not enter the heart and will not bear any fruit in life. The lives of the great pundits of scriptures prove it.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "A mere pundit looks (worthless) like straw. But when I see a pundit, learned in scriptures, a follower of religious practices of the great men, who has taken the vow of discovering the essence of the Self and is a man of discrimination and dispassion, I consider him to be a good man and I offer him my respects." Of the pundits without religious practice, he would say: The kite and the vulture fly high but their eyes remain fixed to the carrion house, that is to say, on sense-pleasures, woman and gold. Thakur would give high praise to Pundit Padmalochan. Why? Because, he followed the religious practices of the great men, carried out spiritual practices, carried out tapasya (austerities). Thakur also loved Pundit Shashadhar Tarka-Churamani. That's why, he asked him to impart religious teaching to men but after acquiring some more knowledge of the essence of Brahman by spiritual practice and worship.

To talk of religion without experiencing the essence of religion by spiritual practice is insipid, like a toy custard apple, or like the shadow of a mango in water. That's why M. would exhort the devotees in so many ways to follow and imitate Sri Ramakrishna's practices. The following incident will testify this fact.

On the 4th of November, 1924, at night, M. said to a young modern educated devotee full of bookish knowledge whose doubting mind was critical of all religious practices, "Kindly find out in which house the Goddess Singhavahini is at present. Thakur had seen the same Singhavahini and before Her, he had prostrated on the ground. Having taken some sacramental water, he had prayed worshipfully with folded hands, 'Ma, please don't delude me by your Maya. Please remain awake always in my heart.' Thereafter, meditating on the Mother in his heart, he went into samadhi. Singhavahini is the awakened Devi."

With M.'s permission, the bhakta went about in the city of Calcutta early in the morning of the next day. On enquiry at a couple of places, he came to know that the Singhavahini was now being worshipped in the Matisheel house. The devotee went to this house in Calcutta and had Mother's holy glimpse. Willy-nilly, he exactly followed Thakur in his worship of the Mother he lay prostrate on the ground to offer Her his pranams. Folding his hands, he said, "Ma, please wake in my heart." Then he sat down to meditate for a while. Thereafter, taking some sacramental water, he took leave of Her to depart.

When the devotee returned to M., the first thing he asked him was whether he had

followed Thakur's practice. The devotee replied in the affirmative but added: "Though I did imitate Thakur, it was all like a parrot. What I had heard from your lips, I repeated not from the heart but merely by speech and intellect." When M. heard him say so, he was very happy. Said he, "This is what is called bhakti, devotion."

He added, "This practice will take the mind off other external actions and establish it one day in this practice of the great man, the avatara. The mind never sits quiet, by nature it is restless. Pulling the mind off the externals and trying to bind to the practices of the great men is what is called tapasya."

And he said, "Later on, this very action will enter the heart. From the mouth, it will go to the mind and from the mind it will enter the heart. Tying this divine treasure within the heart like an anchor with the rope of the intellect, the man will then fight with the demonic (*asuric*) tendencies accumulated from life to life. By fighting in this way, he will receive every help from the inspiring great precepts of the avatara and the living Veda of the avatara's life.

"If the religious practitioner comes out victorious in his fight in this very life, he will attain the Essence of the Self (*atma-tattva*), he will win victory over death. He attains the highest aim of human life to see God, to realise the Self. He liberates himself from the terrible cycle of birth and death, and attains the highest peace, happiness and bliss. He succeeds in life and his task is done.

"And if he is defeated, in accordance to Sri Krishna's assurance in the Gita, he is born in a family of the yogis and attains this rare knowledge of the Self in that life.

"So, the religious practices of the avatara must be imitated. This will bestow three benefits first, one will attain peace and joy in this very life; second, there will be joy in death; and third, there will be joy even in the beyond-death. Birth and death will then be taken as mere incidents and there will be joy, nothing but joy."

In the 10th part of M., the Apostle & the Evangelist, the reader will find an account of the bliss of God-realisation attained by Thakur, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and Thakur's intimate disciples headed by M. through their practices.

Humbly,

The Author.

Sri Ramakrishna Math (Tulsi Math),

Rishikesh (Himalayas),

Snan Purnima, 1970.

A BUCKETFUL OF TEARS, CRYING LIKE A CHILD

1.

Morton School, half past three in the afternoon, M. is seated in the staircase room on the fourth level facing south on a bench. It is cold. M. has put on a white sweater.

Shachi Nandan comes in and offers his pranam lying on the ground. He is studying in a college. He has passed his F.A. examination. M. asks him to study for his B.A. He himself teaches B.A.'s Sanskrit and Jagabandhu teaches philosophy.

Antevasi is living with M. He takes self-cooked vegetarian meals. M. says, "Thakur used to ask the devotees to take self-cooked meals. It has two advantages. One, the fear of cooking goes away." M. says, "You have to eat to preserve your body. If you cook your meal yourself, you have the feeling of independence. Two, self-cooked meals purify the mind." It is by his inspiration and at his behest that the devotees cook their meals. Shachi has also taken his meals for two months with Antevasi. Today Shachi is going to Rampur Hat leaving the shelter of the protecting feet of M. His teacher and guardian Mukunda has sent a person to fetch him. Mukunda is a rector."

M. says, "Yes, Mukunda Babu's health is very bad. He must live very cautiously, this is my desire. Please tell him this. And please look after his health. How much work there is! He needs rest. The Buddha enjoined upon all to take to the middle path *avalambaniya madhyapantha*."

Today it is the day of the immersion of Jagadhatri. The idol is being carried through the Amherst Street. Hearing the sound of various musical instruments, M. comes to the road. With him are Antevasi, Balai and Gadadhar.

They enter the house of Ghoshs in the Bechu Chatterji Street. Having had the darshan of the Devi, they visit Ma Kali of Thanthania and offer Her their pranam. Now the idol is being taken out of the Nandis' house. A number of idols are being taken to the Ganga through the Cornwallis Street accompanied by musical instruments. And in between one can hear the slogan "Victory to Mother Jagadhatri, Victory to Her."

It's about seven in the evening. After the darshan of the idol, M. returns. He is now seated on a mat in the assembly room on the second level facing east. He has devotees on all three sides Vinay, the Younger Jiten, Balai, Gadadhar, Buddhiram, Jagabandhu and so on. Dr. Kartik Bakshi having had the Mother's darshan at Kalighat with his family has returned bringing with him a good quantity of *sandesh*. The devotees receive it full of joy. After a while arrives Attorney Viren Bose. He brings some articles offered to the Mother Bhavatarini from Dakshineswar. These, he gives to M., who takes off his shoes and brings them up to touch his forehead. Then, he hands them over to Buddhiram. Buddhiram holds them in his hands for about an hour and a half. It looks that M. has deliberately given them to him to test his patience.

The devotees talk of the greatness of the Devi. They say: There is but one Mother. It is only the difference of name that She is Jagadhatri, Mother of the Kalighat or Bhavatarini of Dakshineswar.

M. Our Holy Mother used to worship this Jagadhatri, worship as her

Ideal Devi. How much of labour! The preparations for it used to go on throughout the year.

M. beckons to somebody who takes the articles of worship from Buddhiram, the devotee.

M. (to Buddhiram with a short smile) I haven't renounced, you can think so. (Vaguely) It happens only when one says that He has made one do so. What do you say? It is renunciation only when he makes one do it.

Buddhiram and Gadadhar, having renounced all, have now taken the vows of Brahmacharya. They now live on the bread of charity, and they repeat God's name.

M. (to all present) So long as you have the pride that you have renounced, it is not the right renunciation. Later on, when you say that you could not do it, you develop the feeling of taking refuge in Him.

"One tries and gives up little by little. Then after one sees that the mind has not been able to get rid of attachment, the sadhaka then takes refuge in Him. He weeps and says, 'Remove this attachment from my mind.'

"Is external renunciation something insignificant? The external renunciation comes only when the mind is rid of so much of attachment.

"God makes one do so, the man does nothing, through he may say that he is doing it. He doesn't let one understand. However, some do understand by His grace. Renunciation comes only when He brings it."

M. (to Buddhiram) Here is a beautiful story: There was a king and a queen. She was a Brahmajnani. She would often tell the Raja that God is eternal while the world is perishable. That God is ever for taking and the world for rejection. Hearing this daily the Raja developed dispassion and one day he suddenly disappeared. So, the Rani had to manage the state herself. Since, the Rani was Brahmajnani, she did not have to put special effort in working the state-craft. She could easily see to whom it was necessary to entrust the work. By putting the right person at the right place, she ran the state in a very efficient manner and in between she began to look for the place where the Raja was carrying out tapasya.

"The work of the state went on nicely in the hands of an appropriate minister. The Rani would sit in a room and carry out japa and dhyana. Everybody was aware that she was a *tapasvini*, that she was always carrying out tapasya. Sometimes, she would not come out of her inner palace for three or four days. The responsibility was that of the ministers they did everything. In other words, she arranged that the state work should go on automatically and all people had come to know that the Rani was in tapasya.

"One day she suddenly went out. She told the people in the palace not

to tell it to anybody and she reached the Raja. The Raja was carrying out tapasya on a hill this news she had got earlier. She went to him in the guise of a Brahmin boy. The Raja could not recognise her. The disguised Rani said to the Raja, 'You have attained nothing, your tapasya is all in vain.' The Raja said, 'What are you saying? I was a Raja. I had wife, son, everything. I gave up all. How do you say that I have gained nothing?' The Brahmin boy said, 'Carry out your tapasya for another six months. I will then come and tell you how much you have gained.' The Raja did so. When the Rani came again, she said the same again, 'You have gained nothing. Carry out more tapasya.'

"The Raja wondered why she said that he had not gained anything. After thinking over it, he decided that because he was living in a hut, so possibly because of that she said so. Thinking in this way, he vacated the hut and took shelter under a tree. Seated there, he carried out tapasya for another six months. The Rani came again. The Raja asked, 'Master, have I attained now?' The Rani replied, 'No, not even now.' The Raja thought that because he had a seat she had said so. He now left the seat also and carried out tapasya again for six months. This time again the Rani came and said, 'No, you have not gained yet.' The Raja was disappointed. He asked what he should do then. The Rani said in a serene manner, 'Continue your tapasya, you will know.'

M. (to the devotees) So long as one is conscious that he has renounced, realisation is far away. That he makes one renounce, not that I renounce, when one realises this, the real renunciation comes about. This is completely taking refuge in Him. In the words of Thakur, sitting on the pole of the boat. Or, the advent of dawn. The sunrise will follow just after that. He grants His darshan by His grace. The *jiva* becomes Shiva.

"The Rani loved the Raja. Whose love is real? His, who takes one on the path of God. One can never repay this debt."

2.

A Particular Bhakta So is the external renunciation useless?

M. I have already said still, it has a little value. The real thing is needed. The mind should be clean. It remains full of trash. What use is mere external renunciation? The mind is full of desires, all desires for women and gold. It is full of ego and pride. When pride gets dissolved, one understands that it is all in the hands of another power. Man is helpless, that's why one gives up pride. It is a hydra-headed monster, it cannot easily be got rid of. One is helpless before this great enemy. It is then that one feels humble. Giving oneself up to Him, one should say, 'I cannot do it. Please make me renounce.' It is in the state of helplessness that one cries piercing one's inside. It was this kind of crying that Thakur took recourse to saying, 'Mother, let me have your darshan.' And he saw the Mother while crying. He cried like a child, what is called crying a bucket full of tears. He himself went by this path. So he gave the same straight path to the devotees. In this Kali Yuga bereft of manliness and strength, this is

the only easy path. And this is Thakur's present to this Yuga, this crying full of yearning.

"One takes a step ahead by practising external renunciation. Then, the internal renunciation too can come, there is a possibility. When does one rid oneself of internal pride? When one sees that in spite of one's best efforts, one is helpless, when one knows that one's power is no match to it, when all efforts cruelly come to naught, when some invincible power upsets all one's plans, then alone, one surrenders oneself to that power. He then says, 'Do what you wish, I cannot do it, I surrender to you.' This is the path of bhakti.

"It is the same with the way of jnana. What an effort Buddha made! How much he did! The ego simply refuses to come under one's control. This is called *avidya*. He just used to take a grain daily. Then the Mother said, 'This wouldn't do. One does not attain the knowledge of Self by giving up the body. Eat, take to the middle path.' In other words, one should neither be an epicure nor a dry renouncer. Thakur used to say, 'On seeing people making an effort, the Mother makes someone tell what is to be done. Sometimes She does it Herself.'

"The Mother has two kinds of sons. One type is that which asks the Mother for everything. They are happy with their Mother's love. If the Mother is angry, they cry out of fear of Her. They want to see Her happy. And the other type is that of naughty boys. They say nothing with their own mouth but inwardly they have love for Her, they are proud of Her. Thakur used to say, 'There is the nature of a kitten and also that of a monkey offspring.'

"The Gita also means the same when it says *sarvadharmaan parityajya* [Renounce all dharmas (Gita:18-66)]. It means that one should collect one's mind and bring it to one spot. And that spot is *mamekam* [on Me (God)]. In this state, one tries to see Him everywhere, in men, beasts and the whole world. This is the state of a *sadhaka* (aspirant). The same is hinted at in the Vedas, in the mantras, *ishavasyamidam sarvam* [Every thing in the universe abides in the Supreme Being].

"Later on, by His grace, when one sees His form, this mood of *ishavasyam* [abiding in the Lord] becomes natural. The Mother then lifts the veil of ignorance. In that state, one sees that the Mother Herself is living in different forms. *Idam sarvam* i.e. to say this snare of the universe. This is a form of the Mother. (For Thakur) Rati's mother was a form of the Mother of the universe, as also the girl assisting the masons and also the cat. Thakur used to see the Mother outside as well as inside. Having become stable in this state of bhava, Thakur said, 'The rishis are also frightened.'

"First of all, one has to take up a *bhava* (spiritual mood). This happens by faith in the words of the guru, in the words of the scriptures. Later on, one sees His direct presence. Then the bhava becomes stable."

"And this is not the end of it. Thakur used to say, 'And the Mother is

also so much else.' Even so, when one attains this state, this problem of birth and death is solved. The *jiva* becomes Shiva."

"Thakur used to see Mother in numberless bhavas after this daily in a new bhava, always in a new form. He used to say, 'There is no end to Her.' He used to refer to it by calling it the state of the most perfected among the perfected. The Vedas call it *turiyaatita* [the state beyond *turiya* (fourth)]."

M. (to Buddhiram) Haven't you heard Thakur's fable of the elephant and the ascetic? An ascetic having undergone a lot of tapasya gained some powers. He became proud that he was the owner of yogic powers. One day Narada Muni was passing close to that ashram. Peeping inside the ashram and offering namaskar he said, 'Is your tapasya going on well? How far it has gone?' The ascetic having returned the namaskar said very confidently, 'Yes Sir, it has gone quiet far. I can kill that elephant just by saying it. And I can also revive it.' Narada feigning surprise said, 'Very good, so you have attained a lot. I can see it. Well, I ask you one more thing, have you attained God? What you have attained is magic.'

"Do you know what it is like? In the words of Thakur, it is like taking a low caste paramour. There was a brahmin child widow. The whole of her life she preserved her chastity but later in life she look a low caste man as her paramour."

M. (smiling to Buddhiram) Why, don't you feel like doing it killing the elephant and then revive it?

"When you asks for the hospital and dispensary and other such things, you cannot attain Him. Why? You don't want all that?"

M. thinks for a while. Then he resumes.

M. (to all present, seriously) You should say to Him, 'Grant me Your darshan, grant me Your darshan' and not just do japa and dhyana. And in between, one should sing in a lonely spot. You should say the same in your song.

A Particular Young Man Will it happen just by saying, grant me darshan? It does not come from within.

M. Yes, it will happen just by that. When one speaks from the mouth, it gradually goes in. From mouth, it goes to the mind. Thereafter, it enters within, within the heart.

"The thing is this, first the word i.e. listening. Then meditation on it, i.e. deep thinking on it. After that, *nididhyanasana* [deep meditation]. At the time of thinking also, there is danger. Next, when the principle is realised, one has to keep meditating on it one should live feeling one with the thought. In this state, the head and heart become one. Thakur used to say, 'Make the mind and mouth one.' Then word, thought and realisation become almost one. Why almost? Because even then, there is no direct realisation. Therefore, I say almost. Then, all these three ultimately come to one point. Then, one is in the direct presence.

"While singing, head and heart very quickly become one. That is why, Thakur used to say that one should sing in a lonely spot. One becomes a changed man in a moment. Even if it is momentary, it is good. When one has tasted it, one tries to keep on holding it. Then one doesn't like anything else. One does everything but the mind remains attached to that joy. This is followed by making the moment permanent. If one can hold on to this joy in every condition, one has indeed gone quite far.

"Thakur said to a particular bhakta (M.), 'There is *unmana samadhi*. In it, the whole mind concentrates itself suddenly in Him.'

"By weeping secretly in a solitary corner, one becomes accustomed. Once, one is accustomed, the mind suddenly rises and can be fixed in Him even amidst a thousand tasks.

"Thakur left no problem unsolved. He has left instructions for men of all states from those who live in household to those who are perfected by spiritual practice and those spiritually perfected among the perfected. Who has the time for thinking over these things? Those who are very fortunate only enjoy this matchless wealth."



Morton School, Calcutta,
Thursday, 6th November 1924,
20th of Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.),
The 10th day of the bright fortnight,
26 Dandas/15 Palas.

FIRE OF THE WORLD AND THE SHOWER OF PEACE, BOTH ARE HERE

1.

Morton School, room on the fourth level. It is about half past seven in the morning. M. is setting on his bed facing west. The Younger Jiten, Vinay, Jagabandhu, Shachi Nandan, Gadadhar are seated on benches in front of M. and to his left. Buddhiram is telling beads on the roof.

It is 4th November, 1924, 18th Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.), Tuesday, the 8th day of the bright fortnight.

It is a little cold. M. has a muffler round his head and he has covered himself with a shawl. The Kathamrita is under print. He is talking to Antevasi on spiritual matters.

M. (to the devotees) What can a man not do if he wills? He can even gain Brahmajnana (the knowledge of Brahman), not to speak of worldly matters. One must have the will. Why are these English men enjoying the world? Because, they have a great desire of it. That's why, it is so. One must have strong desire. Effort comes only after it.

"He who desires to see God can go very far. His grace comes only when the man has a strong desire. When one calls yearningly, the Mother comes and lifts one in Her arms, so said Thakur.

"One must have a firm determination. There are many who are soft like rice meshed in curd. They have no strength in their work. That is to say, they lack strong desire."

M. is thinking for a while, then he resumes his talk.

M. (laughing) Those people have the desire, so they finish the work of a year in one month.

"Some of the bhaktas did not have the opportunity to study. They had to take up some work during their early years. Now they have the desire to study. They read the Gita, Upanishad and so on."

M. (to a particular teacher) The school boys receive a thrashing at two places here and then from their guardians. Even then, nothing happens because they have no desire.

"And what happens when one has the desire? One says, 'I have baked (imitating the action of making *chapatis*) fourteen to eighteen *chapatis* like this.' The Babus in whose house he was working would get angry on seeing a book in his hand. Out of fear he used to put the book under the stove. And he would read it when they had gone."

M. is pensive.

M. (to the bhaktas) Let us offer namaz for a while. If you stay here, you will not be able to budge. Or else, you may go out. If you keep

sitting here, you will have to sit erect.

"One should meditate quietly nothing to be said. No word! No movement! One has to unite with Him sitting motionless.

"Once the Holy Mother was meditating when somebody came and called her in loud voice. Her meditation was interrupted and she began to cry bitterly. Hearing it, Thakur came running from his room. The Mother was in Nahabat. Then she regained her composure. People were told that one should never call out a person when he is meditating. No sound must be produced.

"Why does one sit shutting the eyes during meditation? So that the sight may not fall on other things. It makes the mind restless. One should make a firm determination before dhyana that one would not open the eyes for any reason.

"Is it a small matter to meditate, my brother? The canal meets the Ganga. There, it is the same water in both. By this yoga, the animal-man becomes a God. You see, all these three subsist in man: animal-man, man and God.

"Animality, that is to say low thinking only eating, sporting, behaving like a creature. Human-ness that is to say in which thoughts arise, high or low. He can establish his divinity by hearing the word of shastra and the guru. Divine that is to say the son of God *amritasya putrah* [the son of Immortality] to establish oneself on this feeling. It may be short lived but it comes only during meditation. When one is in His presence, this divine feeling gets well established.

"One should daily meditate a little. As one does so, this feeling awakens in the mind the feeling of divinity. I am the son of God, thinking in this way, one becomes so in the end. Only a little remains. So long as one is not in His presence, one should put one's trust in the guru's words. Guru's words means the words of the avatara. Doing so, the faith firms up to a great extent. One has a little inkling of one's divinity. In that state, lust, anger etc. get reduced, jealousy and malice subside. Knowing His presence in all, one develops love for all. That's why Thakur used to say, 'In dhyana, it is like the fish of a pond falling into the sea.' "

This gentle reprimand of M. worked like a divine word. The bhaktas shut their eyes and sat there peacefully, feeling ashamed, just like the school boys afraid of the teacher's ruler. M. meditates for an hour with the devotees.

Now they read the Gita the marks of a man of firm determination in Chapter 2:

dukhesvanudvignamanah sukheshu vigatasprihah,

Veetaragabhayakrodhah sthitadheermuniruchyate.

[He, whose mind is not perturbed by adversity, who does not crave for happiness, who is free from attachment, fear and anger is the Muni of constant wisdom. (Gita 2:56)]

M. (to the devotees) For example, Thakur. Unaware of grief and

happiness, of respect and disrespect! How could he be otherwise? He always lived in the Self. He who can see God within and without has this state. Thakur had this same state, not for a day but all the twenty-four hours throughout life.

"Is that all? No. He had had all the states higher than this. (For him) God was not only within and without, but he knew himself to be God. This latter came along with the former.

"As a bhakta, he used to see God within and without. In divine mood, he used to see himself as God. Both these experiences, he had together. Except for avatara, no creature has this state.

"This is the ideal unperturbed in grief, no desire for enjoyment."

M. (to Buddhiram) You see, everything is possible if you will it. If you will, you can know the Gita and the Upanishad, the essence that lies therein.

"Have you heard the name of Vidyasagar Mahashay. He was very poor. His father used to write out accounts at six rupees a month. Vidyasagar Mahashay was studying in a school. He had to cook his own meals. He had four or five brothers living with him. He used to cook for all of them. And in between, he would find time to study. He was always a scholarship holder."

M. (to the bhaktas) All his good work, all effort, concerned worldly people. On the other hand, Buddhiram is doing all for God. What a difference! That is why that sadhu is called a *Mahatma*.

"While the Mahatma of other people calls himself a Mahatma. What a difference between the two!"

M. again reads the Gita.

M. (to all present) The purpose of all this is to fix the mind in God. Sadhan and bhajan are just to serve this purpose. They who have no other wish, they who have only this effort to make are called Mahatmas, great souls. They are the greatest who join their mind to Him or try to do so.

"Those who are Mahatma by self-estimation or those whom the world calls Mahatma, do they have such feeling for God? If the goal is not God, one is not a Mahatma.

"One does not become a Mahatma by service to humanity. Even so, if one serves the God within man, one succeeds.

"Only those who are Mahatmas have a steady intellect have a firm intellect, it does not shake. It goes a little this way and that way but then gets fixed in God."

"Their food, conduct and behaviour, everything are of a different type. They do everything uniting themselves with God. When they see that a work is taking their mind elsewhere, they immediately give it up. They give up even their parents, near and dear ones, riches

everything.

"There is the world on one side and God on the other. When one see Him, the concentration of the mind is naturally attained. But before this, one has to practice.

"There is a lot of difference between an ordinary spiritually perfected man who has had darshan of the Self and the avatara. The avatara always lives in this mood. It is a natural state with him. Reason? He is God in disguise *Satchidananda* coming as a man.

"One has to bring together the whole mind and fix it in God.

"Thakur said to a bhakta (M.) with his own mouth, 'If the whole mind gathers here (in Thakur), what remains there to be done?' This bhakta used to keep looking at him with his whole mind.

"And he also said, 'Thinking on me is enough.' He said to the same person, 'Verily I say, he who thinks of me will gain my wealth like the son inheriting the wealth of his father.' His wealth consists in realisation of Brahman and samadhi.

"Who can say this except God? Who has such a broad breast?

"All the characteristics of a man of steady wisdom given in the Gita were visible in Thakur. And still more have been seen. Thakur's life is a living commentary on the Gita. The Gita is Sri Krishna's personal life."

Shachi It is quarter to nine.

M. (to the Younger Jiten) Then you must get up, get up please.

The Younger Jiten and another person rise. They say indistinctly, 'Down with work, down with slavery.'

2.

M. has asked Antevasi to carry out a job the previous night.

M. (to Antevasi) Where is Singhavahini? Can you find it out by tomorrow morning? Is she in Kashi Mullick's house or in Matisheel's house? If you take a morning walk you can find out. Thakur had the darshan of the Mother in Yadu Mullick's house. She had been there for a long time. Since Thakur saw Her, offered Her his pranams and prayed to Her, the Mother has been awakened. Please go and immediately bring the news of Her. And please offer Her pranam. We shall also go later on to offer our pranam.

"This is called bhakti. Whatever is done by the avatara or whatever he has asked to do should be done by the bhaktas. These are what one must live with, what else? Swami Vivekananda said, 'Train the hand by moving it on the traced letters.'

"Men talk 'bhakti bhakti.' When told how it is gained, they do not want to do that! Determination is needed. What cannot be achieved with determination?

"Thakur used to say, 'I used to roam about like a mad man to see where they had installed a god, where Bhagavata was being read, where the Gita was being read and such other places.

"In the beginning, one has to all do this. When one does so, the mind is able to relieve itself of regret. One does not feel bad later on in old age. Doesn't the mind then say: What have I done for Him? That brings a great grief to the mind. This is repentance. So one should do all this when one is still young. Later on, one has to sit at one spot and ponder over. One should live with what one has seen or heard.

"Is the Singhavahini something trifle? Since Thakur had Her darshan, offered his pranam and prayed to Her shedding tears, She is an awakened deity.

"One should spend one's youth, one's life in this way. This is the best use of life."

It is six in the morning. Antevasi goes out in search of Singhavahini. He is accompanied by Jiten Mukherjee. On reaching Kashi Mullick's house, they are told that Mother Singhavahini is residing now in the Matisheel's house. The Mother accepts the puja of the bhaktas by going from one house to the other by turn.

The Mother is present in the Durga Mandap at Matisheel's. She is covered over with gold, decorated with various kind of ornaments. The bhaktas return after having had Her darshan offering Her pranams by lying on the ground full of devotion and as desired by M.

It is about 9 a.m. The Morton School. M. is seated on a bench in the western end facing south in the veranda on the second level. Shachi is preparing meals in the western room.

M. is anxious for the news of Singhavahini. He is waiting for the bhaktas. His state is like that of the mother and father for their child or that of the children for their parents. No sooner does he see the devotees, he makes them sit beside himself on the bench and hear them in detail. What was the Mother wearing, which were the ornaments on Her body? Which flowers were put around Her neck in the garland, and so on. He asks, "Did you feel a joy on seeing Her? Did you pray for jnana and bhakti? You should do so. What you pray by mouth in the beginning later comes out from within. When you go to the temple, singing hymns are necessary. You should also sit down there and perform japa and dhyana. You should also take *charanamrita* (sacramental water). You should examine everything in detail so that it leaves its mark on the mind. If you do so, you can relive the same darshan and meditation while sitting far from there.

"Saying that these are superstitions and laughing them away will not do. If you want peace of mind in every condition, you will have to do all this. By doing it again and again, bhakti is born in the mind. In other words, one develops a relationship of love with God. And this is all what saves. Just as worldly life is a burning fire, there is arrangement of abundant showers of peace of God. The story of the Lord, places of pilgrimage, sadhus, shrines and so on, they all constitute showers of peace.

"He who has created the fire of the world, has also arranged the means of gaining peace."

The devotees see that, though M.'s body is there in the Morton School, his mind is fixed on the Lord. It is roaming about in places of pilgrimage, in

tapasya, in shrines and in the company of sadhus.

While listening about Singhavahini, M. is fully inspired. He stands up and gets ready to go to the nearby Thanthania for the darshan of Mother Kali. With him are Vinay, Shachi, Gadadhar, Buddhiram, the Younger Jiten, Narendra and Jagabandhu.

M. is going through the Bechu Chatterjee Street. He enters Ghosh's house close by. Here, they worship Mother Jagadhatri. Then he goes to Mother Kali's temple.

M. meditates sitting towards west of the door in front of the Mother. The bhaktas are all behind him. After half an hour, taking some *charanamrita* of the Mother, he gets up. He goes towards Thakurbari. The devotees are with him. He says, 'Please go to the school building. I shall come a little later.' The devotees have brought the prasad of *beguni* and *muri*.

It is twelve o'clock. M. returns from the Thakurbari after his meals. He rests in the veranda of the second level.

Manoranjan comes in all of a sudden. He belongs to Faridpur. Having got down from the carriage just now, he has come to offer Pranams to M. He has to go to Belegkata. There, he is working with the great devotee Shuka Lal. He is the manager. Manoranjan is unmarried and a devotee. M. makes him sit close to himself and talks about the propagation of Thakur's name in East Bengal.

In the cabin close by are residing Antevasi and Shachi. Their food is on the boil. M. says, "When the meal is ready, offer it to the Mother and then take it as prasad. It is going to take time. Till then, sit on the floor and sing the Mother's hymn. Sometimes, Thakur used to make the devotees offer food after it was cooked in this way. Then, they would all sit together and partake of it. He himself used to sit with them. Why he made them do so, I have understood after so long. The mind which becomes worldly by constantly thinking of the world becomes godly by thinking continuously of God. This is the way of the mind. He would say, 'The mind takes any colour in which it is dyed.'

At M.'s behest, the bhaktas sing the hymn to Chandi. Now, it is the worship of Jagadhatri.

namo devyai mahadevyai shivayai satatam namah,

namah prakrityai bhadrayai niyatah pranatah smatam.

[Salutations to the Devi, to the Mahadevi, salutations always to Her who is Ever-Auspicious. Salutations to Her who is the Primordial Cause and the Sustaining Power. (Durga Saptashati 5:9)]

ati saumyaatiraudrayai natastasyai namo namah,

namo jagat pratishthayai devyai krityai namo namah.

[We prostrate before Her who is at once most gentle and most terrible; we salute Her again and again. Salutation to Her who is the support of the world. Salutation to the Devi, who is of the form of volition. (Durga Saptashati 5:13)]

M. is sitting nearby listening to all this, eyes half closed, and tears of love flowing from the corners of his eyes. The bhaktas carry on the kirtan for an hour, as if intoxicated.

They are now sitting in a row for community meal. The devotees are taking prasad. They are Jagabandhu, Shachi, Vinay, Gadadhar, Buddhiram, the

Younger Jiten and Manoranjan. M. looks on.

Six in the evening, M. leaves by Dr. Bakshi's car for Chitpur Adi (Brahmo) Samaj. He tells the devotees, "Reach there on foot. There is no room in the car. Thakur used to say, 'One should go to the shrine of a deity with humility, taking the trouble of going on foot.' I am old now, isn't it? I cannot walk."

Sri Ramakrishna went to Adi Brahmo Samaj to attend their prayer. It is there that he had pointed to the young Keshab Sen, 'His bait piece has sunk.' That is why this Samaj building is holy for M. M. is very fond of the hymns sung in Vedic emotion and the reading of the Vedas here. The prayer service is held every Wednesday. A particular devotee has been given the responsibility of going there and reporting to M. which song was sung and which text of the Vedas was read.

The devotees set off for the Adi Samaj on foot Shachi, Jagabandhu, Balai, Shanti, Gadadhar, Buddhiram and so on. They reach the Samaj temple at quarter to seven. A little later arrive the Younger Nalini, the Younger Ramesh, the Elder Amulya and the Stout Sudhir. The Stout Sudhir is the reporter for here.

The bhaktas have reached there after the arati of Jagadhatri in the house of Nandis in Thanthania.

M. listens to the reading of the Vedas in the Samaj mandir and thereafter the prayer.

Eight in the evening. M. enters the house of Amrit Lal Guha in the Chor Bagan accompanied by the bhaktas. Amrit is a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. He is very dear to M. He had brought Mother Jagadhatri to the house. So M. and the bhaktas have been invited.

M. is seated close to the path in the Thakur Shrine facing south in the northern corner of the western door. The devotees having offered their pranam to Thakur are taking prasad on the roof. M.'s eldest son Prahaz is also taking prasad.

At the time of leaving, they come to know that Vinay's sandals are missing.

In the house in front, hymn to Kali is being sung downstairs 'The bee of my mind drinks deep at the blue lotus-like-feet of Mother Shyama.'

Nine p.m. M. is standing in Thakur's courtyard in the Matisheel's house. In front of him is Mother Singhavahini. He has Her darshan again and again, offering his pranam by joining his hand as if he is seeing Her alive. He is in a serene mood as if the son is saying something to the Mother in the language of the heart.

The Bhagavata lila is being enacted in the Nata Mandir on the Mother's *agaman* (arrival). Calcutta is full of joy today.



Morton School, Calcutta,
Wednesday 5th November, 1924,
19th Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.),
9th Day of the bright fortnight,
22 Dandas/5 Palas.

EVERY SAYING IS LIKE A LAMP

1.

Morton School, four in the evening. Coming to the roof, M. says to Antevasi, 'Why you have not gone? It is getting late.' Antevasi leaves immediately taking with him the Younger Jiten, Vinay and Shachi Nandan. They have to go to the Science College.

Today it is 2nd November 1924, sixteenth Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.), Sunday, the 6th day of the bright fortnight, 40 Dandas/54 Palas.

Mahatma Sarat Chandra Mitra has recently breathed his last. He was the founder of Ramakrishna Samiti of Parshi Bagan and an initiated disciple of Swami Vivekananda and the soul of Brahmavadin Club of Allahabad. He is a natural helper of the Vivekananda Society. As ordered by Sri Gurudeva, taking the vow of service to the Lord in the poor, he led the life of a sannyasin even though living in a household. It is to this great personality that tributes are being paid in the Science College. A helper of the Samiti sings:

*Whence did you come, O, the great hero of a worker?
O, the sea of compassion, you are so troubled when you find others in trouble.
You begin to rid them of their trials,
Who will now constantly utter Sri Ramakrishna's name?
Who will now make musical garlands with flowers of bhakti?*

Another friend sings:

*O, Lord of the world, pray, shower your grace.
On him, who has served with body, mind and soul from his boyhood,
Who had taken the vow of helping the poor,
Who spent his time in talking of spirituality.
O, the compassionate Thakur, he was your devotee servant.*

Half past six in the evening, the Nava-Vedanta Brahma Mandir. M. is seated on a bench to the west. There are a number of bhaktas with him. Some of them have come here from the Sharat Memorial meeting. Keshab Babu's nephew Acharya Pramatha Sen is at the pulpit. He is serving Sri Ramakrishna's Kathamrita to the devotees through the words of Keshab Babu.

It is eight p.m. M. is seated on a mat in the assembly room of the second level in Morton School. On all three sides of him are devotees Shuka Lal, Manoranjan, Kiran, Balai, the Younger Ramesh, the Younger Jiten **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Vinay, Doctor, the Elder Amulya, Jiten, Shachi Nandan, the Younger Nalini, Jagabandhu and so on.

M. is silent for while. Then he resumes his talk.

M. (to himself) Why do I go to the Brahma Samaj? Not for instruction. I go there because there is a connection between it and Thakur. Keshab Babu only elaborated his (Thakur's) words. And this is what the teachers there propagate. I go there just to hear them and also to hear a group of songs which sing of Thakur's different states.

"These people could not understand Thakur's state but Keshab Babu did. He used to deliver his sermons on those very states. Then Trailokya Sanyal, a devotee of Keshab, would compose songs on them. I go there to listen to these songs. All the songs express the different moods of Thakur, as if his moods have taken the form of songs.

"Wherever there is a connection with Thakur, they become very interesting.

"It is like the water of the Ganga clean at some places, muddy at others and full of pebbles at some places, but it is the same water. It is the same with his (Thakur's) sayings. One has to see how they emerge from different channels. It is all very interesting.

"Vivekananda has said it in one way. From Keshab Babu they come out in another way and it comes out from Shivanath Shastri and Vijay Krishna Goswami in different ways. Thus, it comes out of so many people. All very interesting!"

A Particular Bhakta Thakur only asked his intimate disciples to talk about God to others. You were also given a *kala* of power to talk of Thakur to men scalded by the fire of the world. He used to send Khoka Maharaj and others to hear about Thakur from you. He also gave this power to Ram Babu and Girish Babu for the same reason. Householders and sannyasi intimate disciples are co-sharers of this power. The water that flows within them comes from the same source.

M. Yes, Thakur had infinite moods. He was a sea of bhavas. The devotees only express his bhavas. The bhaktas express the bhava which He wishes Himself to be expressed. Their methods are, of course, different.

What is M. thinking of? He talks again.

M. (to the devotees) Wherever Keshab Babu talks of his own ideas, there is confusion. If one knows what Thakur has said, one can always catch what are Thakur's and what are those of the speaker, whosoever may be speaking. Wherever he has tried to strike a parallelism between Thakur's words and his own, he has created confusion. So, it is possible to catch it.

"As for me, I can remember nothing else. It enters one ear and goes out of the other. I can only remember Thakur's words. And I long to hear them from their mouths. So, I go there. I go to see how his words are working in different receptacles.

"His sayings are like crystallised water even a child can understand them. The texts of the shastras and what different people say are intelligible only when one dives deep into them."

Antevasi has recently returned from Kashi. He has had darshan of Vindhyaachal. The myrobalans (*amla*) of that place are very famous. He has brought some. M. now talks about them.

M. Please give some to the bhaktas.

Jagabandhu What use it will it be?

M. No, it has come from such a great place. On seeing the myrobalan, one would be inspired by Vinduvasini (the goddess of Vindhyaachal). When they eat it, its juice will go into the body. This juice will develop the mind. Doesn't the basic portion of food prepare the mind? The mind will then be able to engage itself in God. First fruit, then its juice, then the mind and lastly the mood. The prasada (holy food) therefore purifies the mind. The divine mood impresses the mind without one's knowing it.

Jagabandhu gives one piece of myrobalan to each of the bhaktas. When he comes near the Elder Amulya, M. says, "Give him two, please give two to the Elder Amulya. You must take two. Those, who have married must have two. (Everybody including M. laughs loudly.) Just as there is advantage in it, there is also disadvantage."

It is 10 p.m.

2.

Morton School, the staircase room on the fourth level, eight in the morning. M. is seated on a chair facing south near the door. To the right of M. are seated on the bench (from the north) Vinay, Shachi and the Younger Jiten facing east inside the room. To the left of M. are seated on the bench Gadadhar, Buddhiram and a devotee in the staircase room. Antevasi coming out of his cabin, sits in the staircase room they all face south.

M. is holding Gita in his hand. He is explaining the characteristic of a man of steady wisdom to Buddhiram in Bengali.

M. (to Buddhiram)

Yada samharate cayam kurmonganiva sarvashah,

Indriyanindriyarthebhyastasya prajna pratishhita.

[When, like a tortoise, which withdraws its limbs into his shell, he can also withdraw the senses from sense objects, his wisdom is then firm.(Gita 2:58)]

"What is a man of steady wisdom like? He is like a tortoise, (to Gadadhar) isn't it?"

Gadadhar The tortoise once it takes its limbs into shell, does not bring them out again.

M. (together with Gadadhar) Does not bring them out again. Cut it into a thousand pieces but it does not bring its limbs out of its shell. Similarly, the man of steady wisdom would not let his senses go into sensory objects. In doing so, the body may endure or perish, he doesn't care. Such a firm determination! Even if his whole world perishes, he would not let the mind go into sensory objects. The man of steady wisdom will force his mind in this way to withdraw itself.

M. (to Buddhiram) These are steps to a man's fall. Listen to them now:

Dhyayato vishayan pumsah samgasteshupjayate,

Samgat jayate kamah kamat krodhobhijayate.

Krodhat bhavati sammohah sammohat smritivibhramah,

Smritibhramshad buddhinasho buddhinashat pranashyati.

[Brooding on the objects of senses, man develops attachment to them; from attachment comes desire and from desire anger.

From anger comes delusion, from delusion, confused memory, and thereby, the ruin of reason and the man perishes with this ruin of reason.(Gita 2:62,63)]

"(Counting on his fingers) 1. Brooding on sensory objects 2. Attachment 3. Desire 4. Anger 5. Delusion 6. Loss of memory 7. The ruin of reason. Please count them on your fingers."

Buddhiram repeats them with M. five times one by one. The bhaktas do the same.

M. (to Buddhiram) Speak. Tell me from memory.

Buddhiram Brooding over sensory objects, desire, anger (He cannot tell further).

M. Attachment. Then what? Loss of memory, then what?

Buddhiram Loss of reason.

M. Please repeat them again and again some time more as you sit here.

Buddhiram sits down and repeats them.

M. thinks for a while. He speaks again.

M. (to the devotees) Thakur used to say, 'Brooding over sensory objects i.e. brooding over women and gold.' Except for thinking on God, all is brooding on women and gold. Only that thought which helps in attaining God is real.

"Suppose a man wants to eat mango. He will always be thinking of the mango. By doing so, he develops an attachment for the mango he feels affection, love and attraction for it. If there is some obstacle in his getting the mango, it is delayed, he feels angry. Thereafter, comes *moha*, the loss of discrimination between the good and the bad. After this, he forgets the word of the guru and that of the scripture then, he has only one thought that of the mango. The memory of the mango keeps pressing on the mind, the intellect and consciousness. The memory of the words of guru is lost. He forgets the guru. Thereafter, his right reason vanishes. When the discrimination of what is real and what is not disappears completely, the man falls.

"Acting in this manner, the senses take one to the objects of senses. He who can forcefully keep this mind within is the real man. His wisdom is steady. Where will this man withdraw his mind into? In

the lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan, in the meditation of the Self. It always goes outward. Such is the nature of the mind outgoing. *Paranci khani vyatrinat swyambhuh* [Brahma has made all doors of the senses outward facing. (Kathopanishad, 2nd *valli*)] is there in the Veda. This mind has to be taken within."

M. (to Antevasi) Thakur used to say, 'When a person has even a little love for the Lord, the mind becomes steady in no time. You don't have to fight with it.' There are these two paths, one of *yama, niyama* etc. and the second that of fixing the mind in God, joining the mind to Him. The latter is the direct path, the former is artificially pressing the nose and so on.

"Thakur used to say, 'When you have devotion for God, when you love Him, your desire, anger etc. perish just like that.' He used to say, 'Just as the lion eats up the goat so quickly, when you develop love for Him, it (love) eats up desire, anger etc.'

"There are different ways to steady the mind. This is Bhakti Yoga, the path of love. By *jnanavichara* (reasoning about *jnana*) also, one can steady the mind. Then, one is always thinking of what is real and what is illusion. Giving up illusion, you have to take up real. The way of the eight steps, I have already talked about. And then, there is the path of Karma Yoga. By doing selfless work, the mind gets purified and one attains *jnana*. Purity of the mind, destruction of ignorance and attainment of *jnana* all come together."

M. (to Buddhiram) Do it, do it, finish it up. When you memorise it, it enters the mind. It takes so little time if you will so.

"But the lazy can't do it. (Pointing at a person) For example, he. How lazy he is! (The devotee sheds tears).

"Those who want it, how little time they need to memorise it. Commit it to memory, please commit it to memory. (Pointing at a person) You tell him.

"(to a person, pointing at another) I asked him to memorise two shlokas daily, but he never did."

M. (to Buddhiram) Do it, do it quickly. You see, I have begun with the second chapter directly with *atma-tattva*. The contents of the first chapter, I have just described verbally."

"And how do people read? Word by word, taking days. Whereas, I have started immediately with *atma-tattva*."

M. (to Buddhiram) And to memorise the inflection and the word is also not of little importance. When you are introduced to one, you want to know the other also.

"You must know a little of Sanskrit. You see, shastras are all in this language.

"Just see, we were talking of other things but since a *shloka* came to memory, it all changed. All this is like the match stick catching fire.

They illumine the mind every word is like a lamp.

"If you remember or just recite all these along with mediation over them, you succeed.

"So long as feeling does not become same with those words, you should only memorise them and repeat them. As you repeat them, a fire gets lighted within, like it happens when a piece of wood is rubbed with another.

"Feeling remains latent in all these words. That is why, the words of the avatara and of the spiritually great have so much power. Feeling i.e power. This power takes hold of the mind and takes it to the Absolute Power at the end. Thakur used to say, 'It is like holding the links of the chain one by one to reach the plank.' The plank is under water."

It is eight in the evening. M. is sitting facing east in the room on the second floor. The regular visiting bhaktas are seated on his three sides. The Kathamrita is under print. M. has to work very hard on it.

Satyavan is a pupil of Mukunda Babu. He is studying in a college. He says that Mukunda Babu has written to him that he is very unwell. Because of it, his mind is depressed. Mukunda is the rector of Rampur Hat school. These days, he is in Vrindavan.

M. (all present) That is why, Buddha Deva has talked of middle path, that is to say neither too much, nor too little. One should work in the middle of extremes, that is to say, as much as one can bear, as much as the body and mind do not get too much tired. When the body is much strained, it falls. It is the same with the mind. It also becomes like that when it is too much strained. It breaks. A song by Girish Babu says What is the Song?

A Particular Bhakta 'One should tune the veena of the mind very gently,' etc.

Jagabandhu This time Mukunda Babu went to Kashi, to Advaita Ashram, during the puja holidays. One day he had trouble with his heart. The sadhus were worried. They took him to the Sevashrama. He recovered when administered *makardhwaja* (an Ayurvedic medicine).

M. It couldn't be otherwise. How many worries he has! How much anxiety! It dries up the whole blood. This happens to those who shoulder authority. So many people like to work as subordinates, then they don't have so much strain.

"(After thinking for a while) And this also is true, if those who can do a work, don't put in hard work to do it, how can it then be accomplished? This also is a viewpoint.

"Once you start a machine, it moves automatically later on. In the beginning, it is a little difficult."

A Particular Bhakta What was Thakur's opinion? He did not emphasise work so far as I find in the books.

M. Yes, he was a different person. He knew nothing else but God. He just had 'Mother, Mother' always on his tongue. Even a little talk on God or a song would immediately plunge him into samadhi. The whole of his later life was spent in making bhaktas. Earlier, he was different. He was continuously in samadhi. Later on, he came down as if from the seventh level to the ground floor. Then, he lived with bhakti and bhaktas. Just a little inspiration of God and he would reach the seventh level.

"One does not see another person like him. Nobody can be compared to him. A matchless personality!

"But every bhakta has had to do something. Their work is ordained - to tell His sayings to others. Swami Vivekananda had to go abroad to the west. All this is work, to talk of Him, to attend to welfare work, to propagate and to render service. It is different for Thakur and his bhaktas. They belong to another class.

"There is work in the nature of ordinary people. What will they do without any work? So, the way has been told to work selflessly. Even there, there are two classes. One class wants to take the credit as a doer. The other does not want it or cannot do it. We are talking of the latter.

"Those who have the desire for credit of doing work have to take to all these big undertakings. And for it they have face a number of pushes and pulls.

"Thakur was completely free from *rajas*, *shuddhamapapavidham* pure and sinless. He used to say, 'This body cannot take to any *rajasic* work.' So, he made the bhaktas do it.

"Thakur always would be established in the ideal, in Brahman. He used to come down only to make devotees. This was the only little work he took up. He was to get them to work for the world the establishment of the dharma. There is great difference between this work and that.

"The ordinary man works for himself. A class higher to him is that of those who work to realise God. There is yet another higher class who only takes to ordained work they work at the command of the Lord. The work of Thakur's devotees belongs to this class. They have been given commission by Him. To a man (M.) he said, 'The Mother has told me that you have to do a little of Her work. You have to read out the Bhagavata to people.' He had asked for sannyasa. It is then that he said so to him. He would have to live in the household for Mother's work. It is Thakur's work. The Mother of the Universe makes him do it holding his hand, like a machine.

"What a wonder! On one hand, he says that he is an avatara. On the other, he says that he does what the Mother makes him do. He is talking and suddenly he stops and says, 'Mother does not let me speak.' Both these moods are there in him simultaneously that he is an avatara and Her instrument. These two ideas contradict each other. In the mood of the avatara, he is free, he is God, and in the

mood of an instrument, he is a man. He has both moods, that of God and of the *jiva* (creature). They who show both of these moods together are avataras.

"We did not see Thakur separated from God even for a second. Leaving aside the world, he was merged in Brahman.

"The four states of being awake, in dream, in deep sleep, in *turiya* (fourth), and in *turiyatita* (beyond the fourth) are all to be found in the avatara together. Man sees them separate from each other. Because, he has a limited intelligence. So he used to say, 'A one *seer* jug cannot contain ten *seers* of milk.' One cannot understand the avatara. Even so, if He makes one understand, it is possible. He made his intimate disciples understand that he was both man and God. Sometimes they see this. Then after that, they see him as a man. Yashoda and the Gopis also saw the same at one time they saw Lord Krishna raising the Govardhan mount and then they saw Him as a cowherd-boy (*Gopal*). His (Lord Krishna's) mother also saw him the same way. Once, she saw him as man and then as *Gopal* merged into Lord, she saw this one side and then the other.

"Sitting on the smaller cot in the evening, Thakur used to say, 'Brahma Maya, Jiva Jagat.' It appeared that he was seeing all these as one and then also separate. And then sometimes, he would merge himself in Param Brahman.

"The devotees of Thakur saw him as a perfect man and now Perfect God. What a wonder! What a riddle!"

10 p.m.



Morton School, Calcutta,
Monday, 3rd November, 1924,
18th Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.),
7th day of the bright fortnight,
38 Dandas/7 Palas.

FROM MEMORY IT GOES TO THE MIND

1.

For many days, M. has been sitting in the courtyard on the ground floor in the Morton School. He walks a little on the footpath. He sees how God manifests himself in the common man in so many forms.

Today it is 23rd September 1924, 7th Ashwin, 1331 (B.Y.), Friday, the 10th day of the dark fortnight. 46 Dandas/55 Palas.

In the square made by benches, M. is seated on a bench facing east. In front of him is Amherst Street. The bhaktas are also seated on benches on all four sides. It is evening.

Swami Dhirananda has arrived. He is an old sadhu of the Belur Math. M. makes him sit beside himself with affection and consideration and offers him sweet snacks. He is to go to Parshi Bagan to see Sharat Chandra Mitra who is lying very ill.

A devotee comes to M. climbing down from the fourth level. M. introduces him to Swami Dhirananda saying, 'He goes to the Math.' Swami Dhirananda replies, 'Yes, I know.'

It is M.'s belief that those who are attached sincerely with affection with sadhus of the Math will alone take to the life of renunciation. That is why he is always asking the young brahmacharis to be intimate with the old sadhus.

Sharat Chandra Mitra, the great devotee of Thakur and the founder of Ramakrishna Samiti is very ill. Many a sadhu comes to enquire after him from the Math. Swami Dhirananda is also going to Parshi Bagan to see him. The Younger Nalini and Vinay accompany him.

The evening of the next day. Today M. is seated again on the ground floor. He is meditating. Before it, he was walking on the footpath.

Antevasi comes from Beliaghata at 8:30 p.m. along with Shuka Lal. They have brought kitchen utensils with them. As desired by M., they will eat self-cooked vegetarian food for some days. Thakur made M. also do the same earlier.

It is 9 o' clock. M. rises. Nearby, there is the Panchanan Ghosh Lane. There, the play of *Krishna-yatra* has been going on for some days. M. stands with the devotees and listens to it. The play being enacted is The Lord's going to Mathura. Sri Krishna is going to Mathura. The Gopis stand on his way to stop him. Some of them hold back the wheel of the rath. So Radha said, "My friend, please don't hold the wheel of the rath. The wheel, of which Hari is the *chakri* (bearer of the wheel), moves the world."

The next day, 2 p.m. M. sends Antevasi to Parshi Bagan. The secretary of Sri Ramakrishna Samiti, Sharat Chandra Mitra is very ill. He may die any moment. After having enquired after Sharat Babu, the devotees go to Ram Mohan Roy Library as asked by M. Here, the annual meeting of the Brahmacharya Vidyalaya of Ranchi is going to be held today. Many sadhus will get together here. The students of the Morton School, Hemendra Sanyal and others have also gone there. M. sends Brahmacharis and devotees wherever the sadhus assemble. It is already nine and a half before the devotees return after taking prasad. M. has been waiting for them till so late in the evening. He gets the news of the sadhus from the devotees.

The next day is September 26. After evening prayer, they read from the Devi Bhagavata, first three chapters. M. had sent many bhaktas with Antevasi to have darshan of the sadhus. They return at ten p.m. M. says to the Younger Jiten, "Please again read the Devi Bhagavata to them."

Ram Lal, the old servant of the Morton School has just died in the Cambell Hospital. Today, it is September 27. M. is anxious to have his last rites done. He asks Antevasi and Vinay to arrange it. They go to the Cambell Hospital taking with them Purna, the teacher of the Morton School and Krishna Chakravarti, a student of class two (ninth of today). When they are taking delivery of his dead body from the mortuary, Ram Lal's relatives reach there. They take the body to the Kalighat. The only close relative of Ram Lal is a twelve year boy. The bhaktas come to M. M. asks them to take bath. Antevasi says, 'The corpse is undefiled.' But M. says, 'Even so, one should take a bath.'

2.

Today it is 28th September, 1924, 12th of Ashwin, 1331 (B.Y.), Sunday, Amavasya, 50 Dandas/17 Palas.

It is five in the evening. M. is seated on the roof of the Morton School facing north. Postmaster Amulya arrives with two companions. M. is talking with them. Close to him are Antevasi, Gadadhar and so on. Amulya has just been transferred from Shillong to Alipur. Polite inquiries over, they talk.

M. (to Gadadhar) Please read out your reading of the Veda to them.
(To the devotees) Please listen to the Veda.

Gadadhar *na va are patyuh kamaya patih priyo bhavati, atmanastu kamaya patih priyo bhavati, na va are jayayai kamaya jaya priya bhavati, atmanastu kamaya jaya priya bhavati...* etc.

M. It is not for the love of the husband that the wife loves him, but because of herself alone. By loving him, she feels a joy. Similarly, wife, son, wealth i.e. whatever worldly things people love, desire and want to possess is all for the love of oneself.

"Yajnavalkya, taught this to Maitreyi. He said, 'You have to know the Self, the personal Self, the Atman. When you know Atman, you know everything.' Atman means God, *Brahman, Parmatman, Satchidananda*. Thakur used to say, 'I am that *Satchidananda*. One day, I saw him coming out of my body and saying I come as avatara in every age.' In other words, He has come this time in the body of Sri Ramakrishna."

Doctor Bakshi and Advocate Lalit Banerjee enter.

M. (to advocate) Please tell them what we have talked about the Veda.

A Devotee Rishi Yajnavalkya, having formally embraced sannyasa will leave home. He asks Katyayani and Maitreyi, his two wives to distribute his wealth between themselves. Maitreyi was a *jnani* (one who has attained spiritual wisdom). She said, "Why are you living us behind?" Happily he talks about the principle of Atman to them. Says he: Whomsoever we love is for ourselves alone. Only God, the Lord is our own. When one knows the Lord, one knows all. Then one has no

desire to know anything else. Reason? He is the first cause of the world. And the real wealth. When one knows it's cause, one knows the thing. So Thakur said, 'You people will not have to do very much. You have only to know who I am and who you are.' Thakur has hinted with this great saying that he himself is *Parmatman*.

M. Very nice. He has caught the essence very nicely. When one knows that Thakur is God, one knows all, one has achieved all. He said to a particular person, 'When the whole mind has concentrated itself here (on Thakur), what remains there to be attained?' That bhakta would always sit staring at Thakur's face only. Knowing God is what the Upanishad calls *Atma-jnana* or Brahmajnana. It is all one thing.

M. (to devotees) It is the twilight hour. Let us mediate on Him for a while. Thakur said, 'At the twilight hour one should leave aside everything and meditate on Him.'

M. meditates with the bhaktas for about an hour.

It is 8 p.m. M. is sitting near the northern door in the Nava Vidhan Brahma Samaj towards the west. With him are devotees Shanti, Bhaumik, Surapati, Dhiren, the Younger Jiten, Vinay, Jagabandhu and so on. A little later arrive Manoranjan, Balai, Gadadhar, Dr. Akshay of Assam and his companion. Acharya Pramatha Sen is delivering a sermon from the pulpit. It is an echo of Thakur's word: Man loves all in the world but who loves God. One should love Him.

Coming out of the Nava Vidhan Mandir, M. enters Jhamapukur. He is to go to Kali temple of Thanthania. Pointing towards the mansion of Raja Digamber Mitra he says, "This is Digamber Mitra's house. Initially, Thakur used to perform puja here. And 27, Jhamapukur Lane here too, Vijay Krishna Goswami used to live. One day, Thakur went to see him he had not gone to Dakshineswar for a long time and was not well. This was the reason."

M. comes to the Bechu Chatterji Street. Pointing at the shop of *muri* (roasted rice) and *murki* (sweetened parched paddy) to the right of the road he says, "Here, Pundit Ramakumar Shastri, the elder brother of Thakur had his Sanskrit school. It is he who suggested to Rani Rasmani to donate the Dakshineswar Kali Mandir in the name of the guru. Rani Rasmani could not procure a priest for the temple. Not knowing what to do, she earnestly requested Ram Kumar to agree to act as the priest of the newly built temple. Since then, descendants of this family have been performing the duties of the priest. Thakur used to attend this school and he used to live there (behind the houses to the east, on the left footpath of this road). Now the Hare Press is situated there in a brick built house. It was then a thatched house."

M. goes towards Thanthania. He stops at the turning of the Guru Prasad Chaudhry Lane. Showing a two storey building to the left he says, "This is the house of Rajendra Mitra. Thakur used to visit it very often. Once Keshab Sen came to this house for Thakur's darshan. Aha, what devotion Keshab Babu had! He washed the grapes and wiped each one before giving it to Thakur with his own hand. How much love there has to be for doing so!"

M. proceeds. He says from a distance, "There, you see Mother Kali's temple. Thakur used to visit it regularly. He would sit there and sing to the Mother for quite long. He was seventeen or eighteen then. Yes, we have left behind a holy place. Opposite to the Thakurbari in Guru Prasad Chaudhry Lane, there was Nakul Boshtam's grocery. He would come and sit there too and sing

songs for him when asked."

M. has now reached Mother Kali's temple. Sitting before the Mother, he meditates. He is surrounded on three sides with the devotees. They are all in meditation. After half an hour, M. offers pranam to the Mother, takes some *charanamrita* and leaves. He is going to the Morton School by Bechu Chatterji Street. He stops at the Amherst Street turning near the City College. He is tired, so he is taking rest. He says to the bhaktas, "You may now go home." Many of them offer pranam and depart. It is 9:30 p.m. M. reaches the courtyard of the Morton School. With him are Jagabandhu, Vinay, Shachi, Gadadhar and so on. Standing in front of the gate he says, "All this has been very nice today. We have had the darshan of Kalighat, Navadwip and Kashi together. Mother Kali of Thanthania is like Kalighat and this here (hearing community singing of devotional songs in Doctor Akshay's house in the south-east corner of Morton School) is like Navadwip. (He thinks for a while) And the Nava Vidhan Brahma Samaj is like Kashi." Jagabandhu says, "The Brahmos practice Bhakti. Kashi is the centre of jnana." M. says, "Why, is there no bhakti in Kashi?"

M. is seated in the eastern section of the second level. Doctor Akshay's house is about thirty seven yards away. The music of the community singing is resounding. One can hear only 'Hare Krishna Hare Ram.' M. listens. Full of emotion, he says a little later, "Please go there, you must go there. Go and join them. Such a day doesn't come very often. Thakur used to say: Giving up hesitation, dislike and fear you should call on Him. Please go there. (to Shuka Lal affectionately) You need not go. Your age and then your fat body, you have many worldly worries." The devotees dance with 'Hare Krishna Hare Ram' in their throats.

3.

Morton School, staircase room. M. is sitting on a bench facing south in front of the western door. It is eight p.m. Antevasi has returned from the Ram Mohan Roy Library. M. had sent him there again today. The annual function of the Brahma Boys School is being celebrated today. M.'s idea is that may be one can have a grain of Thakur's Kathamrita. Many old Brahma bhaktas will visit it. Most of them have had Thakur's darshan. Many a time, they talk about Thakur among themselves. So M. sends Antevasi there. He has said to him, 'There is sand mixed with sugar in their talk. Like an ant, you should only pick up sugar. Sugar, that is to say, the words of the avatara, of Thakur.'

Today it is 29th September, 1924, 13th Ashwin 1331 (B.Y.), Monday. M. is listening to the reading of the Devi Bhagavata, 10th *skandha*, 3rd *adhyaya* (chapter).

The next day, M. is sitting in the same staircase room. It is the second day of the bright fortnight, 23 Dandas/23 Palas today. A little while ago, he was gazing at the moon of the second day (*dvitiya*) from the roof. He was saying, "Thakur used to tell us that Sita said to Ravana: Ram is the moon of *dvitiya* and you are the full moon. Ravana was very happy to hear this. But he could not understand its significance. The full moon means it has waxed to its maximum. Now, it is to go down. The destruction will now come. And this is what happened to Ravana. And the moon of *dvitiya* means it has to wax. It has only taken birth just recently the splendour of Ram's sport is about to gain more and more."

As soon as the evening lamp is brought in, M. shuts his eyes and clapping with his hands says, 'Hari Bol, Hari Bol' and meditates with the devotees. Durgapada Mitra, Jitendra Nath Sen, Dr. Kartik Chandra Bakshi, Vinay, Balai, Bhaumik, the Stout Sudhir, Gadadhar, Ramesh, Jagabandhu and others sitting in front of M. and to his left also meditate. The meditation goes

on for about an hour. Now the reading from the Devi Bhagavata is taken up 3rd *skandha*, 20 to 24 *adhyayas*. All listen to the reading without speaking. The reading over, the conversation is resumed.

The Elder Jiten (to M.) The scripture mentions such hard tapasya. Can a man do so much such a great hardship! Is there no other easier way?

M. Meditation on him is tapasya. Whatever (bodily) tapasya one may perform, unless you meditate on Him, it is useless to inflict the body with hardship. One may go on bearing bodily hardships, but the mind remains where it was. Tell me, what use is it then? The test is whether the mind is going to God or not, whether attachment is being reduced or not, whether one keeps the company of sadhus and whether faith is increasing or not.

"Even so, one has to keep an eye on this side also. If there is no control over the body, there too is danger. One cannot be sure where the bodily enjoyments may throw one. One cannot be sure of this. Therefore, a little hardship on the body is necessary.

"When you sit in an armchair and meditate on Him, it is useless. It is necessary that you monitor whether discrimination and dispassion are increasing or not. When this comes about, then a little hardship on the body, a little control over it come automatically. You should subject the body to hardship only as much as it is necessary to keep the mind on God."

The Elder Jiten Well, many people memorise the scriptures. I hear that a person repeats the entire Gita daily sitting in a ferry steamer. Is it needed?

M. While memorising it enters the mind. When you repeat again and again, the words go into the ear and from there into the mind. Repeating an idea daily again and again, it leaves an impression on the mind. This is called *sanskara*. A struggle ensues without one's knowing between the old ideas, thinking on sense objects and new ideas, the words of the scriptures and the guru. Gradually, divine feelings come on the top.

"And if you know by heart, you can meditate on God sitting alone in the darkness of night. The speech borne out of repetition first goes to the ear, then, its meaning goes to the mind and results in meditation. Thus, it is said *aavrittih sarvashastranam bodhadadapi gariyasi* (Repetition is better than even understanding all of the scriptures)."

M. (laughing) But, Thakur never recited a shloka. He knew some by heart, but he would not repeat them, lest the devotees flaunt them in the same way. How many sides he guarded! Such caution is not possible for anybody but the avatara.

"Thakur used to say, 'The shastra should be heard from the mouth of a sadhu, from those who having renounced all have taken to the path.' And he warned that by the reading too much the mind gets attached to the reading itself. So, one should compare what one reads with what the guru has said. The aim is not reading, it is meditation

on God. One should read only as much as it is necessary for it. He used to say, 'Sand is mixed with sugar in the shastras. Like an ant take only the sugar.' "

The roof the Morton School, 3 p.m. M. is seated on a chair facing south. He is talking. In front of him are two teachers on a bench. They have their home is Dhupdheh in Nadia District. They are conversing.

M. (to a teacher) The Paramahansa Deva said, 'The highest duty of man is to see God. It is for this that one is born as a man.' He used to say, 'Money, honours and dignity, wife, son and daughter, all these are not the aim of life. The reason? They don't last forever. Nothing temporary can give permanent happiness and joy.' It is only in God that it is possible to gain all this. Knowing this, God is called dharma, true religion. The Veda says: The reality of man is that he is the son of Immortality *amritasya putrah*.'

A Teacher The world is a very complex place. It is very difficult to live dharma in it.

M. So Thakur said, 'The way for it is daily company of sadhus, regular and continuous.' To get rid of a disease, one has to be up and doing on the directions of the physician. This too is the same.

"What is the meaning of the company of sadhus? To keep company of those who have reached the edge of this complexity who while living in the complexity and having given up the complexity have taken up the core that is God. By sitting with them, one comes to know what is real and what is an illusion. Then one has to try to keep one's hold on reality. Reality is that which takes one to God. Isn't God known by the name of Existence? The true existence is God. There is never the non-existence of God. So it is called Existence.

"The real nature of man is the same. But falling into Maya, he has forgotten everything, whose child he is, where his abode is, all this - that is why there is so much pain. They who always remember this real nature are known as Mahatmas great souls, sadhus. By keeping their company, we always remember that we do not belong here. Our home is in God. Thakur used to say, 'What is human life like? It is coming from the village to the city. One goes back after working there. As soon as the work is finished, one returns home immediately.'

"It is the same with man. Everybody will have to depart from here. One has to come back again and again to enjoy the fruit of one's actions. When action is finished, there is no more birth. Then, one goes to God. One becomes free from the cycle of the birth and death. The son of the house comes back to his house. Everybody will have to return home, everybody will attain freedom. His very nature is freedom. Samadhi is his normal state. Having fallen into Maya, he has come to this state.

"Go, they will. All will go back home one day. Even so, that is the path if one wants to go early to keep company of those who have gone to that own house. It becomes easy when you receive their love."

The Teacher What should one do in the initial stage?

M. Thakur said, 'Sit down twice and repeat His name, meditate on Him and pray to Him. And in between, live alone.' All these are necessary. Only then, one remains awake. Those who keep the company of sadhus do not forget these things. Reason? The sadhus do all this, isn't it?

"Prayer is very essential. He said, 'Weep and say to Him: Don't enchant me with Your world-bewitching Maya.' If you say it sincerely, He hears it. Besides, if one goes on saying it, it becomes sincere."

Enters the Younger Ramesh.

The Second Teacher I think, I shall go into the company of the holy but I forget. The mind goes into other things.

M. In the beginning, one should think of it and force oneself to do it. Later, it becomes easy. Do the boys like to go to the school in the beginning? Many persons send them forcibly. Later, it becomes easy.

Both the teachers had arrived at one o' clock. They were talking with Antevasi too till three o' clock on all these things. One is reborn by keeping company of sadhus. Then, they had talked about who is one's own, who is not, who is an eternal friend and who for only two days. And, they had also reflected that this body will not last forever. By thinking that the body will not last, one tries to attain that entity which will last. Reason? Man becomes frightened on hearing that he will not last. Is there no way that I can last forever? All these thoughts come to the mind. Then the answer comes. You cannot last in the form of the body, but you can in the form of Atman, as the son of God. Only then begins the development of man's self. The result? Peace, happiness and joy.



Morton School, Calcutta.
Thursday, 2nd October, 1924.
16th Ashwin, 1331 (B.Y.).
The 4th day of the bright fortnight,
33 Dandas/22 Palas.

FOREST FEAST AND THE FESTIVAL OF DURGA AGAIN

1.

Morton School. It is evening. M. is seated in a chair on the roof facing north. The devotees are sitting in the front on benches on three sides the Younger Jiten, the Younger Ramesh and so on.

Today it is 3rd October, 1924, 17th of Ashwin, 1331 (B.Y.), Friday, the 5th day of the bright fortnight, 23 Dandas/48 Palas, to be followed by Shashthi.

Devi Paksha. Today it is the Mother's Shashthi Puja. M. is happy like a child on the coming of the Mother. His eyes are brimming with joy, his face so joyful!

As soon as the light is brought in, M. meditates. After a while, he sends Vinay to Kali Singh's street to have the darshan of the idol and the puja of the Vilva Shashthi. As soon as the big drum is sounded, a wave of joy begins to play in M.'s mind. After a while, M. stands up. He is to go with the Doctor in his car to have the darshan of Shashthi Bodhan. Some of the bhaktas keep sitting while others leave for the darshan of the idol.

It is 9 p.m. M. has returned. He is seated in the eastern part of the veranda on the second level on a bench towards north-east, facing south. The Doctor and Amrit are seated on a southern bench facing north, while the Younger Jiten, Jagabandhu and others are seated on a bench to the west of the door, facing south.

M. remains silent for a while. Thereafter, he resumes his talk.

M. (to the devotees) This very Mother (Durga) used to assume a form and always talk to Thakur in Dakshineswar. Thakur prayed for a bhakta (M.) one day, 'Mother, please show this world-bewitching form to him at least once.'

"This mother is the Mother of the universe *Brahmashakti*. She is the object of Gayatri. Today, the idol of this very Mother is being worshipped in every house. She is the same as the Mother Bhavatarini of Dakshineswar. And then, she has come as a human being as our Holy Mother (Sri Sarada Devi).

"Oh, what lilas did Thakur enact with the Mother of the Universe in Dakshineswar! How much fun, how much reverence, pride and joy then!

"Sometimes he said that he was the incarnation of *Adya Shakti* (Primordial Force). Who can understand this mystery? He was himself the Mother as well as the son. She, who is the Mother is also the son. And then, he himself said, '*Brahman* and *Shakti* (Power) are indivisible.' This riddle cannot be solved without it being revealed. Brahman, Shakti, avatara and bhakta all the four are one, one in four. They, however, are separate during the lila.

"Dakshineswar is the field of his lila. Why does man not go there?

There is no place like that in the world today. The greatest of all pilgrimages! Every grain of dust there is holy the path, the *ghat* all holy. The trees and the creepers are holy the house, the building, the men holy. The whole environment is holy. With the holy divine advent of the Lord, all these are awake, alive; all holy and illumined.

"These who go there get the influence of these living harmonic atoms on their mind. The sum of these atoms is the mind subtle atoms. The body above it is the *karana sharira* the causal body. This is yet formed by the atoms more subtle, more holy, more permanent compared to it. Thakur used to call it *bhagavati-tanu*. This very *bhagavati-tanu* wakes up by the contact of the holy, powerful, divine atoms. The Dakshineswar temple is all full of this rare unearthly matter, and till another avatara comes, it remains the king of all places of pilgrimage."

M. thinks for a long time. Then, he again showers the Kathamrita.

M. (to the devotees) But when you go there, you should think over it deeply. Otherwise, the traditional reverence for it is lost. What happened the other day is coming to my mind. I was guilty of a big mistake.

"If you want to celebrate a joyous festival there, you have first to take the consent of Ramalal Dada. You have to please him with devotion, faith and food the guru's son, as he is. He is the son of Thakur's middle brother Rameswar. Moreover, he is Thakur's attendant. Besides, he continues to be the chief priest of the Mother Bhavatarini till today.

"Then you must render service to Thakur's sadhus. You should invite the sadhus of the Math, Udbodhan, Advaita Ashrama and so on.

"How ashamed of myself I was at the time of meals on that day! Ramalal Dada was sitting that day close-by. Even so, I was able to do a little by worshipping him with fruit, sweets, food-grain etc. and sweet words. Pleasing him is the main thing.

"Such is this business of rituals. If one has to feed the Devi, one should first feed the devotees in Her retinue. Haven't you seen during Durga Puja? They first feed the mouse, the owl, the peacock and the ghosts and then they feed the Devi.

"If you wish to celebrate anything in Dakshineswar, you must first consult them. Leaving them out is like performing a *yajna* without Shiva.

"If you wish to do anything there, if you are arranging a feast, you must tell them first. You have satisfy them first."

Amrit Then we have committed a big mistake this time. Besides, we know nothing.

Dr. Bakshi We had no programme to hold it in that way. It just happened.

Mohan Then you did not tell us everything. Then you said that by cooking and eating there, every article of that place goes into the memory by knowing them better and by seeing them again and again. From memory, they go into the mind. So, it was that we arranged that forest feast.

Antevasi Suppose I go, cook and eat food there at this time, shall I have to follow the same conduct?

M. No, not then. It you consult them and then arrange anything big, you have to do like that. Two of you may go, cook and eat. If you have to consult them or if you wish to celebrate, then you have to do like that.

M. rises. Going to the staircase, he stands and begins to praise a bhakta. He lives in Dakshineswar by begging.

M. (to the devotees) He is a lucky person. Besides, to live in such a place!

Antevasi and the Younger Jiten He has been doing so since his birth.

M. Wait a bit. He will defeat you all. He is memorising the Veda. How many people do so after their B.A., M.A. and reading a little?

A Young Man Why should we read the Veda? We have heard such easy words of Thakur which is all the essence of the Vedas.

M. (laughing) Well, well, there is no need to raise this topic now.

10 p.m. The bhaktas offers pranam and depart.

2.

Belur Math, the Durga festival. It is Mahashtami today. M. has come to the Math to have darshan of the Mother and to worship Her. Today, it is 5th October, 1924. As instructed by M., the devotees of the Morton School are to live in the Belur Math from the 4th to the 7th October to celebrate the puja. Living with the sadhus, they are rendering service to the Mother day and night.

A *mandap* has been constructed with the Hogla plant in the middle of Thakur temple and the Math building. The inside of the *mandap* has been decorated with multi-coloured cloth. Mother Durga has her idol made of clay. The Mother sits facing south in the *mandap* with Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Kartik and Ganesha. In front of the image a brahmachari is offering worship. And an experienced sannyasin seated beside him, is acting as the *tantra-dharaka*. He is directing the priest in his puja and reads the mantras etc. The priest offers incense, flower, *dhup*, *dip* (earthen lamp) and other articles of the ritual along with his mantras to the Mother and Her retinue. In between, one hears the sounds of the conch-shell, gong and so on. Not far the musicians are playing on the *shehnayi* and the drum. The whole atmosphere of the Math is filled with the fragrance of the burning incense and the music of the instruments.

It is Mahashtami today. So, there is a big crowd. The devotees are coming in groups in their best dresses. At places they are singing loudly to please the Mother. For these days, the kitchen of the Math is open to public.

Sitting in the south-eastern corner of the *mandap*, M. has darshan of the

deity and Her puja. After a while, he goes around the Math with many bhaktas. He offers pranam and has darshan first in Thakur's temple and then one by one, of Swami Vivekananda's room, Swami Brahmananda's shrine, the Holy Mother's shrine and Swami Vivekananda's shrine. Now he is again in the Holy Mother's shrine.

Here, Miss McLeod, the unique loving brahmacharini lady from America, comes and joins M. Many sadhus and devotees have assembled already. M. sits on his haunches facing north in front of the Mother's temple near the grove of Devadarus. Miss McLeod takes her seat in front of M., facing south. Some of the sadhus and bhaktas sit there, some stand there and have darshan of the great spiritual man. M. talks happily on many topics with brahmacharini McLeod. All of a sudden, M. offers pranam to Miss McLeod by prostrating on the ground. Feeling so much embarrassed, Miss McLeod asking his pardon in a loud pleading tone says humbly, 'O! O! What do you do, Mr. M? You are Sri Ramakrishna's son.'

M. says reverentially in a calm voice, "The Mother of the universe, who is being worshipped in the image over there, the very same Mother, I am worshipping here in this human form. The same blissful Mother is flowing before us the Ganga. And here again, She is in the temple as the Holy Mother. You are the guardian-angle of us all."

A bhakta says to himself: Why has this spiritual man offered his pranam by lying on the ground to Miss McLeod who is but a disciple? Undoubtedly, it is for our training. Not realising her real self, we do not show proper regard to her. We cannot give her due respect. M. comes to know of it from our conduct and talk. So, perhaps, he forces us to see and tells us without speaking, 'She is a goddess, not a human being.'

Reason? He always says to the devotees, "These ladies are none else but the love-lorn cow-herdresses of Lord Krishna of Braja narrated in the Bhagavata. Only, they have taken birth some eight or ten thousand miles away. Forsaking their native land, their near and dear ones, their comfort, they have come to live in the Math inflicted with malaria for no other reason than to beg for divine love." And he adds, "Thakur has kept them in the Math to be the guardian deity of Swamiji's work." How much trouble the gurus have to bear for the training of their disciples! This conduct of M. is the manifestation of dharma to train by conduct, to live Vedanta.

The devotees from the Morton School have been spending their nights in the veranda of guest-house for the past few days. The Younger Jiten, Shachi and Jagabandhu are continuously spending their night there. Vinay, Ramesh, Manoranjan, Balai, the Younger Nalini and others sometimes spend their night here. The puja was celebrated for three days. And this time, the immersion ceremony has been performed at the ghat, not by boat.

M. is sitting on his bed facing south in his room on the fourth level. In front of him are seated a famous doctor from Dhaka along with two companions. They have their homes in Mymensingh.

It is 8th October, the 11th day of the bright fortnight today. 9 a.m. The Younger Jiten, Shachi and Jagabandhu have returned from the Math. They touch M.'s feet to offer their salutation. Today M. has not stopped them. Ordinarily, M. does not permit this way of salutation.

The next day, many sadhus and bhaktas are coming to offer their Vijaya pranams. Shachi, Jagabandhu and the Younger Jiten had placed their seats in the western room on the second level during the puja holidays. They take their prasada (meal) in this very room after having cooked it here and offering it to Thakur. The sadhus and bhaktas first come here and sit for a while, then they meet M.

Next day, 10th October. This day too, sadhus and bhaktas are coming for the darshan of and pranam to M., throughout the day. It is four in the evening. Close to M. are seated Swamis Dayananda, Vireshwarananda and Omkarananda. After sometime arrives Swami Samvidananda.

It is 7 p.m. now. Jagabandhu offers his pranam to M. and leaves for the Howrah Railway Station. He is accompanied by the Younger Jiten and Vinay. Having received M.'s blessings, they are going for the darshan of Sri Kashi as desired by M.

M. is sitting in the room on the second level. He asks Jiten why he has risen so early. Jiten replies, "Vinay and I are going to see off Jagabandhu at the station." M. says, "Then you may go. There isn't much time."

Jagabandhu leaves by the Banaras Express. It is 8 p.m. now. M. has asked him to send him a description of the pilgrimage and the tapasya from time to time on a postcard. That, he said would be very beneficial to him. He and others would be able to have the whole darshan while sitting here itself. That many others are benefited, when a person undertakes pilgrimage and tapasya has been taught by Thakur. It is this skill that has been taught by Thakur.

The pilgrim seated in the train says to himself, "My body is going to Kashi, the king of pilgrimages. The upper part of the mind is absorbed in the joy of the darshan of Kashi. But I see, that the lower part is tied to M. The last message of M., that he wants a description of the holy place and tapasya from time to time is resounding in my ears."



10th October 1924, Friday,
The 12th day of the bright fortnight,
24 Ashwin, 1331 (B.Y.)

KASHI, THE STOREHOUSE OF JNANA AND BHAKTI

1.

Morton School. It is half past seven in the morning. M. is seated in his room on his bed. Jagabandhu comes and offers his pranam. He has just returned from Kashi after a stay of three weeks there. After offering his pranam to M. he sits on the bench towards the south of the bed. Close to him are the Younger Jiten and Shachi. They are talking of Kashi.

Today it is Saturday, 1st November, 1924, fifteenth of Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.), the 5th day of the bright fortnight. 49 Dandas/43 Palas.

M. How far is Vishwanath (temple) and Dashashvamedha Ghat from where you were staying? And, the Advaita Ashrama (of Kashi)?

Jagabandhu The city is within a mile. I was living in 17, Ramapura. Prabhas, Vinay's youngest brother is living there. Also, Vishwash Mahashay. The latter is spending his time in a holy place. He was a station master. He was at Hathras for a long time. Swamiji (Vivekananda) and many others used to live with him during their wandering stage.

M. There is perhaps a strike today. How have you come from Howrah?

Jagabandhu The trams are running but no other conveyance is available. I came by tram from Howrah to the turning of the Amherst Street. From there, I came on foot, with a bag in my hand and a bundle of *baghambari* (designed like the skin of lion) blanket under the armpit. I have come just now. While you were entering the room, I had climbed up to the fourth level. Jiten and Shachi were sitting on the roof.

M. Did you have darshan of Sri Vishwanath and Annapurna every day? When living in a holy place of pilgrimage, one should daily offer pranams and have darshan of the presiding deity of the place, if your health allows. Otherwise, one commits an offence. Suppose, one's father and mother are living together at the same place in a town but the boy is working elsewhere. Just as the son enquires after the parents daily, the same should be done here. Those who want God should conduct themselves in this manner. This is called bhakti. God is the father and mother of one's parents.

Jagabandhu Yes, Sir. Sometimes, when I used to go for the arati I used to have darshans twice I would sit down and take to japa. I used to get a lot of inspiration. I used to take *charanamrita* and make holy rounds. When I would enter, I would notice that my mind would quieten down by itself.

M. Kashi is a place of pilgrimage. Thakur had the darshan of Vishwanath Annapurna there awakened, living entity. How many people have committed tyrannies but they are always there in the

same form. The proof of it is that as soon as one enters, the mind becomes stable. Thakur asked me to meditate on Him. Everything has been prepared according to one's needs. There is a god and a centre of pilgrimage everywhere. 'This world is a burning fire,' so said Thakur. That is why he has made sadhus, shrines and holy centres for the peace of the minds of the devotees.

"You must have been visiting the Advaita Ashrama, Sevashrama quiet often? Are Shantananda, Chandra Maharaj and other sadhus well? Which other Ashrams and Maths managed by others did you visit? Did you bathe at the Dashashvamedha Ghat in the Ganga?"

M. begins to put many such questions. In all these questions the noteworthy point is that none of these questions concerned sensory life, not one had it as the topic. All questions pertain to God, sadhu, Math, Ashrama, bhaktas and places of pilgrimage.

M. Did you go to Vindhyachal? And did you have darshan of Vinduvasini? This is one of the fifty one *Devi Peethas* (holy places of the Goddess).

Jagabandhu Yes, sir. I, Ramamaya and Mukunda Babu went together. And Chaku Maharaj went from the Sevashrama. 'Bengal Mai' also went there with Chapala. We were in the house of a *panda*. We felt very happy at Devi's darshan but there was much more joy on the hill.

M. Did you have any talk with the sadhus on the Vindhyachal mount?

Jagabandhu Yes, Sir. We had a talk with the old Mahatma Purnananda. He lives naked near the Ashtabhuj temple in a hut. He attacked Thakur unprovoked. This made me stubborn. Contradicting him, I quietened him. Then he began to show affection.

"And there is a temple at a spot somewhat below on the hill. I saw sadhus there also."

M. Thakur used to say that all sadhus are Narayana. There are also *rajoguni* and *tamoguni* Mahatmas. One should offer pranam to them all. They are worthy of our worship because of their renunciation. Whenever you have to say something to a sadhu, you should say it folding your hands.

M. Where did you sit on the bank of the Ganga in Kashi?

Jagabandhu At the Kedar Ghat. A nice landscape you have there! Hundreds of people sit there and meditate. I used to sit there for a long time. In front, I had a big expanse of the Ganga. In between, there were loud sounds of 'Gange Hara' by the boat passengers. It is a very inspiring spot.

M. A beautiful spot indeed! Every spot on the bank of the Ganga is holy but the Kedar Ghat is even more holy. It was close to it that Thakur lived in the house of the Raja Babus. One can imagine that he would generally sit at this ghat, have the darshan of the Ganga

and bathe in it. Thakur's meditation, darshan, talk have taken a subtle form and is present there. When the right bhakta goes there, that bhava manifests itself in his heart and that fills the mind and heart of the bhakta with an unknown kind of joy.

"As such places, divine inspiration gets concentrated in this way since eternity by the visit of the rishis, munis, avatars and mahapurushas. Just as the wealth of a state is in the raja's treasure, similarly the treasure of the devotees' dhyana, bhakti and faith gets stocked in a holy place.

"Thakur used to say, 'In Kashi, Shiva whispers the name of Ram in the ears of the dying and the Mother Annapurna breaks the bonds of birth and death of the jivas.' He saw this with his own eyes and he entered into samadhi in the boat at Manikarnika Ghat. He said, 'The Mother snaps the bonds of Maya quickly.' And he said, 'I saw the whole of Kashi as a city of gold.' The shastras contains all this, but with the passage of time people lose their faith. So, Thakur came and revived and re-inspired all these truths for the bhaktas by perceiving them. Thus, all these holy places are the indestructible storehouse of Eternity.

"The shastra says this: If one dies in Kashi he attains *mukti* (liberation). Thakur almost showed it to the bhaktas. Putting his foot on the chest of Hriday's mother, he said, 'Sister, you will die in Kashi,' and this is what happened at last. The others did not accept it, even though they had heard it. But it turned out to be true, so they believed. She was his elder cousin. She had recognised Thakur as an avatara.

"How can man understand all this with his intellect defiled by sensory experience? It is all-wonderful. There is no other way but to put one's faith in it, in the words of guru, in the words of the avatara. This is the only consistent position; faith and faith."

The devotee has returned from Kashi. M. sees him as Vishwanath in person. How many affectionate questions he has! How much joy! As though his face and eyes are lit up with joy. He asks about some one hundred sadhus and bhaktas living in Kashi, their name, their health and their tapasya like a person wants to know all about his home when living abroad.

The devotee feels that he is gaining much more from this divine curiosity and yearning of M. than what he did at Kashi. And he is also thinking: It appears that the spiritually great know all the places of the God and the persons living there as their real home and as their own kith and kin. That is how though living in the world, they are unworldly.

8 p.m. M. is seated on a mat on the floor in the room on the second level. He has devotees on all three sides Shuka Lal, the Elder Jiten, Attorney Viren with his companion Pleader, the Doctor, Shachi, Jagabandhu and so on. Addressing Viren's companion Pleader, M. talks.

M. It goes on this way a group goes there and another returns charged with energy. He who has created this complication of the universe has never-ending energy.

"The reading of the life of Buddha is going on here for several days. The Buddha preaches to his disciples in Kushinagar This body will

not last, it is very troublesome to take it along. Just as a cart creeps along with such difficulties when one of its wheels breaks down, similarly, it is with this body it is not able to move anymore now.

"Householders build houses, states and so on. But, none of these will last. Only God will. He is there since eternity and will be there till ever. Have a relationship with Him. Consider Him as your only eternal friend, your own. Then, you will not be overwhelmed by affection or grief while you live here or while you depart. You will live in joy, you will depart in joy."

M. (to all present) See what happened! Gopa came and saluted Buddha. But, Buddha could not recognise her. At the end, Gopa also embraced sannyasa. He established an independent Math for women. His seven year old son Rahul also became a sannyasi. His step-brother Ananda, the heir apparent also did not go back at all to home on seeing all that. The whole family embraced sannyasa.

"He, whose touch has made all these personalities, what a personality he must be! Think what he is, brother? Think a little. A tree is known by its fruit."

M. (to the Elder Jiten) Thakur said one day, 'She (the Holy Mother) was going to her native village. She came to offer me her pranam. I wondered who she was as though she was not even my acquaintance.'

"Just see what is the state of a man who was an avatara!"

"Why did he speak like this? To train humanity."

M. (to the Pleader) What use are all these, money, house, family and so on? Nothing will go with us. Why then, such love for them? What will go with us are our bhakti, our faith only. Even so, one must earn. It is for this purpose that God has created the *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa* ashramas. One should sit down, mind quietened and develop this non-worldly jnana, bhakti and faith.

"I used to hear that earlier people used to take to *vanaprastha* at the age of fifty. Now, one rarely hears it.

"But nothing will accompany us. All that will accompany us are God's name and love for Him."

Sharatchandra Mahashay has recently breathed his last. He was a founder of Sri Ramakrishna Samiti of Parshi Bagan. He was an intimate devotee of Thakur, initiated by Swamiji. A memorial meeting will be held in Science College to pay him tributes. Two young men have been here to invite M. For some days, the devotees are noticing a change in the moods of M. M. is having this state ever since the passing away of Sharat Babu. On hearing about the memorial meeting, M.'s mood of dispassion as if has increased. Sharat Babu was young in years. Remaining silent for a while, M. talks again.

M. (to all present) A great man, a noble soul. His work over, he has departed. When people begin to revere such people, one may know that the country is rising. He was a hero of selfless work.

Jagabandhu has returned from Kashi only this morning. He has brought the prasad of Sri Vishwanath, Annapurna, Vinduvāsini and other gods and goddesses. Vinay distributes them.

M. (to Vinay) You should name these while giving. This will inspire them with all those places.

"One should have the darshan of the prasad, touch, offer pranam to it, eat it and also hear its name. By repeatedly doing so one gains bhakti. Religion has its subtle ways. Thakur said to Naren, 'One gains bhakti by eating prasad.' When Thakur gave the *atka* prasad (of rice) of Jagannath to Narendra, he refused it at first. He said, 'What use it will be to take it this dried rice?' Thakur then said this to him that one gains bhakti by taking prasad. Then, Narendra took it without further thought. So it happened."

M. asks his daughter's son Buleke to bring a dish from the third level. Then, he puts all kinds of prasad in it. Thereafter, he sends it to Ginni Ma and other ladies in ladies' quarters.

M. (to all present) Devotion does not fall from the sky. It has to be earned. By doing so repeatedly *aneka janmasamsiddhastato yati paraam gatim* [...and perfected through many births reaches then the Supreme Goal (Gita 6:45)]. (To Shuka Lal and the Doctor) Please take home some prasad.

2.

The twilight hour has elapsed. Morton School. M. is seated in the assembly room on the second level. He has just finished his meditation. The bhaktas are seated on a mat on the floor on his three sides.

Today it is 7th November, 1924, 21st Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.), Friday, the 11th day of the bright fortnight, 24 Dandas/22 Palas.

Enters Durgapada Mitra. He is the manager of 'The Healing Balm'. He is a very learned, intelligent and devoted person. He begins to talk of politics as soon as he offered his pranam.

Durgapada C. R. Das has defeated the British government in the Bengal legislature and has come out victorious. The victory of the Swaraj Party is being talked by everybody today. Mahatma Gandhi was initially not in favour of forming the Swaraj Party. Later on, he approved. The British government in India is worried on this account.

M. listens to this for a long time without saying anything. Now, he begins to talk.

M. (happily) Aha! Gandhi Mahashay is as though the picture of renunciation. Wherever there is weakness, he goes to help. In this way, the weak become strong.

"*yato dharmastato krishnah yato krishnastato jayah* (Where there is dharma, there is Krishna and where there is Krishna there is victory). Dharma means truth, justice, purity, self-control and renunciation, all these. The Manu Samhita talks of dharma dharma with its ten characteristics.

"And then there is this *jayastu panduputranaam yesham pakshe janarddanah* (The victory, though, is of the sons of Pandu, on whose side is Sri Krishna).

"With Gandhi Maharaj's support, Das Mahashay's party has become strong. We were suspecting that they would now arrest Das Mahashay.

"What step will the government take now, do you know? Now, it will try to entice the Mohammedans. I am seeing this.

"Whatever the government may do, it will not succeed. It will not be able to keep India down for long. God wills that India should rise. So, it is that such persons are taking part in politics. Gandhi Maharaj and Das Mahashay both have renounced their all and embraced so many difficulties for the freedom of their motherland. The government will not be able to keep it much longer. India's freedom is sure to come.

"Those who cannot see these good signs have been blinded by their attachments. The leadership that emerges out of complete renunciation in a selfless manner brings with it God's power. All other powers are trifles compared to God's power, nothing at all. Outwardly, one sees as if the animal power is winning, but it does not happen. At the end, the divine power is sure to win. The Vedas therefore says *satyameva jayate nanritam* (It is the truth that wins not the untruth).

"A party fights to gain earthly pleasures, the other for the sake of God. Are these two similar? No, there is the difference of heaven and nether between the two. *Yato dharmastato jayah* (Where there is dharma, there is victory)."

The next day, it is Saturday. Morton School, veranda on the second level. It is evening now. M. is meditating in a corner facing east. Some of the devotees are seated on benches in the veranda while others are meditating in the room. M. enters the room after about one o' clock. He takes his seat on the mat facing east. They converse now.

A bhakta (to M.) Can man know God?

M. What kind of God He is if one can know Him? Knowing means knowing by your sensory organs, like one knows so many things - house, home, carriage, horse. How can you know Him with your senses? He is beyond all senses. *avangmanasgocaram* (He is beyond mind and speech).

"One begins to understand a little at the coming of the avatara. He cannot be known fully. There is a big expanse of a land. In the middle of it, there is a wall. One can see nothing beyond it. If a little hole is made in this wall, one sees a little of the beyond through it.

"Thakur said that the avatara was this hole. He introduced himself in this way, in the form of riddle.

"He asked a bhakta (M.), 'Let me hear what that hole is.' The devotee

immediately replied, 'You are that hole.' He was very happy and said, 'That is so.'

"Just as a father feels contented and expresses his joy on seeing his son's ability, similarly Thakur expressed his joy on hearing this reply. It means that the devotee has recognised him as an avatara.

"But then is it the greatness of the devotee? No. He let him catch him. So he was able to hold him. He made him recognise him. So he recognised him. Who has the capacity to recognise Him?

"Thakur said, 'God comes in a human body as an avatara, bringing with Him, all His essentials. The avatara is like the udders of a cow.'

"He said, 'Just as the best part of cow's body is milk and that milk comes from the udders, similarly, God comes in a human body even while creating and preserving the world and though He is omnipresent.' And he demonstrates to the bhaktas His highest wealth from that body, which consists of jnana and bhakti, discrimination and dispassion, peace, happiness, love and samadhi. These qualities are the highest wealth they are the Self of Satchidananda.

"The greatest manifestation of Satchidananda is the avatara. Even if one understands a little of Him, the thing is done the man is blessed, he is fulfilled.

"He said, 'What need is there to touch the whole of the Ganga, from Gangotri to Gangasagar? Touch it at one place and you have had the touch of the Ganga. Similarly, having seen God in an avatara, you have seen God, you have known God. Avatara and God are one. Christ said, 'I and my Father are one (John 10:30)'

"Thakur used to call Satchidananda, God, as Mother. He also said, 'Mother and I are one.'

"So, he said, 'Think of me and it is done ... Verily, verily, I say, he who thinks of me will inherit my wealth, like the son inheriting his father's wealth.' "

What is M. thinking about ? He resumes.

M. (to the bhaktas) The picture box man shows pictures to the children, charging them a paisa. He has pictures in his box. When he pulls a ring, a picture comes in front and the children see it through a glass. And then, he sings beautifully, 'Just see, you have the Mecca city before you and now comes Kashi.'

"The children had seen all these pictures earlier, but they had not understood them. Reason? They were not involved in them. When a person has interpreted them they have understood.

"In the same way, we see all jivas, the world and all, but we don't understand them. We also see the avatara but cannot recognise him till He makes us do so, till He interprets.

"Referring to this, Sri Krishna says:

avajananti mam muda manusheem tanumashritam,

param bhavamajananto mama bhutamaheshwaram.

[Fools disregard Me as one clad in human form, not knowing My higher nature as the Great Lord of beings. (Gita 9:11)]

"But when He explained to Arjuna, Arjuna began to sing this hymn of praise, '*Devesha jagannivasa*' [O Lord of the Gods, O Abode of the universe! (Gita 11:25)].

"When the avatara interprets, one comprehends that God has created all beings, the world and the twenty four elements. And He is the driver. Otherwise, one thinks that they have all come of themselves. And, one cannot understand what they all are, why they all are and wherefrom they have come and then why man is born and why he dies, what is his end.

"When the avatara explains, one understands all this this mystery is solved."

M. keeps silent for a long while. Then he resumes.

M. (to the devotees) Experiencing is easy. One feels the breeze of the fan on the body and one knows that somebody is pulling the fan. One can even guess it without seeing him. This also is a kind of experience, knowing in a way.

"But seeing water, moon, sun, fire, air, fruit and flowers, anything at a particular time, one can guess that there is a person behind all that. He creates all these and He runs them. Once you have this faith, you have gained a lot.

"But there is something higher than that to have His darshan, to be in His direct presence. The Lord comes to the devotees assuming some form. Thakur saw it himself and he showed it to the devotees.

"One day he said, 'Here comes the Mother in a Banarasi Sari. Verily, I say the Mother has come.' This darshan, being in Her direct presence is higher than just experience. He said so in a room full of people. Vijay Goswami and others were there too almost all sceptics.

"Who can challenge what he said? Who has the capacity? Not only having darshan, but talking with Her! Besides, it conforms to reality.

"Whatever the Mother talked to Thakur while giving him Her darshan, Thakur narrated them to the devotees. And then, all those things actually happened, they bore fruit. How can then one say that they are all hallucinations of the mind?"

M. (to Mohan) If God had not come as a man, nobody could have understand the fundamentals about God. He comes as a man and explains it. First he makes himself known, makes himself understood. Then, with the help of this knowledge, by analogy, the bhaktas can understand what is God. Lastly, he makes them understand that he himself is God. Those who have understood Thakur have known God. Thakur is the avatara. As the guru, he has

told the devotees their personal places the one each belongs to.

"The greatest manifestation of God in man is the avatara. The avatara tells man: Ye are divinities.

"The greatest work of the avatara is to make them know their reality. Then, he tells them how to enjoy *Brahmananda* (the joy of Brahman) easily and naturally by meditating on his form, lila and words.

"Thakur said, 'Thinking of me is enough' and he added, 'I am avatara. By seeing me you see God.'"



Saturday, 8th November, 1924,
22nd Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.),
The twelfth day of the bright fortnight,
23 Dandas/35 Palas.

GOD REALISATION BRINGS THE GREATEST CULTURE

1.

Morton School, 8 p.m. M. is standing on the veranda on the second level, facing east on the eastern edge. He is talking with Buddhiram.

Nearby in the parlour, the devotees are sitting on a mat on the floor. M. has just returned from Nava Vidhan Brahma Samaj with the devotees. Many bhaktas have come today Dr. Bakshi, Vinay, the Elder Amulya, Gadadhar, Manoranjan, Ramesh, Shanti, Jagabandhu and others. They are seated in the room. A little later comes Buddhiram. Surapati has come with a friend or two. Some of them are facing west, the others north. The devotees discuss the worship in the Brahma Samaj.

Entering the room last, M. sits on the *baghambari* (designed like the skin of lion) blanket facing. Behind him, there is the western wall of the room. Advocate Lalit Banerjee, having offered his pranam to M., had left on the way.

While standing on the veranda, M. heard the devotees' discussion. As soon as he enters the room, he begins to praise Brahma Samaj.

M. (to the devotees) Aha, as one sits in the Brahma Samaj, one feels as if Thakur is speaking. There, one hears all the words of Thakur. Oh, what they talked about Keshab Sen today 'I feel like taking only rice with vegetables for Him.' Aha! What a thing to say! The Gita also has the same thing *yadicchanto brahmacharyam charanti* [...they lead a life of continence: (Gita 8:11)] Eating rice with vegetables means to live a hard life, to observe brahmacharya, to take to tapasya. How fine! What yearning!

"It is never too much to do anything for God! Only when one has a deep love for Him, such words come out of the mind. Narendra also said, 'Going to west (that is United Provinces of Punjab, that region), I shall fast unto death for Him.' *Brahmacharyamahimsa cha shariram tapa uchhyate* [...continence and non-injury are said to be the austerity of the body (Gita 17:14)]. This too is said in the Gita. One observes continence to attain God.

"They, the Brahma devotees have taken all from Thakur. What an impression Thakur had left on their minds! What a long time has passed, yet they have not been able to forget him. The same 'Mother, O Mother, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Jagadhatri, Durga the Dispeller of all misfortunes' that we heard there today, are all from Thakur. Didn't he inject all this into their leaders. It is the same which is filtering down within them."

The Elder Amulya The younger generation does not accept that they got this 'Mother, Mother' from Thakur.

M. (sharply reprimanding him) We are not talking of this. What they are is for Him to think over. We are able to hear only Thakur's words

there. When we go to them, our mind says that they are talking of him (Thakur) the narration, song, emotion, all these are his.

"What do they say that one gets the genial heat when one is on the orbit. Instead of doing so, to fly at a tangent! (Tracing a circle on the blanket with his finger) Here is an orbit. Instead of living within it, to shoot out at tangent!"

The Elder Amulya They disagree...

M. (strongly interrupting) No Sir, don't talk of it any more.

M. is silent for a while. The conversation is resumed now.

M. (to the devotees) Some people call him irrelevant. I feel very hurt on hearing such words.

"Where is the time to be offensive? One is always restless with the fire of pain, grief, slavery and then the senses. Does it behave to the offensive in such a state? One should always be on the defensive to protect oneself.

"What do you say 'There is such a tyrannical enemy within and without'. Within, one's senses; without, pain and grief, all these. Their fire always keeps the mind unbalanced.

"If there are any defects in them, it is for Him to see. Is He not there? He Himself will take them all in their own way. Everything is happening by His will.

"Just see, how did the formless (God) come out from the middle of the desert from Mohammed's mouth. And then, there is Christianity. It is He, who has created them all.

"(Loudly) No leisure, no time to be critical. Simply, you cannot afford to be critical."

M. is silent. Now, he resumes the conversation.

M. (to a devotee) A pundit used to read out Bhagavata to a raja. He would often say to the raja, 'You understand?' And the raja would say, 'Please understand yourself first.' There is a saying: One does not see that one's own house is burning. But pity, one goes to see another's house burning.

"So Christ also said, 'Why beholdest then the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye (Mathew 7:3).' Have I time to see all that?"

Two months ago, a two-year daughter of Elder Amulya died. M. reminds him of it and talks.

M. (to all present) Just see how a single bereavement upsets! Besides, one illness makes you forget all.

M. is silent again. Again, he talks.

M. (to all present while referring to Elder Jiten) Thakur said, 'You

Calcutta people have this one disease. You only lecture to others. Reading a page or two, they think they have attained all knowledge.' He said this to me on the second day. (Laughing) You only le..c..tu..re.

M. is again silent. And, then he talks.

M. (to the devotees) The babus were going by boat, chewing betel leaves. Thakur saw them and said, 'Just see, see this, they are going to slave and how happy they are.'

"Oh, what an affair of the Mahamaya! On one hand the aim of human life is to realise God, instead of that they are going to slave and then so happy about it.

"It is a different story with the avatara, with a perfected spiritual man. We have seen Thakur, the one man who always lived in joy. Didn't he recognise himself as a child of the Ever-blissful? Anybody who realises that he is the child of the Ever-blissful is ever in joy, isn't it?"

A little silence and then the conversation.

M. (to himself) How do people see the fault of others? Isn't this body a world in itself, the abode of all defects? Taking up a body is in itself a great fault. Take up a body and then carry the burden of slavery! Besides, there is the fire of grief, pain, want, poverty, disease and illness.

"The body is itself a cauldron of fire. The doors to the mind the enemies desire, anger are always awake therein. The Lord has clearly said so in the Gita. Where one should have been trying to save oneself from them, one takes to the criticism of others instead! What do they say 'The mother who serves so devotedly is called the evil spirit.'

"God looks after everybody, the whole world. And it is He who takes us on our paths."

M. (to the young man) Buddha Deva realised that this body itself is a cauldron of fire. Thakur too said: The world is a blazing fire. And this body is the world, the macrocosm. So Buddha Deva sat under the Banyan tree and he said, '*ihava shushyatu me shariram*' let the fire cool down here.

"The sadhus also take to tapasya for the same reason to subjugate the enemies of desire, anger and so on. Why do they put up so many troubles, so many insults, so much bad name? To cool down this blazing fire. God-realisation is only possible then.

"Once two sadhus of our Math went with a Vaishnava group during the days of the circumambulation of the region of Braja. At a particular place there was arrangement for food. They all sat in a row. Both the sadhus of the Math also joined. The Vaishnavas seeing them flew into rage. They said, 'Why are they among the diners? Drive them away.' The fanatical Vaishnavas call sannyasis

irreligious. So, they were so angry. They were afraid that their touch would defile the dinner their sight would defile the food. So, they (sannyasis) left. Later on, when the dinner was over, a person came and said to them, 'Please take something.' They replied, 'No, there is no need to have our meals today.' (Laughing) What need of food after the insult we have had?

"This insult why do they put up with it? For His sake, so as to attain Him. That's why they say, 'He is the real man who is dead while living.' "

Surpati's companion Where is the need then to preserve the body?

M. But we are not talking of preserving the body. One rises supporting oneself with the same earth on which one falls. This body which has to undergo so much is also the means to attain Him. Tapasya keeps subjugated all these enemies of desire, anger and so on. Otherwise, so much of the mind is wasted. The senses pull the mind out and *harati prasabham manah* (kidnap the mind forcibly). Tapasya makes the senses go inward. The mind then goes to God. Tapasya means just this to turn the mind towards God, to concentrate it.

"The mind gets concentrated in external matters, for example, the scientists keeps their minds fixed on their investigations. Swami Abhedananda had seen Edison. He is the inventor of the electric bulb and the Gramophone. He saw him fully concentrated the whole mind absorbed in that idea. His food was lying uneaten close-by on the table two meals, but he was not aware of it.

"This too is tapasya but it does not bring *param shantim* (ultimate peace). But if this ready mind is turned towards God, one can have His darshan through it.

"Thakur went to Vidyasagar to say the same. He said, 'If you do these acts of charity for God, you will be able to realise God thereby.' "

M. (to the devotees) Do all attain only in one birth? No, some are born ten times, some twenty times and others any number of times. One should only pray to God, 'Don't delude me Mother, don't delude me, Mother, do not delude me with your world-enchancing Maya.

"What are hundred lives in eternity? Very ordinary. So, one should pray, always pray. There is no other way than this."

M. (to a bhakta) He is not in the scriptures. He is not to be found in the Veda or the Vedanta. These holy books, the reading of Bhagavata and so on, they are all *apara* (worldly) knowledge. What I am saying is also all *apara vidya*. They all belong to the outer quarters. You see, the house has the outer quarters and the inner quarters. These are all of the outer quarters. Even so, some can enter the inner quarters through the outer quarters when they are intimately known to the members of the family.

"Some live absolutely within the inner quarters, for example, Thakur. Inner quarter means to always to live joined with God.

"The Veda is also *apara vidya*. If it does not lead to God-realisation, why should one have so much pride on having read some two pages of it? There would have been no rescue if one could attain Him thereby. Did Thakur read anything?"

"*Paravidya yaya tadaksharamadhigamyate* (*Paravidya* is that by which you know the imperishable) jnana and bhakti. When you know how to use it, even *apara vidya* can help to gain *para vidya*. Worship, reading of holy texts, repetition of the holy name and meditation, though, they are a part of worldly *vidya*, if they are taken up in a selfless manner, for the attainment of God one can gain *para vidya* through them. If they are for that aim, they are good. Otherwise, they become the cause of harder bonds.

"The company of sadhus is also the same, strictly speaking, in the region of *apara vidya*. But, if the ideal is attainment of God, they are all a help.

"Hearing is better than reading and seeing is better than hearing, so said Thakur. Reading and hearing both come in the category of *shravana* (hearing). Then, there is *manana*, deep thinking; then *nididhyasana*, concentrated meditation. Thereafter, comes darshan, the attainment of the object. They are respectively better than the other."

M. keeps silent for a while, then the conversation is resumed.

M. (to the devotees) Man wants to understand God's work with this intelligence. How amazing! Simply foolhardiness! He is invisible to the sensory intellect but visible to the purified intellect. Devotions, reading, repetition of the name, meditation, company of the sadhus and service of the sadhus, when undertaken in a selfless manner, purify the mind and He shows Himself to a purified mind by His grace. Thakur used to say, 'The pure water reflects.'

"Just see, how difficult it is to solve a single mathematical problem. Is it so easy to solve His work?"

M. (to Buddhiram) Have you not solved mathematical problems? Well, let me see, what is it to multiply three and four?

Buddhiram No sir, I have done nothing.

M. (happily) Well son, you are a good receptacle. If a white paper has broken zigzag lines, can one write on it? The man is full of such broken zigzag lines.



Sunday, 9th November, 1924,
23rd of Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.),
The 13th day of the bright fortnight,
23 Dandas/25 Palas

WHICH IS THE HIGHER CULTURE, JUST LEARNING OR SELF-REALISATION?

1.

Thakur asked Narendra in Cossipore Garden, 'I say you have not taken your examination (B.L.)'. Narendra was to appear in the Law examination. Narendra replied, 'I would be saved if I can forget what I have learnt, not to speak of the examination!'

Surpati's Other Companion Without studies, how can one be cultured?

M. (interrupting him) Culture will result from thinking upon Him. Can just reading two pages bring culture? It comes by praying to Him.

"Why, Thakur hardly learnt reading or writing. How did he get it? I saw such highly learned men seated at his feet, folding their hands. Latu Maharaj was also quite unlettered, yet how many persons worship him now!

"So Christ said, 'Do not lean on a broken reed, for such is man.' Do not depend on this weak man, depend on God."

Jagabandhu All the disciples of Christ were unlettered. Some were fishermen, others, something else.

M. Yes, all his intimate disciples were fishermen. Christ called out Peter and said, 'Come and follow me. (Mathew 4:19).' Peter was mending his fishing net at that time. Peter replied, 'Where shall I get food and clothes without working?' Christ then reprimanding him said, 'O, ye of little faith, you cannot see that God arranges food and clothing for all. Even the animals and birds are provided with food and covering to sustain their life.

"Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they (Mathew 6:26)?"

"He said: Don't worry about these things like worldly men, mad for sensory enjoyments. He said so with a lot of contempt. You should rather meditate on God. 'For these things the nations of the earth seek after, seek ye rather the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 6:33).'"

"Thakur too said, 'Don't worry for all these things, for all these.' These things, that is to say house, money, society, wife, son and so on. You only think upon Him. He will take care. If you take refuge in Him, He will bear your burden. Thakur used to say this to his intimate disciples.

"Christ also said something else to Peter: Give up fishing. Follow me, you will catch human fish 'I will make you fishers of men.' In other

words, the world will worship you.

"How did he get his culture?"

"Christ was himself illiterate, but hearing him speak such words of wisdom, the rabbis well versed in scriptures would be dumbfounded. And in wonder they would say, 'Wherefrom this young son of Joseph, the carpenter, got this wisdom? He was not at all literate.'

"The same with Thakur. Dr. Mahendra Sarkar, such a great devotee of science, said to him, 'It is not possible to match you in words.' The world famous Keshab also said, 'There is none like him in the world. He should be preserved in a glass-case.' "

"Thakur said something else to Mahendra Sarkar, 'Let me see, tell me what has happened to me? I am a fool, even so, why do these English-men come to me?' "

M. (to all present) The Veda says: *kasminnu bhagavo vijnate sarvamidam vijnatam bhavati* [Master, what is that by knowing which every thing is known?] Rishi Saunak was the chancellor of the Naimishyaranya Gurukul. Some ten thousand students it had. Seeing that there was no end to worldly knowledge and that this knowledge was incapable of bringing peace to the mind, he has put that question to Rishi Angiras, viz. which is that knowledge gaining which one gains all knowledge. His reply: By *para vidya* that is to say by knowing God one gains all knowledge."

M. (to a bhakta) What does the Gita say *Yam labdhva...?*

A bhakta

yam labdhva chaparam labham manyate nadhitam tatah,

yasminsthito na dukkhen gurunapi vichalyate.

[And having gained which, he thinks that there is no greater gain than that, wherein established, he is not shaken even by the heaviest affliction. (Gita 6:22)]

M. (to all present) The Veda and the Gita say that by knowing Him everything is known. Besides, the Veda says: *etadatmamidam sarvam*. He is the support of the whole world. When one knows Him, Sarasvati, the goddess of learning comes to reside in one's throat. Thakur said, "Then, the Mother keeps on pushing portions of jnana."

"Such a learned pundit was Swami Dayananda Sarasvati. He and Thakur met in the Nainan Bagan of the Tagore family. Keshab Sen was also there. As soon as he saw him, Thakur went into samadhi. Then a person (Vishwanath Upadhyaya) said to Swami Dayananda, 'Have you attained this stage?' He replied, 'No, I am seeing that he (Thakur) has attained that state about which I have read in scriptures.' And he also said, 'I have the pride of learning.'

"When one has pride, samadhi does not occur. Any pride, whether it is of learning or any other."

M. (to Surpati's companion) Which do you call culture, this pride or being in presence of Brahman?

"Listen, such a great personality himself confesses that he has the pride of learning. And, therefore he does not get samadhi.

"If studies could bring the knowledge of Brahman, there would be no rescue. Just see, without reading or writing, Thakur was at the highest point of culture, all the twenty-four hours, throughout his life.

"Which is culture, learning or Self-realisation, God-realisation?"

A Particular Bhakta We have heard only from you that the subtle body needs food. It sharpens the intellect, it fortifies the power of judgement and reasoning. It helps the meditation on Brahman.

M. Yes, that is right. At the end, giving up learning, one takes to sadhana. Then, one throws the books away. How the Object is attained, he longs for that.

"Knowledge is only the means, it is not the end. The end is God-realisation.

"Gaining knowledge does not consist in devouring a lot of information. If it does not help to concentrate the mind, it is all useless.

"Giving up knowledge to take to sadhana that leads to attainment of the Object. Then, one become child-like as Thakur was. The Veda describes the different states of *Brahmin*, that is to say a knower of Brahman. *Pandityam nirvidya balyena tisthaseet*. Giving up learning, one becomes childlike. One becomes quiet, then one attains the Object.

"Thakur used to say: The end of the education and reason are faith - faith in the words of the guru. Then comes sadhana on instruction from the guru. At last, one gains the Object by God's grace.

"He who has no faith in the guru's word takes to reading. When he sees by labouring in this way that there is nothing in it, he puts his faith in the guru's words. He belongs to the second class. He who has faith in guru's words from the beginning is of the first class. Without giving up all pride, without being humble, one cannot attain Him.

"The Vedas have the story of Narada. Even when he had gained every kind of knowledge, Narada did not attain peace. At Rishi Sanat Kumar's teaching, he gave up all pride and practising sadhana with humility, had God realisation. Then he had peace.

"Svetaketu also underwent this state. Having gained worldly knowledge, he became proud, *anuchanavachi*. He also obeying his father Aruni Rishi practised Sadhana with humility and realised the Self and obtained peace.

"Saunak also became restless after acquiring knowledge in the same

way. He also took shelter under Rishi Angiras with humility. He also attained the knowledge of Brahman under his instruction and became peaceful.

"But Satyakama Jabali put faith in the guru's words from the beginning. He attained the knowledge of Brahman while grazing cows."

2.

M. (to the devotees) It is right to acquire knowledge to know that one cannot attain *param shantim* (transcendental peace) by means of it. Persons given mainly to reasoning should know all this. Their doubt does not leave them in any manner. Understanding this, throwing away all the books, weeping and crying 'Mother, Mother' is the right thing.

"Thakur wept and wept and then attained the knowledge of Brahman. This is the straight easy path of this age. That's why, Thakur took to this path for the training of humanity. The creature of Kali Yuga is weak, he has no strength of mind, his life depends on food and he has a short life. His mind is restless. So Thakur prescribed: Take shelter under Him and cry. You will attain thereby.

"Everything about him was for the training of humanity this he said himself.

"Thakur attained Nirvikalpa samadhi in three days. Totapuri was wonder-struck on seeing it. Amazed, he said, 'Oh man, what is this?' Totapuri himself practised continuously for forty years and then he was able to gain samadhi. At the end, he realised that Thakur was an avatara. Thakur spoke of it to us.

"Thakur used to call the Nirvikalpa samadhi as *jada samadhi*. In that state, there is neither one nor two there is nothing. One can not tell by mouth what happens within that state. Even so, if somebody is bold enough to speak, he can only say that there is One in which there is no second associated, *ekamevadvitiam* [There is only one, no second]. In other words, relativity is completely annihilated, only one Absolute Existence remains.

Surapati How is it?

M. If you want to understand it, take to tapasya first. Then seek. The Veda says: All the younger rishis, taking firewood for the yajnas in their hands, went to ask a question. The older rishis said, 'Sons, first go and perform tapasya for a year. I will tell you then.' Tapasya concentrates the mind. Unless one is humble, He doesn't give darshan.

What is M. thinking over? Now he resumes.

M. (to the bhaktas) Chaitanya Deva was a great pundit of Vedanta and Nyaya. He defeated the world famous Pundit Keshab Kashmiri. And he was only sixteen then. He gained so much knowledge in such a young age. He had knowledge of the six *angas* of the Vedas, viz.

shiksha, kalpa, vyakarana, nirukta, chhanda and *jyotish*. Ultimately, giving up all these, he took to uttering 'Krishna, Krishna'. He was then twenty. At twenty-four, he embraced sannyasa.

"Once he went to Kashi. There, Sri Prakashananda was the greatest of sannyasis. Chaitanya Deva came across him in a meeting. There, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sat on the foot-mat away, in front. Prakashananda asked him, who had taken Chaitanya Deva there, where was his bhakta. He replied, 'There you see him seated.' Prakashananda then called out aloud, 'Come here, do come here.' Chaitanyananda joining his hands said, 'Lord, I am all right here.'

"Prakashananda asked, 'Why don't you say *soham* (I am He) even though you have embraced sannyasa? Why do you say Krishna, Krishna?' Chaitanya replied most humbly, 'Lord, my guru, knowing me to be a man of low eligibility, has directed me to do so.' Seeing his humility, Prakashananda was happy and said, 'Good, you will attain just by this.'

"Later on, a *kirtan* (community singing of the devotional songs) was going on one day somewhere. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu uttering 'Krishna, Krishna' aloud was completely overwhelmed by emotion and entered samadhi at last. No movement then. Seeing this Prakashananda came and suddenly fell at his feet.

"(To a devotee from Orissa) In Puri, in your province, seeing Chaitanya as a young man of twenty four, Vasudeva Sarvabhaum asked him why he had embraced sannyasa at such a young age. 'Let me see your tongue,' said he. When he stuck out his tongue, he placed a little sugar on it. In a moment, the sugar flew away in the air, as if it had been placed on a paper. Seeing this Sarvabhaum said, 'I see that you have gained control over your senses.'

"And on another occasion, Sarvabhaum said, 'You are a sannyasin. Study Vedanta. Sannyasis should study Vedanta.' He replied, 'All right, Lord.'"

M. (to Gadadhar) I say, speak out some names of (the books of) Vedanta, Upanishads.

Gadadhar gave the names of thirty two Upanishads learnt from Atal Mitra's edition. M. had got him to memorise them.

M. Well done, well done, blessed you are. How many names of the books of Vedanta you have memorised!

M. (to the bhaktas) Vedanta, that is Upanishads. Because, they are at the end of the Vedas, they are called Vedanta. The Vedas contain *karmakanda* (instructions about religious ceremonies, particularly yajnas) and *jnanakanda* (instructions about jnana). This *jnanakanda* is called Upanishad. Besides, Vedanta means the philosophy of the Vedanta written by Veda Vyasa Vedanta Darshan. Seen superficially, the Upanishads contain many contradicting things. Veda Vyasa has harmonised them. They are all compiled as *sutras* (aphorisms). There was no printing press then. How much can a man memorise? So they took to it, to memorise *sutras*.

M. (to all present, after repeating the above) Then, they (Sarvabhaum and Chaitanya Deva) take to the philosophy of Vedanta. Sarvabhaum explains while Chaitanya Deva listens. And perhaps, it continued for seven days. Chaitanya Deva did not say a word, neither yes nor no. He just went on listening. When Sarvabhaum said, 'I say, perhaps you don't understand what I am saying.' He replied, 'Lord, when you read the *sutra*, I understand it but the commentary I don't.' In other words, he was apparently criticising the commentary by Shankara.

"Twisting the text, Shankara had put bhakti into confusion at many places, while Chaitanya had accepted both jnana and bhakti."

M. keeps silent for a while and then he talks.

M. (to the devotees) Chaitanya Deva's divine disposition was manifested somewhat even in his childhood. Raghunandan was his school friend. Chaitanya wrote a book on *Nyaya* at an early age. Raghunandan also wrote a book on *Nyaya*.

"Both of them were once sailing on the Ganga in a boat. They compared the two books then. Seeing Chaitanya's book, Raghunandan said that nobody would touch his book, when the other book was published. Chaitanya threw his book in the Ganga, as soon as he heard Raghunandan say so. He said, 'What use will it be?'

"He had not been to Gaya till then, nor had he met Ishwar Puri. He had understood that the book was of no use. What was the need for learning? Sarasvati (the goddess of learning) was seated in his throat, you see."

M. (to Gadadhar) Please recite from memory something from Yajnavalkya.

Gadadhar *na va are patyuh kamaya patih priyo bhavati atmanstu kamaya patih priyo bhavati. Na va are jayayai kamaya jaya priya bhavati atmanstu kamaya jaya priya bhavati etc.* (Taittiriya Upanishad, conversation of Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi).

M. (to Surapati) One should commit it to memory. It is what he (Thakur) said too. By reciting it, the mind works on it. One feels joy oneself and can give joy to others too.

"Those who think and meditate upon Thakur do not take long to understand all this. They can understand it effortlessly. (Pointing at Gadadhar) Doesn't he meditate on Him? So it has become easy for him."

The Doctor How should one practice dhyana?

M. Contemplate His lotus feet. And when you have to talk to others, talk of Him. Think upon Him in sleep, in dream and while awake.



23rd of Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.),
The 13th day of the bright fortnight,
33 Dandas/25 Palas.

M.'S ABSORPTION IN KRISHNA'S RASA LILA

1.

Morton School. The twilight hour is over. M. goes to witness Rasa Lila in Darjipara after the twilight hour. It is the full moon day. But Rasa is going to be performed tomorrow. Today it is Monday, 10th November, 1924, 24th of Kartik, 1331 (B.Y). As desired by M., Jagabandhu, Vinay, Ramesh, Gadadhar are going on foot. While M. is returning after the darshan of Madanmohan, he is seen by the devotees in front of the house of the Palas. The puppets are not yet ready for the Rasa they have yet to be painted.

The next day, the day of the Rasa, M. has been thinking of and meditating upon Sri Krishna's Rasa Lila for many days. It was five thousand years ago when Sri Krishna had made so many devotees see God together. It is a rare occasion in the history of India, nay, in the history of the world. Self-realisation is a very rare matter. Only God can make one do so, no one else has the capability. If a man makes one realise God, one has to understand that he is God Himself in human form. *Yamevaisha vrinute tena labhyah* (Only he can have His darshan whom He chooses).

Those who had the darshan of God that day were all illiterate women without sanskaras. They had no right to the reading of the Veda and other scriptures. Yet, they gained that state of Brahman, which is so difficult to attain even by Rishis and Munis, just with their love. They had loved the child Krishna with whole of their mind and soul. Krishna was only eleven then, but even at his early age, he developed perfect youth in him. The Gopis of Braja did not know him as Lord God. They thought that Krishna was their beloved. They came to him with him as a paramour.

Sri Krishna knew that he was God the One beyond mind and speech, Indivisible Satchidananda. By loving His form and His attributes, one was actually showing love to Him. Whichever His part, His gross, subtle, causal or the supreme cause one loved, one was loving Him. Sri Ramakrishna said, "If you take chilli without knowing it, you will still feel its pungency." The Gopis loved Sri Krishna's looks. And that means loving Sri Krishna. That is why, Bhagavan fulfilled the desires of the devotees in the way they wanted.

The Rasa Lila is the climax of what one can possibly enjoy of Satchidananda, of the Lord in gross body. It is its supreme development. In the Rasa Lila, the gross assumes the quality of the conscious. The gross body and the mind have got filled today with Satchidananda with the consciousness of the Satchidananda. Is there any difference of male and female here? They are all one and the same Satchidananda. The body, mind, intellect, the *jivatman* have all become *Parmatman* today they have all become God, all filled with consciousness. They are Brahman.

Sri Krishna is filled with perfect Self of conscious Krishna each of His parts is consciousness. In the Rasa, the Gopis have got filled with Krishna by calling out 'Krishna, Krishna'. They are immersed in Sri Krishna's ocean of love. Today every Gopi is a dancing picture of consciousness. Consciousness meets consciousness, they embrace each other. Social point of view or the ordinary point of view is blind. The question of physical enjoyment simply doesn't arise here. The Rasa is the meeting of Brahman consciousness with jiva consciousness. Today the whole world, the universe is Satchidananda.

You little man with your little intelligence, you look at Krishna and Gopis as the other man and the other woman. When your high divine Brahman eye opens by calling piteously Sri Bhagavan, after having fallen into the pits of trials and tribulations life after life, then you will be able to understand the reality of Rasa

Lila. You will then understand the one Bhagavan, the self of love, having assumed outwardly two forms, is playing the game of love as Krishna and Gopis.

The devotee Gopis desired Bhagavan as their husband. Like other bhaktas desire him as the Lord, or the friend, or the son, or the father, or the mother. When Gopis got Krishna as their husband, their body, mind, intellect and soul all got filled with Sri Krishna they lost the distinction between man and woman. By fulfilling the desire of the Gopis, he justified His name as the wishful-filling tree.

The Rasa is the meeting place of all such contradictory ideas as the perfect man and the perfect God, one within Maya and one beyond Maya, the inert and the conscious, the one associated with senses and the one beyond the senses, man and God, man and woman, *jivatman* and *Parmatman*.

M. has remained absorbed in the Rasa for a number of days. The reading of the fifth chapter of the Rasa from the Bhagavata has been going on all these days. He has only been thinking of the Gopis and Krishna. He has only been talking of the Gopis and Krishna and he has been looking for Gopis and Krishna. He has been wanting to know about the Rasa wherever it is being performed in Calcutta. He has been sending devotees to different places.

A bhakta says, "A Rasa Lila is being performed in Chingrighata. There, the different Lilas of the Lord are performed with earthen idols at the time of Rasa. There, they have a fair of dance and music."

M. is going by car to the same fair of the Rasa. He is accompanied by Jagabandhu, Doctor and Vinay. The car is moving via Amherst Street, Harrison Road, Beliaghata Road, Camblay (now Neel Rattan) and Shivtala Lane. and stops in front of the venue of the Rasa at Chingrighata

There is a flood of rows of electric lamps. There is a big crowd. A mart of joy it is. The place of the Rasa is full of joy and entertainment. Little boys and girls are enjoying merry-go-rounds, the elders have climbed up the *Nagardola*. The whole atmosphere is resounding with various kinds of flutes. *Takuti-takuti* sound of the *khol* is heard from afar. The lengthy *raginis* of music mixes with words such as 'father, mother and brother' and also with 'Keshab, Mani, Kalu.' And the music of the words of 'Give me *papar* worth a paisa and fried pulses worth a paisa, two paise worth of *pan* (beetle leaf) and *biri* (leaf cigarette), sweets worth an anna,' is also being heard.

M. is in a jolly mood. Having come to this physical spot of the Lila filled with a divine fervour, M. is happy like a child, his eyes and face aglow with joy.

Now, he is at the big mandap of the Rasa. M. enters through the main gate along with the devotees. To begin with, he has the darshan of 'The Ten Avatars' in different big painted ten earthen idols.

The whole mandap is decorated with different kinds of leaves, flowers and colours. The right colour is placed where it is displayed best. Besides, there are chains of multi-coloured bulbs, red, blue and green. M. stands lost in joy to the south of the Nat Mandir. Says he in wonder, "Aha, the waves of joy are playing here, it looks. What a discovery Jagabandhu made for us! The day is indeed successful. How beautifully they have painted, sculpted them! That is why he said while talking of the Rasa of Darjipara, 'They are like pigeon holes.' "

M. (to the doctor) Ladies should be brought here too to see them. They may then feel a little inspired. (To all) See how beautiful is Vamana (avatara) as if a live Lila is going on.

M. has now entered the courtyard of the Thakur Temple.

He begins with having the darshan from the North. First 'Trip by boat,' then 'Devi Ghostha' and then 'Krishna Kali'. M. gets fascinated on seeing Krishna. He stands firm staring at Sri Krishna. After a while he says laughing, "I say this is the *chandala* (Ayan Ghosh the husband of Radha)."

Now he sees 'Rakhil Ghostha,' 'Rai Raja' and 'Navnari Kunj' and then 'The Stealing of the Clothes,' 'The Subjugation of the Snake Kali' and 'The Eight (Girl) Friends' and lastly 'Balaram and Krishna in a Forest Excursion'. M. sees them all and then stands in a corner to take a little rest.

After this, he sees 'The Stealing of the Butter,' 'Milking of the Cow,' 'Stealing of Kanva Muni's Food' and 'The Celebration of Nanda'.

Now, he witnesses 'The Birth of Sri Krishna' the child Krishna is in the lap and Vasudeva is crossing the Yamuna. The cows have raised their eyes in a stare. M. says to the devotees, "Just see how beautiful all this is! The cows look as if real! And look at him there, how he looks, Kanva Muni! I thought this was perhaps somebody of the house. It would have been better if they had shown a jackal near the Yamuna. And see this, how the Gopas and Gopis are happy at Sri Krishna's birth! Without knowing why they are also happy."

Standing in the north-western corner inside the room M. says, "How beautiful! What a wonderful idea! How much money they have spent! It is one thing to imagine all these and it is quite different to see them. There is a lot of difference between the two. By seeing, one gets a hundred times more of inspiration. It just gets set in the mind."

M. moves up and then again stops in front of 'Krishna Kali.' Says he, "One cannot see such a thing even by spending ten rupees on a ticket."

2.

The venue of the Rasa is very spacious. In the centre under the tent is an assembly of musicians. To the east there are a number of idols. To the west there is a brick built house. To the south is placed the kitchen of the festival with space for diners. The stage for the Rasa is in the northern corner.

Now M. goes in for the darshan of all the idols towards the east. After seeing 'Laksha Hira,' he comes and stops at 'The Birth of Gaur'. The Lord came down to Navadwip. There Srivasa, Advaita Acharya and other devotees dance full of joy. This scene has particularly stolen M.'s heart. Sri Ramakrishna had seen M. as an intimate disciple of God within the singing party of Chaitanya. It appears from it that this past memory of his has awakened again. So, filled with joy he says, "Just see, see there, what a dance of the Vaishnavas! What a joy! It is indeed very beautiful."

And now 'Karna the Magnanimous,' 'Karna's Reverence for his Guest' Karna is sawing the body of his son. Seeing this, M. says in a distressed tone, 'Then alone people will say that he is such a charitable person! What a cruel act!'

Now, M. comes and stops near 'Savitri Satyavan'. One can see a lot of *sindoor* (red lead) on the parting of the hair of Savitri. Seeing it M. asks, "Very nice, who has put the *sindoor*?" Antevasi says that it is the ladies. Bringing the *sindoor* from their homes they have put it on Savitri.

Now, he has the darshan of 'Shaiyya-Harishchandra'. M. says if they had shown both Harish Chandra and Shaiyya in unlaundered clothes, it would have better. Seeing 'the tapasya of Dhruva', M. goes and stands near 'Saptarathi (the seven cart drivers)'. The child Abhimanyu has been surrounded by the *Saptarathis*. M. says in a piteous voice, "How amazing this world is! Drona is here!" A certain bhakta says, "Bheeshma is also there." M. replies, "No, had he been there, would have been such a wrong?"

In the meanwhile, M. comes near 'Bheeshma's Bed of Arrows'. Mother Ganga is standing near the head of her son. M. has the darshan of the Mother Ganga with a concentrated mind. Thereafter 'Sheetala Devi'. The Puranic tableaux end here.

There is another scene thereafter. It is social and modern. The old parents are begging pardon of their arrogant beastly son with folded hands.

Seeing it M. says, "Here, this is Maya. Maya is not an illusion. It is a matter of fact. Such an insult and yet the creature is bound by affection. Affection is Maya.

"The learned of the west say that Maya is an unreal fact, but the rishis opine that it is a realm it is Lord's power by which the unreal is perceived as real. It is by this power that the truth appears to be illusion and the illusion as the real. That is why, Thakur would always pray, 'Don't enchant me with Your world bewitching Maya, Mother.' This is the only way to save oneself from Her to take refuge in Her."

The assembly of musicians. Group singing of devotional songs is going on, Kirtan Lila. The musicians facing south are singing. M. casts glance from the south and then reaches the north-western corner of the stage. This is a fairly high platform like the *dolmanch*. Here, Krishna, the Lord of joy is bound in a loving embrace with his beloved Gopis. M. says to Doctor Bakshi, 'Please offer a paise and do pranam.' M. takes a little holy water and then comes down. Nearby, he sees a *samadhi sthal* (memorial where ashes of the dead are kept). On enquiry he finds out that it is the *samadhi* of the founder.

M. comes down the steps. He peeps into the dressing room of the musicians. Now, he listens to the *kirtan*. He stands on the veranda of the brick built house to the west of the musicians, exactly in the middle. The musicians are the Adhikaris of the Chuna Patti in Belegkata. They are playing on two khols, and there are four persons to repeat the lines of the songs. There is also a child in this group. The *kirtania* (singer) sings the Rasa Lila with so much of gestures with his body.

The bank of the Yamuna, the venue of the Rasa and the full moon day of the Kartik. The sky is full of the bright rays of the moon. A sweet, soft, cool breeze is blowing. Nature has assumed a very serene, fragrant and enchanting form as a backdrop to the divine lila of the Lord. Krishna had promised that he would fulfil the desires of the Gopis as the lover at an auspicious moment. Today, that moment has arrived.

The young boy Krishna is full of divine love. He is playing on his flute, while the Gopis are beside themselves on hearing that tune. Leaving behind their homes and near and dear ones, they depart. Neither husband, nor son, nor daughter, nor father, nor mother, nor brother, none could bind them. Because, Maya has become impotent here. Krishna's beloveds are now beyond Maya. How? As they are now full of Krishna. Who is this Krishna? It appears he is the Eternal Brahman.

The musicians is singing:

*The bond of Maya is left behind.
The Gopis have received what is unattainable even by the yogis.
They are saturated with the nectar of the love of the Great Lover.
The Gopis have snapped the bonds of Maya.*

Krishna, Parmatman gets bound to the bhakta yearning for Him. That is how the bonds of their affection for the world break down. The music of the flute has reached the ears of the Gopis. It has even reached the ears of the cows.

But, it has not reached the jivas involved in the world. Today, they are deaf, blinded as they are by affection.

The Gopis have gained liberation in this very life by Krishna's love alone. By loving Krishna with their heart and soul, the Gopis have gained the worship of the world. The union of the *jivatman* (Individual Soul) with Parmatman (the Supreme Soul) is this Rasa Lila.

The kirtan goes on. Giving a four-anna piece in the hands of the singer, M. comes out and again goes to see the dining space.

The gatekeeper stands at the gate with a big stick in his hand. Arrangement is

being made for the meals of a big number of people. Carrying bundles of earthen glasses, two porters enter the dining space close to M.

M. now stands at the *Dola Kshetra* (the spot for the swings) enjoying various colourful objects. In front of him is a circus. A human skull is dancing various steps. It is connected with a battery. M. walks along the rows of the idols. On both sides, there are shops with various idols of gods and goddesses. M. casts his glance this side and that side as he goes along.

Now he enters the bazaar of sweets. Naughty like a child with child-like curiosity, M. pushes his way in front of every shop. Now, his big protruding eyes cannot contain his joy. It looks as if he is yearning to eat them. Many little boys and girls have crowded here one of them is M. Just as the children say to their parents beaming with joy, 'Just see there, see how many sweets are there,' similarly, M. says to the devotees full of joy, 'Just how many varieties of sweets, how colourful they are!'

Pointing towards the *Nagardola* (the revolving swing) Antevasi says, "This is '*Radha Chakra* (the wheel of Radha)'. "Hearing this, M. says full of joy, "Oh, they have given it such a beautiful name, we call it *Nagardola*. Various people call it by various names. '*Radha chakra*' is beautiful name. But they are all the same."

Now, he sees the puppets dancing. The puppets quarrel and then embrace lovingly and dance in joy. A person is making them dance to the tune of the flute.

M. says in a serious mood, "Just see this dance of the puppets. It is absolutely the same with us. God is pulling the string and we think that we are dancing. That is why there is so much trouble. Only if we can understand that He is the juggler (puppet man), we will have perpetual joy. Otherwise, there is happiness today and unhappiness tomorrow. The joy of the senses is very short lived. When we know who is the juggler, we don't have to dance. We are ever in joy then."

A wave of joy is passing through M. That is why he is feeling joy in every thing, everywhere. Those who have attained Brahmananda by the guru's grace remain joyful even with sensory joy. They see the Joyful One everywhere.

Now, M. comes to the road. He has the car in front and the Ramsthali behind.

Morton School, 8 p.m. M. is seated in the room on the second level with some devotees in front of him. He had sent Jiten to the Rasa in Darjipara. He has just returned after the darshan of Madanmohan. M. hears from him the description of Rasa at both places there. He says to him, "Go to Chingrighata tomorrow for darshan of the Rasa. It is very beautiful. All my life, I have lived in Calcutta but only today I had the darshan of this movement. I simply did not know and nobody told me about it. So near is God, but one does not know it. This too is just like it."

The devotees listen to the reading of the Bhagavata at M.'s behest the five chapters of the Rasa. M. goes upstairs to take his meals. When he returns, he asks for the last chapter to be read again, but because of the conversation, that reading was not done. The Rasa of Chingrighata was again the topic of the conversation.

A certain bhakta says, "The individual who has made this Rasa belongs to a very low caste." M. contradicts him sharply saying, "What? He who has such bhakti is certainly a Brahmin. What a great devotee he must be who has such a joyful Lila in his heart. Is it true because you have said it? Thakur used to say, 'He who has so much devotion is certainly a Brahmin.' "



Tuesday, 11th November, 1924.

25th of Kartik, 1331 (B.Y.)

The full moon day of the Rasa,

27 Dandas/53 Palas.

TODAY, A SUCCESSFUL DAY

1.

Morton School, eight in the morning, room on the fourth level. M. is seated on his bedding facing west. To the south on a bench is seated Amar of the Students Home with a companion. The Younger Jiten and Vinay are also seated on this bench. Antevasi comes in a little later. He stands facing east placing his hand on the table. He is followed by Gangadhar. Buddhiram is seated on the roof. M. talks.

M. (to Gadadhar) Tell the milk-man sometimes that he should not give milk of the cow with a new calf, not even of the cow with a mature calf. If you tell him from time to time, he will remember.

"Thakur said, 'Go rascal, go immediately, return it.' Yogen had brought seven betel leaves for one paisa. Eleven of them could be had for one paisa. He said, 'If they are too many for you, distribute them to your neighbours but don't allow yourself to be deceived.' "

"The babus go to bazaar and ask, 'How much is it?' The shopkeeper tells the price and they say, 'All right, let's have it.' They never try to find out the right price.

"Is it of no value of what Thakur has said? It means, he who allows himself to be deceived thus will never be able to save himself from the attack of lust and anger."

Today, 12th November, 1924, 26th of Kartik, Wednesday.

M. is silent for a while. Then, he resumes.

M. (to Amar) There is no fear for him who holds on to the truth. He has succeeded seventy five percent already.

"Oh, I am being reminded of that memorable night. We were coming together by a coach. Thakur said at the turning of the Shobha Bazaar, 'Look here, if you hold on to the truth, you will attain Him.' Oh, what a great thing!

"Yadu Mullick said that he would have the song of Chandi sung. Seeing that he was not doing so, Thakur said, 'But, you have not had the song of Chandi organised (as you had said).'

"And another day he said, 'What kind of man your Vidyasagar is? He promised to come but never did?' He had promised Thakur that he would go to Dakshineswar but he never went.

"Thakur used to say, 'The word of a man is the tusk of an elephant.' Just as an elephant tusk, once it comes out, (to Gadadhar) what happens?"

Gadadhar It does not go in.

M. (saying the same) Does not go in. Similarly, one must keep the word, once it comes out of the mouth.

M. (to Narhari) I hear, the people of your native place do not keep their promise and that you people are careless like you [neglectfully] close a lock. You do everything in this way.

Amar had brought some *jalebis* and had handed them to Buddhiram. Buddhiram had kept them on a bench on the roof. Then Buddhiram and Gadadhar were there on the roof and Antevasi was in the tin cabin. When Buddhiram went to M. in this room, he talked about the *jalebis*. Amar went upstairs and brought them. Buddhiram was getting ready to go upstairs.

M. (to Amar) Put them here. They have to be offered to Thakur.

Antevasi They can't be offered in the service of Thakur.

M. Why?

Antevasi A crow has pecked at them. They had been placed on the bench.

M. (to Buddhiram) You could have kept them in the room.

Buddhiram (pointing at Gadadhar) He was there so I didn't.

Gadadhar Why? You never told me about it.

These *jalebis* were served to the birds the next day. M. stood there to see it.

One in the afternoon. M. says to Jagabandhu, "They hold Rasa in Tollyganj. I would like to go there once. But first, you see it and bring a report. Then I could go once."

Jagabandhu leaves immediately for Tollyganj. With him goes the Younger Jiten. They return at ten in the evening. On their way back, they visit the cremation ground of Keortala, Mother Kali and the Gadadhar Ashrama. Being very tired, they sit downstairs with Vinay and Gadadhar and talk of the Rasa. Hearing the conversation below, M. sends the peon Jiva to fetch them upstairs. M. is awaiting their report.

M. What did you see?

Jagabandhu It is not nice. It is nothing compared even to the Rasa of Beliaghata. There are not many scenes. Besides, there are very big crowds. It is difficult to move about pushing and jostling. You will feel choked if you go there.

M. No, then I will not go. I will not be able to tolerate such crowds. You should once go to the house of the Mullicks to see the Rasa there.

The bhaktas go to see the Rasa at Goshtha Mullick's home. It is about eleven at night.

The next day it is Thursday. At six in the evening, M. leaves by Dr. Bakshi's car to witness the Rasa at Chingrighata. With him are the Doctor, Gadadhar and Swami Sadbhavananda. Antevasi says, "I shall also go with the bhaktas later on." M. says, "That's good, please go."

Seven in the evening. Many bhaktas are awaiting M. on the roof of the

Morton School the Younger Jiten, Vinay, Nalini, Shanti, Ramesh, Jagabandhu and so on. Durgapada Mitra, the old *jnanavridha* (elder in jnana) devotee arrives. He is learned, intelligent and has lot of respect for M. During the conversation, the topic 'Which is higher, the house-holder ashrama or that of sannyasa' comes up for discussion. Many bhaktas take part in it. Finally Durgapada is on one side and Jagabandhu on the other. A tumultuous war of words is being waged from both sides, but there is none to see it. All the weapons of reason, shastras, *apta vakya* (utterances of the realised souls) are being used. But neither side is ready to yield. After lot of arguments they come to reach the stage of a treaty. They agree that each is great in its own place, "*Sannyasah karmayogashcha nihshreyaskaravubhau*" [Renunciation and performance of yoga of action both lead to highest bliss, both are good (Gita 5:2)].

Antevasi, the Younger Jiten, Manoranjan and others reach Shuklal's house in Beliaghata. Shuka Lal, showing a lot of consideration, treats the bhaktas to a sumptuous meal. Then, the bhaktas go to witness the Rasa at the nearby Chingrighata. The venue of the Rasa today too is full of the joy of the Rasa. They return to Morton School at twelve at night.

The next day, seven in the evening. M. is seated on a mat on a seat of blanket in the room of the second level facing east. He has devotees on all three sides Shuka Lal, the Elder Amulya, the Elder Jiten, the Doctor, the Younger Jiten, Vinay, Balai, the Elder Nalini, Gadadhar, Buddhiram, Jagabandhu and others. These days, Sri Krishna's Rasa Lila is being performed. They only talk of the Rasa in the assembly of the bhaktas. They are now talking of the Rasa of the Chingrighata. Shuka Lal is talking about the Mahatma who has started this Rasa.

Shuka Lal The person who started this Rasa fare had the name of Ananda Jana. By caste he was *namah shudra*. He had earned a lot of wealth by taking up the trade of fishing during his ordinary life. It is with that money that he has arranged this big show. In his later life, he took to the *gerua* (ochre) clothes and become a sannyasi. He would live his life by begging. For fourteen years, he lived as a sannyasi.

M. (with great joy) So, I was thinking that it was by the tapasya of some Mahatma that such a festival of joy had been established. Just as the son inherits the wealth of his father, similarly, his sons have received his divine wealth. They are blessed by getting such a rare wealth of their father. They, who have such bhakti and renunciation, are really Brahmins. Let the society say anything about them, but they belong to a high caste. God is bound to them by their devotion. Thakur, who came as an avatara, said this. Let the society say anything, we will only listen to the avatara.

Next day is a Saturday, eight in the morning. Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten and Vinay are seated in the room of the second level. They are living in this very room. Jiva, the peon hands over some proofs of the Kathamrita to Jagabandhu and says, 'The Bara (elder) Babuji has sent them for you to read.' Having read the proofs with the help of Younger Jiten, Jagabandhu sends them back to M.

At nine o' clock, M. climbs down to the second level and takes his seat on a bench in the veranda in front of the staircase. To the left of M. are seated the Younger Jiten and Vinay on the same bench. Jagabandhu stands in front. Showing the proofs to them, M. says, 'See this, here is a wrong found. You have not marked it. Why do I show them all to you? For future guidance.'

Jagabandhu (to himself) There is a broken letter only at one place. Even this has not escaped his sight. What a powerful brain, what a sharp concentration even in this old age! This little mistake of mine, he has shown me for my good, so that I am accurate in all matters. Lest, I should feel hurt at his pointing out this mistake to me, he has also added his explanation.

"The man cannot see his own mistake and doesn't want to hear about it when it is pointed out. He makes mistakes and will be proud too. What an effort M. makes, what an anxiety M. has to save one from this precarious situation. This is as if it is his need and our good. All trouble, effort and compassion are his. So, he is so sweetly humble. A perfect teacher, a Self-realised man. He knows all our weaknesses, so he becomes so humble before the devotee because of his selfless compassion, like the parents are before their ignorant offspring."

M. is now on the roof of the fourth level. With him are some bhaktas. Seeing the bright gentle rays of the sun, he is so happy like a child. Says he, 'Oh, how beautiful is the sunshine as if the whole earth is laughing because of the sun sent by Him!'

A devotee spreads M.'s bedding in the sun.

Two in the afternoon. Vinay and his elder brother Dr. Bakshi have brought a car for him. M. would go to Cossipore to witness the Rasa, and Ginni Ma, M.'s wife, will go to the Doctor's house, in Cossipore.

M. comes to the second level. The school is now closed for the day. M. says to a young teacher, "Where is your water kept?" The devotee brings a mug of water from upstairs. M. washes his hand and mouth with it.

'I want a little water, bring me some water,' such words gratify the bhaktas. But M. does not say so. According to him, it is the language of the proud. He uses the language of request, the language of a servant, not that of one who is served.

After Self-realisation, one's language changes. Perhaps, that is why Arjuna asked Sri Krishna: *sthitaprajnasya ka bhasha* [What kind of language a man of steady wisdom uses? (Gita 2:54)]. One must watch all the conduct of such men. One can then compare it with one's own.

After some time, M. stands near the north-western window on the second level. Down below in the school's courtyard, a hen is pecking at grain, with two of its chicks. M. fixes his gaze on them. There is a bhakta standing close to M. M. says to him, 'Just see this, this goes on (eating, sleeping, sex and fear). This is the dharma of the jiva. Yet do people wake up?'

It is evening. The parlour on the second level. M. is seated on a mat with the devotees. He meditates along with the bhaktas for the long time. The Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten, the Doctor, the Elder Nalini, Vinay, Ramani, Amrit, Balai, the Younger Nalini, Manoranjan, Gadadhar, Buddhiram, Shanti, Fakir, Jagabandhu and so on come and join in the meditation.

It is eight o'clock. M. is seated there for the reading of the Devi Bhagavata. Ramani is reading. Today, M. is very tired. To rid himself of this fatigue, he takes to this *dhyana*. The devotees often sees him doing so. Sometimes there is a flood of spiritual talk, continuous talk to get rid of this fatigue. While narrating the qualities of God, M. forgets his body, intellect and his lower mind and gets immersed in the higher spiritual joy. When he is bodily tired, M. generally asks for the shastras to be read or he may ask for a song to be sung. So today Devi Bhagavata is being read. At the end of the reading,

Ramani sings:

*O the bee of mind! Get intoxicated at the lotus-feet of Ramakrishna!
All sensory pleasure is covered with thorns, don't get absorbed in it.
Birth and death are terrible diseases. How long will you tolerate them?
Drink the nectar of the love of the Lord's feet. Your worldly travails
will end.
There is no escape from the pairs of dharma and adharma, joy and
sorrow, peace and fire.
Cut asunder the cord of karmas with the sword of jnana.
Speak the name of Ramakrishna, the night of your moha will turn into
a day.
Then, you will not suffer the fire of bad dreams and your deep sleep
will break.*

2.

The second level of the Morton School. Seven in the morning. The onset of cold weather is gently felt. M. is seated on the bench in the veranda. He has put on a white sweater. The Younger Jiten, Vinay and Jagabandhu are seated near M. They are talking at random. M. says to the bhaktas, "Then you may get up. It's already time. Go for the darshan of the Math and Dakshineswar. I would like to hear about them this evening. Men go to the homes of their near and dear ones. The near and the dear of the bhaktas is Thakur. And they, who leaving aside their all, call upon him day and night. They are whole time men. You should go and have their darshan. Then alone will your mind will be at right place. Otherwise, the man forgets his ideal. The highest aim of man's life is God realisation, that is to say knowing the Self. Those who live in the Math have this as their ideal. One must keep contact with them."

It is Sunday today. The devotees are free. At times, M. makes the devotees do so. He makes them spend their whole day in the darshan of God and in thinking upon Him. This, he calls practical Vedanta. Thakur used to call it, 'Administering medicine forcibly by placing the knees on the chest.' In Thakur's language, this is how a good physician acts.

The bhaktas spend three hours in the Belur Math in *dhyana*, *bhajana*, *darshan* and so on. Some of them meditate in the Thakur-shrine and the others in the Holy Mother's. Then, they leave for Dakshineswar by steamer at twelve noon. The arati and the offerings of bhoga to the Mother are being performed. After having it's darshan, they come to Thakur's room. Ramalal Dada's son, the priest of Mother Kali gives a leaf with the prasada of the Mother to each bhakta. At 3 o' clock, Vinay goes to Calcutta on some mission.

The Younger Jiten and Jagabandhu meditate for a long time on the platform under the old Banyan tree. Then they read the Chaitanya Bhagavata. Chaitanya, having embraced sannyasa has come to Navadwip. The devotees, seeing him in the new dress shed tears of love. His head is shaven, his clothes dyed *gerua* and 'Krishna, Krishna' always on his lips. His clothes of a *tyagi* have a silent message for the common man: One attains the joy of Brahman only by giving up all sensory pleasures of the world for attaining God. The ideal is same even for the house-holders, to have *darshan* of God. They are house-holders only in name, within them, they have sannyasa. They attend to all work with unselfish motive and offer its fruits to Sri Bhagavan. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say Live in the house-hold as a maid in a big house. The maid has only the right to work, not to its fruit. She has to be contented with what the lady of the house gives her.

At six o'clock, the devotee Durgapada Mitra joins them. They begin to discuss with him the complete renunciation of the bhaktas and living in the

household like a maid servant.

Durgapada If the ideal is God-realisation, then the right thing is to try to attain this ideal giving up all work, leaving everything, but all people can't do it. They understand but can't do it. Only some can do so. Their number is very small. Why is it so?

A Particular Bhakta Some desire for sensory enjoyment is persisting, that is why, they cannot renounce all. That is why, Thakur taught to serve like a maid servant, to do unselfish work i.e. work for God. To serve like a maid servant by speech and in work is very difficult, but, Lord gave an assurance: *svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat*. If one makes a sincere effort, he comes and tells everything.

"We have heard from the gurus that the Lord knows that the man is feeble. So, if one weeps and implores Him, He makes the impossible, possible. Thakur said to M., 'What is beyond the mind, the thought, even the dream, He solves such an invincible problem just by moving His finger.' That is why, he told them to take shelter under that Juggler and to keep company of and serve those who have taken refuge in Him. And Thakur said something else, 'Cry secretly in a solitary corner and ask God, He will certainly fulfil the desire of your mind.' Having listened to the guru's word and thinking over it, you have to understand by intellect what is your duty. This is the first thing. Then, one should try to act on it with the help of the company of the holy in accordance with your reasoning. Having done so, one should cry and cry and ask Him, this is what Thakur said. Hearing, thinking, trying and then weeping this is the path."

The bell of the *arati* is ringing in Mother Kali's temple. Giving up everything, the devotees go to have the darshan of the arati. Then the bhaktas dance in Thakur's room clapping and singing Thakur's name.

The bhaktas return to Calcutta by a motor bus.

Having had the darshan of Mother Kali of Thanthania, they listen to the prayers of Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj. The preacher is talking of Brahmananda Keshab Sen: He (Keshab Sen) used to say, "Weep, crying 'Mother, Mother'. The All Compassionate One will certainly bestow Her grace, brother."

Morton School, the room on the second level, the session with M. It is already eight p.m. M. is seated on a mat on the floor surrounded by the bhaktas. He is telling the householder bhaktas how to conduct the household ashrama.

M. (to Dr. Bakshi) Because one pays the servants, should one always make them work hard? One should not take too hard a work from one's servants to make him work from morning to night continuously! How much concentration the chauffeur needs, lest somebody should be run over!

"I sit down every day to meditate. My God, I feel as if the head is being pressed. Is concentration a mere trifle? The mind has to be brought together from so many sides before it can be concentrated."

As soon as M. sees the devotees who have returned from the Dakshineswar,

he stops all conversation. He says anxiously, 'Tell me, give me an account of your *tapasya* of today.'

The Younger Jiten We had the darshan of Thakur and the sadhus in the Math and after offering them pranam, we sat separately to meditate. Then, we went by steamer to Dakshineswar. There, we took our bath in the Ganga and had darshan of the *bhoga* and *arati* of the Mother. After meditating in the Thakur's room, we took some very simple food and went to rest in the Panchavati. Thereafter, we meditated for two hours under the Banyan tree. This was followed by the reading of the Chaitanya Bhagavata.

M. A good day's work! The time spent with God as the goal is the only time well spent. Who did the reading? And from where?

The Younger Jiten He read. Chaitanya Deva had taken sannyasa from Keshab Bharati. The bhaktas manoeuvred to bring him to Navadwip. He wanted to go to Vrindavan.

M. A nice place to read from! Chaitanya Deva renounced all for the sake of God. And this is the ideal of man. One must make an effort to attain the Lord. This effort should take priority over all other efforts.

"And the reading was done in such a beautiful spot. It was under this Banyan tree that Thakur had so many visions. By sitting there to meditate and carry out japa and reading, one is quickly inspired. The fire is burning there, it is concentrated there. The mind gets concentrated as soon as you sit there. Thakur himself said so to a bhakta (M.) that one should meditate there."

M. The death anniversary of Raghunath Das is being celebrated in Vrindavan today. Kaviraj Goswami wrote most of the Chaitanya Charitamrita (The Life of Chaitanya) after hearing about him from Raghunath. Some portion of it, he wrote from Damodar's daily recordings. Raghunath was the only son, the son of the raja of *saptagram* (seven villages). He had married, but so powerful was his renunciation that he left home and ran away to Puri. He was only nineteen then. Giving up his most beautiful wife, immeasurable wealth, he reached Puri. Chaitanya Deva gave the responsibility of training him to the old Sannyasi Swarup Damodar. He used to write his diary daily. This diary is the another source of the Chaitanya Charitamrita.

"The Chaitanya Charitamrita was written at the behest of old sadhus of Vrindavan. Kaviraj Goswami was old, then about eighty. He has not seen Chaitanya Deva himself."

Amrit Who wrote the Chaitanya Bhagavata?

M. Vrindavan Das was the son of Sri Vas's daughter. He had seen Chaitanya Deva. Perhaps, he was five years old then. It is said that Chaitanya Deva injected power into him. That is how the (Chaitanya) Bhagavata came to be written.

"They say about 'The Chaitanya Charitamrita' that it remained unpublished for a long time after it was written. Perhaps, it was after

about a hundred years of Chaitanya Deva's passing away that it was published. In those days, books in Bengali did not receive much consideration. The manuscript of this book was thrown into the Yamuna along with other old papers and letters. The bundle of this book was carried by the current to a *ghat* (bathing point) where it got stuck. Some individual happened to see it. Taking it out of water, he gave it to somebody and thus the book was saved. This book had undergone a very critical time.

"There was yet another critical time for it. Srinivas, the disciple of Nityananda was carrying this manuscript to Bengal. On the way, the box containing it was stolen at Vishnupur. It was Raja Hambir of that place whose help made it possible to retrieve the book."

M. remains silent for a while. Then, he resumes the conversation.

M. (to the devotees) Raghunath Das's life is all saturated with constant deep *vairagya* (renunciation) He was with Chaitanya Deva in Puri for twelve years. Then, he was sent to Rupa Sanatan in Sri Vrindavan to revive Vrindavan.

"He was told before his departure to Vrindavan, 'You will not talk rustic (low) language, nor will you hear such talk. You will not eat good food, nor dress well and you will repeat the name of Radha-Krishna of Braja.' He followed this advice literally. Sitting at the bank of Radha Kund, he went on repeating 'Radha-Krishna'. He had nothing but a loin-cloth on his body and in his last period his food consisted of a small leaf-cup of curd diluted with lot of water (*lassi*). It is said that in the matter of hard life, he defeated even Sanatan. Sometimes, Sanatan would come and ask him to desist from such austerity but who listens! Reason, 'Raghu's rule is like a line drawn on a stone.' "

3.

While talking of Radha-Krishna, Vrindavan, Raghunath and Sanatan, the bhaktas raised various matters regarding Krishna Lila. Along with it, they also talked on Rasa Lila and then the Rasa fair of Chingrighata. A bhakta said, 'It's managers belong to a low caste.' Instantly, M. contradicted him sharply.

M. (gravely, to the bhakta) What are you saying? Those who have such a sea of devotion in their home, they are real Brahmins. Brahman means God. They who know Him are Brahmins. If one did not know Him, if one did not have unbreakable faith in Him, could one spend money so freely? What a great receptacle they are! Those who have such devotion are real Brahmins.

Because of M.'s sharp rebuke, they all keep quiet. M. is also silent. Then, he begins to talk.

M. (to the devotees) I went to the Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj. There, we had a very beautiful conversation. For sometime, they read the sayings of Keshab. On hearing them, Oh, I feel, they were all Thakur's words.

"Some people say that Brahmo Samaj does not accept that. Never

mind, if they don't. When a son inherits the wealth of the father, does he go to the market place shouting: I say, I have inherited my father's wealth. And then what should he say? His wealth tells all very quietly that it is all his father's wealth father, i.e. avatara."

M. is again pensive. Then he talks.

M. (laughing, to the devotees) Oh, how beautiful was Keshab Babu's way of putting it. At one place he says, 'All right Baba, but you have no caste. You are neither Brahmin, nor Vaidya, not Kayastha nothing. Then how can your son have a caste?' (Laughter) So very beautiful the way of his putting.

"If a person, who is called low by the society, has bhakti, he becomes a Brahmin. And, if there is no bhakti, even a Brahmin changes himself into a low caste. The cult of Chaitanya has a great saying (to a bhakta) What is it?

Bhakta

*chandaloṇi dvijashreshṭhah haribhaktiparayanah,
haribhaktiviheenastu dvijopi shvapachadhamah.*

[Even a Chandala (pariah), if he is full of bhakti for Hari, is a great Brahmin, and the Brahmin without bhakti for Hari is lower than a dog.]

What is M. thinking? Some more talk.

M. (laughing) Thakur once said to Kedar Chatterjee, 'If you go from here without taking anything, Adhar will be very much hurt.'

"Kedar has his house in Haliṣahar. Once he become a Brahma Samajist. He was then ex-communicated by the Samaj.

"One day Thakur went to Adhar Sen's house. Arrangement for meals was being made there. When Kedar came to know of it, he wanted to run away. He said to Thakur, 'Lord, I may leave if you permit.' (Laughter) Thakur knew that he would leave. So, he said, 'If you people go without taking food, Adhar will feel very much hurt.'

"And he also said, 'What caste for devotees? All devotees belong to one caste the children of the Lord.' So, they are one's near and dear ones. You can leave your relatives, but you cannot leave the bhakta. By making a bhakta happy, by worshipping him, you worship God himself. The food grains of the bhakta are pure.'

"Folding his hands, Kedar Babu had said, 'Lord, once it put me into complexity, so may I go?'

"Thakur did not give him his consent. Because he had entered the Brahma Samaj, he had been excommunicated. He feared it again. (Laughter).

"After a while, Adhar Babu came to say that the leaf plates had been arranged. Thakur rose and said to all, 'Let us go.' He sat with them

all and ate. After the meals, Kedar Babu asked for his pardon. Said he, 'Lord, I made a mistake. If you have eaten here, who am I to refuse? Mere insignificant (pinch of) ashes.'

"The Lord saved the esteem of the devotee. Adhar was His own child, but, does He only take responsibility of the devotees' other world? No, He takes responsibility for this life here, too. Now, He is at Adhar's house. Adhar is an intimate disciple, who has taken shelter at His feet. So, Thakur has taken his whole responsibility on His shoulders.

"On the other hand, if Kedar Babu had not taken anything there, Adhar Babu would have felt hurt and this would have meant harm to Kedar Babu. He saved Kedar from committing that fault.

"What is the significance of such a conduct on his part? God, His incarnation is above the bonds of society. For preserving the society, He, having entered the mind of the master of the society, has made its rules. But, where the devotee is subjected to insult, He leaves the society's rules behind. God is above society. Besides, the devotee and the Lord are one. So, He saved the self-esteem of the devotee, Adhar."

Enter the Elder Sudhir. It is about nine p.m. Sudhir is an old boy of the Morton School. He is a devotee, so, M. is very fond of him. Now, his head is some what disordered. So, he talks of very irrelevant matters.

Sudhir (to M.) I shall have to sell my house.

M. Why? Have you to pay any debt?

Sudhir No.

M. Then, why do you have to sell?

Sudhir I would like to tour.

M. Where?

Sudhir America.

M. (affectionately, in loving words) No, no, not yet. I am old now. I can die any day. I like to see you always. You can go even after I am no more. How young you are after all! Let it be after a few years. You may do then what you like.

Sudhir Yes, Sir.

A Certain Devotee (to himself) The teachers task is indeed very difficult. How anxious he is for the good of the devotees. Sudhir is a devotee of Thakur, so, he has so much consideration for him. Besides, how much he has come down, out of compassion!

M. keeps silent for a while and then resumes.

M. (to Sudhir) But, is it right to sell it? It is called real estate a brick built house, a good situation and all that. Where are you living now?

Sudhir In Howrah.

M. Do you massage your head with oil?

Sudhir Yes Sir, with *Lakshmi Vilas* oil.

M. And you should take rice with curd and churned milk (*lassi*, butter milk) and you should take bath and have long sleep.

Amrit *Lakshmi Vilas* is only coconut oil. The oil of *til* should be better.

M. Yes, you should massage with *til* oil. Paramahansa Deva used it for massage. He also had a little disorder of *vayu*, you know.

Amrit You should follow his advice.

M. Yes, this is like our meeting. You should come here sometimes. We sit here together every day. Please come here sometimes.

A bhakta sees this divine conduct of his with thirsty eyes. His heart is full of joy, assurance and gratitude. He is saying to himself, we are blessed. Our heart is also tasting the touch of the loving sport of Thakur through His intimate disciples. Indeed, we are blessed. Sudhir, the orphan having no near and dear one is not alone, without help, for he belongs to the divine, huge family of the Sri Ramakrishna bhaktas.



Sunday, 18th November 1924.

The first of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.).

The 5th day of the dark fortnight,

52 Dandas/1 Pala.

THERE IS SOMETHING BEYOND REASON TOO

1.

Morton School, four in the afternoon. M. is resting in his room. The door is latched. Some bhaktas have gathered in the staircase room and some others are talking to Antevasi on the roof.

Today, 17th November, 1924, Monday, second of Agrahayana. The sixth day of the dark fortnight, 56 Dandas/14 Palas.

It is 5 o' clock. The Doctor, Vinay, Ramesh, Shanti, Gadadhar, Jagabandhu and others are seated in the staircase room. A devotee from Shyam Bazaar has come today for the first time. The bhaktas are engaged in a happy conversation with him.

Arrives Swami Kamaleshwarananda. He is the head of the Gadadhar Ashrama branch of the Ramakrishna Math. He comes at times to see M. After twenty minutes, the evening light is brought in. It is about 6 p.m. The attendant brings a hurricane lamp from downstairs and having lighted it places it in the staircase room.

Suddenly, M. opens the door and comes out. He is not looking at anything outside, his sight is fixed within. Without saying anything, he lifts the lamp from the bench and quickly enters his room again.

On the eastern wall of the room, hangs a picture of Sri Ramakrishna. Close to it are the pictures of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Christ, Chaitanya and other human gods and also the pictures of Shiva and other gods.

M. brings the light in front of each picture and bowing down offers his pranam, calling out their names: Victory to Rama, victory to Krishna, victory to Shiva.

Antevasi is with M. When the arati with the lantern light is over, Antevasi says, "Lalit Maharaj is sitting outside." M. comes near the door and says, "Where is Lalit Maharaj? Come in, please come in."

Lalit Maharaj sits facing west on a chair near M.'s bed. M. says to him, 'Please, let us hear a hymn.' Lalit Maharaj recites: *Brahmanandam paramasukhadam dvandvateetam* and so on. *Adharabhute chadheye dhritirupe dhurandhare* (hymn of Jagadhatri) and so on, *gururbrahma gururvishnurgururdevo maheshwarah* (hymn of the guru) etc. *Om niranjanam nityam anantarupam bhaktanukampaya dhritavigraham vai, ishawataram parameshamidyam tam ramakrishnam shirasa namami* etc. (hymn of Sri Ramakrishna).

After sometime, comes Manmath Chatterji. He takes his seat with the bhaktas in the staircase room. He is a teacher of the South Suburban School. He is fifty four and has his house in Ranaghat. On Antevasi telling M. about his coming, M. asks him to come to his room. He sits down on the bedding in front of him, facing east, as indicated by M. M. is seated towards north-west.

In no time, arrive the Elder Jiten, Pleader Lalit Banerjee, the Younger Jiten, Nalini, Balai, the Elder Amulya, the Stout Sudhir and so on. They sit on a bench facing west near the eastern wall. Thereafter, arrive Doctor Bakshi, Shanti, Gadadhar, the Younger Nalini, Vinay, Ramesh, Jagabandhu and so on. They sit facing north on a bench to the south of the bedding. M.'s room is quite big with a small wooden partition to the north. Some persons are

seated outside the partition also. Many a bhakta has assembled today. Antevasi rises and going towards the west of the bedding stands there. Behind him, there is a big table full of heaps of books.

Manmath has seen M. for the first time. He has read the Kathamrita thoroughly. For various reasons, he has had to marry thrice. He has a big family three sons and six daughters. He has to work very hard to earn money. He finds no leisure to keep company of the holy, so he is sad. All this has come out during the conversation. Manmath is very humble. He states very humbly what is in his mind to M.

Manmath (to M.) I consider all those who came in contact with Thakur as my very near ones. So, I could not show you any formality.

"Just as all your reasoning ceased before Thakur on the very second day, similarly, my reasoning has also stopped after reading the Kathamrita. Such a thing is not available such simple, easy language. It is so beautiful wherever one opens it. And your reflections are also most beautiful. Your narration of the reaction you had by seeing Thakur are very attractive. What can we reason about? Can a one *seer* jug contain four *seers* of milk?

M. (clipping his tongue as a sign of approval) Aha!

"(Laughing) The reason left because of the blows of his sledgehammer."

Swami Kamaleshwarananda Well, Master Mahashay, there is no need to reason but must not a person reason about the real and the unreal?

M. Once a person asked him at noon time, 'Sir, what is the way?' Thakur had a ready answer, 'Faith in the word of the guru.'

"How can a person with his meagre intelligence understand that the formless assumes a form? It is good to reason about the real and the unreal. Thakur had forbidden the learned from reasoning."

Manmath Whether there is one Atman or more, whether God is with form or without form, what use it to reason about all these matters? He himself tells everything if you call upon Him, so said Thakur.

Swami Kamaleshwarananda Is there no need to reason out whether there is only one Atman or more? Then why did Shankaracharya do so?

M. (interrupting him) Vivekananda sometimes used to say that Shankaracharya had realised. And sometimes he said that he was a mere pundit (laughter). Reasoning is a mere intellectual somersault.

Swami Kamaleshwarananda It can be so in the all matters. One person calls something good, the other says it is not so.

M. But all the shastras say at the end: Faith in the word of the guru. By definition, the guru is one who has been to Kashi, that is to say, has seen God.

"It comes down to this that it is an individual matter, that is to say it

is not essential that all must reason.

"And then, what is truth for Shankaracharya is not the truth for another person.

"So, there are so many religions Hinduism, Islam, Christianity.

"Mohammed had Self-realisation, so had Christ, but do the Hindus accept Mohammed?"

Swami Kamaleshwarananda I am also saying the same.

M. Doctor Mahendra Sarkar and I used to reason. One day this reasoning ended when Thakur said, 'It would be better, if you now have a little of darshan.' By this he hinted that there is something above reason also. Reason is not the be-all and end-all of life. Beyond it there is also something.

M. keeps silent for a while and then talks.

M. (to all) Can reasoning be stopped just by saying so? Sometimes, I used to hear him pleading to the Mother and saying, 'What else can they do Mother? Should they never reason? What is their fault mother?'

"One can know from this that it is not right to reason.

"The devotees used to discuss. He did not like it. Yet, he himself would ask two persons to start a discussion and he would whisper in the ears of another person, 'See, I don't like all this.'

"Why then, did he make two persons reason? Just to see whether one was firm in one's principles.

"Once, the principles are formed, one should stop reasoning and start acting on them. One should try to attain the object of one's reason. When He is attained, one's task is accomplished. There is no need to keep on reasoning throughout one's life.

"Thakur used to indicate the principle, suiting the devotee's inclination. Then, one should only practice it, take to tapasya.

"He said of Narendra as the one of the abode of the Indivisible. For Rakhal, he said abode of God-with-form. Why to reason about it? Instead, one should take to practice with it. One should attain the Object. One should realise one's Real Self."

Swami Kamaleshwarananda Then it means that reason is relative. At one stage, this is good and at the other stage that.

M. Yes, that too is a stage when one may reason out. Thereafter, it stops.

Everybody keeps silent for a while before the conversation is resumed.

Manmath When I punished a boy in a school, he used a knife on me. But, I couldn't say anything against him.

Swami Kamaleshwarananda Such a nice spiritual conversation was going on!

Manmath This too is about Him. It is He, who has given us our respective inclinations. Everything pertains to Him, only after knowing this one succeeds.

Swami Kamaleshwarananda (becoming impatient) Master Mahashay, is there no consistency in it?

M. (in a peaceful, patient tone) We heard from Thakur that God had two departments, one of knowledge (*Vidya Maya*) and the other one of ignorance (*Avidya Maya*). The Maya of ignorance fetches money, house, respect in the society and so on, but it takes man away from God. And compassion, charity, company of the sadhus, pilgrimages, tapasya, reading of the holy books, all these are the actions of *Vidya Maya*. They lead to realisation.

Swami Kamaleshwarananda (very slowly but with firmness underneath) That is indeed the difference. But is this difference something so ordinary?

M. (smiling) Thakur narrated a parable. A woman climbed up a tree with her lover. The sister of her husband saw it. Later on, she asked, 'Who was with you on the tree?' She said in reply, 'Who? There was nobody. I was alone.' The sister-in-law then said, 'But I saw two persons.' The wife replied, 'When one goes up a tree, one only perceives so.' (Everybody laughs loudly).

"The snare of the Mahamaya is just like it. Is it possible to save oneself from it unless He doesn't protect? When one takes up a body, there is dualism one is bound to see two. All (reasoning) escapes when in the snare of the Mahamaya."

Swami Kamaleshwarananda I received a letter from Baburam Maharaj (Swami Premananda) written in his own hand. He writes, 'One doesn't become a sadhu merely by wearing the ochre clothes, or being initiated. One becomes sadhu only when one loves Him.'

M. Aha! Aha!

Swami Kamaleshwarananda When he was returning after his stay in the Eastern Bengal, the Hindus and Muslims began to wail at Rarikhal. So much love they had! I am a fool. I wish I had kept a record of it in writing.

M. Aha! Can a human being have such love? He lived up to his name Premananda (the joy of love).

M. I heard a story about Baburam Maharaj. Once some friends were going out of Calcutta by the Ganga. Landing at the Belur Math, they went to have darshan of Thakur shrine in an impulsive mood. Then they left. Baburam Maharaj asked an attendant, 'Did you give them prasad?' The attendant said, 'No, Sir.' 'Call them, call them,' he said. By that time, they had got into the boat. So, he gave them prasad by calling them over.

"Babu Ram Maharaj then said to the attendants, 'Do you know why I have given them this prasad? When they will have to face the trials of life, they will remember this prasad.' "

M. (to the devotees) Who has such a foresight? He indeed justified his name of Premananda. Whenever anybody talks of him he will say, 'Me, he loved the most.'

Swami Kamaleshwarananda He used to say, 'I say man, when I depart, you will have nobody to scold you in bad language.'

M. is silent for a while, what is he thinking of?

Baburam Maharaj was earlier a favourite pupil of M. Then, he become his loving brother disciple. Have the numberless, loving, divine memories of his awakened in M.'s heart?

Everybody keeps silent. The conversation is resumed.

Manmath (to M.) I don't know how one should go to have the darshan of sadhus. Please excuse me as a brother if I have committed any fault.

Swami Kamaleshwarananda Yudhishtira said, 'The best present is to arrive with the name of Bhagavan on the lips.'

M. A Brahma song says, 'The only thing needed is a garland of the flowers of bhakti with the fragrance of sandal...' and so on.

Manmath (to M.) Sir, how many sons and daughters do you have? Where are they? etc.

Jagabandhu (interrupting impatiently) What is the time by your watch?

M. (interrupting) We shall talk of it some other day.

Swami Kamaleshwarananda It interrupts the joy. All the holy places meet where there is a talk of God. *Tatraiv ganga yamuna cha triveni godavari tatra saraswati cha* [There one has the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Triveni, the Godawari and there also the Sarasvati.] The Bhagavata says: He talks best who always talks of Him.

M. rises. Everybody departs. It is nine p.m.

2.

The next day, Tuesday. M. has sent the devotees to different places to listen prayers and religious discourses. From time to time, he enjoys himself by listening to the divine descriptions of all such places. He always wants to have darshan of and listen to the worship of places of all religions, all at the same time. But it is not possible for the human sight to do so. So, he has made this alternative arrangement.

Today, the Vaishnava speaker, Kulada Mullick is going to give a discourse in the Theosophical Society the topic is 'Power and Sacrifice'. M. has sent Antevasi there. He himself goes to the Nava Vidhan Brahma Samaj of Keshab Sen situated close to his residence. And he has sent the Stout Sudhir to Adi Brahma Samaj on the Chitpur Road.

It is eight p.m. M. has just returned from the Nava Vidhan. He is taking rest in the veranda on the second level of the Morton School. Close to him are seated Swami Sadbhavananda, the head of the Vidya Peetha. He discusses different matters concerning the running of the Vidya Peetha. In the meanwhile, Antevasi has returned. M. asks, "What did Kulada Babu say?" Antevasi says, "The essence of his talk is this:

"Without strength nothing can be done. Whether it is physical or mental or spiritual work, strength is needed for doing every work. First of all, one must gather strength. If one wants to be a wrestler, he will have to collect bodily strength. Similarly, if one wants to be a thinker, he has to train his mind. And to become the specialist in Atman, one particularly needs to gather *Brahma-shakti* or *Atma-shakti* especially. The topic of today was particularly *Atma-shakti*.

"In order to gain any *shakti* (power) renunciation is needed. To obtain *Brahma-shakti*, one has to renounce sensory pleasures. In sensory pleasures, power is wasted. By renunciation, one accumulates *shakti* (power). Its perceptible form is the enjoyment of the riches of Brahman (*Brahma-sampad*). Then, one has non-attachment to all worldly things but attachment for Brahman.

"One can gain the greatest of powers by gaining oneness with God. It is with the help of this *shakti* that man becomes God. He gains immortality. This is the highest ideal of human life."

M. All these are very nice. I too heard the same there. And there is another direction. The great words of Thakur ooze out in all that they say. He said, 'Giving one's all body, mind, wealth, all one should love Him. Then one can have His darshan.' This is the highest ideal.

The Stout Sudhir and others have returned from Brahma Samaj. He says, 'Today's topic was the life of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He has brought a new awakening in Bengal and in India, in religion, society, politics in all matters. Because of his social reforms, a number of bad customs have been ended. A new hope, a new assurance has been generated in man. He has established interest in the Upanishad, the Vedas and so on ...' etc.

Hearing it M. says, 'Sudhir Babu, please read this out to the bhaktas.' Sudhir begins to read the life of Ram Mohan Roy from the Tattvabodhini. The devotees listen while M. goes for meals to the third level.

The next day, Wednesday. Toady, M. himself went by Doctor's car to Brahma Samaj at mid-day. While returning, he got down at the turning of the College Street to see the Over Town hall. There a lecture on Keshab's life will be delivered after the twilight hour. Speaker, the great orator Vipin Chandra Paul.

Harish Chandra Das, a devotee from Decca, came in when M. was out. He talked for a while with Antevasi and returned to Belur Math. He will come again tomorrow and have M.'s darshan.

M. returned a little before the twilight hour. He sent Antevasi to the Over Town Hall immediately. Vipin Paul, the patriot was lecturing there. Antevasi did not like it. So, he went today again to the Theosophical Society. Kulada Mullick Bhagavataratna was speaking there again today.

M. (to Antevasi) What did you hear there?

Antevasi Vipin Babu was making a political commentary on the life of Keshab. He placed Keshab Babu in the colour of a politician before

the audience. I didn't like it. So, I went to the Theosophical Society. There, Kulada Mullick was again speaking today. Topic, the principle of avatara.

M. Keshab Babu as a politician! What are you saying? You have been saved by not having heard this lecture. When one goes to the Arya Samaj, one can hear readings from the Veda, and Bengali songs based on the Veda. They inspire one with God.

M. (to Antevasi) What did he say there?

Antevasi Kulada Babu said, 'When the devotees begin to long for God most earnestly, He comes as avatara. Before His coming, dharma gets defiled. People talk a lot, but work very little. On the top of it, there is lack of sincerity. Then, a number of bhaktas begin to long for true religion. They cannot follow it themselves and they don't see others doing it. In that state, they weep secretly in a solitary corner and they call out, 'Lord, please come. We are in great trouble. Bless us by your darshan.' By this wail of the devotees, the Lord is touched with compassion. So, he assumes a human body. So powerful is the call of the devotees, the electrifying current of their cries is so powerful that the Lord just cannot help coming His throne begins to shake. 'Will grant you Krishna darshan' in order to fulfil this unshakeable promise of Advaitacharya to his bhaktas and because of the maddening roars of Advaitacharya and the sincere cries of Srivasa and other bhaktas, the Lord came as an avatara in human body in Navadwip in the body of Nimai in the form of Sri Gauranga in the same way a loving mother comes upon hearing the tender cries of her child' etc.

M. How nice! How very beautiful? All these correspond with what Thakur said. Thakur said to Narendra, 'I myself am Gaur.' To us he said, 'Christ, Chaitanya and I are the same one.' The Dweller of the Hearts had noticed the pain of the hearts of the devotees. Many of them had not been born then. But, Sri Ramakrishna had to come in a human body because of the earnest cries of their previous lives. The world perhaps does not know them who called upon Him. And it will never know. But their purpose and the purpose of the world was fulfilled and Thakur appeared. How many devotees he has in the world! How many people called upon him in so many different ways without others knowing it. So, Thakur came along with so many of his companions. When he came, the first thing that he did to was to assemble and organise 'a troupe of *Bauls*'. The second was to make them preach His word in their motherland and foreign lands and instil in the hearts of the restless, unhappy and worried devotees, the cool draught of loving devotion.

"It is said that before he formed a 'troupe of *Bauls*', many devotees belonging to different religions came to Thakur from different places and attained God-realisation by His grace and were fulfilled. It is said that a number of Muslims mendicants and Christian devotees came to him and were fulfilled.

"Even after assembling the 'troupe of *Bauls*,' so many bhaktas attained eternal peace and eternal joy in so many ways by His grace.

How much can we know about it?

"His advent was for the good of the whole world. Outwardly, it looks as if He came only for a few persons, but no, this is not true. Many persons called upon Him even before He assumed a gross body. Perhaps they took birth before His advent or at the time of His coming, and so many of them came after He had departed. They are still taking birth and many will do so later. Till, He assumes another body the present lila will continue. People from different lands will come to the current of his ideas and gain comfort and happiness.

"The redemption of Girish and others is not an accidental occurrence of the time when He was in a human body. They cried for Him in so many lives and there was any amount of unperceived wailing of this life. Thakur knew of it all, being the controller of the hearts. That is why He himself came and brought them in His arms. Man can only see outwardly but God sees within. Besides, the man does not himself perceive the unknown cry of his own life. But, the Controller of the hearts knows all this.

"Endless is the world, the creatures endless, endless the devotees. He knows them all. He answers all the prayers of everybody. We are insignificant creatures. What can we understand of Him? A one *seer* jug can not contain ten *seers* of milk this is a saying of Thakur."



Morton School, Calcutta,
Wednesday, 19th November, 1924,
The fifth of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The 8th day of the dark fortnight, 60 Dandas.

THE SEVEN STEPS OF DESTRUCTION

1.

Morton School, fourth level, staircase room. It is four in the evening. M. is seated on a chair facing south. Nearby are seated Antevasi, Gadadhar, Vinay and others.

Enters Harish Babu of Decca. Having offered pranam to M., he takes his seat with the devotees. He is a bachelor and a devotee, a little over thirty years old. He has great longing for God and wants to embrace sannyasa. But was asked by the senior sadhus of the Math, the children of Thakur, to stay at home for sometime and serve his mother. Recently, his mother has died.

Harish has returned to the Belur Math some days ago after visiting several places of pilgrimage. He is not to go back to home now. Instead, he will become a sadhu. M. talks to him in a happy mood.

M. (to Harish) On knowing that you had been to so many holy places, Thakur would have gone into samadhi on seeing you. By seeing you, we feel that we have also had the darshan of the holy spots.

"A person has come from Vrindavan just on hearing this, Thakur went into samadhi. Please say what you have seen."

Harish First, I had the darshan of Kedarnath, then of Badrinarayana. After that, I went to Kashmir. There, I had the darshan of Sri Amarnath and Sri Kshir Bhavani.

"I also had darshan of Rishikesh, Lakshman Jhula and Swarga Ashrama. In the Swarga Ashrama, the sadhus live in huts on the bank of Ganga and beg their food in the *satra* (a free food distribution centre). One feels very inspired there."

M. How quickly those twelve years passed! I was in the Swarga Ashrama for some time. The bank of the river, the Himalayas! A beautiful spot it is! A deep peaceful atmosphere reigns in all these places. I also stayed at the Maya Kund of Rishikesh. Swami Vivekananda and others had been there even earlier. In Maya Kund there was a *satra*. I also lived in a room there. I was also in the Kankhal Ashrama. I used to go and sit at the bank of the Ganga near the *satra* of Basti Ram. I was in one of the rooms of a primary school. Rakhil Maharaj was in the Sevashrama then, along with Hari Maharaj and Mahapurusha Maharaj. They lived in the hall. They are all nice places to live in. And then to have such a company!

M. Swamiji (Vivekananda) had been to Kshira Bhavani. It appears, it is there that Thakur 'unlocked' him. Thakur had said to Swamiji at Cossipore Bagan, 'Now, go and do Mother's work.' He had kept everything locked up. Later on, what an amount of work he did in America and Europe!

"Swamiji told me that he had had the darshan of the Mother. He had

thought of the tyrannical deeds of the Muslim kings and had said to himself that he would have saved all by giving his own blood, if he had been there. Immediately, the Mother spoke from above, 'Son, is it I who protect you or you that protects Me? All this has happened at My will.'

"How wonderful! What can a man understand?"

What is M. thinking of? He resumes.

M. (to Harish) There has been a catastrophe in Rishikesh. Many sadhus have lost their lives in the floods. Two of the Math have also departed.

A Particular Bhakta Sarveshwarananda and Bhavani Chaitanya.

M. (to Harish) How did you find Naimishyaranya? How did you go there?

Harish On the journey back from Hardwar, one gets down at the Balamau Junction, some fifty miles from Lucknow and travels fifteen or sixteen miles by another train.

The Patua of Goswami Sut in Naimishyaranya is situated on the bank of the Gomti river. There, he had narrated the Bhagavata for the first time to Rishis and Munis. And there Veda Vyasa had compiled the Puranas.

M. rises, goes to the roof and walks up and down there. After sometime, he goes to sit on a desk-bench facing west in the south-western corner of the roof. Harish and Jagabandhu come and sit on another bench in front of M. They converse.

M. (to Harish) These are all holy places. And if you think of it, all places are holy. The earth has supported the rishis, so the whole earth is a place of pilgrimage.

"And then, see in the Vamana avatara, one of His feet had held the earth. Besides, Thakur says, 'It is He who is living everywhere in every form in all these.' Thus, everything is holy, all places are places of pilgrimage.

"But, we live with small things. That is why, we feel a little inspired on going to such places of pilgrimage. It is a fact, yes, we live with very small things."

Harish is going to the Math. As desired by M., Jagabandhu gives him sweets in a plate. Besides, the evening lamp has been lighted. M. says to Harish, 'It is already evening. Repeat the name of Thakur for a while and eat this.' Having taken the sweet snacks, Harish departs.

Eight in the evening, the staircase room. M. is seated on a chair facing south near the sill. To his left and right are seated some devotees the Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten, Jagabandhu, Vinay, Pleader Lalit, Balai, Gadadhar, Buddhiram and others.

The eldest grandson of M., Matko is singing on the second storey. The child has a sweet throat. The waves of his song have stolen M.'s mind. Thereafter, he talks.

M. (to the bhaktas) It attracts the mind so much. Music makes the mind very steady. Also, the company of sadhus.

The Elder Jiten None of us knows how to sing.

M. You don't try, that's why. How much effort did Narendra put in for learning it! He went from the house of one teacher after the other to learn it. On hearing his music, the mind would steady itself at once. It would not roam at all. The same was the case with Thakur's songs. Why did it happen? A feeling of God used to show itself in the tune of their songs. So, it used to attract the mind like a magnet. One would forget the world. Thakur's dance was also equally attractive. The eye would see nothing else. Thakur's words also stabilised the mind and when he went into samadhi, the minds of the bhaktas would also get concentrated in a fixed stare. Song is an easy spiritual practice. It quickly steadies the mind.

2.

Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj Mandir. It is six in the evening, Friday. The birth anniversary of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra is being celebrated. He was the founder of this sect and the temple.

Now, they talk on the life of Keshab Sen. Gopal Babu is the presiding preacher of today. The topic of discussion is Keshab and national problems. The Samaj temple is decorated with flowers and greenery and is illuminated by chains of lamps.

M. enters the courtyard of the temple with Jagabandhu and Vinay. M. stands in front of the western gate and talks happily with the head pundit of the Calcutta Madrasa. In the meanwhile, Rajni, the devotee of Silcher joins them.

M. enters the mandir by the northern gate to the west along with the bhaktas. He sits in the nearest row of benches on the first seat. There are only a few persons in the mandir. So, an attendant comes and requests him to take a seat in front. M. rises and takes his seat at the first place in the first row.

There is a path leading to the pulpit on M.'s left. Antevasi takes his seat in the first row to the right of the path; the Younger Jiten takes a seat in the row behind Antevasi. On a bench to his right sit Vinay and Rajni. The doctor sits with M. to his left and Gadadhar in the second row behind M. Balai arrives a little later.

Religion, politics, social reform and such other activities received a new life with the coming of Keshab. The preachers proceeded on their side of action with a new earnestness. Let us go ahead brothers, let us all go ahead such zeal spread everywhere. These topics began to be discussed everywhere.

After an hour, M. and the devotees came out of the temple and set out for the Morton School at a slow speed. It takes only five minutes to reach there.

7.30 p.m. M. is seated on a bench in the veranda on the second level veranda of the Morton School. The Elder Jiten, the Stout Sudhir, the Elder Amulya, Jagabandhu and others are seated close to M.

After a while, M. goes up to the third level for taking his meals, asking others to remain busy. The devotees talk at random. After a while, they will start reading but they don't. In an hour, M. returns after taking his meals. Says he, 'Well, where are you devotees? The class hasn't started yet.'

Antevasi says, 'It has been a period of recreation.'

M. enters the assembly room of the second level. A mat and a blanket had been spread on the floor. M. sits on the blanket facing east. The bhaktas are seated on his three sides. As soon as M. takes his seat, the devotees offer him pranam. He keeps silent for a few moments. Then he hums the following:

Rishibhirbahudha gitam chhandobhirvividhaih prithak,

Brahmasutrapadaishchaiva hetumadbhirvinishchitaih.

[This (the Field and the Knower of the Field) has been sung by rishis in many ways and distinctly in various hymns and also in well reasoned and conclusive expressions of the aphorisms of the absolute (Brahmasutra). (Gita 13:4)]

M. sings it again and again as if he is intoxicated. His voice gradually rises crescendo and then goes down into the sweetest of mental state. This mantra is the most favourite of M., so he generally sings it in a tune. This same sweet, grave, mental current goes on for fifteen minutes. Then, he turns a wave or two of this current to the devotees.

M. (to devotees) Aha, just see, what a reverence he has for rishis he says, 'The rishis say so.'

"But Arjuna also says, 'You say, you are God. So, I believe it.'

"Aha, both of them are right. Arjuna is also a bhakta and he talks to him as a bhakta. And he, Sri Krishna, to give credit to the rishis, also said what he had to say.

"The Rajasuya *yajna* was performed in Yudhishtira's house. Sri Krishna took the responsibility of washing the feet of all the Brahmins. The Brahmins of that time, you see, were always calling upon God."

The Elder Jiten Then only, the others will learn, besides.

M. (interrupting him) No besides. He comes down only for teaching mankind 'He teaches dharma to the humans by His own conduct'.

M. remains silent for a while and then resumes.

M. (to the devotees) Aha, how devoted they are to Keshab Babu. *Mannatha srijagannathah madguruh srijagadguruh* [My master, the Master of the world, my guru, the guru of the world.]

"Only He (God) knows why so much of devotion to the guru. No, it is for us."

M. (to all present) Tomorrow evening a *kathkata* (a commentary on an old tale with music) is going to be held about Keshab Babu in the Lilly Cottage. I am thinking of going there by a rickshaw.

The Doctor Why, we will go by car. Isn't it right to go in this way?

M. No. It would be better if we return by car. You can go that side (Cossipore, Shyam Bazaar and the Circular Road). Let us come back by car.

"One must not bother the driver. Since he is paid, should he for that reason be made to work so hard? Fie!"

"It was in the newspaper. A woman was working as a nurse in England. You see, they earn a lot by way of salary and the European women have so many engagements theatre today, bioscope tomorrow. They leave their children in the care of the nurses and then don't have to worry.

"Later, a son of the nurse herself fell ill. She asked for leave. The lady did not grant it. She said, 'We have engaged you for this work. It cannot be done.' The next day she heard that the nurse's son died. Just see all this just for money!

"It is the same everywhere. This happens wherever there is clash of interest. A constant struggle goes on there and one loses one's temper."

M. is pensive for a moment then he resumes.

M. (to the bhaktas) A boy went to meet somebody. A girl was winnowing paddy. The bangles in the girl's hand were jingling. The boy follows the sound. By striking with each other, the bangles break one by one. When there are only two bangles in her two hands, there is no longer any sound. Seeing this, the boy is about to go back, when the girl says, 'Why don't you meet me before you go?' The boy then replied, 'By God, no. There is no sound (fighting) when one is alone. I would rather be alone.'

3.

"To establish agreement in the midst of disagreements, well, only an avatara can do it."

The Elder Jiten Husband, wife and child, in these two and a half persons there is never an agreement!

M. Why husband and wife? Wherever there are two there is no agreement.

Dhyayato vishayan punsah sangasteshupjayate,

Sangat sanjayate kamah kamah krodhobhijayate.

Krodhat bhavati sammohah sammohat smritivibhramah,

Smritibhranshat buddhinasho buddhinashat pranashyati.

(Gita 2:62-63)

"(Counting on his fingers) (1) Thinking of worldly objects (2) Attachment (3) Desire (4) Anger (5) Delusion (6) Loss of memory (7) Ruin of reason these are seven steps leading to destruction.

"He quarrels with another but he doesn't know who is making him dance this dance.

"Just imagine, there is one big boss in an office. Under him, there is the second boss. Under him, there is another man and so on one under the another. Then this group departs and another comes dancing in its place. And such is the world.

"One loses his temper here. So for those, who cannot remain stable, there is sannyasa."

Vaman Das Mukherjee is a teacher of the Morton School. He has beaten a boy, Gyan Rai by name. He has struck rather hard. M. is the rector. He is informed about it. He has become very disturbed.

M. (to the devotees) If you have the strength of ten thousand elephants within you, you may take to worldly life. But if you lose your patience by a mere trifle, you have no place in the world. The sannyasa ashrama is for you. Why does he not take to sannyasa?

The Elder Jiten Who will give him bread and *dal*? And who will arrange the mosquito-net for him?

M. You may say so. But if you have the strength of ten thousand elephants, you may enter it (household). Otherwise, come out. The sannyasa ashrama was created for this purpose.

A Particular Devotee Teacher I have insulted Rakhali in his class by reprimanding him.

M. We will ask you another day what kind of insult you have inflicted.

M. (to the devotees) Look here, he thinks upon Thakur night and day. If he has such a state of mind, what to speak of others' condition. Alas, even devotees are in such a state!

"Thakur therefore said, "The world is a burning fire."

The Elder Amulya Two persons were quarrelling in the College Square. One was Bengali, the other Hindustani (from northern India). While one gave the highest place to Tulasi Das, the other would not agree with it.

M. (absent mindedly) Such a dance goes on, what else?

The Elder Amulya When will the *kathkata* be held there tomorrow?

M. At six in the evening, in the Lilly Cottage. Besides, it is held in the Nava Vidhan in the morning in their preaching hall. All these people go there (Rajni, Buddhiram, Gadadhar, Vinay, the Younger Jiten and so on.)

"Some four or five persons live there, all good people. They are sadhus, of little means. They have not given themselves the privilege of worldly name and fame. They are all renouncing sadhus.

"They say: Man makes a family by visits. By visiting others, you come to know them.

"Perhaps, they have talked so much about Thakur, you see, I have not been there for number of days. How then to know? Many of them enjoyed the love of Thakur. They used to accompany Keshab Babu on his visits. There are many other groups like these.

"What the Christian devotees do, we do not know. Many of them had the darshan of Thakur. Besides, there are so many who did not have his darshan, but know so much about Thakur. And they love Thakur.

"Similarly, there are Muslims devotees. I have heard that many Muslim devotees used to visit Thakur before his close disciples came to him. There are so many such groups of devotees of Hindus, of Muslims and of Christians. There are so many branches of the Hindus the Buddhist, the Jains, the Sikhs, the Brahmos, the Arya Samajists and so many others. The mother of them all is the Veda. Nowadays, they all accept the word of Thakur according to their own interest.

"So one should meet them all. By meetings, one comes near each other. In one or two days, one may meet perhaps two or three persons. Then one comes to know how many earnest, how many devout persons there are.

"Today in the Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj, they mentioned Thakur's name thrice. Once they said, 'The Paramahansa Deva, on seeing Keshab, said: The bait of this boy has sunk.' And another time while talking of Christ, Moses and Chaitanya they also talked of Thakur. And a third time they said, 'The Paramahansa Deva used to repeat the name of the Mother of the Universe.'

"Thakur went to attend the prayer meeting in the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Keshab Babu was then meditating seated on the pulpit. He was then twenty seven. As soon as Thakur saw him, he said, 'The fish hook of this boy has sunk.' That is to say, the fish has attached itself to the hook. When the fish tries to eat the bait, the hook sinks into the water though the fish has not yet been hooked. It means that the mind has attached itself to God but it has not been able to hold Him yet. What a great thing he said! Is it an ordinary thing? So Thakur said, 'Keshab is a highly spiritual person.' "

The Elder Amulya Who was the first teacher of the Adi Samaj?

M. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first. Thereafter, came Devendra Nath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. Keshab Babu was their preacher. But, he could not conform himself to them. He admired Christ but Devendra Nath Thakur used to say, 'A man should not be raised so high.' So Keshab broke away and established the Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj.

M. keeps silent for a while and then starts the conversation.

M. (to the bhaktas, hinting at the Elder Amulya) What right have you to see what others are doing, or not doing? Where is the time even to see the work of the others? Even a single mourning and everything gets upset. Such is the state of things! How can people then find time to think about others?

A two year old daughter of Amulya has recently passed away.

M. (to Antevasi) Let there be a little reading from Purana. Is there any book here?

Antevasi No, Sir.

M. Never mind, I have a Gita.

Gadadhar brings the hurricane lamp near. M. himself reads the Gita the (Lord's) universal form. But, since the wick of the lamp is too small, it flickers and dies down. It is dark all around.

A particular bhakta goes up to the fourth level to fetch another lamp. In the meanwhile, M. begins talking again. '(Hinting at the Elder Amulya) How can we get time to see the work of others? One says one is unstable in one's own fire.'

The lamp has been brought in. The reading of the Gita continues (Lord's) universal form.

M. (to the devotees) Arjuna could not have complete faith on who was Sri Krishna. He would begin to doubt at times. Sri Krishna said, 'I am the Father, Mother and Master of the world. I am all. And I am also its destroyer.' When he gained a little faith, Arjuna wanted to see His universal form but could not bear it. He started shaking all over.

"The devotees cannot understand all about the avatara. Where is the power to do so? Therefore, they don't even want it. What they can bear is good enough for them. When one asks for too much, what Arjuna experienced is bound to happen. The Lord fulfilled the request of the bhakta. And at the same time, he taught others not to ask for too much.

"But, of course, it was really meant for Arjuna. Yet, he says to all bhaktas:

Matkarmakrinmatparamo madbhaktah sangavarjitah,

Nirvairah sarvabhuteshu yah sa mameti pandavah.

[He who does work for Me, he who looks upon Me as his goal, he who worships Me, free from attachment, he who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to Me, O Arjuna.(Gita 11:55)]

" 'Take refuge in Me, make Me as your goal,' that is to say know that God comes first, the world only next. If you wish to attain God this is what is needed. You will have to change your entire outlook. God first, world next."



Morton School, Calcutta,
Friday, 21st November, 1924,
The 6th of Agrahayana 1331 (B.Y.),
The 9th day of the dark fortnight,
2 Dandas/13 Palas.

M. IN THE LILLY COTTAGE

1.

Lilly Cottage, the Upper Circular Road. It is the residence of the would famous teacher Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen. He is the founder of the Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj. Some forty years ago, he passed away in this very house. Even today, the Brahmo devotees consider it a holy place of pilgrimage.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna also visited this place many times. In 1875, Sri Ramakrishna went to Jai Gopal Sen's garden house in Belgharhia to see Keshab engaged in tapasya. Hriday Mukherjee, his attendant took him there. Thakur said, 'He has dropped his tail.' Since then a deep love developed between the two. Keshab also had the darshan of Sri Ramakrishna many times in Dakshineswar and in the houses of the devotees in Calcutta. Once Keshab took Sri Ramakrishna on a boat trip on the Bhagirathi river on the night of Lakshmi Puja. Between 1875 and 1880, these five years before his close disciples had come to him, Sri Ramakrishna considered Keshab as a very near and dear one. Even after the coming of the close disciples, in 1884, when Keshab breathed his last, his love for him remained unbroken and constant.

Even before this close association, Sri Ramakrishna said of him, 'His fishing hook has already sunk.' It was almost the state of samadhi. The second time when he met him, it was in the 'Nainaner Gardens' of the Tagore's. It probably happened during the winter of 1873. Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj was also staying there in this garden. Vishwanath Upadhyaya, the envoy of Nepal took Sri Ramakrishna there. A very interesting situation came up there. Vishwanath was a very orthodox Brahmin. He used to utter 'Shiva Shiva Kali Kali' all the time. Swami Dayananda said to him in fun, 'I say, utter *sandesh sandesh* (a Bengali Sweet).' He was a worshipper of the formless God with attributes. He did not accept the idols of gods and goddesses. Though, he did not say anything, it is possible, that Upadhyaya felt hurt.

Seeing Keshab Sen and Dayananda, Sri Ramakrishna went into Samadhi. Vishwanath then asked Dayananda, 'Maharaj, have you ever had such a state?' The truthful Dayananda replied, 'No, I have the pride of learning. I am seeing for the first time in him, what I have read in the shastras.'

Keshab and Dayananda are the pioneers of India's new awakening. Both used to consult each other how to revive the lost glory of India.

Keshab's shrine on the second level is a very holy place. It was in this room that having bolted themselves inside, he prayed to God with Sri Ramakrishna for a long time.

Once when Keshab had fallen ill, Sri Ramakrishna took the vow of offering sugar and coconut to the Mother of the universe for his recovery. He pleaded, 'Mother, if anything happens to Keshab, with whom shall I talk about God in Calcutta? Please cure him.'

Once, Sri Ramakrishna went to the Lilly Cottage. They had on that day a party in the western style. Keshab persuaded Sri Ramakrishna to join the party. He also took some refreshments there.

Sri Ramakrishna went to the Lilly Cottage for the last time when Keshab was lying fatally ill. Seated in the parlour on the second level, he became

impatient to see Keshab. Keshab was confined to bed in the inner quarters. He had become extremely weak. Leaning against the wall, he came to the parlour and offered pranam by lying prostrate on the ground. Thakur had realised that Keshab's body could not be saved after this coming to him. He said to him, 'An elephant has entered into your thatched house. It is breaking everything inside.'

Keshab's mother requested Thakur to bless him so that he could get rid of his disease. Thakur replied, 'I cannot bless, my Mother is there.'

The list of the incidents of the loving contacts of Keshab and Sri Ramakrishna is never ending. So, that place is considered very holy by Sri Ramakrishna's devotees too.

Even earlier, M. sent the devotees many a times to visit the Lilly Cottage and offer their pranam there. Keshab Babu, took Sri Ramakrishna with him to the Nava Vidhan Mandir a number of times. Thus, just as the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna love Nava Vidhan Mandir and considered it holy, they also have the same consideration for the Lilly Cottage.

Today, a *kathkata* is being performed in this Lilly Cottage on the occasion of Keshab's birth anniversary. M., Sri Ramakrishna's close disciple has been spreading this information in the assembly of the devotees for quite some days. Today, he himself visits it with his whole group. Doctor Bakshi has brought Acharya M. there in his car. M. is seated in the car in front of the Lilly Cottage on the road, awaiting the arrival of the devotees. On their arrival, M. enters the Lilly Cottage along the group of devotees. M.'s face is serious but happy, his eyes gazing within.

It appears that M. has tuned the eyes of his mind backwards to visualise the memorable moments of his past life. Since his boyhood, while he was at school, Keshab was M.'s hero. M. used to say: I used to feel so restless to see him. I was then studying in class nine (called class two in those days). Keshab used to sit in a room in the Albert hall to reply to his foreign post. The door of the room was kept closed. I would climb the pillar outside to have a peep at him. Later on, while a student in the college and in the beginning of my working life, Keshab Sen was the object of my worship. I would try to attend every one of his discourses. Once, he was to speak in the Town Hall. I reached there three hours earlier. The religious discourses of Keshab Babu would captivate me. Why I had so much attraction for him, I came to know after I had the darshan of Thakur. The source of Keshab Babu's talk was Sri Ramakrishna, I realised it then. It was Sri Ramakrishna's word and spirit which used to flow through him.

M. enters this holy place by the main gate and walks towards the west. Stopping at the turning to the right, he says, 'It was in November that Thakur went to see the ailing Keshab.' Now he walks towards the North. The car stops in the veranda. Then, he climbs up the steps from the eastern gate facing east. The steps are made of wood. On being informed of his coming, Acharya Pramatha Sen welcomes him and takes him to the assembly room on the second level.

This room lies east-west, with carpet and sheets over the floor for sitting. M. sits facing south leaning against the northern wall. To his right is the Doctor, to his left the Younger Nalini and behind him Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten and Vinay. Behind them are Balai, Shanti, Ramani and Rajni. And behind them are Lalit Rai of Bhatapara, Bholanath Mukherjee. With him are Buddhiram, Gadadhar, Shuka Lal and the Elder Jiten.

M. is in a pensive mood. A number of times, he had accompanied Thakur to this room. So, perhaps he is recalling the conversations of Thakur and Keshab on the 2nd April 1882, Thakur was sitting in this room when he said to Keshab, 'You are such a busy man, you cannot go to Dakshineswar

very often. So, I have come myself to meet you. When I heard about your illness, I vowed to offer sugar and coconut to the Mother for your recovery.'

Pointing at M., Thakur had complained to Keshab, 'Why doesn't he (M.) go to Dakshineswar, just ask him please. Yet, he says that his mind is not on his household.'

It was a little more than a month ago that M. had gone to Thakur. That was his first visit. He had said, 'If you are delayed, please let me know it by post.'

It was in this room that Thakur had said about Samadhyayi, 'I can see his inside through his eyes just as one can see everything in a room through a glass door.'

After the twilight hour, when Thakur heard Trailokya's song, Thakur stood up and went into samadhi. When he regained the normal state he began to dance and sing the song.

*I drink no ordinary wine, but wine of immortality,
As I repeat my Mother Kali's name, It so intoxicates my mind that
people take me to be drunk!*

After singing the song he said to Keshab Babu:

We are afraid to speak, and yet we are afraid to keep still;

Our minds, O Radha, half believe that we are about to lose you!

We tell you the mantra that we know, which makes one cross all troubles, now it is up to you.

He meant: Leave everything else and call upon the Lord. He alone is eternal, all else is perishable. If you have not realised God, you have done nothing.

2.

Thakur went to see Keshab for the last time on 28th November, 1883, during his terminal illness. With him were M., Rakhai and Latu. Thakur was sitting on a couch in this very room when he went into the state of bhava. He said, 'Oh, Mother you have come, showing us your Banarasi Sari, sit down Mother, sit down. Don't create a fuss.'

He was sitting on this very couch, when he said, 'The body and the Atman are separate from each other, like the betel nut and its skin. When one has the darshan of God, one realises this.'

M. sees the whole of this divine scene, as if intoxicated and realises its reality on the screen of his mind. Then he sees Keshab coming with great difficulty from the inner quarters holding the wall and then sitting on the floor and offering his pranam to Thakur by lying prostrate on the ground for a long time. After this, Keshab talked with Thakur on God. M. recites that conversation, "Thakur had said to Keshab: So long as there are attributes, you know different things. But, when you attain perfect knowledge, you see that all is one God, consciousness. He is consciousness as well as the world.

"Man has a special manifestation of God in him. Among the men too, the man with the qualities of *sattva* has more of His light. More than him this light he has who has seen God.

"God's special power manifests itself in heart of the devotee. His heart is the parlour of God. Here, you see Him more often.

"God and his (*Shakti*) power are not two. Take for an example, a snake.

When it sits coiled up, I call it Brahman. When he creates, preserves and dissolves I call him Shakti. He is Brahman by His real nature.

"When one is a spiritual practitioner, he has to take to 'Not this, not this.' He leaves aside butter-milk and only takes butter. When he has perfected himself, he sees that butter is nothing but butter-milk and butter-milk is only the same as butter.

"The Mother of universe is always protecting Her children. Whichever of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* the child wants, She gives him. However, the real child cannot live without his Mother.

"God is not under the influence of splendour, He is under the Bhakta. He wants discrimination and dispassion, devotion and faith, bhava and love all these.

"Everybody sees God according to his own ideas. The bhakta with the qualities of *tamas* worships him by sacrificing the goat for Him. The devotee with the quality of *rajas* worships Him with a number of articles with many eatables, fruit, sweets and what not. The bhakta with *sattvic* qualities worship Him with flowers, Vilva leaves and Ganga water. If he doesn't have any flowers, he worships Him only with Vilva leaves. Sometimes, he also makes Him an offering of *payas*. And he who is beyond the three gunas worships Him with His divine name repeating His name itself constitutes His puja.

"The fire of jnana destroys the fire of anger. Then, it destroys the ego. Then starts breaking of this and shattering that this is the state of a mad man.

"Once you get your name registered in hospital, you cannot come out till you are cured of your disease. Similarly, till one is done with his activity, he cannot get out. God does not let him.

"On seeing you (Keshab) falling ill, I used to be very worried. When you fell ill for the first time, I cried in the early morning. I said, 'Mother if anything happens to Keshab with whom shall I talk on God?' I went to Calcutta and offered sugar and coconut to the (Mother) Siddheshwari. I had vowed to Her so that you might recover.

"How can a man bless? It is God who does everything. 'Mother, it is You who does Her work but the man says that he does it.'

"God laughs twice. Once, when two brothers fight and divide their land and a second time, when the doctor says, 'I shall cure your son'. Can anybody save when God kills?

"Keshab, please don't stay at home too much. By living too much with your sons and daughters, you will sink. On the other hand, if you live with devotees, you will talk of God and you will keep well.

"Keshab is a special person. Everybody respects him, people of wealth as well as sadhus. I saw Dayananda in the 'Nainaner Bagan' awaiting the arrival of Keshab very very anxiously.

"One should place a light in every place in the house. Without lights one becomes poor."

M. is absorbed in his reminiscences of the past. His eyes and face show that his mind is in a high state.

There are many persons in the parlour of the Lilly Cottage. They are all listening to the conversation. The speaker of the *katha* is seated in front of M. facing north.

M. inquires after the welfare of Pramatha Babu. Keshab Sen's family is closely related to M.'s in-laws. Pramatha Babu is the nephew of Keshab Sen and Keshab is a relation of M.

Now they take up the *katha*. The speaker of the *katha* exaggerate whatever they speak. The same is with this *katha*. He says the earth was inflicted with great trouble. Narada went to Narayana and submitted this fact to him. He said, 'All right, I will come down to the earth in the Sen family of Calcutta in Calcutta for redeeming the devotees Keshab is none else but He.' And so on. The devotees did not enjoy this *katha* so much. There is the life of such a great man. How much of divine light it shed. Had he talked of these things, it would have been true and beautiful. But instead of doing so, he painted an imaginary picture of him. This made it rather insipid.

M. rises a little after 8 o'clock and goes down the steps with the devotees.

Below there is the sanctuary close by. M. enters it. It is dark. A devotee strikes a match-stick to show the way to M. M. comes out into the courtyard. Then, a member of the family brings a hurricane lamp. He again calls M. to the temple. M. sees all the articles in the room. On the wall there are many pictures. The names of all the preachers are also inscribed there. At M.'s behest, Jagabandhu and others memorise all those names.

M. now comes to the bank of the tank. Standing at the bank, he says to the devotees, 'How much *tapasya* has been carried out here by the devotees. All these places are awakened.'

M. comes out. Near the gate, the daughter's son of Jai Gopal Sen comes and offers his pranam. While enquiring about his welfare etc., M. gets into car. With him are the Doctor, the Elder Jiten and the Elder Amulya. All other go to their respective places. Jagabandhu, Vinay, Buddhiram, Gadadhar and others return to the Morton School.

The devotees talk of the unfeigned loving relationship of Sri Ramakrishna and Keshab as they walk down. One of them says, 'Keshab Babu is very near and dear to us. It was he who proclaimed Thakur in a newspaper. He said: A man like the Paramahansa Deva has never come to the earth. He must be preserved in a glass case. The facts that have manifested themselves in his life constitute the central wealth of the Hindus. The Hindu Dharma is great indeed.'



Morton School Calcutta,
Saturday, 22nd November, 1924,
7th of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The 10th day of the dark fortnight, 1 Danda/41 Palas,
The 11th day, 58 Dandas/14 Palas.

HE WHO ONLY SEES THE EYE OF THE FISH HITS THE TARGET

1.

Morton School, roof of the fourth level, 4 p.m. M. is seated on a chair facing west close to the eastern wall. To his right and left there are two rows of benches facing each other. The bhaktas are seated there.

Today, it is 22nd November 1924, 8th of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.), Sunday, the 12th day of the dark fortnight.

Amulya, the postmaster of Alipur has arrived with many companions. He is followed by the Younger Nalini, Kiran, Sita Nath, Gadadhar and Buddhiram. They have come from St. Paul's Cathedral (the Church of Long Sahib). They had gone there to join the worship at the behest of M. After them arrives Nagen Chakraborty. He is the secretary of the Vedanta Society. The last to come are Swami Kamaleshwarananda and Advocate Surya Aich. Swami Kamaleshwarananda is the head of the Gadadhar Ashrama of Bhavanipur, a branch of Ramakrishna Math. M. enquires after everybody's health. He asks Nagen about the health of Swami Abhedananda and about the Technical Work Centre founded by him.

M. is silent for a while. What is he thinking? He resumes.

M. (to the devotees) There was absolutely no such thing during the life time of Thakur. No flood-relief, no famine-relief, nothing of the kind. There was just this, how to attain God.

"When the avatara has departed, they fly at a tangent.

"He used to say, 'Doesn't the Mother know that the devotees need these?'

"Christ said: God knows well what things you need. You just call upon Him.

"...your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, ... But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mathew 6:8, 33)

"He knows all. Just see, He sends the sun and the moon. And then, He has also created water. I was just thinking of it today Oh, had there been no water, the whole atmosphere would be smelling awfully. And then, the air, when it stops even for an hour the eyes becomes stony. He knows all what you want. How to attain Him, this should be your only effort.

"...your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, ... But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Mathew 6:8, 33)

"By saying that you need this and you need that, there is just no end to need.

"He has various departments: politics, social reforms and so many others."

A Certain Bhakta Gita praises the yoga of work:

Sannyasah karmayogascha nihshreyaskaravubhau,

Tayostu karmasannyasat karmayogo vishishyate.

[The renunciation of work and its unselfish performance both lead to the Soul's salvation. But of the two, the unselfish performance of work is better than its renunciation (Gita 5:2)]

M. Yes, it is because of different capacities of the *sadhaka* that it is said that the renunciation of work and its unselfish performance both lead to God-realisation. Arjuna was fit for Karma Yoga (yoga through work). So, He praises it for his benefit.

"*Jnana* (the path of spiritual insight), *Yoga* (i.e. Raja Yoga), *Bhakti* (the path of devotion) and *Karma* (path of unselfish work) these four only are the paths. Let him adopt one of these for attaining God, who has preference for it.

"He says, 'Uddhava, give up every thing and embrace sannyasa. Go to Badrinarayana and practice tapasya.' "

"Thakur used to say, 'The mother arranges for the food which suits a particular stomach.'

"The Gita says, '*jnanayogena sankhyanam karmayogena yogeenam* [The path of knowledge for the men of contemplation and that of work for men of action. (Gita 3:3)]'

"And there are other exhortations (1) *mayyeva mana aadhatsva* [fix the mind in Me alone.] (2) *abhyasayogen tato mamichhaptum* [Seek to attain Me by the yoga of practice] (3) *matkarmaparamo bhava* [Work for My sake.] (4) *sarvakarmafalatyagam tatah kuru* [Renounce all fruit of the work you do].

"He has given four alternatives. Any one of them will do. The basic thing is the difference of natures. One should take up that which suits one. But, it will have to be done with extreme earnestness.

"Though, Thakur has neither rejected the jnani nor the man of yoga nor the bhakta nor the man of work, yet, he said that for this age the path of devotion is the easiest. Life depends on food, it is not long, and the mind is restless. In this age, one succeeds by surrendering everything to Him and crying for Him. That is why he said so. And he himself took to this path."

M. keeps silent for a while and then starts the conversation again.

M. (to all present) Yesterday, I went to the Lilly Cottage. Thakur used to go there frequently. He was very fond of Keshab Babu. He said to him, 'The moment I remember you, I feel so different in my head,' that is to say that I feel so inspired with God. Yesterday, his birth anniversary was being celebrated and there was *kathkata*.

Thakur said, 'I salute the ancient Brahmajnanis (men who realised God) and I salute the Brahmajnanis of today.' That is to say, he accepted all.

"Among the performers, some were very good. They generated a lot of inspiration. On the other hand, some colour it too much. This covers the basic thing, the real life. No doubt, Keshab Babu's life was so bright, so great. Had it not been so, would Thakur had loved him so much? When he was lying ill, Thakur worshipped Siddheshwari with sugar and coconut. Rising early he would cry. And he said to the Mother, 'Mother, if something happens to Keshab, with whom shall I talk about You?'

"The Nava Vidhan has taken the words 'Mother, Mother' from Thakur. Max Müller has pointed this out by asking wherefrom had this 'Mother, Mother' come suddenly. When he came to know of Keshab's closeness to Thakur, he said, 'This (Mother, Mother) had come from Thakur.'

"Thakur went to see Keshab Babu during his last illness. He cried when he died, wrapping a sheet over his face and head for three days. He said, 'Mother, why did you tie me with him in this way with bhakti?' When Adhar Sen died, his conduct was the same. For three days, he kept to bed and said weeping, 'Why have you tied me with bhakti?' Had it not been so, avatara's lila would not have been enacted. He enacts his lila with his devotees of the inner and the outer circle."

Jagabandhu I noticed yesterday in the Lilly Cottage that they had the idols of Ganesha, Durga and Lakshmi all these gods and goddesses.

M. Surely, they are all going to 'turn red' (take the colour of Thakur's way of worship).

2

M. (to Swami Kamaleshwarananda) I kept his company for five years, but did not hear him talking of anything else even once. Now I hear so much.

"He would always say: First try to have His darshan somehow. After it, you may do what you like just straight to the point."

M. (to all present) The hero who says that I see nothing but the eye of the fish can only shoot the target. Drona asked a person what he was seeing. The latter replied, 'The rajas, the trees and you.' Drona said, 'No, you will not be able to do it.' And then, he asked another person what he was seeing. He replied, 'The fish, the rajas and you.' He said 'No, you will not be able to do it.' When he asked Arjuna what he was seeing, he replied, 'Only the eye of the fish.' Then Drona said, 'Yes, you will be able to do it.'

"He was testing who would be able to hit the target. Below, there was water in a container, above in the open, the fish. By seeing the reflection of the eye of the fish in the water, the right eye of the fish

was to be hit, Arjuna only saw the right eye of the fish. That is how he was able to hit the target.

"Similarly, another target how to attain Him, just this is what Thakur would say."

A devotee (to himself) M. is also taking the devotees by the way of diameter, by way of Thakur's new prescription.

M. (to the sadhu) 'Your Madhava is not in the temple, O Poddo (Padmalochan), why have you brought this chaos by blowing on your conch-shell?' There was a temple in ruins. One evening, hearing the sound of the conch-shell suddenly, every one ran to it. The door was bolted from inside. One of the men saw through the chink of the door that there was no idol inside and that Poddo was blowing on his conch-shell. Then the above was said, 'Your Madhava is not in your temple, O Poddo. You have brought this chaos by blowing on your conch-shell.'

"So, first install Madhava in your heart and then take to everything else."

M. (to the young man) Thakur used to say sometime the *achina gachha* (unknown tree) is of a particular kind. Have you heard about it? Nobody can recognise him, the avatara. So the Gita says:

Avajananti mam modah tanumashritam,

Paramabhavamajananto mama bhutamaheshwaram.

[The deluded despise Me clad in human body, not knowing My higher nature (divinity) as Lord of all existence. (Gita 9:11)]

"If He does let Himself be caught, nobody can do so."

M. (to Nagen) One day, the devotees were discussing how best to form the characters of the boys. Thakur heard them and scolded them.

"One day Braj Mohan Babu, Ashwini Datt's father was sitting in Thakur's room talking at random. Thakur could not bear it. He immediately went into samadhi. After sometime, coming out of it, he said folding his hands, 'Baba, don't talk of these things. I cannot bear them. Please talk here only of God.' Braj Babu then asked for his pardon and said, 'Master, now you know what is our disease. Please give us its medicine.' "

"A college has been named in Barishal after Braj Babu. He was a judge and had only just retired.

"It was not possible to talk of anything else there. Only, how to attain God was the subject of all conversations there talk of God all the twenty-four hours sometime singing His name and praises, sometimes bhajan and community singing and at other times reading from the holy books. When he was in lower state, he used to live with all this, otherwise, always absorbed in samadhi. Nothing else could be done. And if anything else happened, he would writhe like a fish

out of water."

M. (to Swami Kamaleshwarananda) When the avatara comes and tells people, only then they get an awakening. Only when He orders, one preaches to humanity. Otherwise, who listens? It enters from one ear and goes out the other. Even if one listens, one cannot take it up, cannot hold on to it, that is to say, he cannot frame his life according to it.

"When one has received orders, one is heard by all. When Christ spoke, the learned doctors were wonder-struck doctors, that is to say the teachers of religion. They would be wonder-stuck and say, 'Wherefrom has this child taken all this? He is illiterate but he teaches them as one that has authority.' "

Nagen Then, why did Swamiji (Vivekananda) ask us to work?

M. Did Swamiji only talk of work? He also talked of Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. He has talked about them all. One takes that which one can digest. He, who is inclined to work, should take to it. Thakur gave this basic injunction: Do that by which you can attain God.

"The work indicated by the guru when done selflessly purifies the mind. And he manifests himself in a pure mind.

"In the extended sense, Jnana, Yoga, Bhakti and Karma are all works. They have all to be performed selflessly. The Gita says '*sahaja karma kaunteya sadoshamapi na tyajet*' [One should not give up the work in one's nature even though attended by evil, O son of Kunti... (Gita 18:48)]. *Sahaja karma* that is to say work in one's nature One should do the work that is natural to him.

"And there is another ordained work. This is done after God-realisation for teaching humanity, for example Swamiji's work. On being asked by Thakur, Swamiji said, 'I wish to remain absorbed in Samadhi like Sukadeva.' This was his own nature but as desired by Thakur, he did all other work for teaching humanity."

3.

M. There is personal work and there is work for others, work for many in society. Those who are world teachers have to do both. But, one must first firmly determine one's own path by personal work before taking work for others. Otherwise, one will not succeed in either.

"All the devotees of Thakur, by His grace, first established themselves well in their own personal ways before adopting welfare work or imparting instructions to others.

"Thakur forbade Swamiji to talk of *Advaita* (Monism) to Rakhal (Swami Brahmananda). He said that Swamiji's place is of the Indivisible One. When Swamiji changed the ideas of Kali Maharaj, Thakur said on hearing it, 'What have you done?'

"Work, every man must do. *Na hi kashchit kshanamapi jatu tishthatyakarmakrit* [No one can remain without doing work even for a moment. (Gita 3:5)] Man cannot remain without work. And then He says: *niyatam kuru karma tvam* [Do your obligatory work (Gita 3:8)]. Here, He talks of work in the larger sense. In the personal sense, He says just this: *sahajam karma kaunteya sadoshamapi na tyajet* [One should not give up the work in one's nature even though attended by evil, O son of Kunti... (Gita 18:48)]

"The guru instructs the disciple according to the latter's nature. To one he says 'Take to meditation, repetition of His name,' to another he says, 'Render service to me'; to one he says, 'Go about the places of pilgrimage,' to another he says, 'Go home and do your duty as a house-holder.' If it is done in a selfless manner, it will bring good to all. By working with a personal motive, one falls into the bonds of work.

"Thakur teachings are principally for two classes: the all renouncing ones, that is to say yogis, sannyasis and *bhogi-yogis*, that is to say house-holder bhaktas. The goal of both classes of these men is God-realisation. One class marches direct towards its ideal, the other goes on a little roundabout ways. But the latter class of persons is always asked to keep company of the former. For otherwise, there is a possibility of their going astray."

Nagen By nature, I want Bhakti Yoga. But the guru asks me to take to Karma Yoga. Which shall I take up?

M. One must obey one's guru. Later on, you can convey to him your wish, humbly joining your palms. When you are earnest, He will take you on to the path suited to your nature. The guru is always anxious for the good of the disciple and takes him on to the path suiting his nature. Even so, occasionally, for sometime he may ask you to take to the other path, keeping some object in view. He who takes refuge in his guru comes out alright.

M. keeps silent for a while and then resumes.

M. (to all present) Thakur wanted just this: make an effort that you may attain Him. So you should always pray to Him to take you on the path by which you can attain God. He wants you to have deep longing I want Him in this very life. He used to say, 'The father gives the son's share to him, when he sees that the boy is insistent when he gives up eating and pleasures.'

"And there is another way: *aneka janmasansiddhastato yati param gatim* (Having perfected himself through many lives, he attains to the highest goal.) Thakur did not like this path.

"When you ask with a deep longing, He gives it. When you are like mad for it, He lets you take it. By weeping secretly in a solitary corner, He lets you have His darshan. It is like the child crying for his mother. All these are Thakur's words.

"Christ also said the same: Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you (Mathew 7:7)."

M. keeps silent for a while before he continues.

M. (to all present) He said in Cossipore, 'If I had some more days, some more individuals would have attained consciousness, but Mother is not going to keep me long. She is taking me away. I talk all about Her to everybody. So She is taking me away.'

The Elder Amulya From this, it appears that he had much more to say. It would have been good had he done it.

M. (laughing) Can your wish prevail? The moon, the sun you see, water, air, the whole universe, all these have come about by His will and they move by His will. The Veda says: *sa aikshat bahu syam prajayeya* [He wished that He should become many]. He has become all these. Does He consult anybody?

A Particular Bhakta Why does He will that one should remain ignorant?

M. He has two departments, one of knowledge and the other ignorance. It is due to his Maya of ignorance. If everybody were to attain consciousness, how would this world move?

M. begins to sing a prayer to Mahamaya completely absorbed in it:

O, the Embodiment of all gunas, Mother, worshipped by the three worlds, be pleased.

O, my refuge, who but You is my course.

You cover Brahman with the veil of nature.

You bewitch the three worlds as Mahamaya.

O Mother! the creator, preserver and the destroyer give this vile person shelter at Your feet.

You are all, there is nothing but You, You are beyond all the beyondness.

You are vidya, the dispenser of vidya, Mahavidya and the giver of the right reason to the ignorant.

M. Such are Her songs. It has been said about Her that She does good as well as bad.

"Christianity also has the same idea. Christ prays, 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Mathew 6:13).'

"Apparently, He also gives temptations.

"So, Thakur would always pray, 'Do not bewitch me by your world-bewitching Maya, O, Mother!'

"The Gita also says: *daivi hyaisha gunamayi mama maya duratyaya*. [This divine maya of Mine consisting of Gunas is hard to overcome (Gita 7:14)]. Therefore the prayer: Don't delude me, pray.

"And yet, if there is no delusion, this game cannot continue. Thakur used to say, 'Just as the mother keeps the children happy with toys so that she can attend to her household work, similarly the Mother of the universe keeps us busy in our delusion. Otherwise, the world would stop. He who has had enough of this game calls upon the

Mother crying and She lifts him in Her arms. Then Her play is over.

"If you do not want to remain deluded, pray, 'Mother, don't bewitch me by Your world-enchanting Maya.' All happens by Her will."



Morton School, Calcutta,
Sunday, 23rd November, 1924,
8th of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The 11th day of the dark fortnight,
57 Dandas/3 Palas.

KESHAB, THE BEARER OF THAKUR'S IDEAS

1.

Morton School, M.'s bedroom on the fourth level. It is evening. M. is seated on his bed. To his left the devotees are seated on benches Vinay, Doctor Bakshi, Jagabandhu, Rajni and others. They are followed by Shuka Lal, Balai and others. A devotee from Kharagpur has also arrived. And also, Bhuvan Maiti. He is studying in a college and has his lodging in the Prachar Ashrama in Nava Vidhan Brahma Samaj. But he is a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva. M. had visited the Prachara Ashrama yesterday. There, the bhaktas were celebrating in connection with Keshab Sen's birth anniversary. A 'lantern lecture' was given there yesterday, topic: The History of Brahma Samaj, Speaker: Sri Jnananjana Viyogi.

The teachers of the Nava Vidhan Brahma Samaj, Pramatha Sen and others reside in the Prachara Ashrama. It is situated in the Ramanath Majumdar Street close to the Mirzapur street. A number of bhaktas had accompanied M., the bhaktas who regularly visit him. The subject of the first slide was Raja Ram Mohan Roy's visits to holy places.

It is 27th November, 1924 today, 12th Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.), Thursday, the first day of the bright fortnight, 37 Dandas/46 Palas.

M. is not quite well today. He has got cold. Last evening, while returning from Prachara Ashrama, he had caught cold.

On the 24th and 25th November, there were lantern lectures in the Morton School too. Jnananjana Viyogi was the speaker. The subject of the first day was cholera and tuberculosis. M. also saw it seated in the veranda on the second level with the bhaktas for sometime. Thereafter, he went to the Nava Vidhan Brahma Samaj. There, the subject of discussion was the life of Keshab Babu. Like a honeybee, M. always draws Sri Ramakrishna's nectar like words from the life of Keshab. He frequently goes there for this purpose. He says that the nectar of the words of Sri Ramakrishna is flowing within Keshab.

The subject of the lecture of the 25th November was smallpox. M. saw all the illustrations with the bhaktas sitting in the veranda of the second level. Another lantern slide lecture will be held on malaria in the Morton School on the coming 29th of November.

Being unwell, M. is seated on his bed in his room on the fourth level. He is happily talking to the bhaktas.

M. (to Bhuvan) Why do I go so frequently to the Nava Vidhan Samaj? Thakur's power has percolated into Keshab Babu. How long he had the privilege of Thakur's company! Thakur also used to visit him. How he loved him! He enjoyed his whole love before we, his intimate devotees, arrived.

"Aha! Thakur used to say, 'He is a divine personality. When I see him, I feel there is the sound of water boiling in a kettle in my head.'"

Doctor Bakshi What does it mean?

M. It means that he felt highly inspired so much that his nervous

system could not tolerate it. What else could it mean? Thakur used to name such a state as *mahavayu*.

A Certain Bhakta The Brahma Devotees do not want to accept that Keshab Sen was indebted to Thakur for perfecting his religious life.

M. Truth manifests itself by its own light, like the sun. So, it does not depend on the acceptance of others. Besides, there is no harm if they do not accept it.

"If a person becomes rich because of the wealth of his father, does he have to proclaim it? I don't listen to what others say. I have seen both these persons with my own eyes, and also their divine contact. He received Thakur's love for ten years. It is not possible to estimate the value of a moment of the avatara's grace and here it was love lasting ten years.

"After the passing away of Keshab Babu, his mother went to Cossipore with one of Keshab's son to see Thakur. Thakur was ailing. Yet, embracing the boy, he began to cry. On Keshab's passing away, Thakur did not rise from his bed for three days. He said while crying, 'Mother, why have You bound me with such affection?' Just read what Keshab Babu has written himself He has himself written, 'There is none like him in this world. He should be preserved within a glass case or He should be kept like they keep grapes in cotton wool.' One can well understand from this what was Thakur in Keshab Babu's estimation."

Bhuvan There is a Brahma Devotee who loses his equilibrium with just so little He is very sentimental.

M. How can he be other than sentimental? The loving souls have an independent nature.

Saying this M. sings the whole of the following song:

*A loving person is independent by nature,
Brother, none is his own or a stranger.
He is a unique jewel;
He who is a loving soul cares little even for Indra's status,
His face is always smiling as if his mind is a lake of nectar.
He does not care for caste, nor for name,
He merely fills his heart with emotion, never to bother about being
called names,
When he has the key to happiness in his hand, what fear has he?
His conduct is different from and independent of the rituals of the
Vedas,
Even when the moon falls in the midst of darkness, there is no mark of
it on his face,
And even when the fourteen worlds are destroyed, he builds his home
in the sky.*

M. These are all Brahma Songs, written by Trailokya Sanyal. Thakur used to sing all of them. Seeing the various states of Thakur, Trailokya Babu used to compose songs and sing them to him.

Song

My friend, to whom shall I speak out my heart. Since there is a ban on it.

Unless there is someone to share the grief, I cannot survive.

He who has the heart of a man can be recognised by his eyes.

But there are only one or two such,

Who laugh in emotion and dance in love. They can walk up and down the ujana path... and so on.

Song

My mind has gone deep down into the sea of Gaurang's beauty, having lifted the veil,

And it has not returned.

2.

It is a very cold winter. M. is sitting on his bed facing west with a woollen shirt and a wrapper over it. His feet are covered with a quilt. Later, Shuka Lal enters and takes his seat on a stool to the west of the bed. He faces east. They talk at random. The maid comes and says, 'The mother has sent me to ask you what would you like to eat, milk and roasted rice or milk and bread?' M. said, 'Milk and bread.'

M. (to the devotees) The '*ujana path*' that is to say the path of God, not the path of the world. For him, the world has been proved to be an illusion to a great extent. So, he has established himself on the God, the Eternal. This is the state of samadhi. This comes about after samadhi. Even while he lives in the household, he sees God in all. So, his mind does not go elsewhere, it remains absorbed in God.

"By living exactly like a maid in your own house, you attain this state. Thakur has described his own state in all these songs. In this state, one needs the company of a close and pure minded devotee. At one place, Thakur went into samadhi. His neck got twisted. There was nobody in the room. Then he sang this very song. Baburam (Swami Premananda) could touch him in every state. He said about him, 'He is pure to his bones.' In such a state, one needs a person who can share one's pain. Worldly people cannot understand this state.

" 'My mind has gone deep down,' that is to say I went into samadhi - the state of the Gopis. In the beginning, *saguna samadhi* (samadhi with qualities), *sakar samadhi* (samadhi with form) manifests itself. Later on in *mahabhava* all becomes one. Thakur had this state. He would sing about his own state. The devotees were wonder-struck as they gazed at him trying to understand what was happening within him. So coming down from a higher state, he used to narrate it in a song.

"So long as one is fond of a beautiful form and good taste, one does not attain this state. One does not attain this state when there is even a trace of sensory enjoyments. When the mindness of the mind disappears, when the mind is stripped of its sensuous nature, one attains this state. Also, this comes about by His grace."

A devotee (to himself) For many days, M. has a different mood because of the birth anniversary of Keshab Sen. Repeatedly thinking of the loving contact of Thakur and Keshab, the mind perhaps wants

to return home, a salt doll wishes to sink itself into the sea. But, the key is with Thakur. Though, by the grace of Thakur, his close devotees have tasted the joys of the beyond, yet without His will, they cannot return home at all. Thakur said to M. pointing with his thumb and the little finger, 'You will have to do this much of Mother's work.' Till 'this much' has been done he cannot be free.

"Also the body is so indisposed, that is another reason for inspiration to go back. Thakur had said to M., 'You have gained the guru. This body is His (Thakur's) own.' In spite of bodily trouble in this old age, the apostles do not have the option of leaving the body."

Shuka Lal The close disciples of Thakur are already free by His grace. They can give up their bodily existence at their will. Thereby, they can end the pain of their disease and old age.

M. The close disciples cannot. They are ever-free. Their advent is always for the good of the world, always for teaching. When He discharges them, only then they get liberated freeing themselves from their body. Their advent is for teaching of the world. Till this work is over, they cannot depart. Swamiji had said, 'He has made me dance like a monkey with a rope in its nostrils for the last ten years. What can I do about it?'

"The avatara lila is quiet another thing. The bhaktas, the close disciples, are not like other ordinary people. Only, when He discharges them, they are freed."

The next day. M.'s bed room in Morton School. He is not well, so he is sitting on his bed. To the south of the bed, Vinay and the Younger Jiten are seated on a bench. Antevasi was cooking in his kitchen at half past seven in the morning. At half past eight, he comes to M.'s room. What M. had said to the devotees before the end of his conversation with them, he repeats it to Antevasi.

M. (to Antevasi) What a nice thing the Lord has said about the company of sadhus in the Bhagavata. He said, 'One can reach the state of God realisation by the company of sadhus alone.' Says Sri Krishna, 'The Gopis of Braja and the ladies at the *yajna* achieved the joy of Brahman just by My company and by losing themselves in love for Me.' In other words, they attained this state just by their love for Krishna.

"He instructs Uddhava on dispassion. He says, 'Giving up all worldly duties and leaving your home, come out and take to tapasya.' And then he says in another way, 'Love Me. Then, you will be able to attain the eternal life easily.'

"He mentioned Gopis as an example. They were rustic women, unintelligent, sans sanskaras, sans renunciation and dispassion. Even then, they reached the state, so difficult to attain even by the yogis, just by giving Me their love with one mind.

"He tells the state of the mind of the Gopis to Uddhava, 'When I came to Mathura, they contemplated upon Me so much that they lost all sense of their body. The homes and the people of the neighbourhood

etc. simply did not exist in their estimation.'

"Uddhava was a pundit learned in all the shastras, a jnani bhakta. 'What the jnani gets by deep thought, what the yogi gets by concentration, the Gopis attained that rare state just by loving Me. Just by thinking of Me, they forgot the body and the world like the yogis. So, I tell Uddhava only to think upon Me.'

"And He gave another illustration to Uddhava. He had read shastras etc. Krishna said to him, 'Just as a river becomes the sea by falling into it, similarly the Gopis became full of Krishna by contemplating on Me,' i.e. they became one with Brahman.

"Faith does not come easily. So, to establish it in the intellect, he gives so many illustrations and tells different ways again and again, 'Contemplate on Me like Gopis.' "

M. (to all present) Thakur also said to the bhaktas, 'You will not have to do much, only know who I am and who you are, and you will attain.' And then he also said clearly, 'You will succeed just by thinking upon me. Verily, verily, I say, who thinks upon me will gain my wealth, like the son inheriting his father's wealth. My wealth comprises jnana, bhakti, discrimination, dispassion, peace, happiness, love and samadhi.'

A Particular Bhakta The Gopis loved Sri Krishna secretly like one does one's lover. How then did they attain the joy of Brahman?

M. Thakur said, 'If you take chilli even without knowing it, you will, yet, feel its pungency.' Krishna knew that he was God, never mind, if the Gopis did not. They however gave their love to Sri Krishna forgetting the whole world, their body, home, near and dear ones, all.

"Thakur said to Keshab Sen, 'Don't accept Gopis. But, only accept their attraction for the Lord.' So much attraction that they even forgot the world!

M. (to Antevasi) Some devotees of Thakur also become completely filled with Ramakrishna by thinking upon him.

"Mary Magdalene also became Christ by continuous contemplation on him.

"This is the easy way. The avatara comes to show the easy way to the devotees. They come and make teachers of so many of them. They in turn make teachers of others.

"This is a very easy and natural way for the devotees. By giving their love to the avatara, they give their love to God. When this happens, it is done."

3.

M. is pensive for a while. He talks again.

M. (to Antevasi) They call this body a boat and the guru oars-man. Guru, that is to say avatara, God. You have a boat and you have a

boatman. He who does not reach even when he has a boat commits suicide that is to say, destroys himself.

"Effort is needed. Labour is needed. The guru is sitting holding the oar. In other words, he is in the heart as its controller. Besides, Thakur the avatara is anyway there. One must make some effort. At least, take a step or two, He will come and lead you holding your hand. This is his promise, a great chance indeed."

M. is again silent. Then he resumes.

M. (to the bhaktas) Once the Holy Mother was living in a rented house near the cremation ghat in Belur. I had to go to her by crossing the Ganga. The boatman who usually would take me across was not there. His name was Dora. Another boatman said, 'Come into the boat, I shall take you across. What does it matter if Dora is not there?' I got into the boat and he also took me to the other bank. I did not return that night.

"What an attraction, as if some one was pulling me!"

A Particular Bhakta (to himself) The body, a boat and the guru, a boatman. If you are in earnest, the guru takes you across. In other words, he takes you out of the sea of the world and gives refuge at His holy feet. Has he made an illustration of it by narrating this incident of his life?

M. (to the bhaktas) It would be nice if some one could commit it to memory (the twelfth *adhyaya* of the eleventh *skandha* of the Bhagavata) the importance of the company of sadhus. (To Vinay) You can do it in ten minutes. Or, take an hour. Had Gadadhar been here, he would have memorised.

M. (to Antevasi) Just read this *adhyaya* the greatness of the company of sadhus.

Antevasi reads and M. gives the meaning in between.

M. Please read it again.

Antevasi

*na bodhayati mam yogo na sankhyam dharmam eva ca,
na svadhyayastapastyago neshtapurtam na dakshina,
vratani yajnaschhandansi tirthani niyama yamah,
yathavarundhe satsangah sarvasangapaho hi mam.*

[Practice of Yoga, *sankhya* (philosophical reflection), *dharmam* (virtuous conduct), Vedic study, austerities, renunciation, Vedic rites, charity, gifts, observance of vows and fasts, *yajnas*, visit to holy places, chanting of mantras and control of mind (*yama*) and of the body do not help one to realise Me so much as the company of the holy, which eradicates all worldly attachments from the mind of man (Srimadbhagvata XI:12:1-2)]

M. The Lord says, 'The way the company of sadhus binds Me, nothing else does.' Besides, when the inner longing for the company of sadhus awakens, all other attachments perish. Who wants the company of sadhus earnestly? He who is not at peace with himself. The source of peace is God. Peace comes by contemplation of God. Where there is peace, there is real happiness.

"Thakur said, one should keep the company of the person by sitting with whom, by being friendly with whom, only the feeling of God rises in the mind and one begins to perceive that only God is eternal and company of sadhu transitory, only He is real. One should keep his company.

"No other remedy, no other thing can bring long lasting peace. So, if one asks for the company of the holy, just this one remedy kills all one's worldly desires.

"Thakur said, 'He who calls upon God with a sincere heart will have to come here.' And he also said, 'Mother, fulfil the desires of those who come here with an earnest mind.'

"Observance of vows and rules also brings peace, but it is temporary. But the peace of the company of the holy is permanent. Why? The company of the holy brings God, the embodiment of Reality near to you.

"Uddhava was a man of spiritual wisdom, a devotee and learned in shastras. To him, the Lord talked of the Gopis. Even earlier, He had sent him to the Gopis saying, 'The Gopis have forgotten the world in their love for Me. These rustic, uncivilised, unlettered women have attained the state, which the yogis reach only by practising yoga for long and by observing vows, rules and so on, just by keeping My company and by loving Me with their whole heart.'

Antevasi reads:

*Ta narvidan mayyanushangabaddhadhiyah
svamatmanamadastathedam,*

Yatha samadhau munayodhvitoye nadyah pravishtha iv namarupe.

[Just as name and form are lost in samadhi by sages, like the river merging in the ocean, the intensely loving selves of the Gopis lost in Me their separate existence lost the awareness of their kith and kin, whom one looks upon as one's own, lost even consciousness of their body with which one identifies oneself. (Bhagavata XI:12:12)]

M. Thakur said, 'The salt doll went to fathom the sea and itself became the sea.' Similarly, by thinking constantly upon Krishna, the Gopis got filled with Krishna. They forgot the world. They forgot even the body which is so dear to man and they forgot their near and dear ones, their present, their future all, like the river losing itself in the sea. In other words, the company of Sri Krishna brought that state to the Gopis which the Munis get at the time of samadhi by being one with *Parabrahman*. Thakur said, 'The (undeveloped) cockroach thinking upon a cockroach becomes a cockroach.'

The reading of the twelfth *adhyaya* ends.

4.

M. He said to Arjuna, 'Giving up all duties, take refuge in Me alone - *mamekam sharanam vraja* (Gita 18:56). Follow My advice.' To Uddhava also He said, '*mamekameva sharanamanam sarvadehinam yahi...*'

"How amazing is His play! Uddhava stayed with Sri Krishna for so long. He still calls him Yogeshwaraeshwar The Lord of the Lord of yogis but along with it he says to him, 'My doubts are not dispelled even by Your fear-dispelling words.' It is because of the sense of the body. Thakur used to say, 'The feeling of doership.' This is all a play of Maya. So Thakur would always pray as a human being, 'Do not delude me by Your world-enchanting Maya.'

"He said to Arjuna, 'Place your whole burden on Me and live and work in the world. The renunciation of the work is not for you now.' And to Uddhava, He said, 'Giving up all work, embrace sannyasa and think upon Me.' Thus, let one take that which one can digest. Both the yoga of the work and the renunciation of work are correct because of the difference in states, in one's eligibility.

"This self-sense is also given by Him. This generates doubts. He wants to get some work done by him. He made Arjuna wage a war and he made Uddhava practice austerity.

"So long as there is body, there is mind. Because, there is mind, there is doubt. The doubt goes only in samadhi, when one has the darshan of the Lord. But, when the mind comes down to the earth, it enters the region of Maya. Doubt will then come. The doubt of a spiritually-perfected man is diluted even though the mind may be in the world. He, who has not realised the Self, finds it very difficult. One should then have faith in the guru's words.

"What a riddle! Sri Krishna stands in front, and He says, 'I am Parabrahman.' Even then, he cannot put his firm faith in it. So, He said, 'Go to Badrinarayana. Think upon Me. This will help control your doubt. With work, it is bound to increase.'

"The same is the state of Thakur's devotees. He had shown his Real Self, that is Parama-Brahman, to the inner circle of his devotees. Even then, the doubt persists, though it cannot harm them. And, even if it does a little, it does so till the 'I' persists in them. When they give up the body, they are totally freed."

The Younger Jiten (humbly) I have not been able to stabilise my mind for a number of days. It runs about in all directions.

M. (with sympathy) No fear. Thakur is the guru. Such human life and this boat of life with the guru as the boatman! You have got the human life and also the boatman. What to fear? The boatman is an expert. He shows the right course.

"Thakur said to Girish Ghosh, 'The cloud will rise in the mind at times, just as it does in the sky. It rises and then disappears this is

its nature.' Because, there is the body. The body, well, its nature is the same. There is no reason to have fear.'

"As soon as the cloud rises, the boatmen become conscious in the river. And when, it is clear they sit down and smoke. Sometime, the boat may sink, then they take to the life-belt. Thakur is the life-belt, He is also the river. He is the boat of life and He is the boatman. He is the cloud and He is also the storm, also the boat of life.

"If you were to say that there is the threat of the crocodile in water, he also gave the prescription for it rub the body with turmeric of discrimination. The crocodile will not touch you because of its smell."

It is seven in the evening. M. has kept to his room throughout the day because of his ill-health. The devotees come and sit on benches in the partitioned room close to M.'s the Doctor, the Younger Jiten, Vinay, Balai, a son of Doctor's sister, Jagabandhu and so on. The Elder Jiten takes his seat on a chair near the staircase room on arriving.

M. is ill. But, he will go to the latrine on the second level without listening to anybody. The Mahapurusha Maharaj once sent a word through Antevasi from the Math, that M. should carry out all such necessities on the upper floor. But, he did not agree to this suggestion. He said humbly, 'They all are sadhus so anxious for my welfare. But it is nothing climbing down from the fourth level to the second level.'


M. goes down to the second level. Lest the devotees begin to talk at random, he asks Antevasi to read the Bhagavata to them. Antevasi reads the hymn to the Devi sung by Brahma visit to the Swargapuri. He reads for an hour.

An hour ago, M. went to the second level to have his meal. The bhaktas are impatient thinking why he has not returned.

M. was coming up after the call of nature when Swami Madhavananda and Swami Nikhilananda arrived. He sat with them on the veranda of second level on a bench to talk with them. Recently, Nikhilananda had toured the western India. There, the life of Thakur and his words are discussed with great reverence in many big ashramas. The men of Gujarat are devotees of Thakur. The Kathamrita has been published in Gujarati. Mahatma Gandhi has written the introduction to the English version of Thakur's Life. He had said therein, 'Sri Ramakrishna was a God-realised soul. We can see God in front of us with our own eyes in the mirror of his life. Sri Ramakrishna is physical manifestation of divinity.'

The sadhus talk of it with a lot of gusto while M. listens with great curiosity like a child. Finally, he says full of joy, "It will all become red at the end." That is to say, that Sri Ramakrishna's current of thought will spread everywhere in India. He says, "Why only India? It will spread in other countries too. Pointing at his own photo, Thakur had said, 'This picture will be worshiped in all homes later on.' What a wonder that it is becoming so every day! But for God who could have asserted it."

9 p.m. The devotees have cooked *khichri* and offered it as *bhog* in the western hall on the second level. Having done so, they all sit down and take prasad the Younger Nalini, Rajni, Balai, Vinay, Jagabandhu, the Younger Jiten, Lakshman and so on. At the suggestion of M., the bhaktas enjoy themselves with such small but loving celebrations in this way from time to time. M. says, "Thakur himself established such happy celebrations. He used to make the devotees celebrate in this way at times. Why he did so, who can tell? Only, he knows it."



Morton School, Calcutta,
Friday 21st November, 1924,
13th Agrahayana 1331 (B.Y.),
The 2nd day of the bright fortnight,
31 Dandas/48 Palas.

AT THE WISH-YIELDING PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

1.

Cossipore Garden. Here, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was in sick bed for ten months. Here itself, close to his bed was established Sri Ramakrishna's devotees' revolutionary *sangha* (organisation). And here, it was that he merged himself in *mahasamadhi*, having given up his body made up of five elements.

Four in the afternoon. M., the writer of the Kathamrita and Sri Ramakrishna's close disciple is standing in south-western corner of the ground floor of Sri Ramakrishna's house. With him is Doctor Kartik Bakshi, Vinay and Jagabandhu. This is a two storey house. On the upper storey, against the western wall of the hall was Sri Ramakrishna's sick bed on the floor, with the pillow to the south.

Five minutes ago, M. came out of the car at the gate. Without taking the path, he crosses the front open space and stands here. He wishes that he may circumambulate round this holy garden-house again today and have darshan of and offer pranams to the holy shrine on the second level. M. has always been saying that in future this holy shrine will be the meeting-temple of the peace and joy of different religious denominations, different communities and different countries of the world. Just as Ayodhya and Dwarika, Jerusalem and Kushinara are the holy centres of pilgrimage for the devotees, so will this Cossipore Garden will be. Even now, the devotees from Europe, America and other places come for the darshan of this holy spot.

With the desire for the darshan of this holy place of this era's revolution, M. had started from the Morton School with some devotees in the Doctor's car at 3 p.m. His heart is looking forward so earnestly to this beloved darshan.

These days, an Armenian Christian gentleman is living in this Garden house. He comes downstairs and talks alone to Doctor Bakshi, while M. proceeds along with his devotees. The Doctor says to M. in Bengali that his padre had objected to keeping the picture (of Sri Ramakrishna) there. Many days ago, Doctor Bakshi had presented a big picture of Sri Ramakrishna to him. It was hung on the southern wall to the west of the hall just above the head-rest of Thakur near the south-western corner above the closed door.

Thinking that it was inconvenient for the gentleman, M. takes the initiative. Giving a copy of Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, Part I to the foreigner as a present, he says, "May we have a look around?" The foreigner says, "Oh, yes."

M. goes round the residential shrine of Thakur. The shrine is to the right hand. M. is leading. Behind him are the foreigner and the devotees. They are going towards the north. Pointing to the hall on the ground floor, he says, "Here, the devotees would gather together." Pointing to the kitchen to the north he says, "Here, our Holy Mother would prepare food and diet for the Master."

M. goes towards the east. To the right hand is temple room. Pointing to room in the north-eastern corner on the ground floor, he says, "In this chamber, the Holy Mother lived."

M. moves towards the east. In front of him are very small rooms. Pointing to a room to the north-east he says, "This was the stable. Here, the disciples practised austerities." Pointing to the room to the east, he says, "Here, one

day the would-be Swamis, forgetting the external world, danced in joy divine. And on their lips was a song on Shiva, the symbol of complete renunciation, the ideal of the sannyasis. They were then filled with the fire of the renunciation of the worldly enjoyments.

"The song described Shiva dancing in the joy of His own Self, living in the cremation grounds signifying full and perfect renunciation, although He was the Lord of the Universe. It was just then composed by the would-be Swami Vivekananda, their leader. They were then only with the *kaupinam* (loincloth) on."

M. hymns the following song:

Shiva is dancing, ta thaiya, ta thaiya. His damru sounds dum dum and his cheeks bum bum.

His scalp and forehead are swinging. The Ganga is roaring in his long hair.

His trident, belching fire is a beautiful sight.

The moon attached to his forehead is burning bright.

M. now enters this small room from the south eastern corner. He proceeds a little towards the south and reaches the south of the eastern pond. Says he, "Here we used to sit on hot days."

M. comes towards the main road of the garden from the *ghat* and stands facing east. Showing south-eastern corner of the pond he says, "There was a bush here." Now he reaches the main road. Here, thanking the resident foreigners of the garden house, he leaves.

M. goes towards the gate on the road with the bhaktas. There is a tree at the turning of the road, to south east. This tree is a remnant of old memories. The air of the body of Sri Ramakrishna had touched it. It is perhaps because of it that M. touches it reverently and embraces it full of love. This tree has had the darshan of Sri Ramakrishna, so, it is a very dear friend of M.

M. says, "Every particle of dust of Cossipore and Dakshineswar are holy. The trees are hidden gods and rishis. They are standing there keeping their real self hidden to enjoy the lila of the avatara."

M. comes to the turning of the road and stands there. His mood has changed. The mind is peeping inside and the eyes are brimming with tears. After a few moments he says, "How much has happened at this turning! One day Thakur was perhaps somewhat well. He came down on foot and reached this spot. It was afternoon, the first of January. It was a holiday. So, many a bhakta Girish and others, had come from Calcutta. They all were walking with Thakur. When Thakur stopped moving, they started offering him pranam one by one while lying on the ground and touching his lotus feet. Thakur said, 'Be illumined.' The moment the bhaktas prostrate themselves to offer pranam and touch his lotus feet, the lotus of their hearts begin to develop, and they were overwhelmed with joy at His direct darshan thereby. Some of them even called others. They also gained the same state." M.'s mind is still fixed and his eyes tied inwardly.

Today again, M. brings that holy dust to touch his forehead like one completely overwhelmed, having touched the holy spot with both of his hands the spot where Thakur stood. One by one, the devotees also prostrate themselves on that spot sanctified by the divine touch of Lord's feet. And they put some of the holy dust on their head.

M. stands silent for sometime. Then he proceeds towards the gate and reaches the car. With a faint smile he says, "So I see that they have destroyed the 'holy contact.' They were afraid, lest they should go astray (away from their own religion). This is also the reason for such a cold

reception. Had it not been so and if his mood was not so different, he would have invited us to go upstairs like the other day when we thanked him after the circumambulation."

2.

The white man is Doctor Bakshi's patient. He is under his treatment. Some days ago, the Doctor said to him, showing him the south-western corner of the hall on the upper story, "It was here at this place that Sri Ramakrishna passed away into his last in *mahasamadhi*. He (Thakur) said that he himself was Christ."

The foreigner is a good man of simple faith. One day, the Doctor gave him a big picture of Thakur. The foreigner had very carefully hung that picture on the southern wall of the south-eastern corner of the hall.

The foreigner is a Christian. His priest, when he came and saw the picture hanging there, objected to it. And when he heard the white man say that Christ and Ramakrishna were one and the same, he was very angry and ordered him to remove the picture immediately. The orthodox Christians believe that Christ was the only begotten son of the Father that nobody else could be an avatara, nor there would be one in future.

That is why there was such a cold reception. The white man was afraid lest he should have to fall a prey to social orthodoxy later on. So, he requested the Doctor to take away the picture.

At this holy spot, where a number of bhaktas had Self-realisation together, M. stood with a heart full of grief. He says to the Doctor with a lacerated heart, "Why come as preachers to such places? One should rather come as learners.

"And how can one believe just by being asked to do so? When does one began to believe? When one receives love, one gains faith. How can one have faith without love?

"Thakur used to talk to the assembly only after giving his love in so many ways. Is it possible to believe just by being told to do so?

"It appears that it is perhaps my last darshan, so it appears from my emotion. So, I cannot lift my foot."

M. again goes to that great spot of pilgrimage made holy by the touch of Sri Ramakrishna, the wish yielding tree. A cloud of the pain of dejection has covered the face of M., who is naturally otherwise a profound, happy and peaceful soul. The bhaktas say to themselves that even the close disciple of the avatara is suffering from the pangs of separation. So long as one is still in a body, one can never rid oneself of it.

The seventy year old M. lies down on that wish yielding tree spot offering his pranam again and again. Overwhelmed with grief, he stands there for ten minutes without saying a word. M.'s state is just like that of a person who has not the heart to part from his dear one. M. is today inflicted with the pain of separation as that of a dear one.

At last, M. stands near the car, having walked to it in deep patient steps. But his eyes are still fixed to the garden. Perhaps he is having the darshan of the wishing yielding Sri Ramakrishna as of a living person with his mind's eye.

Coming near the gate says M. with a lacerated heart, "The last and lingering look! Who knows whether it will be possible again?"

M. takes his seat in the car. He again says in a troubled voice, "It appears

that holy contact has been destroyed.”

Antevasi says, “People don’t attain it even after having been associated with sadhus for long. How can he have it just by being told once?”

M. says, “Yes, even the avatara cannot do it. How then is it possible by this...?”



Morton School, Calcutta,
Sunday, 30th November, 1924,
15th Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The fourth day of the bright fortnight,
20 Dandas/16 Palas.

THE MADHAVI PEETHA SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND TOTAPURI

1.

The car goes towards Dakshineswar. It is about five in the afternoon. M. is sitting on the back seat to the right. To the left is the Doctor. Vinay and Jagabandhu are in front with the chauffeur.

The car goes toward Baranagore. To the left is the Cossipore cremation ground on the bank of Ganga. It was at this great holy place, that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's physical body was consigned to the flames. M. joins his palms and offers his pranam to this spot with Thakur as his object. The car now goes further toward the north. Pointing to a spot to the left, he says that it is perhaps the Patbari of Bhagavata-Acharya. Pointing toward the bathing point on the tank, M. says, "This is a memorable spot. Many a days, drenched with perspiration while coming in the heat of the sun, I would rest here."

Bhagavata-Acharya is a disciple of Sri Chaitanya Deva.

The car enters the Baranagore Bazar, and then leaving it goes towards Alam Bazar. M. says, "I will show you the house in which I was staying when I first had Thakur's darshan." The car moves on. M. says, "There, you see the house of Ishan Kavi Raj. He was the husband of my elder sister. He treated Thakur and was loved by him."

Now the car stops near the Alam Bazar Math. M. says, "Here is Alam Bazar Math." Swamiji was here after his return from America.

The doctor goes to buy some *sandesh*. The car starts again. Now, it stops at the main gate of the Dakshineswar Temple. M. says, "Let us go on foot now." The devotees say that it (car) could take them to the end. M. says, "But then, we will not be able to see all these spots." M. comes down from the car with a pair of slippers on his feet.

M. moves slowly towards the west. He has a loose sleeve war flannel shirt on his body. A Bhagalpuri cotton shawl is hanging on both of his shoulders. His dhoti is white bordered and he has black slippers on his feet. M. is walking, overcome with emotions. His mind is fixed within. He offers his pranam with folded hands to the Banyan tree at the Gazitala.

With the Kuthi to his left, he walks towards the north. He stops for a while near the Kuthi and seeing Mother Kali's temple, offers pranams to Her joining his hands. Then, walking on the eastern bank of the Hanspukur towards east, he goes through the mango grove to the pond for sanitary washing. To the left of the M.'s path, three friends are cooking food in the garden they are on a picnic today. M. says, "Good, what they are doing. They will have to stay here for a long time in connection with their forest meals. Thus, repeatedly seeing the garden, the tank, the ghat, the path, all, an impression will be formed on their minds. Later on, whenever they will recall this picnic, they will also remember Thakur and Mother Kali. Thakur used to get something like this done by the devotees, from time to time. If one has something to eat, it leaves a far greater impression on the mind. Thakur used to employ so many means to attract the mind to God. No sooner did the devotees arrive that he would give them something to eat. This would serve two objects, one they would remember this food. Mere instructions are forgotten. And two, without knowing they would develop

love for Thakur. Their mind would tell them that they were dear to him. Otherwise, why should he have given them snacks? This memory would save them, instil courage in their mind when they would be struggling to save themselves from drowning in the sea of sansara.

"Every act of Thakur was a lesson to humanity this, he himself said. There was nothing small or big in his acts every one of them was holy and beneficial for all.

"Once, he sent a devotee to another in Calcutta in the Haritiki garden saying, 'Go and tell him that he will succeed just by thinking upon me.' He who was sent was fond of reasoning. So, he says in front of him itself, 'Well Mother, have I done anything wrong by saying so? I see that you are present everywhere in the body, mind, intellect, consciousness, I-sense and the fourteen elements, in all these.' Tell me, is there another person like him? Absolutely Unique!"

Now M. walks on the Belatala, having walked northwards on the eastern bank of the Hanspukur. This is the spot of Thakur's sadhana of the tantras. It was here that the Brahmin lady had established the *panchamundi asana*. Here, she made Thakur practice the sadhana of sixty eight tantras.

M. touches the Vilva tree with his hands from south over the *vedi* (altar). Then with the tree to his right, he begins to circumambulate. He lies on the ground to offer pranam in the middle of the eastern edge of the *vedi*. Once, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna stood at this very place. M. was sitting facing east on the *vedi* meditating. It was all a jungle then nothing was visible from outside. After his dhyana, M. was wonder-struck when he saw Thakur standing in front of him. It is a very great and invaluable wealth of the human life to be able to see standing in front, with physical eyes, him on whom one was meditating in the heart. Only, the very very fortunate can have such a divine opportunity. The scripture narrates that Narayana stood before the great devotee Dhruva in this way. M.'s face lit up with deep joy. Thrice, he went round the *vedi*. Then, sitting down in the north-eastern corner of the *vedi*, he began to meditate. Behind him is the Vilva tree. The devotees also meditate, the Doctor, Vinay and Jagabandhu.

On rising, they go towards the Panchavati. To the right of M. is Jhautala and then the Ganga. On the turning of the path to Jhautala, M. stops. He stands and gazes at the Ganga for a long time facing north west.

At Panchavati now. He takes off his shoes under the steps towards the north-west of the old *vedi* of the Banyan tree. Then, he offers pranam again and again, placing his head on the *vedi* of the third court i.e. some four arm lengths away from the northern step to the east. It was to its south on the *vedi* (raised platform) that Thakur used to meditate at the foot of the Banyan tree facing north. There, he had had the darshan of so many gods and goddesses and tasted the divine joy of their sight, touch and talk at the same spot. This spot is surcharged, awakened even today. In 1883, he asked M. to meditate for almost a month there. He said, "One has had so much darshan etc. here. You had better be there, it is full of inspiration." M. had his seat in the meditation hut of Thakur at the spot, so pure, so free, so awakened, so very alive of the Nirvikalpa samadhi of Thakur. M. was a poet. He wanted to establish a seat on the second level of the Nahabat so that he could have a good view of the Ganga. But Thakur did not approve of it. He said, "Panchavati is good, how much tapasya has been carried out there! How much darshan!" So, M. keeps on asking the devotees to practice tapasya there. He tells them, "The fire is ablaze there." He adds, "One should meditate in Panchavati or under the Vilva tree or in Thakur's room or Mother Kali's shrine or Nat Mandir all these places. They are (surcharged) like a dry match stick."

Now, M. goes around it bare foot, silently, keeping the old *vedica* of the Banyan tree to his right. The devotees follow him. Standing in the middle of the western spot of the *vedica*, he touches it with forehead and offers his pranam. The Ganga is flowing behind M.

M. stands for sometime in the north-western corner of the *vedica* under the steps, facing south. In front of him, some devotees are doing some holy reading seated on the *vedica* of the Panchavati grown by Thakur himself. M. says to the devotees accompanying him "Please go and listen to them, I myself want to hear them."

M. puts on his shoes and proceeds towards the south and reaches the Panchavati grown by Thakur's own hands. Thakur had grown five trees in this spot the Banyan, the Ashwatha, the Vilva, the Neem and the Myrobalan. Only the Ashwatha tree has survived. However, the spot is still called the Panchavati. Earlier, it was known as the Vatatala.

2.

The Vatatala and the Panchavati are famous for a number of reasons. In the future, men of the world will gather there for gaining peace. The Vatatala is not just famous as a spot of Thakur's spiritual sadhana, there is more to it. Sri Ramakrishna would come and talk of God to bhaktas himself, seated on the *vedi* of the Vatatala, a number of times. Sri Ramakrishna also joined a number of times in the forest-feasts held on the land beautified by Crotons and evergreen foliage near to the Vata-*vedica*. It was to satisfy his wish that the bhaktas used to arrange these festivities and Thakur would sit with the bhaktas to partake of the food to add to their joy. M. has also made the bhaktas arrange for the feast in memory of Sri Bhagavan's forest-food-lila and has joined himself increasing the joy of the bhaktas.

Once the bhaktas were to arrange the forest feast in the Kalibari. All the items for preparing food had been procured. The bhaktas had the desire that it should be cooked at the Vatatala, the holy spot of Thakur's forest feast. But, the superintendent of the temple did not permit it. When M. was told about it, he wondered why the permission had been refused. Seeing the earnest keenness of M., the bhaktas went to Calcutta and told about it to Kiran Dutt, the receiver of the temple. He wrote to the superintendent rebuking him, "Let the revered Sri M. arrange it anywhere he likes and you people should clean that spot and help in every possible way." M. was very happy and he said, "Why should we arrange it there? Because the spot has become surcharged because the Lord himself arranged the joyous forest feast there along with bhaktas."

Dakshineswar is holy everywhere. But, for repeating the task that Thakur had performed there, the spots are especially surcharged. If one partakes of the forest feast in the same spot, the earlier joy would get revived and fill the minds of the bhaktas with joy of the lila. By replaying the earlier lila, a joy similar to it develops again. Besides, Thakur had experienced the pure joy of Brahman at the foot of the Vata tree, nearby. How often and in how many ways, he has tasted the joy of Parama-Brahman in so many forms. By celebrating this mixed forest feast near the holy, pure feast of joy, the former will also carry the influence of the latter. So, it should be celebrated at that very spot. Eating by itself is just a physical pleasure. So, the Vedas says, *ishavasyamidam sarvam*. The Veda asks one to cover all work, all thought and all places with God's name. This is called sublimation, i.e. to say, joining of all thinking with God. But the work, thought and place which have been sublimated by God Himself coming down as an avatara, if repeated at the same spot, so easily bring union with the joy of Brahman to the mind and cover it with the joy.

M. comes with the devotees and offers his pranam prostrating himself on the

ground at the root of Sri Thakur's hand grown Ashwatha and touches the holy tree with his hand. To the east of this holy Ashwatha is situated Thakur's meditation room. Earlier in Thakur's time, this room was built with mud, now it is built with bricks. To the east and south, it has two windows and to the west a door. It was in this room that Thakur had attained the highest treasure of Vedanta, Nirvikalpa samadhi of the Vedanta under the care of Acharya Paramahansa Totapuri. There, he remained merged in the sea of joy for three days. M. touches the door and the steps of this hut with his hand and then brings it up to touch his forehead. Then he takes rounds of the hut having come down from the north of the veranda of the hut. To the east and south there are two windows. Having had the darshan of the inside of the room through these windows, M. comes to the foot of the Madhavi creeper. This spot is in the middle of the Ashwatha and the Vata-vedica (altar). This creeper was brought by Thakur from Vrindavan and was transplanted there with his own hands. Today it is no longer a creeper it is almost a tree. The trunk of the creeper is now fat and round, some eighteen inches in circumference. Having divided itself into two branches four arm lengths above the trunk, it climbs some fifty feet and then like two hands the two branches lovingly embrace the Vata on one side and the Ashwatha on the other.

M. prostrates himself to offer his pranam at the foot of this holy creeper and then holds it in a tight embrace. Says he, "This Madhavi is very dear to us. Thakur has brought it up serving it like a mother. It bears the touch of his divine holy hand on its body. Blessed indeed is this tree which received so much of love, so much of darshan, so much of touch, so much of care and so much of concern in its early years as from a mother. Like Yamalarjuna, this creeper tree is also perhaps some saint in disguise. Its birth as a plant is blessed! The Veda says that man is born on the earth as a plant as a result of his Karmas: *sthanumanyenusamyanti yathakarma yathashrutam.*"

In the Bhagavata, the twin trees Yamalarjuna are mentioned as the gatekeepers of Narayana in disguise, their names: Jai and Vijaya. It is said that Jagdish Chandra Bose, the great scientist of Bengal, took this sutra of the Veda as the basis and with the help of a very sensitive instrument proved that a tree also feels joy and grief, comfort and pain like a human being and he established that it is also a living entity. It has also proved the depth of the knowledge, its extent and greatness of the ancient Brahman-realised rishis and it has also proved the veracity of the Vedas. Just as the rishis were experts in Brahman-Jnana, so were they experts in psychology and the science of atoms. Perhaps, the knowledge of atomic science of the ancients will one day join itself with psychology and reach the early premises of Brahmajnana. Only then our search of knowledge will be complete. It will result into a flood of peace and joy and bring back *satyayuga*.

M. says, "This Madhavi grove is also a great holy centre of pilgrimage for other reasons. Totapuri Maharaj, the naked Paramahansa, also made it his seat for eleven long months. He used to live there under the open sky having lighted a fire. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna used to come here many times during the day and sit with the teacher for long periods to listen to Vedanta from him. Totapuri had reached Dakshineswar by divine command. One day, Thakur was clapping and singing at the spot: 'The bee of my mind drinks deep at the lotus-like feet of Mother Shyama.' Acharya Totapuri making fun of it said, 'Why are you flattening the dough into a loaf?'

"Some days later, the same God-realised master hearing songs in praise of Mother of the universe from Thakur's lips shed tears of joy. Why this firm sannyasin, the unique worshipper of the axiom 'Only Brahma is real, the world is only an illusion,' he who had experienced the highest state of Vedanta in Nirvikalpa samadhi shed tears of love? Thakur had himself answered this question. He said to Mahimacharan Chakravarti, 'The naked Totapuri knew what is here within.' "

Mahimacharan did not believe in avatara. He was a follower of *Advaita* (Monism). He used to say that anybody can become Sri Ramakrishna if he had righteous acts to his credit. So, it was that Thakur held Totapuri as an example before him.

Acharya Puri recognised Sri Ramakrishna as an avatara later on. He did not stay at one place for more than three days and used to walk about naked. The only provisions he had was a jug of water, a *chimta* and a pot. However, this philosophical sannyasin could not leave Dakshineswar for any other place, though he tried to do so. Thakur would tell him, "You cannot leave this place till you have told me all about Vedanta. The Mother has told me so." Once this hefty iron-bodied God-realised teacher began to suffer dysentery because of the climate of Bengal. And then, he tried to leave Dakshineswar but could not. He realised to some extent the work of this divine Maya. When he could no longer put up with his suffering, he tried to drown himself in the Ganga. The Veda says, "Giving up one's body in this way by a jnani is not suicide giving it up in a current of water or by entering a burning fire or by fasting or in *mahaprasthan* is not to be taken as suicide *veeradhvane va anashake va apaam praveshe va agnipraveshe va mahaprasthane va.*" Even today the jnani Mahatmas struck by disease give up their bodies by drowning themselves in the Ganga in their old age. So, making this resolve, Totapuri also entered into water midstream in the Ganga. M. says that during those days, a sand island used to form itself in front of the Kali temple at the ebb time. When Totapuri reached there, some unknown power broke this resolve of his. Another belief is that at that time, the whole of the Ganga had knee deep water. Let it be what it may, Totapuri could realise the work of the divine Maya. Though, he showed sympathy to his guru in a worldly way, in the spiritual sense Thakur resolved to make Totapuri realise that both Brahman and the *jagat* (world) are real. Totapuri was a philosopher and one having attained the knowledge of Advaita. Yet, in spite of his Brahmajnana that God inhered all *brahmaveda brahmaiva bhavati* (Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself), he was not aware that so long as one was in a body one was subject to Maya. One merges himself in the Nirvikalpa samadhi and realises Brahman by way of reasoning that only Brahman is real and the Universe an illusion (*brahma satya jagat mithya*), or by realising, 'I am Brahman *aham brahmasmi*'. It is then that world loses its reality. Sri Ramakrishna asked Totapuri who had established himself in this thought and in this knowledge, "What has happened to you?" The teacher replied, "Dysentery." "How many motions did you have?" asked Thakur. Acharya Totapuri said, "Fifty times." Then, Sri Ramakrishna, the disciple taking up the mantle of a guru said to Totapuri in a firm, solemn voice, "If you have dysentery, you have to accept the Mother of the Universe." A new jnana dawned on Totapuri, that "Brahman is real as also the world." The teacher had become the disciple. He became aware that Sri Ramakrishna was not merely a knower of Brahman but also an avatara. It was because of this knowledge that Totapuri began to shed tears on hearing Thakur sing, though he did not know the meaning of the song. Totapuri who on the first day ran down Mother Kali saying, "I say this is only *Prakriti* and *Prakriti* is an illusion," he who had said, "Why are you flattening bread?" on hearing Thakur clapping and singing the Mother's praise, this very Totapuri worshipped Mahamaya today. He understood that the Shakti of Brahman is real, that Brahman and his Shakti are indivisible. And he understood also that Sri Ramakrishna, his disciple, was an incarnation of God. That is why, Thakur had said to Mahimacharan, "The naked one knew what was within this (Sri Ramakrishna)."

3.

The platform of Hanspukur. M. having become tired is seated on the western stone bench some two and a quarter arm lengths away in its south, facing

east. Before he sat down he offered pranam by touching the middle of the northern part of the platform with both of his hands and bringing them up to touch his forehead. It was at this spot that Thakur used to stand daily, while some bhaktas would go down to the ghat and bring him water in a jug. Thakur used this water for sanitary purposes he would not use the Ganga water for it. He would say, "Ganga water is Brahman-water." M. narrates, "One day Thakur was standing on the platform. Narendra brought a jug full of water for him from the tank. Thakur said to him, 'One should come more frequently in the initial days of love as a lover does during his first days of love with his beloved.' "

M. rises after resting for a while and returns to the Panchavati via the south-western corner of the tank and proceeds towards the Ganga passing in between the Ashwatha and the Banyan trees. Then he goes to the south. In front of him is the Bakul tree. It is an old tree of Thakur's time. To the west of it there is the Bakul Tala *ghat*. M. offers his pranam in the middle of the steps on the ghat. He says, "It was at this ghat that the *antarjali* ceremony of Thakur's mother Chandramani Devi before her passing away was done. The mother was lying on the cot. Two of the legs of the cot were placed inside the Ganga water and the other two on the dry land above on the ghat. Holding his mother's leg Thakur said, 'Mother, who are you that you kept this body in your belly?' In other words, she was no ordinary mother. She was like Kaushalya, Devaki, Mayadevi, Mary and Shachidevi."

It was also at this *ghat* that our Holy Mother used to take her bath daily at three before dawn. Then, she would enter the Nahabat and perform japa and dhyana and also cook Thakur's food. It was also on the southern embankment of this *ghat* that Narendra sang an *agamani* song for Thakur which he had newly learnt. Thakur was seated on a brick bench towards north one day absorbed in *bhavasamadhi*. M. and the other bhaktas offer Him pranam. To the north of the bench. M. has darshan of the Ganga facing east. It is high tide now Mother Ganga, the redeemer of fallen, is in flood. M. stood there for a while as if gazing at something in wonder. A little later he says, "How beautiful Ganga looks today! Just see, Mother, why did you kill one hundred and fifty sadhus in Rishikesh?" Some two months ago, a hundred and fifty *tapasvi* sadhus were carried away by the flood tide of Ganga. Some say that two hundred and fifty sadhus perished then.

Now M. stands below the steps of the Nahabat to the south. Touching the steps with both hands, he brings the holy dust of the spot to his forehead. He says, "It is by these steps that Thakur, the Holy Mother and the devotees used to enter the Nahabat." Now, he climbs up the smaller veranda of the Nahabat. The door of the Holy Mother's room downstairs in Nahabat is shut. As soon as M. pushes the door which was unlocked, it opens and Buddhiram comes out with the joy and wonder on his face and prostrates before M. Every body laughs full of joy. M. also says with joy and wonder, "Very good! How a sadhu has appeared!" Antevasi says, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." (Everybody laughs loudly.) Buddhiram and Gadadhar are practising tapasya for some days here.

This Nahabat Peetha is the new Shakti Peetha the spot of the Holy Mother's *tapa*. The Holy Mother lived here for a long time. There was a mat curtain round the veranda. The room is about six by six arm lengths. Here, the Holy Mother used to live like a bird in a cage. Not only was she there, but there were also her attendants Golap Ma, Yogin Ma and Laxmi Didi living there with her. Sometimes Gauri Ma would also come here to live. Besides, the articles for the use of Thakur were also stored here. The Mother used to carry out japa on the steps of the first storey. The modern man is amazed when he sees this room. They wonder how a human being can live in such a small room. Add to it that the mother had so many devotee companions. Why did the Holy Mother live here? To serve Thakur, isn't it? The mother used to live here to serve Thakur sacrificing all her comfort. The Holy Mother, the

picture of modesty, used to enter this room after finishing her toilet etc. and her bath in the Ganga at three o' clock in the morning and would leave it the next night at three before dawn to have her toilet and so on. Imagine answering the call of nature once in twenty four hours! What will the authorities on health say about it? But if one's ideal is to serve the Lord, anything is possible. Our Mother, so unique in the service, patience and forbearance!



Morton School, Calcutta,
Sunday, 30th November, 1924,
15th of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The fourth day of the bright fortnight,
20 Dandas/ 11 Palas.

IN THE MEETING TEMPLE

1.

This is the meeting temple (where M. had met Thakur) the temple of Sri Ramakrishna. M. is standing below in the circular veranda to the south. What is he thinking of? After a while, he offers pranam by touching the steps. M. is silent and serene. Perhaps a flood of happy memories is surging in the temple of his mind. How many divine words, how many divine sights have taken shape in it!

In this very room, Thakur had imparted instructions to M. on his second visit: "Knowing one God is jnana and not knowing Him is ignorance. You must serve all members of your family but in your heart you should know that they are not yours, nor are you theirs, that God alone is yours as well as theirs. The mind is like milk and the world like water. Milk is mixed with water. If you curdle the milk in a corner and then take butter out of it by churning, then no harm can come to it when kept in the water of world. The butter will just float on the water. In other words, you must practice tapasya, keep company of sadhus and gain devotion and then live in the world. Then this perishable world will do you no harm." Thakur had said, "It will be enough if you just visit here (him). I saw you in Chaitanya's community singing party. You are my own, like father and son of the same origin." When M. insisted that he should be initiated into sannyasa, Thakur said, "The Mother of the Universe has told me that She would keep you within household for Her work. You will have to read out the Bhagavata to people." (Joining his little finger with his thumb) Thakur said that M. would have to do just that much work. M. talked to a devotee in Puri about 'just that much' work the Mother's work is being done for the last fifty years constantly but even now he has not been freed from it.

Thakur had said, "Mother, when You keep him in household, pray, grant him Your darshan at times." Hundreds and thousands of the nectar like words of his five years with Thakur are swelling in his mind. So, it is that M. is so solemn and serene. Shivram Dada, Thakur's younger nephew breaks his silence. As soon as he sees M., he welcomes him saying, "Come in brother, come in." M. lies down on the floor between the two cots.

Thakur has established M. in the *unmana samadhi* in a few days. Once or twice he asked M. whether he had understood (the nature of) the *unmana samadhi*. Those who are busy with worldly matters can have easy access to this samadhi. They can absorb their mind in God even amidst work. The Purana too makes a mention of this type of samadhi in the lives of divine personalities like Brahma busy with other work. Brahma imparted Brahmajnana to Sanaka and others in the disguise of a swan but he could not do so while he was in his usual body, engaged in work. Just as the *jiva* unites with the Eternal in deep sleep and then returns to his normal state after getting rid of tiredness, similarly the eligible persons unite with God while awake, busy doing work. And then, having dispelled the defilement of work, go forward on the path of the Reality. Thus, all acts of the spiritually great conform to the truth.

Now, M. rises and goes round seeing the pictures of gods and goddesses and devotees of Thakur's time. M. now stands at the north-eastern corner of the smaller cot. He cannot recognise one of the pictures. So, he asks, "Whose picture is it?" Shivram Dada and others answer together, "It is that of Mathur Babu." There are many pictures in this room. M. keeps on looking at the picture of the drowning Peter and then says, "There was a picture of Vak

Devi here (near Thakur's bed on the western wall) in Thakur's time. Before talking to any newcomer, Thakur used to look at this picture and say, 'Mother, I am a fool. Please talk for me seated in my throat.'

The northern door of Thakur's room is open. One can see the Nahabat from here. A hefty sadhu from western India is seated on the first storey of the Nahabat. His head is shaven and he has a white cloak on his body. M. goes to the northern veranda to have a look at the sadhu. He stands and has his darshan. In the meanwhile, a number of devotees come from outside and offer pranam to M. They know M. as the immortal recorder of the Kathamrita and a close disciple of Thakur.

Shivram Dada makes an offering of sweets brought by Dr. Bakshi to Thakur. This prasad will be consumed later on. M. climbs down to the courtyard of Kali's temple to have the darshan of the rest of the deities. He goes out of the south-eastern door under the second arch. To his right are the six temples of Shiva. He offers pranam lying on the third step, two and a half arm length away from the northern part towards south. M. says, "Here Thakur often used to sit. It was here that Thakur was photographed while absorbed in samadhi. This photograph is worshipped everywhere. Thakur himself worshipped this photograph and declared that it would be worshipped later on everywhere. This photograph is of a very high state. His mind had dissolved itself in the infinite, in the sea of Satchidananda. In this state, the world becomes an illusion and Brahman the reality."

M. comes toward the east, goes across the courtyard and prostrates himself facing north at the steps of the Radhakanta temples down in the courtyard. He says, "Thakur used to offer pranam in this way when he was accompanied by Keshab. You see, the Brahmos do not worship idols so it was to train them that Thakur did it." M. does likewise also to train the devotees.

Now he climbs up the veranda of the temple. Putting his cloth round his neck, M. joined his hands and offers pranam to Radhakanta while lying on the ground, and taking some *charanamrita* (sacramental water) puts it in his mouth. And standing near the drum of Ganga water to the south, he asks Antevasi in a whisper, "Do you have some money? Please give me a rupee." Gadadhar goes out to bring small coins for that rupee.

Shivram Dada gives some Tulasi leaves as prasad in M.'s hand. Climbing down the stairs, M. again offers his pranam prostrating himself facing north along with bhaktas. M. says again, "Though Thakur had such a delicate body, what does God not do for the instruction of devotees when he comes as an avatara?. Christ gave up his body on a cross. Thakur took upon himself the sins of his bhaktas and redeemed them, himself suffering the excruciating pain of cancer. Man can never repay the debt he owes to the Lord. Who can understand why He created the universe and the creatures, why He plays this game with *Vidya Maya* and *Avidya Maya* and why does He redeem the bhaktas by taking upon Himself all their sins? It is an amazing riddle, even the rishis could not understand it. So they said: *lokavattu lilakaivalyam* (this world is His play)."

2.

Now M. salutes at the foot of the steps of the courtyard in front of the Mother Kali's temple. First the door-keeper, then the *beshkari* (he who decorates the idols) see M. and offer him pranam. They are followed by Nakul, Ramalal Dada's son and Thakur's nephew, the priest of the Mother, who comes and welcomes M. saying, "Do come, elder uncle".

M. with his cloth round his neck and the Mother to his right offers pranams by lying on the ground in the veranda as he faces west. Then he rises and

gets absorbed within facing east. Behind M. are the Younger Ramesh and the Doctor. And in front of him is Antevasi to the west. To his right are Vinay and Buddhiram. It is 4.15 p.m.

The temple attendants opened the western door. A net of the rays of the setting sun enters the room lighting up the Mother's exceedingly beautiful face. The Mother scintillates with joy. The doorkeeper takes M. to the western veranda. Here M. has the darshan of the Mother concentrating his mind on Her. The Mother has a smiling face, lighted up with joy as one sees Her with western and southern doors open. M. remains absorbed in Her darshan for long. Vinay and Antevasi then offer pranams to M. stealthily without his knowledge. They know that he does not let anybody touch his feet while saluting him.

What does M. see, what is he contemplating upon as he stands so absorbed? Perhaps he is contemplating the form of the Mother he had been shown by the grace of Thakur. Thakur said to him, "The Mother is not a clay idol but the smiling manifestation of divinity. The Mother Herself accepts the devotions of the bhaktas in this form of clay." Besides, she played with Thakur in Her divine form, talked to him, ate from his hands. And it was this Mother whom he fed with *luchi* of *bhog* when he saw Her as a cat. It is this Mother who showed to him, in the form of Rati's mother, that occult powers are like a prostitute's stool. It was again in front of this Mother that Thakur sang the song: 'O, Bhavatarini, the Redeemer, the destroyer of our fear...' and dedicated M. to Her. It was to this Mother that Thakur sent Narendra to pray for food and clothes for his mother and brothers. But Narendra asked for discrimination and dispassion, knowledge and devotion. It was this Mother that Thakur saw with dishevelled hair, with little bells tinkling from Her ankles climbing down from the temple above, absorbed in Her joyful play of dance. M.'s mind is immersed in hundreds of these reminiscences. He is overwhelmed with *bhava*.

Going down, M. stands on the courtyard below in front of the temple, and has darshan of the Mother, while he faces north. Thakur one day sat in the south of the courtyard, almost next to the Nata Mandir with M. to his left and dedicated M. to the Mother singing the following song 'O, Bhavatarini, the Redeemer, the destroyer of our fear, I call upon you name. I cast my burden on You. Save me, save me, O, Mother if You will.'

M. in the Nat Mandir. M. goes towards the south taking the middle path. The Mother is behind M. M. embraces the first pillar of the second row to the right. One day Thakur having embraced this very pillar shed tears overwhelmed by emotion. *Bhagavata-guna-prakshak*, the musical drama was being played here. M. reaches the sacrificial block direct from the middle spot. One day Thakur was moving about like a lion on this very path after the evening *arati*. M. again climbs the upper courtyard in front of the Mother's temple facing north. Nakul comes and gives some *charanamrita* in M.'s hands. He marks on his forehead a *tilak* (religious sign) with vermilion and gives him some *sandesh* which had been offered to the Mother. Yogin, the treasurer of the temple also comes to this spot and offers pranam to M. Prostrating himself again before the Mother, M. comes down to the lower courtyard.

M. is now in the Chandani. A beggar begs of him. M. says to Antevasi, "Please lend me four paise." There is tide over the Ganga now. M. comes to ghat and sits down there, towards the northern portion of the steps, three arm lengths away towards the south. He touches the Ganga and performs japa. After sometime, he offers salutations lying on the grounds and climbs up. Seeing a sadhu from the United Provinces of India, he salutes him and exchanges a few sweet words.

M. comes out of the northern courtyard walking through the Chandani. Just

then attorney Viren Bose meets him and offers him pranam.

M. is again in Thakur's room. He again offers pranam in the middle of the smaller cot facing west. It was here that Thakur's footmat used to lie. In winter, M. used to sit on this mat when asked by Thakur. One day, M. was seated on this mat. It was eight at night. There was nobody in the room. Thakur was absorbed in *bhava samadhi* and had not yet regained the normal state. From outside it appeared that he was intoxicated. He said to M. in an indistinct voice, "Let nobody think that the Mother's work will remain incomplete. The Mother can create big teachers with a piece of straw."

M. was insisting upon Thakur to grant him sannyasa. Thakur and the Mother of the Universe however willed that he should stay in his household and impart instruction from there, and read out the Bhagavata to human beings scalded with *sansara*. Seeing Rakhai, Yogen, Tarak, all of whom had married and were yet destined to be sannyasis by Thakur's blessings, M. was yearning to embrace sannyasa like his brother disciples though he also had a wife. The Mother of the Universe however willed that M. should remain in the household for training others. So, it was that Thakur talked to him so harshly with displeasure.

After this incident, M. completely gave himself up to Thakur's will. Thakur always used to say that the *sansara* was burning fire. It was after being scalded by this fire that M. first came to Thakur. From his early age, M. had come to know of this matter. It was to save himself forever from this fire that M. had been imploring Thakur for sannyasa.

It was while sitting in this room that Thakur asked M. to remain in the household to do the work of God. And it was while sitting in this room that Thakur again prayed to the Mother for M.'s sake. He prayed, "Mother, if You wish to keep him in the household, please grant him Your darshan from time to time. Otherwise, while staying in the cauldron of fire, how will he be able to do Your work?" All this happened in the early days of M. Now he is old. It is but natural that these divine, sweet memories should rise in his mind.

As M. is rising after offering his farewell salutations, Dr. Vipin enters the room through the northern door. The Doctor had seen Thakur and has enjoyed his love. They exchange happy memories of Thakur. Now M. is to leave for Calcutta. Going down to the western veranda from the northern veranda he finds that his slippers have vanished. He says, "I see that my shoes have disappeared." The devotees can't retrieve them though they search a great deal. A particular bhakta says to himself, "This has happened because of my fault. I should have picked them up and put them in the car. We are selfish, busy seeking pleasure but we do not care to see whether we are serving him who is giving us this pleasure." M. begins to walk barefoot. His body and his two feet are very delicate. M. has to undergo this discomfort because of the carelessness of the bhaktas, and the bhaktas feel mentally very uncomfortable. The bhakta begins to repent.

It is already dark. M. gets into the Doctor's car in front of the Kuthi. The Doctor, Jagabandhu and Vinay are with him. Viren Bose's car also moves along with his. The car reaches close to the Baranagore Bazar after passing through Alam Bazaar. M. says, "It is an anachronism that I am alive. I feel this when I see new faces and other minds." M. is now seventy. The car passes in front of the Cossipore Garden. Pointing at a dilapidated house to his right, M. says, "It seems, it is the same house. Yes, it is just like it." The Doctor has his house in Cossipore. Vinay and the Doctor stay back here along with the car. M. leaves by Viren Bose's car. Jagabandhu is with him. This car reaches Morton School in Amherst Street near the Circular Road.

It's about 8 p.m. The devotees are awaiting M. in the staircase room on the

fourth level Balai, Ramani, the Younger Nalini, Fakir with a companion are there. Also, the older bhaktas of the Math, Pulin Mitra and his son-in-law Ranada. They all came before it was evening. M. is very tired. Though M. sits with the bhaktas, only his body is here but his mind is in Thakur, in Cossipore Garden and in the Dakshineswar Temple in Sri Ramakrishna, the solace of one's life breath.



Morton School Calcutta,
Sunday, 30th November, 1924,
15th of Agrahayana 1331 (B.Y.),
The fourth day of the bright fortnight,
20 Dandas/11 Palas.

WORLD PEACE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT JIVA IS SHIVA

1.

Morton School, the roof on the fourth level. M. is seated on a chair with a number of devotees on benches. The twilight hour is approaching.

It is winter. M. has wrapped his head with a muffler. He has a Lal Imli sweater on his body, with a grey war flannel shirt over it and all these covered with an overall. He is talking of the Dakshineswar temple and the Cossipore Garden to the devotees. He has been to both places the previous day.

M. (to the devotees) Thakur practised different kinds of sadhanas in Dakshineswar of the Vedas, Puranas, Tantras different religious practices of different creeds. Besides, he also practised the spiritual disciplines of Islam and Christianity. He gained perfection in all these. And he said there, "As many creeds, so many paths" All religions, all creeds are different ways to attain God. However, they are paths, not God. God is only one without a second. He has only proved from it that there is only one source of all creatures, all men - one True Existence. Why did he practice spiritual discipline? He saw that the whole world will become one family under the influence of science. If the members of family have love for each other and are sympathetic to each other, there is peace and permanent joy in that family. Then alone, peace, comfort and joy prevail there. Besides, if all members respect the head of the family and have love for him, there is no discord there. Similarly, if all the people of the world accept one God, if they know that there is only one God in reality, that He is many only in difference of names, then also, there is no discord they can all live in peace bound to each other by love. The object of the practice of different religions by Thakur was just this. Only this high feeling can bring about peace in the world. All men are the children of the same Father with this idea at the root, all the people with different natures and education, different kinds of food, different kinds of dress and with different religions can live together with peace and harmony. Politics by itself cannot bring about this unity. Diversity is the rule of the external world, but if in spite of these peculiarities, this high idea can persist that all human beings are the children of the God, then unity can live amidst diversity. And it can bring peace and joy, it can bring the bond of brotherhood among all.

"And the Cossipore Garden. It was there that 'the establishment of the inner oneness of Thakur' came to be manifested outwardly. Every devotee had love for Thakur. In spite of the difference in their natures and in their education, they all love Thakur. By loving one, they have got bound to each other. The real unity can accrue only by the love of God."

It is cold outside. M. comes to sit in the staircase room. Suddenly, they all hear Ginni Ma, M.'s wife, shrieking on the third level. M. also listens to that.

M. knows the reason. Ginni Ma had made 'baries' in a husking mat. And had placed them on the roof of the tin cabin on the fourth level for drying. It is already dark, and it has started dewing, so one of the devotees sent it downstairs. Since else somebody has touched this mat, Ginni Ma has uttered a shriek. Overcome by anger she says, "This place has become the centre for the people of the (eastern) Bengal." M. just smiles on hearing the shriek. He says, "This is only a disturbance caused by *shuchi vayu* (over anxiety for ritual purity). You see, so many suffer from this feeling. While purity is good, this exaggerated feeling for it is not. Why purity is necessary is not their concern. One needs to be pure inwardly and outwardly for God this ideal is forgotten and the sense of purity takes the place of God."

M. (laughing) Thakur said, 'He who has this exaggerated sense of purity cannot practice religion.' And he also said that the puritans had no religion. Those who call themselves puritans were called *dharmadhvaj* (religious banners) by Thakur. They have no love for God within, outwardly they are moralists. Such people also have no religion.

M. (laughing to a bhakta) You only touched the husker not the *baries*. Where is the harm?

Ginni Ma has received Thakur's grace and is an attendant of the Holy Mother. She is a very soft Mother-like person. In her early youth, she lost a son. This still upsets her at times. She becomes so impatient even on a slight pretext and gets easily angry. When Thakur saw that she was mentally imbalanced because of grief, he asked her to be with the Holy Mother. He also prescribed for her, massage with almond oil and sugar candy water to drink. Even then, she did not get over her trouble. At times, she gets very impatient and shrieks. However, M. has been putting up with it with a happy face like an expert player.

2.

M. is silent for a while and then resumes the conversation.

M.(to the devotees) The mother of a sadhu also suffered from such notions of purity. This brought her many difficulties. When told about it, Thakur prescribed a remedy. He said, 'If she is able to make a mark on the forehead with human refuse, she will get over such notions.' The sadhu's mother one day went to take her bath in the Ganga before it was dawn. After her bath, she used to make a mark with the clay of the Ganga. She did the same today, not with clay, but with a line of human excreta. When she returned home, her daughter's daughter said to her, 'I say, grandmother, you have made the mark with excreta! How it smells!' Then she got rid of her notions of purity.

A Particular Bhakta He purified water with water. (All laugh).

Another Bhakta Such people don't walk, they just frisk like birds, taking care lest the cloth on their body should touch somebody else.

Another Bhakta When these people take bath in the Ganga, they may make a child or somebody sit on the bank and say to him, 'I am going to dive. Just see if my cloth keeps floating on the water.'

'It is cold here too, let's go into the room,' saying so, they all go to the room.

M. sits on a chair facing south near the door. The devotees the Doctor, Vinay, Jagabandhu, the Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten and others take their seats on benches in front. M. says, "Let's have a little reading from the Kathamrita." He opens the book at December 1883, Chapter seven, Volume IV. M. was then living under the shelter of his guru in his room in Dakshineswar. The reading is done mostly by Antevasi. Today he is feeling sleepy. So, M. asks the Doctor to read. It is eight in the evening.

The doctor reads: Sri Ramakrishna says to Mukherjee, 'Cry for Him with the heart full of yearning. The water of the tears will wipe the dust off the mind. When it is quite clean, the magnet will draw the needle *yoga* (union with God) is bound to result.'

M. (to the bhaktas) This is Thakur's personal prescription. He used to say, 'It is the best for the Calcutta People. Now the man's mind is weak, the span of life is short and he needs food. The practice of difficult spiritual disciplines is not possible.' Thakur himself followed this path in the beginning. He used to say, 'Everything here is for training others.' Wasn't Thakur an avatara? So, his work was to show the suitable way for this age to the bhaktas. So, he has recommended this. How firmly he has said, 'The *yoga* is bound to come.' He used to say, 'The *kumbhaka* (holding of the breath) is bound to result itself from crying. Then comes his darshan *samadhi* is attained.' He had shown the direct way, but who listens? Who follows it?

"And he has also asked to keep company of those who cry for Him. He has asked that the company of sadhus must be kept. He says, 'This is very necessary.' Even a sadhu needs the company of sadhu. The Mother's *Avidya Maya* (illusion of ignorance) makes one forget always. Even so, it is very important for the householders. They all live in the circle of sensory enjoyment, within women and gold. By seeing the sadhus, you can compare their state with yours. When you develop love for them, this love will later lead your mind to God. The company of sadhus is an easy access to God.

"Thakur said to Mukherjee, 'Give your power of attorney to God and cry longingly like a kitten.' Thakur didn't ask to read much. He would ask to practice it. One had to practice what one reads in the book. Otherwise, who will listen only to the 'notation?' *Dharma* means practising principles. Man is His son 'the son of the Immortality'. One has to live this axiom of the Veda living in the world, one has to conduct oneself like His son, not merely talk about it. One has to act. Crying for Him is also an action. When the father sees that the son is not able to do, he does everything for him."

The Doctor reads: Mani asks Thakur whether the world is an illusion. Thakur replies, "Why should it be so? That is the path of reason one climbs the roof by the steps of '*neti neti*' (Not this, not this). When He wipes out 'the I-sense,' what happens in that state nobody can tell by mouth. When you come downstairs, you realise that He himself has become brick, lime, brick-dust and the steps too. The Mother showed me all this. When I was in that state, I took a cat as the Mother Herself and fed her with *luchis* meant as offering to the Deity. She showed me that the *jiva* (creatures), *jagat* (the world) and all the twenty-four elements are the Mother itself. Even now whenever the Mother erases 'the I-sense,' the world disappears for me. I cannot tell what remains then."

The Doctor reads. M. now listens keeping quite. The seventh chapter has been read. M. has been to the Dakshineswar, the previous day. It appears that M. has lost himself in the joy of the memories of the past on hearing today's narration and after visiting Dakshineswar yesterday. The reading of the eighth chapter is now taken up. After the song 'Gaurang beautiful, of the hue of molten gold, the new Master Dancer' is over, M. wakes up as if from sleep and exclaims, 'Stop, that's all.'

M. is not yet out of the intoxication of his *bhava*. Even so, one of the devotees takes courage to ask him some questions on today's text.

The Devotee Some people say that the company of the guru brings the defects of the devotee to his notice. Thus, the defect is removed by the guru's grace, is this true?

M. This happens only when the guru is a perfect man of *jnana* (spiritual wisdom). This is what we heard from Thakur's mouth. Otherwise, it is like falling into the mouth of a water snake, which can neither devour the frog, nor throw it out. Both die. Only, he who is perfect in spiritual wisdom can show the way.

The devotee Sir, my question is, whether the guru can take upon himself the sins of his disciple.

M. The answer to it is the same if the guru is himself perfect, he can do it, it is only possible for a perfect man of wisdom. Thakur took upon himself all the sins of his disciples. He enabled one of the bhaktas to transcend the senses he pulled out all sensual desire from him. Taking him to the Mother Kali, he sang this song and dedicated him to the Mother: 'Your name as I have heard is *Bhavatarini Bhaihara* (the Redeemer, the Dispeller of fear). So, I cast my burden on you. Save me, save me, O, Mother, if You will.' Actually, Thakur did it all but he did so in the name of the Mother. He would take no credit. He was a child in the arms of his Mother while the devotee is a householder.

"To some, he said that it would be enough if they just visit 'here' (him). He would pick out some quality of a bhakta and raise him high. In this way, all his defects would fall off. Raise up that is to say to God. So he said, 'When love for God is generated, it devours all sins like the tiger devouring the goat.' He also said, 'Just as the wax melts as soon as the candle is lighted, similarly, all sensual desires melt away in the fire of bhakti.' Thakur brought his bhaktas into this state."

Devotee Thakur used to say, 'Worldly people also get samadhi sometimes, the *unmana samadhi*. Later on, the work and the senses pulling the mind out, bring a fall from Yoga.' Do they lose the feeling of God then?

M. He did not say that they lose their feelings for God. It is only covered up. He said, 'The lotus blooms when the sun rises and when it is cloudy, the flower closes again. And again, when the sun comes out, it begins to bloom.' The feeling for God is not lost, it only gets covered.

"The Puranas narrate that Sanaka and other rishis went to Brahma

for gaining spiritual knowledge. Brahma was then busy with many other matters. He said, 'You have come at a wrong time. Never mind, wait.' Then Brahma came in disguise of a swan and instructed them in spiritual knowledge.

"Outwardly, it seemed as if they had no *jnana*. Janaka also had this state sometimes. The devotees of Thakur are also in this state sometimes. But they retain their *jnana* inwardly.

"Thakur said, 'A *jnani bhakta* in household is living in a glass house. Everything is visible, but, in between there is a glass. On the other hand, those who are standing in the open leaving all i.e. the all-renouncing persons stand amidst the flood of light. They have no other work but to meditate on God, for example Narada and Sukadeva.'

"They don't lose any of their knowledge even while living in family. When a *sannyasin* is attending to work, he too has the same state. When the sword turns into gold, keep it where you will, it remains gold."

Bhakta Thakur said, 'One has to be mad to attain God.' A mad man does not distinguish between what is good for him and what is not. He only desires how to attain Him.

M. This is about one who is mad after sensuous enjoyment. Thakur was talking of those who are mad for God. Men of the world become mad thinking of wife, son, daughter and wealth. Similarly, he who ever calls upon God with a yearning in his heart like a mad man never loses his knowledge of God. The song says, 'There is joy in that madness. Only when you are really mad, you will know Him. The mad Mother will hold you in her arms saying: Come on, my mad son.'

"Thakur himself became mad like this. Everybody called him mad but the Brahmin woman came and said: 'This is the madness of love. Chaitanya Deva also had this same state.' It was she who first called him an *avatara*.

"One is madness for worldly objects, the other the madness of the love of God.

"So Thakur used to sing, 'O Mother make me mad with Thy love...' Jesus, Moses and Sri Chaitanya these had the madness of love."



Monday, 1st December 1924,
10th of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The fifth day of the bright fortnight,
14 Dandas/48 Palas.

THAKUR'S ONE INSTRUCTION: DO SOMETHING!

1.

Morton School, 6 p.m. now. M. is seated on a chair facing south in the staircase room. Close to him are seated a number of devotees. M. says to Jagabandhu, "Please get up. Go and listen for a while. You should visit all places, and listen to everybody. Only then you become firm with regard to your principles. Everybody is calling upon One. Only the bhavas are different. The Lord has innumerable bhavas. In whatever place one calls upon Him, He is bound to listen if one is earnest. Looking at them contemptuously will not do. If you do not accept them all, your approach will be deficient. I am very keen to hear all to see how others call upon Him. Thakur used to say, 'Without having a large heart, one cannot attain Him.' That's why, he practised all spiritual disciplines. By doing himself, he realised that He can be attained by all paths. 'As many beliefs so many paths.' Every belief is a path. The rishis discovered it in very early times. The Rigveda says: *ekam sat viprah bahudhah vadanti* (The reality is only one, the learned call it in many ways). People forget it sometimes, so He Himself comes down and propagates this all-encompassing idea. Thakur has come also to do so in this age. It will again get covered up. He will return. And this is how the world goes on. (To Jagabandhu) Please get up, you are getting late. I am old. I cannot do it even when I want to do, so I ask friends to help."

Theosophical society. Some hundred and fifty persons have assembled in the hall. Sri Kulada Mullick, Bhagavataratna, the great pundit of Vaishnava creed is going to speak. The topic is Rasa Lila.

It is 20th of December, 1924 today. 1331 (B.Y.), 17th of Agrahayana, Tuesday. The 6th of bright fortnight, 10 Danda/3 Palas. It is about 6.30 p.m. Kulada Mullick speaks for almost an hour with his usual fluency. In between, he quotes from different shastras in his sweet voice. Even though the topic is difficult, since he has mastery over its essence, his discourse was heard with great interest by the audience. Everybody listened to his elucidation of the principle of Rasa in a very patient manner. The discourse ended at half past seven. By the time Antevasi returned, it was already quarter to eight.

M. is seated on a chair facing south in front of the door in the partition room close to his room. It is cold so he is inside the room having covered himself with woollens. Around his head he has muffler. Keeping the proof on the high bench to the right, Ramani reads Part IV, Chapter 30. Doctor Bakshi, Vinay, the Elder Jiten, the Younger Jiten, Balai and others are present. M. talks happily with Antevasi.

M. (to Antevasi) What did you hear there?

Antevasi First they sang songs of Vaishnava saints they were all songs of Rasa Lila. He himself sang them with emotion.

M. Do you remember any?

Antevasi 'Dance O Gaur, the avatara full of the joy of Rasa...' etc.

M. Anything else?

Antevasi There was also the song on the sweetness of Vrindavan

Your clothes are sweet, Your ornaments are sweet, so are your walk and movements.

Sweet is Your wandering, sweet Your gait everything sweet there.

"He said, 'Everything of the Lord is sweet. The whole lila of Gaur is sweet. Sri Krishna and Sri Krishna Chaitanya are one and the same. Sri Krishna Chaitanya comprises both Sri Krishna and Sri Radha. His inside is Sri Krishna, the outside Radha. The yearning of Radha manifested itself as Sri Chaitanya."

M. Beautifully said! Anything else?

Antevasi Then there was recitation of the *Shanti Patha* of Veda - *Madhu Shanti Patha*.

Madhu vata ritayate madhu ksharanti sindhavah, madhveerna santvoshadhah.

Madhu naktamutoshasi, madhumatparthivam rajah, madhu dhyaurastu nah pita.

Madhumanno vanaspatirmadhuman astu suryah, madhveergavo bhavantu nah.

Om madhu om madhu om madhu

[The air and streams shower sweetness. May the medicinal herbs have sweet properties. May the particles of earth be full of sweetness night and day, May the life preserving light of the sun be sweet too. May the rays of the sun and the herbs be full of sweet qualities. (Rigveda 1-14-90)]

"When one has attained the source of sweetness, the whole universe gets filled with sweetness.

"And he said, 'The significance of the Rasa is subjugation of the pride of the god of desire. Madanmohan also means the same. Madan (the god of desire) enchanting all, makes them work. That Madan is enchanted by the Lord. Rasa is the stage for subjugating Kama Deva (the god of desire) and his pride. It is the cremation ground for Madan. The Chaitanya Charitamrita beautifully describes the significance of Madanmohan in the Antaleela. The Sri Govinda Leelamrita also describes it.

" 'Why are people so fond of Kama deva? Because of the grandfather. There were celebrations in a house. The grandfather had been invited there, but he did couldn't go as he was busy with some work. However, he sent his five year old daughter's son with the manager. How much love and regard they showered on the boy! The chief host made him come down from the carriage by taking him in his arms. He also fed him seating him in his lap and then made him sit in the carriage holding him in his arms, talking so sweetly with him. There was no end to his love and regard for him. What is the reason for all this consideration? Because the grandfather was known to them.

" 'Dada here stands for God, and the daughter's son is Kama Deva.

However, when you have attained the Dada, the grandson is not favoured so much'."

M. Anything else?

Antevasi And he commented upon the views of Max Müller.

M. Which views?

Antevasi According to him, Max Müller does not have the right opinion on *Panchagni Vidya* (the knowledge of the five fires) of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. He criticised also the 'Sacred Books of the East'. He said, 'In these books edited by Max Müller, he was not able to give the Indian thought properly he was not able to catch it. In the *Panchagni Vidya* (knowledge of the five fires), giving birth to a son is said to be making an ablution to God. But Max Müller has called it obscene. Max Müller could not reach the height of this idea of thought that is the reason why he talked of it in this way. Edward Carpenter, the poet of democracy has criticised this irreverent view of Max Müller. In his famous poetical essay 'Love's coming of the age' criticising him he says: The view of the rishis that giving birth to a son is an ablution to God is right. It is a beautiful idea, very highly conceived.'

M. Did Kulada support it?

Antevasi Yes, Sir. But, he also said, 'You must do the first things first. Then alone you will be eligible for it. First things, that is to say the practice of self control etc. Without practising such discipline, it is just that i.e. giving birth to a son it is not enough to call it ablution to God.'

M. Will it be there tomorrow also?

Antevasi Yes, Sir. The topic for tomorrow is 'Vrindavan'.

M. After attending it for some time, one should go to the Adi Brahma Samaj. You should go there. It will be nice to hear all this. Otherwise, one turns a fanatic it generates fanaticism. And there is another thing, one can appreciate the value of Thakur's words much better when one hears all this from other people.

M. is silent. He resumes.

2.

M. (to the Bhaktas) 'Dance, O Gaur, the avatara full of the joy of the Rasa' this is said in one state of mind when the mind is rid of lust, when not a trace of it remains, when it vanishes completely, desire takes the form of *prema*, love of God. All this comes in this state. The Gopis came to Sri Krishna in the forest viewing him as a paramour. So long as this view persisted in their mind, there was no Rasa. It was only when the desire had been turned into *prema* in the company of Sri Krishna, the Rasa was enacted. Then uttering 'Krishna, Krishna,' they had become completely full of Krishna.

"So long as they thought of Krishna as a man, there was no Rasa. The touch of Sri Krishna made them realise that he was an incarnation of God. Then they were freed of desire. Their desire transformed itself into *prema*.

"Thakur said, 'Those whose body consciousness is very strong, should not listen to all this and nobody should talk to them about it.' Chaitanya Deva used to enjoy this story of the play of the Lord in the company of three and a half devotees. Rai Ramananda, Swarup Damodar Puri and Shikhi Maiti these three plus Madhavi Devi, the old sister of Shikhi Maiti taken as half. With other bhaktas, Chaitanya used to carry out some other *lila-kirtan* of the Lord. And when the devotees of the outer circle came to him, he just used to sing the name of the Lord with them."

A Certain Bhakta In the *Phalashruti* (the results of hearing) of the Rasa Lila, it is said that by listening to the story of the Lord's Rasa Lila one's desire is killed.

M. This too is not meant for ordinary men. It is only for those whose mind has climbed to very high spiritual heights. Veda Vyasa taught about the Gopi-lila to Sukadeva, his son, the image of concentrated jnana. It is so high! That's why, just at the mention of the Gopis, Thakur would bow down and offer them his pranam. He used to say, 'Just a grain of the *prema* of the Gopis, if it enters a person, turns everything topsy-turvy.'

"Sukadeva only was eligible to narrate the story of the *prema* of Gopis and the only eligible listener was Parikshit. When did he narrate it to Parikshit? When Parikshit was about to die at the bank of the Ganga in the presence of rishis and munis. In the beginning, Parikshit did not possess the capability of understanding it. So, he had some doubts. Even when it was explained to him twice, he couldn't be rid of his doubt. It was only when it was narrated to him a third time that he was freed from his doubt.

"The last doubt that Parikshit had was: Why did Sri Krishna enact his lila with the Gopis, though he was God himself? Sri Krishna was a friend and protector of his family. Even so, the scorn for this play had taken firm roots in the mind of Parikshit so much so that there was no way to get rid of it.

"Sukadeva said to Parikshit, '*tejaseeyam na doshaya vanheh sarvabhujoh yatha.*' The fire consumes both sandalwood and excreta with equanimity when they are dropped in it.' Similarly, those who have realised the Self, those whose sense of 'I' has become one with that of God have the power.

"Parikshit had the social view point. So, he could not accept this elucidation. His doubt persisted. His idea was that what is bad, is bad for everybody. Apparently, this appears to be correct.

"Sukadeva tried to explain it to him a second time. This time he tried to awaken Parikshit's scriptural insight. He said, 'All the acts of the spiritually great are not to be imitated. There are so many of their deeds which they perform themselves, but don't ask others to imitate.

And there are so many which they perform and ask others to do likewise. Only these acts are the ones that can be imitated by others. Sri Krishna's Rasa Lila was performed with another man's wife, but he never asked others to do so.'

"This argument also could not remove the doubt from Parikshit's mind. He was inclined to take Sri Krishna as the ideal man. All his acts should be imitated and put into one's conduct. Nevertheless, it is a contemptible act to meet another man's wife alone. In what way could this act of Sri Krishna be considered unimpeachable?

"Parikshit's death was near. So, on seeing him possessed by such an innocent yearning, Sukadeva opened the door of his spiritual insight by his grace. Said he, 'Parikshit, Sri Krishna was not merely an ideal man, he was Parama-Brahman absolute. It is by His will that the universe is created, preserved and dissolved. In the form of *Ishwara* (Lord), he himself becomes man or woman, and the twenty four elements. He was himself the Gopis and himself Krishna. He was enacting his sport with the Self.' How? Like a child playing with his own reflections in the mirror. He who was Gopis was also Krishna - Gopi-Krishna."

3.

Morton School. M. is standing on the roof. It is about 6 p.m. He says to Antevasi, "It appears it will not be possible to go there 'Vrindavan' was going to be enacted there."

It had been decided the previous day that M. would go to the Theosophical society by the Doctor's car. The Doctor has been delayed. Antevasi says, "I am also being delayed because of you."

In the meanwhile, the Doctor arrives. He salutes M. from the door on the roof. M. enters his room and comes out after dressing himself. Then comes Makhan. M. says, "Some of you may go on foot. The car cannot accommodate so many persons. Let him (Antevasi) and the Younger Ramesh go on foot. They are our own people." Antevasi departs. Coming in front of the steps, he says, "So we shall not be able to go to the Adi Samaj." M. laughs and says, "He doesn't feel like going to Adi Samaj." Antevasi says, "I am going to the Theosophical society."

The bhaktas have already assembled. M. comes a little later and takes his seat under the fan on a bench near the door on the second level. After sometime, at quarter to seven he goes to Adi Brahmo Samaj.

Kulada Babu is saying, "If you wish to attain Vrindavan, you should have a very earnest desire for it. You can do so by trying with your mind and soul. His grace can be attained when one tries with a yearning heart. Besides, the good wishes of the holy men are also needed. When there is the grace of the saintly, there is the grace of Sri Krishna.

"The material Vrindavan is the reflection of the eternal Vrindavan. Both of these are beyond nature. Both of them are the abode of the Eternal." ... and so on.

M. returns from the Samaj with his companions. The bhaktas have already returned from the Theosophical Hall a little while ago. M. takes his seat on a bench near the edge in the eastern side of the veranda on the second level. The devotees are also seated in front on benches close by Shuka Lal, Vinay, Doctor, Jagabandhu, Mukunda, Akshay and so on. A little later arrives

Gadadhar, Buddhiram and the Younger Nalini. They all come from Dakshineswar. They have brought the prasada of the Bhavatarini of Dakshineswar. M. says, "You may all take prasada if there is water here." One of Bhaktas (Vinay) goes and brings some water. M. washes his hand having taken off the shoes and puts a grain of the prasada after bringing it to touch his forehead. The conversation starts.

M. (to Antevasi) Come here, tell me what happened there.

Antevasi The same thing said in different ways. It's substance is that one cannot attain *shreya* (God) if one also wants *preya* (the world). If you ask for money, name and fame if you want all these worldly things, you cannot attain God. All these comprise *preya*. The darshan of God is the same thing as attaining Vrindavan ... and so on.

A Devotee One has to imagine a lot to be able to understand their elucidation of dharma. While imagining so much, one forgets the original thing itself. It is rather more dogmatic than rational.

M. How can there be sameness in everything? One should take that which conforms. How can one digest if one takes everything? Thakur used to say, 'Sand is mixed with sugar. Become an ant and bring only the grains of sugar.' And then, where is the time to read and hear more than that?

"Thakur used to say, 'The musical notation has to be brought to the fingers. What is the use of merely speaking it?' Thakur had just this to say, 'Do something.' Everything about him is practical. He used to say that one should do it eighty five percent or ninety five percent, bring it to the hand and the rest five or fifteen percent one should listen.

"Thakur used to say, 'As soon as you put your faith in the words heard from the guru's mouth and act upon it, He himself comes and tells what is to be done first.' He may talk to you perhaps through your mind in the form of intellect. Or, he may send somebody to go and tell you. He comes and tells you.

"Thakur's one instruction is: Take to tapasya, practice sadhana."

M. is silent for a while. He talks again.

M. (to Dr. Akshay) Everything well at home?

Akshay No, Sir. One of the daughters has given up her body.

M. (consoling him) So Thakur used to say, 'I can see that family life is a burning fire. How can I ask you to enter it?'

"Oh! The son of a bhakta had died. When Thakur heard of it, he cried. Why not? He comes as an avatara when he is overwhelmed by the sorrow of the jiva. So long as there is the body, there is no escape from sorrows. Even so, if by His grace, the mind remains in Him, there is some safety. So Thakur came and repeated it again and again, 'Only God is ours. The duty of man is to know Him.' He himself came and said, 'Hold Me, I will protect you all from

attachment and grief?' But who listens?"



Morton School, Calcutta,
Wednesday, 3rd December, 1924,
18th of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The sixth day of the bright fortnight,
6 Dandas.

BRAHMAJNANA POSSIBLE BY THE PATH OF DEVOTION TOO

1.

Morton School, terrace at the fourth level. It is four in the evening. Antevasi is talking to Manmath Chatterji who is a teacher of the South Suburban School. He is a devotee. He had seen M. on 17th November. M. comes to the terrace from the second level, exchanges a few words with the devotees and goes to his room. The room is latched.

It is seven in the evening. M. comes to the staircase room and takes his seat on a chair facing south. His body is covered with a war-flannel shirt with a muffler over his head and a woollen shawl wrapped over the shirt. In front of M. and on the sides a number of bhaktas are sitting on benches. Jagabandhu, Gadadhar, Buddhiram and the Younger Nalini, Rajni, Manoranjan and Mukunda, Akshay, Brooke Bond and Manmath and several others are there.

Enters Brahmachari Pranesh Kumar of the prayer room of Itali. He is holding a small copy of the Gita in his hand. He has edited it in a new manner. He presents a copy of the Gita to M. He is protégé child of Devendra Majumdar Mahashay, a beloved devotee of Thakur. M. turns the pages of this book. In between they talk of Majumdar Mahashay.

M. (to Pranesh) It is beautiful. It is not a publication, it is tapasya so much of thought, deep thought, you had to give to it!

Enters Vinay and the Doctor. They have come from Dakshineswar holding the prasad of Mother Bhavatarini in their hands. All the devotees go out of the room to partake of the prasad. Having taken the prasad, the devotees again return to the staircase room. The conversation is resumed.

Manmath I have greatly benefited by reading the narration of your reaction on your darshan of Thakur in Girish Babu's house.

M. Yes, I have just recorded whatever reaction I had in my mind on seeing him. (Happily) You have a beautiful power of observation. How you have caught him!

Manmath Can a person come down from samadhi? Some people say that one cannot.

M. Mahimacharan also asked the same question. Thakur said, 'Then what about Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, such people? And then, what about Sukadeva and Hanuman?' He said that the avataras can come out of it. Otherwise, who would train humanity?

"(Laughing) Mahimacharan thought that all can become Sri Krishna by spiritual practice. As soon as the obstacles are removed, it is possible. The Bel tree can become the Mango tree.

"So, Thakur made Girish Ghosh and Mahimacharan reason with each other. Girish believed that nobody but an avatara could be an avatara. If the power of Krishna was manifest in anybody, he surely

was Krishna.

"Mahimacharan accepted it. He could not stand against Girish Babu and one day Thakur also said to Mahimacharan that only the avatara could be an avatara, not any human being. That day Mahima did not agree.

"(Laughing) Thakur said, 'You did well by agreeing with Girish. Otherwise, he would have torn your throat like a dog tearing a piece of flesh.'"

Manmath Mahimacharan was perhaps a jnani?

M. Yes, he became a jnani by reading books. Thakur used to say, 'One is something else when you have the right jnana'. He would add, 'The jnani gets rid of his ego. Whatever little of 'I' sense left is there for teaching the mankind. That's the 'I of wisdom', the 'I of devotion', the 'I of slave'. This 'I' cannot do any harm.

"He said, 'So long as there is the reflection of the sun, one's intellect is yet centred in the body till then, one has not attained jnana perfectly.' Later on, he sees that the reflection is not the sun. Only the sun of jnana, the real sun remains. It is in this state that one has *soham* I am He.

"He said, 'Just as there is no shadow at mid-day, just as it becomes one with the body, similarly, there is no 'I' in Brahmanjnana. Then the individual soul becomes one with the Supreme Soul.'

"He said, 'The mind and intellect are like water and the body is like a vessel. During the period of sadhana, the reflection of Param-Brahman appears in the mind and the intellect. Later on, one sees that there is no reflection by His grace. This reflection gets covered with 'Satchidananda' with Parama-Brahman.' This is the path of reason.

"One can attain Brahmajnana the jnana of oneness also by the path of devotion. The Gopis became Krishna Himself by thinking upon Krishna. They lost their awareness that they were women."

Manmath Why did Totapuri become like that at the end?

M. He had gone by the path of 'Brahman is truth, the world an illusion' to attain the jnana of *soham* (I am He). Even after coming back (from samadhi), he had the same jnana. So he used to say, '*Prakriti* is an illusion, the world is an illusion.' Thakur attained Brahmajnana by uttering 'Ma, Ma'. Even upon coming back, he saw the same that the Mother had Herself become all the plant and tree, house and living quarters everything is Mother. He gave Thakur the jnana of the formless, attribute-less, Parama-Brahman, of Nirvikalpa samadhi in other words. And Thakur gave him, 'All is Mother Brahman is true, the world is true.'

"Thakur attained Brahmajnana by the path of devotion and Totapuri by the path of jnana. Totapuri first attained the knowledge that 'Brahma is true and the world an illusion'. Thakur attained the jnana

that 'Brahma is true and the world is true'. Later on, Totapuri realised that 'both Brahman and the world were true'. Thakur realised that 'Brahman was true and the world an illusion'. Thakur had Brahmajnana both by the path of jnana and the path of devotion."

Brahmachari Pranesh But Thakur preached the path of devotion to all.

M. Almost all of us are eligible only for the path of devotion. Very few are fit for the path of jnana. Besides, it is age of Kali. Our life depends upon food, our life is short. In this age, the path of jnana does not suit all particularly the householder.

Brahmachari Pranesh The western savants, some of them, say that Gita had been written in three periods by three persons each of the six chapters were written by one man. Some other says that initially there were only twelve chapters and that six chapters were added later on. What is Thakur's definite opinion on this matter?

M. Thakur said that nothing in the Gita can be contradicted. It is all true.

Brahmachari Pranesh Is it that the words, the language and the ideas are all true or is it that only the ideas are? What did Thakur mean? What is the significance of his words 'It cannot be contradicted.'

M. Only he can tell what he meant by what he said. How can we understand him? Even so, our human intellect says he meant this about the ideas.

"And the western savants are almost unable to understand its significance. Unless the significance is realised, the expression is not fully correct. We believed that Thakur's words are a revelation. Thakur's life is the manifestation of the Gita."

2.

Manmath In one place, he (Ram Babu) says in the context of Thakur: What is the need of more of tapasya when you have seen him?

M. Yes, Ram Babu said that he had taken Thakur in that way. In other words, it is after the tapasya of many lives that one has the darshan of the Lord in a human body. More of tapasya is not needed for them.

"Then there are people of another class. They are made to practice tapasya for teaching others. How much tapasya did the Swamijis undergo!

"Somebody (M.) was going to commit suicide. Or had been facing great difficulties. Narendra had to undergo such difficult days of starvation etc. Why all that? So that one may be able to apply his own experience of it in the case of others."

M. The householders live with a bit of amateur religion. They have no right to instruct others. Why? Because, they live amidst woman and gold.

"It is for the other class, the sadhus, to impart instruction. That's why, they have been made to renounce all. Besides, He has made them undergo tapasya.

"What great difficulties did Vivekananda face! Once, he had nothing to eat for three days in Bhagalpur. Seeing an individual approaching, he said that he would feed us. Who was with Swamiji? It was Gangadhar. Swamiji said to him, 'This fellow is a nice man.' The individual did bow and ask him where he was going to have his meal of charity. 'Here, at some place,' said Swamiji. The man invited them to his house and they accepted to go with him. And they recite holy verses as they go along. Had they not done so, how could they have been taken as great sadhus? (All Laugh) Yes, that's what people think.

"They were sitting there that round thing made of bricks on the Ganga where people sit. What do you call it?"

Antevasi That which one finds at intervals on the embankment - rampart .

M. May be. What a hardship he had! He used to tell us all this.

M. is silent before he resumes.

M. Once he fell unconscious near Almora. He had had no food for three days. Somebody then offered him a cucumber to eat. Eating that saved his life.

"These people have faced such hard times."

Manmath Why did Thakur give him such trials of life, when he loved Swamiji so much?

M. To make of him an expert pilot. Only then could he be a world teacher. He would then be able to realise how hard it is to go without food. That is the reason why he started *Sevashramas* (homes of service), relief work so much for the service of the poor.

"Take the Belur Math. Why did he establish it? So as to provide a shelter to those who renounce the world. It is like the perch of a bird tired after a day long flight. It would serve as the sadhu's perch. And he prophesied that some boys would come there later on who will not be able to bear so much strain of homelessness. This is the reason why he established it. Here, they would find a handful of rice and shelter over their head. These people would not be able to bear the hard life that they have had. This is why he founded the Math."

M. is silent. The talk is resumed.

M. (to the bhaktas) To compare sadhus with householders! As the Yogopanishad mentions, the difference between the two is as between the Mount Sumeru and a grain of mustard, or the vast ocean and the

water in the small pit made by the hoof of a cow such is the difference between the two.

"It does not however, mean that the devotees are of little significance the householder devotees have their importance. Yet, the difference between the two is like that. Thakur would sometimes say, 'Those who have attained jnana while remaining householders, are as though living in a house of glass, while the all-renouncing persons are standing in the open in a flood of light.' While talking of the devotees, he used to say, 'Not one of them who come here is worldly.' In other words, these persons are worldly only from the outside, inwardly they are sannyasis."

Now they distribute the prasada of Mother Kali and Thakur of Dakshineswar. Some bhaktas go down, the others climb.

M. hums the tune: 'When shall I take to holy begging in sweet Vrindavan?' After five minutes, he showers the nectar of the divine words.

M. (to the bhaktas) What a great influence Chaitanya Deva has shed over the Vaishnava bards! Just mark the sweetness of this verse of Narottam Das: 'When shall I take to the holy begging in sweet Vrindavan?' Is the verse only so sweet? No, it is also the high flight of the idea and its depth. He is talking of sannyasa. *Madhukari* (the holy begging) means to collect like a honey-bee. The bee collects honey drop by drop and constructs a beehive. Similarly, *madhukari* means to live upon and feed oneself with the food of charity collected from home to home.

M. is silent for a while. He resumes.

M. (to a certain bhakta) Jiva Goswami was a nephew of Roop Goswami. He was very learned. A top class pundit arrived. Jiva Goswami defeated even him in religious debate. Not only this, he made the pundit accept his defeat in writing. Hearing this Roop Goswami said, 'I would not like to look at his face. Having renounced all, having become a sannyasi, to ask for a note of victory!' Sad in mind, Jiva Goswami roamed about for a month or two. Thereafter, the friends of Jiva Goswami asked Roop Goswami what were the marks of a Vaishnava. He said, 'Love of the repetition of the sacred name, compassion for *jiva* (the creature) and rendering service to the Vaishnavas.' The friends said, 'Compassion for the *jiva* is also a mark of a Vaishnava. Why don't you then show compassion to Jiva?' (All laugh). Thus, Roop Goswami pardoned Jiva. To care for name and procure a note of victory, though a sadhu such is the affair! (Laughter). Doesn't the all-renouncing one have to train humanity by his conduct?

M. climbs down to the third level of the building for his meals. It is eight o'clock.

A Bhakta Doctor Babu, we are all praise for you and we thank you. You take M. to different places by your car and fulfil his desires.

The devotee wants Shuka Lal, a rich man also to buy a car. This would also help him to have more company of sadhus. He is fat and lives far away in Belegkata.

M. has been telling him, "What is money for? If you buy a car, you can have company of sadhus, even without wanting it. You can go to the Math, to Dakshineswar. Money is helpful in attaining God if you know how to spend it for a good cause. Thakur said, 'A man of wealth is already half-liberated.' "

But has Shuka Lal Babu listened to it?

The devotees are seated in the staircase room. Antevasi is pacing the roof. The moon in the sky is shedding its rays all over. M. has returned and taken a seat in the partitioned room. It is quite cold outside. He tells a bhakta to go to Antevasi and ask him to write out an application and give it to Jeebu, so that he can give to him tomorrow. M. asks, 'To whom?' Antevasi says, 'To Mani Babu.'

M. comes back to the staircase room and sits down with the bhaktas. He begins to turn the leaves of Pranesh Kumar's Gita. In between, he reads out some verses from some chapters to the devotees. Now he reads out the outer marks of a Yogi

Yuktaharaviharasya yuktacheshtasya karmasu,

Yuktasvapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati dukkhaha.

(Gita 6:17)

"The man, who is temperate in food, recreation, actions; who is restrained in his actions, whose sleep and waking are regulated, only his mind attaches itself to God. This yoga destroys all sorrow. In other words, if a person always remembers God, he gains peace and joy then. On the other hand, he, whose mind is bound to the world, has neither peace, nor happiness, nor joy. He destroys this life as well as the life after.

"He who now wants this, now that cannot attain yoga His mind is ever restless." M. reads further. Then again the same: He who wants all kinds of things cannot have yoga. Now, he stops reading and repeats: Only those who are leading a simple life can gain yoga.

M. (to a particular bhakta) The yogis don't sleep long at night. They also eat sparingly especially at night. God is attained only after doing so much.

M. is again silent and then resumes the conversation.

M. (to the bhaktas) Thakur said to Keshab Sen, 'You people look at light through a chink.' Those who look at God while living in family are in this state. See, to whom he said this? To Keshab Babu! He, who was the observed of all observers, he, for whose sight, people are crazy, to him he says this!

"If that be so, what use are mutual admiration societies? What is the value of the words of these mutual admirers?"

"How he loved Keshab Babu! The latter was an authority on religion of his time.

"Mayyeva mana aadhatsva mayi buddhim niveshaya,

Nivasishyasi mayyeva ata urdhvam na sanshayah.

[On me alone fix thy mind. Let thy understanding dwell in Me. In Me alone, shalt thou live alone thereafter. Of this, there is no doubt. (Gita 12:8)]

"Giving up all, engage yourself in the pursuit of God offering your mind and soul to Him, then alone, you can have His darshan. So difficult is the attainment of God.

"Thakur used to say, 'Those who have a busy life can draw succour from yoga' i.e. to say 'routine life' (from disciplined activity).

"And he also said, 'Those who are weak in body can also draw help from yoga i.e. to say actions in a measured way. Those who practice this, their life becomes peaceful and concentrated on the Lord.

"Unless one takes the vow of do or die, one cannot realise God. Even this can come about only by His grace this Himalayan determination.

"To do or die either I will realise the mantra or give up the body - such a resolve is needed!

"The yogi needs to control his food first of all. '*jite rase jitam sarvam*' (Victory over the tongue is an all-encompassing victory). Thakur put a great stress on this. Control the tongue and you have won victory over desire, anger and so on, to a great extent."

A Particular Bhakta Those who eat in a mess of a boarding house, their food becomes the food of a yogi on its own.

M. Even so, they take a lot of chillies. (Laughter).

M. If it is beyond you to control all this, there is the other way i.e. to cry and say to Thakur with sincerity. He would do all for you. This is His promise. A sincere longing and crying are needed.



Morton School, Calcutta,
Thursday, 4th December, 1924,
19th of Agrahayana, 1331 (B.Y.),
The eighth day of the bright fortnight,
2 Dandas/54 Palas.