

SOWING SEEDS ALONG INDIAN ROADS

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I. (PEACE Nov. & Dec. 1932)

The fateful March evening of our exodus from the Abode of Peace had arrived. For we were going forth to drop seeds of Peace along Indian roads: thru southern plains to Himalayan heights. As the sun like a fiery crater, still flung hot blasts from the west, our Sri Swami Omkarji requested me to accompany him on a farewell walk. Thru the arbors, pleasant gardens and orchards we moved silently, for a dreamy glamour pervades every loved spot. Perhaps one loves it so at Santi Ashram because it is hallowed by a silence, which makes each day a stride towards the Eternal. The atmosphere is such that one has time there to separate the mellow gold of life from the worthless dross, Reality from Maya. With such high possibilities what spot would not seem sanctuary?

We sat to rest at the door of my little hut, "The Cave" so called because of its subterranean meditation hall, and looked at the friendly, green mountains. They held the peace and bliss that is Santi Ashram, as if in a mighty chalice of Divinity.

Then we turned to retrace our steps to our waiting comrades, stopping first to chant Aum! into "The Cave" before bolting the door. We repeated this blessing at the door of the Swamiji's hut, the "Ananda Kutir" Absolute—Bliss—Hut, and a foolish tear-drop came to our eyes, which we laughed away, as we swung down the gravel path to the Ashram Hall. The fruit trees flung forth their full-arms as if to stay us, the citron trees in blossom, wept their melancholy sweetness into our very hearts, the birds, squirrels, lizards and our countless "little brothers" that play about us free and fearless, and even the whitewashed stones seemed to fling wraithlike arms of love about us, that would not let us go. Yet, the clarion call had come which must be heeded by works of the Vineyard of Truth. Our dear comrades waiting under our "Bodhi" tree, placed farewell garlands about our necks and the champa trees above, heaped farewell tokens white about our feet. In our "Peace Car" we then sped out into the night feeling like souls going forth from Devachan into an earthly birth. I prayed that the peace and inner strength gathered unto myself for over a year would not desert me, out there, in the world, the crowded places, where the vibrations are not as harmonious and the prevailing thought not as pure, as in our blessed retreat.

As we sped along under the Banyan trees that arched high above the road, night-birds called from the tank-rushes, startled foxes leaped across the road and something tawny with dark spots dashed under a thicket with a leopard's cry, a cobra

shot across the way just escaping our car wheels. Owls flew by, immense bats flapped their wings above and a howling jackal-pack tore thru a paddy field.

All manner of elemental creatures seemed to be abroad to witness the exodus. The freshness of nightfall with its mingled perfumes of a thousand night-blooms fell upon one's consciousness like a mantle of an angelic fabric. The Cosmic hymns of the planets were singing in our hearts as we arrived at the gate of brother Rama Rao's home at Rajamundry. The first fertile field for our dropping Peace seeds, was reached. Dear mother Ratnam, Rama Raoji, their boys and all the members of the large Indian household greeted us lovingly. And, soon we were made comfortable in rooms that opened up to a roof garden under the open sky. Swami Tatwanandaji was also there to welcome us. Guests, my dear friends, are most warmly welcomed in India and made to feel like one of the family in the shortest possible time. One travels with bedding which servants quickly unfold on fragrant mats in the appointed place. Drinking water, and bath-water is speedily supplied in great brazen vessels, followed up by refreshments and food.

An astonishing number of guests whose wants are simple, and whose hearts are loving, can be thus kindly and hospitably accommodated. Above all other nations, Indians love to entertain guests and do so, as often as possible. At the very frequent festivals, every household is gay with relatives and dear friends who disport themselves, most amiably, singing, chanting to the tune of flute, harmonium or vina, laughing and gossiping from dawn till dark like guileless children, and then parting lovingly. It often filled me with joy and wonder to see the congeniality at these large gatherings; where, expected or uninvited guests were treated and considered as an added blessing. The children copy the decorum and good-will of their elders, in happy camaraderie and generosity. But all these good things I have to say about the many Indian hearths and hearts must be relegated to a longer tale. It would take too long now, and volumes would leave the best untold, as it is something subtle, as the high dimensional Vedantic Philosophy, which must be felt and experienced by the individual soul, to seem real. A luscious fruit is better tasted than described, and all depends upon the taster and his particular appetite. Since news travels faster than wireless over garden-walls and neighbourly windows, in India, the next day brought a host of devotees to Swamiji.

The rich, the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind, of all castes and ages, from early morn till late at night swarmed to hear Swamiji's message of Peace. I sat with

the women and children teaching them simple mantrams, which we chanted together capping our hands in perfect eastern fashion. My heart leaped with joy at the unity and love these gentle people seemed to feel with me, from the day I landed. And indeed in my Saree, living among them, naturally adapting myself to their ways, which never seemed foreign, it seems that the American me had vanished somewhere on the S.S. Haruna Maru and an Indian changeling had landed at Ceylon. And yet one feels this same kinship among all peoples. O love the irresistible! Mother of unity and internationality, is the sweet language that can be interpreted by the dwellers around the seven seas. Little else is needed in the Far East where exteriors are not important and where people have a peculiar searching gaze to instinctively and intuitively probe the quality of thought and the heart. For several days truth seekers were served with loving impartiality. Our Swamiji gave counsel and initiations to ripe souls, according the needs and evolution of individuals. Many came anxious, heartsick, and sad. All left the Sweet Presence, transfigured and filled with a new joy.

When I remarked about this transfiguration so strikingly apparent, when all had trailed into mid-night silence; Swamiji turned his luminous eyes on me reflecting thousands of births and deaths, and said in the mellifluous voice of a twice-born sage. "All glory belongs to Him my child, if you deem anything by me well done, know that it is He who does it, if you see any failings be assured they are mine. So it is in my way with these many Truth seekers. They do not come to me. They are drawn by the little spark of divine love that God has kindled in my heart, so that I can ignite theirs, sharing the little I have with all who ask, almost spontaneously. Now good-night and remember me in your meditation my child." Bowing to the dazzling Radiance reflecting from the Pure One before me, I left rich with humility, for a tower room that I had explored and occupied near the beautiful mid-night stars.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

II. (PEACE, JAN. 1933)

Mother Ratnam tucked a little bundle of jasmine and myrrh into my hair, one of her many thousand sweet gestures, dropping like a cracking pearl into the treasure

casket of my Indian memories. We then joined Swamiji to bid adieu to our Rajahmundry friends. He was fairly beaming with loving service as he sowed peace seeds in the hearts of the group sitting on the marble floor about him. As we watched from the low arched door way, the words of poet Carpenter rose, in my consciousness

*“Now who so despised and lost, but what shall be my savior?
Is there one yet sick and suffering in the whole world? Or deformed condemned
degraded?
Thither hastening am I at rest for this one can absolve me.
O I am greedy of love--all are beautiful to me!
You my deliverers every one – from death, from sin, from evil-
I float, I dissolve in you!
O bars of self you cannot shut me now.
O frailest child, O blackest criminal,
Whoe'er you are I can never repay you—though the world despise you, you are
glorious to me.
For you have saved me from myself
You delivered me when I was in prison-
I passed thru you into heaven,
You were my Christ to me”.*

That is the attitude of our Swamiji seems to have towards all that lives, and indeed it is in serving the Christ, the Krishna, the Buddha, thru our fellow-creatures, and learning from their sufferings that we may find our freedom soonest of all. Such teachers, as our Swamiji, evening stars of the aspirants, keep one's feet firmly and bravely planted on the mystic road no matter where it leads, divinely reckless. But in advancing one must remember to plough fields, and to drop peace seeds into the heart of some yet weaker brother along that mystic road, which finally leads to the Eternal! It was now leading us to Madras. As we waved farewell to the retreating forms of friends gathered on the doorstep, the cloying sweetness of the garlands about our necks soon mingled with the odours of cooking-curries, as we drove thru the din of the town, to the station.

Fireworks shot into the sky from a passing garden, where a bridal pair was being feted like beating hearts. The entire world's mortal pain seemed lurking in those strains full of surface joys. Poignantly from another lane rose the wail of mourners and we caught glimpse of a poor, pale sheath also being carried in state,

to the burning ghat. From open doors too, came the wails of the new-born. On this short stretch of scarcely a mile, the immortal drama of life and death – Krishna Leela, the play of God and generation seemed swiftly enacted. The Spirit cried within us, Who will learn Freedom? Regeneration? O weary, sleeping sufferers on the winding way to paradise!

Finally we were safely seated in the train, water jugs and tiffin carriers tucked amidst the boundless and baggage. Brother Atma Ram had quickly, with Swamiji's help unrolled our bedding on the long benches. The compartment was very big, and the cool night wind pouring thru the open windows, was fanned on our hot faces by a beneficent electric Punka. There were only two other fellow passengers luckily, friendly Islamic government officials going to Hyderabad. In friendly eastern fashion they soon exchanged greetings and the usual inquiries as to the destination of each etc. Before long, Allah, God, and Brahma, were discussed with a tolerance and unity that would have pleased Him. When their red, jaunty fezzes were doffed in farewell, after we partook of a melon together, as a sort of sacrament of brotherhood, we were all sorry to part so soon. They said Swamiji's printed prayers, would be part of their daily worship of "the God of the Universe"

Om! Om!! Om!!!

We took advantage of the now vacant compartment, and spreading out in deluxe comfort, knew nothing ill the grey hours just before dawn. How some of our American friends would have laughed with us, if they could have witnessed our rather brief morning toilet, as the train stopped at a little village station. Swamiji's "Kamandal" a large vessel, cunningly fashioned out of a cocoa-nut shell with a little metal spout set in with a lump of tar, such as Indian hermits use; was very useful for the mouth, and face wash, out of the window. This funny process ended, we sat looking at the radiant dawn coming up over the feathery palms. At the next station clamorous with vendors of all manner of Indian dainties, several fellow passengers joined us with their jugs and bundles and vessels of lunch which all helped to tuck away on shelves or under the seats.

Before long our travelling companions were new devotees of our Swamiji seeking Truth from his lips and presence. They were given leaflets according to

their needs after their earnest questions were answered. So each new set of passengers on asking spiritual questions, were given help and enlightenment and went forth to scatter among their friends, in turn, the peace seeds they received along the winding Indian roads, “Amid the fashionable; the scientific, the artistic, the commercial, the political, the learned and literary scramble, seeking, seeking, for a God!” and a Son of Man to direct them along the way to find God. At evening on reaching Madras, Brother Ananda Rao, known as Janaka, because of his ideality, Mother Kamalamba and their three little girls Sushila, Manorama and Somathi welcomed us.

At their home a stream of loving friends and devotees came all day long. And in the evenings we attended the meetings of the Brahmin community, who were celebrating the birthday of Sri Rama, a great Indian Avatar loved by all Hindus and Universalists. The hall and altar was a glitter with hundreds of little ghee lamps. The colored electric-lights, ornaments, and the order of burning sandal and heaps of flowers was sweetly exotic. Bhajan or song worship went on for hours, with rapture. I heard the ancient and mystic Vedic words that have come down to the Aryans from before time. The people were devout. Even the lovely, wistful children sat dignified and thoughtful, also clapping their wee hands, or clashing little tumbrels that were held together by a silken cord.

To this lovely throng with their Love-lit eyes, Swamiji gave out his message of Peace, and I, a benediction to the Universal God, whom we worship in so many ways and forms. Only those who know Him or see His Glory behind only the thinnest of veils of self, know that all worship of a personal God, whatever name or attribute is ascribed to Him and however he is sought in worship; that way is acceptable—and will eventually lead to the Universal God or the Truth Entire. Though all this was new and strange to the Christian church of my dogmatic days, one could not help but feel lovely vibrations from the sacred atmosphere; enhanced tenfold by our Swamiji’s fiery words. He entreated the worshippers not to make ritual, song, or ceremony the end of their communion with God, but a means of reaching the end, Yog, or a close union with Him. Use all outer worship as a purifying method, to finally merge in God; in mute communion; perfect meditation,” he admonished. “For that is the simplest and most direct way for obtaining Spiritual realization.” The holy hush that pervaded as Swamiji dropped his golden grains of Peace; indicated that they had again fallen on fertile hearts of Madras; the second “ploughed field” along the Indian Road.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

III. (PEACE June, 1933)

Our Capt. Krishnarao's greeting and jovial smile was all the pass-word needed to admit us thru the immense "Seasame-like portal" that marked the confines of the royal elephant compound, which place was not at all incongruous with the astonishing jewels we had just seen at the treasure house. The chief mahout who was a holy-man as well, came forward to greet us with a sweeping light on his thin ascetic face. His gentle eyes gleamed forth from clouds of deliberately tangled hair and bears which meant to say, "My wearer is a Yogi, so fixed on the Eternal that he cares not to cut or arrange us". About his neck was the common "Japa Mala" or Hindu rosary, made of the curious seeds of sacred tree "Rudraksha" which are by nature round and carved like lovely dark ivory beads. The ashes of renunciation were upon his brow, breast and arms, in three horizontal stripes, symbolical of the Trimurti or Hindu Trinity.

After an exchange of greetings, queries, and mutual admiration, as is the way in oriental lands, we were directly led to the king of the elephant herd. He raised his great trunk and trumpeted long and loud as if in welcome. This weird, wild sound transported one to jungle shades, full of the scent of sandal, where this race of mammoths live, mate, breed and are fast dying away. It set one's vagrant soul afire with ancient memories down the dim ages recollections of keen jungle adventures besides quiet lotus pools where the little musk-doe and her fawn drink at even-tide, where birds of paradise preen their plumes in bowers of orchids, where black-monkeys fling their subtle bodies from vine to vine, and the beautiful, clean-pelted "cats" roar terribly, so that the whole jungle quivers with fear and self-preservation. This latter reverie brought one swiftly back to the sight of our king elephant.

The clever creature took a garland from a peg in his stall and with profound dignity hung it deftly about my neck, whom our Swamiji as usual had thrust forward for first honors, eager that our "American Sister Sushila" should experience the best of our mother India always, and by God's Grace this wish is ever realized. For being little concerned with the outer things of name and form and change, my loving Guru

took me right into the glorious, golden, God-heart of mother India, which was all one cared to seek anywhere. The arcane Law holds: We attract to ourselves that which we crave and seek, and are,” replies Swamiji, when I express meek wonder at the ever unfolding glory of the Mystic-road which runs parallel with the one along which we are sowing Peace-seeds day by day, along with the “great companions” the earth over.

The huge beast went thru a series of unique stunts, such as bowing, drinking water from a tumbler, beating a tattoo on a drum, ringing a gong etc., ending by settling down for a smoke with his private nargoihla like his mahout, whose sect of “Yogis”, use drugs to induce a certain state. The latter performance we couldn’t appreciate in either man or beast, neither did we condemn it. For this is India, which has impressed anew a lesson learned of old, that even Truth is relative with the individual soul’s evolution and concepts. It is always with foreboding and heartache that we chance to see trick animals, for past Samskaras, and a certain queer state of exaggerated Ahimsa, have made us enter deep into the animal souls which are often so outraged by the human beings, who were given dominion over them to help evolve them and delight in their beauty. Therefore we were happy to learn that it was thru infinite patience and love that our mahout yogi had educated his creature-friends and not the fiendish whips, heated irons, sharp forks, racks and other evil means used by circuses and animal shows. Realizing the torture the poor quivering, fear maddened creatures are put thru, no humane pleasure seekers would attend such performances, or take their little children to wring laughter and amusement out of such outraged animal-souls. Their hate for human or rather inhuman persecutors keeps the ancient strife alive thru ages of Karma, for they in their turn rise up in fierce revenge.

After paying our respects to all the elephants, we were taken to a really Alice in Wonder-land place, to see the jewels of the elephants, fancy! There were massive gold and silver earrings, crest-jewels, anklets, necklaces and pins to fasten the rich trappings which they wore on state occasions. We were shown too the beautiful gold and silver plated palanquins in which the elephants carry their royal burdens to open durbars etc. They looked like the Indian “Vimanam” or flying vehicles which the Gods were said to have used in their aerial flights from heaven to earth, and from star to star, moon to moon, and sun to sun.

Leaving our Peace-seeds, a few words; and pamphlets with the various officials, who so kindly attended us thru the curious elephant house-hold, we proceeded on our way to the temple and soon drove into its ancient and spacious courtyard. On dismounting we were ushered into the beaming and kindly presence of Swami Vidyanandaji, who is famous in several north Indian states for his lessons on the Bhagavad Gita. A stream of devotees came from the temple cell which he inhabits while in Baroda. They stopped to prostrate to Swamiji Omkar, and myself, because of being his disciple, which we did not allow, raising them at once, to save that homage and energy for the Indweller of their own hearts. Swami Vidyanandaji, as happy a little Sanyasin as ever found joy in religion and service, embraced Swami Omkarji lovingly, and greeted us all as we gathered about him on the cool mats. Our Captain Krishnarao translated our Hindi and English, which began with exuberant expressions of joy at God's goodness in giving us the joy of meeting as dear friends and comrades in Him though from distant parts of the earth, not a difference between us, one in the Ancient Heart of Love. Long we sat so, gazing silently into the deep wonder of each other's soul. When night fell we rose to leave as we wished to continue our journey north. As our Vidyanandaji placed garlands about our necks however, he constrained us to remain in Baroda at least one more day to break bread with him on the morrow.

Therefore garlanded to him with our promise and love, we found ourselves on the morrow in the spacious temple court yard, with its floor sweet and neatly polished with cow-dung, water and sunshine, after the ancient custom of India. At one time on hearing about this usage from missionary relatives I thought, how strange! Now it didn't seem strange, and seemed just like concrete, as we sat on little teak-wood platforms with our big plantain leaves before us heaped with snowy rice gram-pottage chapattis and fruits of many exotic varieties. The wearers of Sun-cloth or Purohit-white sat side by side in a row, and all the sisters, and lay brethren sat in a row opposite them. My ecstasy fed me so full of Heavenly-honey, that my rice mound didn't seem to diminish, which made a little yellow dog looking from behind a pillar very happy, but dismayed our dear friends who wished to lavish more and more upon us with true Indian hospitality.

After washing hands, and mouth from a curious brazen beaker we sat resting in the shade of the temple wall which looked out upon a number of little fanes, intricately carved with ancient mythological symbols, by devotees who took their skill and cunning with them to the funeral pyre ages ago. Ah! Why have the sad old

lands such strong charms and pulls, is it because of sweet memories that only our soul remembers now, and that we only in some moment of deep insight glimpse very vaguely as something seen in a strange dream? As it grew more sunny and sultry Swami Vidyanandaji led us down into a cool, dark meditation chamber, deep in the lap of Mother-earth, where all was sacred silence, with the vibrations of many a God imbued saint, who had sought here to consciously mingle in the Infinite Ocean of Vastness.

We only whispered as we seated ourselves on cool Kusha-grass mats. An old priest with a white beard and eyes full of Soul, lit some long sticks of incense that made perfume wraiths dance slowly above us with trailing veils of blue. Sri Omkarji and Vidyanandaji exchanged a few experiences about methods of entering into the Silence rhythmical breathing etc. The loving Vidyanandaji was overjoyed that many of our experiences tallied. On the vibrations of the sacred syllable Om, chanted in mystic manner by our Omkarji we were then swept away on wave on wave of light, to Peace, perhaps for an hour, which held centuries. We were awakened by a dropping of rose-leaves upon our heads, hands and feet by our venerable priest, Swamiji then chanted again his mystical Om song, which like Gabriel's trumpet first called one from the ranks of the living dead, with a fiery sweet strain that consumed the present past and future, leaving only that golden beauty of the Eternal, forever. With a new heartful of Peace-seeds, wet with the living, precious "Amrita", dew of Love's own tears, we arose, blessed and were blessed by all our dear comrades of Baroda joys, and went our ways to sow them along Indian roads singing the glad hymns of our soul.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

IV. (PEACE July 1933)

On thru the old Wisdom-land, the powerful rhythm of flying wheels carried us, while the Southern Cross and the Plaids shone in the velvet night sky without. Our fellow passengers were sleeping fitfully on mats spread on the floor or benches. On entering the train we tucked away our clay water-jug, tiffin-carrier, and fruit basket, spread our bedding, and joined the rest, of our snoring friends. I scrambled to an

upper berth, as I could hang a bath-towel screen around it and make my brief evening toilet in all boudoir sanctity. Swamiji hung an orange towel about the glaring light around which innumerable insects were madly whirling. At the clamour of a big station we would start up and gossip for a few minutes sipping lukewarm soda which our Atma Ram would make a sprint for, when we were athirst. Sometimes he brought back a rare trophy, a piece of ice which we sucked beamingly, or tinkled in our glasses of unbelievably vivid hued beverage, till it dwindled to nothing in a moment, so sultry was the weather.

Then off again into a deliria, in which range on range of Himalayan peaks rose mirage-like all cool and glittering with snow and glaciers. When the faint grey light of dawn came over the horizon, we all stirred and I descended from my ceiling retreat and returned the pearly smiles and morning greetings of the fellow-wayfarer below my berth, a lady from Gujarat in a purple saree splashed with golden leaves. She offered me a neem tooth-brush-stick, and I supplied water from our Swamiji's Kamandel and we performed the most intimate of offices of teeth cleaning out of the window, with merry quips, while her men-folk who appeared from above and below, joined Swamiji and the two boys on the other train side, in the same performance. When we were all ready, and my third eye was nicely put between my eyes by my new friend in completion of the whole triumph of Indian toilet, we sat down to watch the dawn in silent joy and wonder.

A Sheikh in one corner was doing his Namaz, morning prostrations to Allah, how beautiful to behold his communion with the infinite shutting out his surroundings, so fixed on God! The crimson and gold tide of dawn spread for across the eastern sky, and a flock of white cranes flew over it like pure thoughts over the red heart of a (Bhakta) devotee. As Swamiji answered the queries of our fellow passengers about our Peace Mission and creed, and held their interest with thoughts that were later the inspiration of his well-loved "Message of the Sun", full of such illuminating thoughts as this passage. "Filled with self-purification, saturated with divine Love, bathing ourselves in the Light of Lights, let us now approach the glorious rising sun for its message, O! Golden disked sun what is your message to us the children of Immortality? The sun looking into my very soul, penetrating its burning rays into the very cells of my being, speaks as follows: Blessed one! I have nothing to teach thee in words, Thou art the Ocean and I am bubble, Thou art the manifested image of Truth. How can this tiny orb give its message to the Sun of suns? Arise and awake to manifest the glory of the Sun of suns! Etc."

On a tide of Light and Sun, we thus entered Agra, bade adieu to our travelling companions and leaving our baggage at the station, walked out into the wonderful old city. The ramparts of a great fort met our gaze at once, as walked along the ancient highway where mighty armies had tramped to mortal combats. A caravan of camels plodding along the same road, added just the proper touch of exotic interest to the scene, already interesting with bright garbed people and queer little canopied vehicles, "Ekkas" in which passengers sat dangling their legs over the sides while they jingled along musically beside us. The appearance, apparel, and language was all different from the south, so that one seemed to be in a different land. The many fezzed heads and heavily veiled female shapes, gave evidence of a majority of Muslim inhabitants.

Our Srinivasarao who had been to Agra before, guided us along the historic road telling us thrilling tales of the days of Rajput chivalry. We stopped at the spot where a besieged prince had jumped on his mount from the high ramparts and galloped away, after in open Darbar slaying the Dewan, and thus avenging the honor of a noble Rajaput lady. Entering the great fort which is now inhabited by British regiments, we wandered thru its labyrinths so full of a hallow of a melancholy grandeur, as are all relics of past splendours. After seeing many of the buildings which the great Moguls inhabited in their complex lives of luxury, within the double walls of sand stone, with its many watch towers and battlements and stopping to see the moat which all medieval castles had, we explored the ancient royal living quarters.

We passed thru audience chambers, court yards and baths all architectural victories, and went forth on the turrets to see the Taj Mahal the greatest triumph of all. Around the bend of the Jamuna we saw it best from the jasmine tower on the top of the fort, where Shah Jehan had been imprisoned for long years by his own son Aurangajeb. Like a shimmering white dove we beheld this poem in pearly marble nesting among the green foliage of its gardens, under the very blue sky. The fleecy cloud-ships were not more ethereal or pure, as they floated and enviously mirrored themselves in the placid river besides it. One more glance and we left the fort to see the world's greatest monument to love undying at a closer range. In one of the funny little tongas that shook and rattled us so that we were threatened with a seat on the road, at every awful lurch, we reached the outer portal a thing of beauty in mosaics

which heralded the splendour just beyond it, and ushered us into another lovely experience, in the cool shadow of the Taj Mahal.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

V. (PEACE AUG. 1933)

Ethereal and lovelier than its many pictures, we saw the Taj Mahal from the beautiful portico leading into its gardens. O! flawless pearl, set in emeralds, our first glimpse from afar was not decoying and our childhood roving fancies of seeing you were all worth the while! The sympathetic and congenial companionship of our Omkarji, Atma Ram and Srinivasarao, all aesthetic and philosophic, added much to the perfection of one's delight, for besides my own, I had their eyes to see through.

The long white side-walks bordered with evergreen shrubbery on one side, and a row of fountains and quiet pools of lilies at intervals, lent a serene and fitting atmosphere, to the tomb with so melancholy and enchanting a tale hovering about its memory. We steeped our souls in the exquisite stillness of the haunting environment, walking in harmonious silence. All felt reverent and impressed by the Taj Mahal, in which a long dead emperor tried to symbolize the charm and beauty of the queen whose death gave life to the fairest structure on earth. One mused: If thus the strength and purity of but an earthly love, proved a factor in unfolding so lovely a monument of human culture, what glories then may rise out of Divine, Cosmic-love, whose wonders the materialist can hardly conceive of, and much less experience. Oh! Let us hope that Shah Jehan as well as other great earthly lovers, eventually realize that mundane love is only a bridge spanning the river of evolving life, which must be crossed over, to attain the shining plane of God-consciousness or Divine love. The former has limitations and is closely linked with pain, while the latter, God-love, is limitless and in its highest expression, Akhanda Satchidananda, or supreme and everlasting bliss.

What superb craftsmen the ancient Moguls were, with their skill of using the beauties of river, mountain or sea as a background for their exquisite materialized

fancies. The Taj Mahal, with its mirror, the placid Jamuna, reflecting its delicate beauty and the expanse of love land, gives a subtle imaginative touch. It seems to mean spirituality rising out of common clay. As the sun was fervent we climbed the steps to the terrace and rested on a cold bench in the shade of white walls and towers, surveying them, and the region about. Muslims in Fez and bag-trousers hovered about, or sat on the walls dangling sumptuous, gold-embroidered foot-gear with turned up toes, adding a colourful “One Thousand and One Night” touch to the exotic place. Atma Ram and Swami snapped various scenes. Srinivasarao scouted for drinking water or soda. And I sat looking at the beautiful designs, and Quran Quotations in mosaics of semi-precious stones, the words of which are inlaid with a view to perspective, so the topmost letters seem of the same size as the lowest ones. Such tricks in art are highly intriguing!

The cool interior with its delicate lattices and screens more like Spanish lace than marble led one into various chambers, always of chastest marble inlaid with lapis, cornelian, jade and onyx and other jewels replacing the valuable ones long since removed by the conquerors of this kingdom. Its relics remain like the sad refrain of a finished Aria in a fond memory. Down the marble steps to the still sarcophagus of the darling Mumtaz we walked on reverent unshod feet like in a temple or mosque. There on the marble floor immaculate as snow on Everest’s crest, we sat in cross-legged posture meditating on life’s evanescence and the way to immortality. We were uninterrupted because the heat without forbade other visitors, and the white-bearded ancient guard in his white Kaftan seemed like Father Time himself sitting in silent approval of our reverence, on the stone stairs nigh us. We felt like lingering but it was a public place. Alas! So refreshed and soothed by that short visit to the luminous realms, we passed up into the glaring sunshine and wended our way over the blinding marble whiteness to the dusty road. In a souvenir museum we saw lovely miniature Taj Mahals and Pearl Mosques the lovely building which is the plainer sister of the Taj. There were wondrous silver on velvet embroidered pictures of the wonder structure and beautiful inlaid stone ornaments, motifs from the mosaics just admired. The merchants were moderns, but had tongues which dripped silver into one’s ear when they extolled the quality of their wares. Their patient persistency our Swamiji said with a sparkle of humor, was an object lesson to the Truth seeker or the aspirant to perfect meditation, in thus striving to obtain the Goal of One Center. With several interested ones Swamiji had short spiritual conversations. As a high compliment we were told that we were better Muslims than they, whereupon Swamiji reminded them of the shining possibilities

latent in every soul irrespective of the vocation in life, if it be an honest one. The discourse was the seedling of that splendid inspiring essay which our Swamiji later offered to you all thru the “Peace Journal”, entitled “Religion and Life are not Two, but One”.

As is invariably the rule when travelling with our loving wonderful Guruji, we were proffered refreshments by these perfect stranger who so soon felt irresistible love and unity and treated us like friends. The luke-warm soda of outlandish hue, slipped down our parched throats like nectar, we thanked our kind Muslim brothers, took our pretty trifling mementoes of a wonderful day, and returned to the station. Resting in the Purdah ladies salon, I was awakened by a buzz of whispers and beheld about my couch five rain-bow fairies. They addressed me in Hindi wanting to settle the question if I were “A Kashmiri or a European lady”. To their friendly interest, I responded, this body was born in America but I belong to all nations, and all people are my very own. This pleased them and they drew closer to hear all about Santi Ashram, Guru Omkarji and asked many innocent questions about my beliefs and impressions, and I learned that they were all Hindu Medical Students just going home for vacation. We had a short meditation together, the reverence humility and child-like sweetness despite their learning and culture, filled me with admiration. And for the millionth time, I saw with joy the other side, the golden lining, of the so often darkly portrayed picture of Indian womanhood and Hindu life. As I left to rejoin my Peace companions plied with fruit, flowers and fond hand-fold Namaskars and enjoined to remember these dear sisters I mused on the Welder of hearts: Into a living chain of the gold of Love and the pearls of fellowship He fuses His children’s thoughts; verily as Swamiji often quotes “They shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God.”.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

VI. (PEACE OCT. 1933)

A few hours ride from Agra, and we turned a new page in the book of our Indian travels. Muttra was the new chapter destiny had written for us with her flowing pen.

This place is famous for the birth of Krishna, and is one of the most frequented of pilgrimage places. Arriving at the station, we lost no time in hiring one of the native Tonga vehicles, and started for Brindaban, where the Jumna flows along bathing ghats and temple walls. Legend always throws an added hallow over ancient and sacred places. So, as we lazily rumbled over the dusty road passing many an Ashram and minor temple from which all manner of Indian recluses and holy men watched us as we passed by, our Swamiji recounted for our benefit the well-known life of the deity Krishna as recorded in the Puranas which are India's most sacred scriptures next to the Vedas.

Peacocks called us from tree and wall or spread their jewelled fans for our delight; because of their association with the beloved Krishna, they are cherished and protected by all and are seen in large numbers. Watching temple spires, priests and ash-coloured yogis with great caste marks on various parts of their bodies and odd dress, and head-dresses and even the expanse of level land green with young crops, we listened to the words of our beloved Guruji who related that at Muttra a cruel king named Kamsa reigned who had been told by a soothsayer that he would soon meet death at the hands of one of his relatives. Somewhat like Herod at the birth of Jesus, the king ordered every male child to be slain, in the least way related to him. Now, the God Vishnu, the preserver, took human birth as Krishna to put an end to the evil reign of king Kamsa. His parents were the very sister of the king and her husband. As the time of birth approached, they were both imprisoned. Yet when the child was born the prison guard fell in a deep sleep. By divine hands the prison gates were thrown open, and the father carried the holy baby Krishna across the dashing, stormy, torrent, Jumna to its safe new home with a cow-herd whose wife had just been delivered of a female child, really a goddess who had incarnated for the purpose of being substituted for Krishna in the prison. All the efforts of Kamsa to destroy the child Krishna, of whose birth he became aware, were in vain.

When the boy was quite young he boldly went to seek out the tyrant Kamsa, and slew him. There are a series of fanciful and idyllic tales about the childhood days of the boy Krishna, spent in company with Balarama who had incarnated to assist him in his great life's work for humanity. As they played in Brindaban's forests and fields with the little cow-herds they would string flowers with garlands and hang them about their necks and make beautiful crest ornaments of peacock feathers. During their play and pranks they often came upon a demon sent by Kamsa to kill Krishna, in the form of a horse dragon or mad elephant which they would

vanquish. Many are the miracles attributed to the god Krishna and numerous the tales which on festive days or on the birth day of the deity are dramatized for the delight of the multitudes that flock to the ancient and sacred places that are in anyway conceded with Sri Bhagavan's life and that of his beautiful consort Radha who is always mentioned with him.

The sprightly or spiritual, symbolical tales made our journey seem very short, and soon we were before the golden temple of Brindaban. Its magnificent pagodas rose in dreamy splendour against the sunset sky. A high wall enclosed its immense area. There are many other small temples; indeed it is a city old temples. Pilgrims carrying garlands of beautiful flowers thronged the streets and the temple steps, or stopped to buy little idols, ghee lamps or other souvenirs to take home to loved ones. All manner of mendicants, fakirs and beggars sought alms, having walked incredible distances on foot to the holy place. The highest delight for a large section of the Hindus, when they have time and means, is to spend it in visiting some sacred place, and there bashing and worshipping for several days, feeling that they too have taken a spiritual bath, gaining purification and merit. One might meet among the pilgrims anyone from a great Maharajah to a beggar child and all are bent on the one errand salvation.

Though this was one's first experience of this nature and the environment strange and dream-like one found the pure vibrations of hundreds of devoted hearts sweep one into a very high state of consciousness. One's soul was on fire with Divine Love. Facing the sunset all pink and green as jade, while the golden Jumna danced before us we leaned on the wall of a bathing ghat, withdrawing our gaze from all the outer beauty to the all-beautiful Beloved enshrined in our hearts. Then the Blessed One spoke thru our Swamiji in accents mellow. "Thru His saints and sages the Almighty God said: -- I do not need your outer rituals, your animal sacrifices or pilgrimages. What I want is your devoted heart which is full of love for Me and the whole universe. The awakened souls are filled and saturated with it. In selfless service they reach heights of sacrifice and heroism beyond mortal comprehension, and thru their divine love unlock the very doors of Heaven, beholding its vastness and wonders. They begin to understand the laws of the universe and the mysteries of all creation. Verily and best of all, *Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God*. This Divine love at length opens wide the inner eye of spirit, so that the human soul may see the face of God, achieving the aim of all existence. May this Godly glow of love burn with a steadily raising flame within us, till the little self is entirely

consumed and our goal and glory is revealed to us!” Those words brought to my mind a few lines by Puran Singh which our Swamiji asked for:

*“My soul is on fire!
The spring is in its half-opened buds!
How great the joy if my lips open and say His Nam!
O saints! Put on my tongue that honey which makes so life-giving
The repetition of His Nam!
The spring is indeed for those who have met Him!
In vain the Mother gives birth to that which passes outside the maddening circle of
His arms!
All is death and ruin but his great love, His Nam.
Pure are the hearts of those who are at the feet of my Beloved!
Meet me, O Beloved! Pray come to me now!”*

Then as the peacocks of Brindaban called to each other, from the jasmine scented bush, we chanted the sacred syllable Om!, the Word, the Nam—and then drove away, beside the ancient bathing ghats and temple walls into the silent country where the feet of a god had trod on a mission of mercy to man over fifty centuries ago. Feeling His presence, we scattered our leaflets—Peace seeds—all along the way. May the pilgrims who received them find hereafter Sri Krishna and Brindaban within their own hearts!

Om! Om!! Om!!!

VII. (PEACE NOV. & DEC. 1933)

The tropical sun seemed to be pouring its very heart of light and fire across the Punjabi plains and villages with their straight square roofs. As we sped northward to green forests, waterfalls and perennial Himalayan snows, we caught glimpses of the arid plains which grow bush and green with wheat when the gracious rains come. Land, dwellings, people and dress here took on a distinctive difference. This was the land of the warrior race, Rajaputs and Kshatriyas, a comely people with fair faces

and strong large limbs, whose valour is part of the religion left to them by Saintly Guru Nanak in their scriptures “*The Granth Sahib*”. In their beautiful, well-regulated temples, the One God is adored by perpetually having a priest or church official and reading the *Granth*, so that all people may hear and learn the Path to the One Goal it indicates.

As our train halted for brief space, we saw turbaned figures, in long, tight-fitting trousers accompanied by women in lovely gauze veils embroidered jumpers, and silk trousers, burring past the many hawkers and vendors of foods, which too had changed; different breads, sweets and curries as well as fruits swung by in large trays under our windows. Without, under arrow of trees, a caravan of camels was resting adding an exalted touch again. Our fellow-way farers were so benevolent and interesting that one did not mind a somewhat crowded area. As we were plied with questions which our Swamiji ever diverted into spiritual channels and offered “Chapaties” or fried bread and other refreshments as well, I thought of the reserved mode of western travel, which has its advantages in privacy and comfort no doubt; yet one was glad to be here in this happy gypsy atmosphere, where genial warmth flamed from heart to heart and people were unafraid to be kind.

Noticing that our Swamiji was feeling crowded and uncomfortable because of his hip, still delicate from a fall while in America, and that I was weary from long journeying and the oppressive heat, they eagerly made room for us sitting about on their bundles and bedding for a time. When we were all comfortable and a Muslim friend in one corner had obligingly put away his big water-pipe, our Swamiji began sowing Peace seeds. As we rumbled on, he said, “Here we are from different parts of India and mother earth, our religions and customs, dress and other outward appearances differ. Yet with a spark of Love in our hearts we feel a sense of Oneness. Every religion and creed has some mission to fulfil and has mark of distinction. Time and the land in which they were conceived make them all outwardly different. That is in non-essentials, but the basic principles are the same, for Truth is one though men call it by various names. Religions may have various paths but they have one goal, the purification and evolution of the soul which ultimately leads to Freedom or Salvation.

Our Heavenly Father, like an earthly father places his children in the environment that will best evolve them for their divine heritage of immortality and glory. Hence, we have many paths or religions. In the fragrant rose of humanity, the various religions are petals surrounding the one golden Heart God or Truth. The formation, colour and position of these fragrant petals of Divinity may vary, each having some individual attribute and ideal. We have Buddhism with Ahimsa or compassion as its ideal, we have Hinduism teaching Wisdom, we have Zoroastrian religion of flame like purity, we have Christianity, the religion of love and sacrifice, the unity and physical well-being of Islam, and we have their branches or sects. The divine perfume of all these petals in the rose of humanity is –Love!

If all God's children would fill and saturate heart and soul with the living perfume of divine Love, all differences, all pain, all sorrow, would melt like sunset-clouds into golden glow of the Sun of Unity and Oneness. Why is this fair earth a place of pain, death-dealing, greed and agony? And yet, by the perfume of love it could be Nirvana, Paradise, and the Kingdom of Heaven. It is because the children of the earth refuse to inhale and exhale Peace and Love filling their beings with negative poisons instead of this life-giving scent. Oh dear ones, by the one Heavenly Father of us all, let us love, love, love, friend and foe alike, and all creation. Let us drink deeply the perfume that floats from Truth, our one God, and begin this very moment to send forth healing streams of Love to all the universe. Om, Santi, Santi, Santi!" Then he closed his shining eyes of love and went into a trance. Our kind friends listened earnestly as our beloved Gururji scattered his golden thoughts, the seeds, upon our open hearts and all were deeply stirred.

After a period of silence, one kind and generous soul who recently entered our compartment approached Swamiji with the invitation to give up the discomfort of this crowd and go with him to Sialkot. Yes, our brother Samsar Chand was so loving and persuasive that we soon found ourselves in the station at Sialkot, breaking our journey with a refreshing rest. At dawn we drove to the large, and comfortable home of Samsar Chandji's cousin Tara Chandji, where though unexpected and utter strangers, we were given a most loving welcome, as if dear and awaited friends. Such were our experiences throughout our journey with our Gururji; if all were

chronicled as are the events recorded in the lives of other saints, they would show how God takes care of those who utterly lean and rely on Him.

When weary and hungry in some far place, God would send us some messenger in the form of a loving friend and all our needs would be supplied. My heart was often filled with praise and wonder at the wonderful experiences, ever since leaving America, little short of miracle, and one's faith was greatly strengthened. At every unexpected place, our Swamiji seemed to have friends and devotees; thru the Strait settlements friends came with garlands and fruits to meet us; at every stop and station as we journeyed throughout India and Kashmir, some loving heart, Divinely sent, seemed to anticipate us. Even when our car would break down in some lonely road at night, assistance and kindly succour never failed. Such is God's grace! May He be praised!. There is so much to tell about the last instance of his loving care at Sialkot that will relegate it to next month's number. May the Indweller of our hearts give us perfect meditation so that we may realize all His loving kindness, as we go thru life sowing seeds of Peace and Love.

P R A Y E R

May all beings drink the Nectar of blessedness till Life, Love and Light fill every atom and cell!

May all souls be soothed, healed and satisfied, who thirst and long for these waters of Life, forever.

Om, Santi, Santi, Santi.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

VIII. (PEACE JAN. 1934)

As the bright Punjabi sunshine discovered us, we were in our genial Saikot resting-place, where brother Samsar Chandji had, like a true angel led us weary pilgrims, at dawn. His cousin Tara Chandji was asking us warmly welcome, as if we were very dear and long expected relatives, and not utter strangers. Already our kind Heavenly Father had again prepared these hearts with His invisible bonds of unity. How good the creamy milk, luscious fruits, and little cakes tasted as we sat down, bathed and radiant, to breakfast, with our kind friends beaming at us. As I recounted in another chat with you dear reader, in India hospitality is a veritable ritual not a matter of etiquette but an act of devotion.

Travelling with a great soul like Swamiji whose renunciation and inherent purity sheds its influence on all who contact him, his little band of disciples were partakers in the respect and love shown him wherever we stayed. In India the spiritual life is idealized, and nothing is so revered and holy a thing to an Indian heart, than a soul who lives in God, and helps others to live in Him. Riches, worldly learning, fine apparel, and mere outer beauty are as unheeded as autumn leaves when compared with the value placed on a God-man. A Maharajah in all his Durbar glory cannot attract an Indian heart as a homeless, penniless monk in a ragged Khaddar loin-cloth, who has the glory of heaven in his thoughts, words and deeds. Such is India, our spiritual Mother!

Living symbols of this, our chaste Mother, came to greet us in the manifested forms of the beautiful daughters of the house of Chand. Smiling and blushing like dewy roses at dawn, beneath their gauze veils, they came and spoke sweet words of welcome and reverence to our Swamiji. Taking me right into their innocent hearts, they fondled and loved me as a child rejoices over a new doll that some God-mother brings to them from a journey, or as a long lost sister who has come home at last. When we spoke of our work in east and west and the great Beloved, I saw living before me again the immortal Sita, Radha, Savitri, Sakuntala, Padmini and all the long procession of the queens of Indian womanhood. Here one beheld not the mere beauty of colour, line and form but the loveliness that an awakened soul radiates,

when God is shining thru but the thinnest veil of self, and whose full glory is about to break forth any moment.

No wonder Indian poets sing so divinely, with such mothers, sisters and wives to call out the very music of heaven itself from their souls. Many of these girls were college students preparing themselves for service of the motherland, as have thousands of their sisters in all parts of India, gallant women who are doctors, welfare workers and of various vocations helpful to themselves and humanity.

The rare-prejudiced and propaganda misinformed half of the western world, seldom hear of these. They love to dwell on Suttee, child marriage, etc., which the enlightened Indian reformers themselves caused the government to abolish. Others like to think of India as a land of uncivilized heathens, which to their narrow view is marked at once by a shade of difference in colour or beliefs and manners.

The beauty, the poetry, and the simple lives more Christ-like than could be imagined without living among them, is brought to us only by the few truly universal hearts that have wandered and lived there. Such souls are rare to begin with on earth itself. Many profess to be such but would fail in the acid test of their mettle. Misery and agony, inhumanity and cruelty, found equally in every land, are not to be ignored as did dainty Marie Antoinette, the misery before her very palace door. True servants of God give their very heart's blood to alleviate it, yet there are people like the little dung worm which does not care for the loveliest roses but seeks only its own element. Ignorance and might triumph over right in the world of delusion. The earthly life of bees, and birds and of fakirs and saints is at the mercy of others. If any hurt them they will but smile in reply. Such is India, my venerable loving foster-mother. She has blessed this daughter to gaze long and lovingly into her golden, mystical heart of Love and wisdom. What she beheld there was a Glory that blinded her eyes forever to anything else. She touched her heart and saturated it with sacred love for Him. She sent a messenger in Swami Omkar my Guru to say, "like the vermillion spot between thy eyes, you have a third eye, a spiritual eye, see all thru that, be blind my child to the delusive world forever, gaze only into Eternity, with thy third eye, alert day and night".

After a mutual interchange of spiritual experiences, a Pandit and his pupil joined our large group of visitors. They came to engage our Gururji in a long discourse to hair-split Vedic verses. Just as the outlook indicated a session of several hours, Swamiji brought it to one-pointedness. It brought to mind the hour of Grace in New York when a lightning flash of Illumination had cleared my mind of obstructing doubts and a deep sense of Peace pervaded my heart like a perfume. As on that occasion Swamiji said: "To solve the most intricate problems to our very own satisfaction, we must turn to our own SELF which is Truth Itself. Truth is relative with the evolution and spiritual state of the individual. Because of this difference in perception, evolution and environment, arise all the misunderstandings and strife, even in the name of God and religion, the Presence of the all Holy Unspeakable, is disturbed by the meaningless wranglings of His aspirants. It is an undeniable fact that we eventually become the embodiment of that upon which we meditate. God is all-pervading, all-knowing, verily He is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent, let us meditate on Him incessantly, and enter into His Being. Then all questions and answers will melt in Silence. If we really seek God my loved ones, and not merely our own gratification, or mystery instead of mysticism, then first of all learn to meditate deeply to gain higher consciousness, do not dream in a negative state, but be a flame with God thoughts, and nothing else beside. Seek Him in your heart with unswerving devotion and an immaculate body, mind and heart. In the great Silence and profound Peace that will be yours, you will find the door to the very heart of the Sat Guru, your Teacher of teachers."

An eloquent silence and holy calm filled every heart, as Truth like nectar dripped into them from these inspiring words. We chanted a beautiful Mantram, and the Pandit with his pupil went home to meditate, in grateful silence, thanking our Swamiji. This was Vedanta in its highest and direct form, so simple, even for a child-heart, but deep enough to confound a most learned Pharisee or Sadducee. Taking leave of our lovely visitors, we went with brother Samsar Chandji to see the ancient city. It was inspiring to see a Sikh temple lovely in architecture, where Guru Nanak used to stay, that poet sage who thru sheer beauty makes one feel the closeness of Nam, Om.

Long we gazed at the old, old fane, feeling the presence of the gentle sage, and listening to the chanting of the Granth Sahib under the blossoming trees of the temple court yard. Passing the street scenes the characters from tales of eastern folklore seemed to live again before us, and I expected Nanakji with his guitar and rebeck-players to appear in every lane. One felt light and joyous and a subtle sense of being almost transparent so that all was filtering thru one, and the heart was full of glory, so that one reeled a little with joy. The eyes of our faithful Atma Ram, Srinivasarao and Samsar Chandji were all starry, and Omkarji seemed to exude an aura of light as he sang Om Om Om, like a happy bird. May the Universal Father be greeted with a 'Hail, Lord Hail forever by every atom'. Om Tat Sat!

Om! Om!! Om!!!

IX. (PEACE FEB. & MAR. 1934)

Morning was hailed with a ringing of temple bells, the lowing of the milk-white temple-kine, and chanting of sweet eastern hymns or Mantrams, mingled with the heavenly notes of thousands of song-birds. Bathed and radiant we greeted one another with folded palms and bowed heads saying 'Namastay' in His Name. Then we showered jasmine flowers on the feet of our Guruji in whom Heaven itself comes down to us each day. Our Guruji who always protests when we worship the God who whines so clearly upon us thru him, said, "Children, children the beautiful God is everywhere! Come, we shall see His manifested glory in the rising sun", and he scattered a rain of flowers on our heads, as we went together into the temple courtyard. Like the dancing of waves, undulations of rosy light flowed into the heavens, filling our hearts with the throbbing music of joy.

Deeper and deeper grew the yearning for freedom forever, from this ball of clay to pass into that nameless Splendour, that Celestial Sun, of which they manifested sun, is only a dim symbol and shadowy reflection. Our Guruji asked me what I was

meditating on, then, I replied “The description of His cosmic-conscious Balzac, which describes the ritual of a soul welcomed into Glory”:- “Hail to him who rises to life! Come flower of the worlds, diamond passed thru the fire of affliction, pearl without spot, desire without flesh, new link between earth and heaven. Be thou Light! Conquering spirit, queen of the world, fly to take thy crown; victorious over the earth, receive thy diadem! Be one of us!” Swamiji said, “That is –beautiful— Sister Sushila may we all soon, like running streams flow and merge in that Ocean of Light, symbolized by these beautiful words, describing the Mystical Union”. I was startled from reveries by a lovely, white cow which began licking my arm. We patted her and fed her fruits till our merry Atma Ramji warned, “You will kill her with your kindness; it is not only a cow, which is sacred in India, but a temple cow! I looked at him in horror fancying such a possibility.

Partaking of the good breakfast—the food our loving friends had arranged for us, helping and serving us, with reverent love, we spoke of our journey to Kashmir on which we were to start shortly. We gathered in sweet communion for an hour more snapped a few pictures of the famous Pundit and Raj Guru and their family who gave us each a lovely remembrance in farewell. Mine was a beautiful head shawl of scarlet gauze with a golden border, and a field of golden embroidered stars. In the south we wear only flowers in our hair, but in the north the head shawl is used, so our loving friends provided me with a wonderful one—far too sumptuous for a wandering Brahmacharini.

Amid the fond farewells and the flower offerings of the little children, we climbed into our lorry and soon were speeding towards the glittering Himalayan peaks that reared in the distance before us. The Jamuna river flashed like a steel dagger as it flowed far below, and we could see afar now the temple towers of fairy beauty pointing their golden fingers into the blue, blue heavens in farewell. We passed a caravan of camels, and saw the Jammu palace high on a distant hill well fortified by rocky walls. The road was narrow, unbelievably steep and perilous, and the curves so hazardous that we smiled nervously at each other, and Swamiji often said, ‘Om! Santi! Santi!’ very quietly, as he always does when confronted by a peril, and which fills us all with admiration and wonder at his state, beyond mortal far.

How can one paint in words the growing holy beauty of the scenery, which not only made us forge the dangerous way, but the piercing cold, and the body itself! One felt like a bird darting from glistening, blinding, field on field, summit on summit, of virgin snow to beautiful valleys, green with tender crops. Blossoming trees and wild flowers greeted every glance of the eye. And under pomegranate trees red with blossoms, the sure-footed mountain goats with their long silken coats sprang about, or grazed among the iris-beds, besides the many streamlets and waterfalls. As our car plowed thru a snowy stretch, our dear Srinivasaraoji said, “O please stop here I want to touch and feel it, this white dust of heaven—for I never have”. We did stop, and had a merry romp, and I told him how children in lands where snow is common each winter, play with it—and demonstrated with a snowball that was a good shot. Quoting Swamiji, I then said, “See brother, Srinivaarao, one touch of the Reality is better than all explanations”.

All laughed and got under shawls and blankets for another stretch of the heavenly beauty of this journey. Here and there one could see a hermit beside a fire on the banks of a stream or near a waterfall. It gave me joy to see the free and natural life of these solitary ones, and as I breathed the pure, clean air of these heights I thought of the poor bound souls slaving in sweatshops and dismal evil places such as “civilization” tolerates, and thru the shimmering holy beauty about me a flood of world-pain stole into my heart with varying pictures of the miseries of the so called “civilization” in this world maniac with delusion. When I spoke of these things with our Swamiji he said these beautiful words while we all listened intensely. “The thoughts that our sister, and you my dear Atma Ram and Srinivasarao and other dear ones, have shared with me, from time to time, in this trend, have given rise to a kindred introspection, with the thought foremost, that when a pure and selfless soul, begins to feel radiant within itself, an illumination, peace and ecstasy that might embrace the whole world—it is a sign of attunement with Heaven. When that same soul feels at times an unspeakable sadness born of no personal or base regret, commingling in with its delectable joys, and sense of profound peace, it is also an indication of attunement with the Infinite. Such is the experience of the Cosmic or Higher conscious soul.

Many a pilgrim on the Way of Light becomes despondent because of this experience of earth shadows stealing across the deep inner glory. With growing light comes growing compassion, or a catching of the bitter drops, that fall from the brimming rim of the cup of human woes. This tender grief however, born of compassion, is not akin to the sorrows of the ignorant exiled from heaven by their sins, which constantly confront and chastise them until redemption comes. Children of Light are glad with the joy of being boundlessly loved—the self-made Out-castes from this joy, go feverishly searching thru all the perversion and more of their element for one touch of real Love—and because of their own darkness cannot perceive it. ‘The Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not’. God-consciousness brings with it a mystical attunement with the Universal Heartbeat and its exquisite harmonies.”

As Guruji’s speech faded into silence while we glided thru a sun-splashed valley through which a foaming torrent tore with a thunder and surge, it was not hard to feel that Boundless Love of God within and without and all around for the majesty of His Presence vibrate about us at the rate of fire. In silent joy we beheld the unearthly splendour of the sunset glow which made unattainable the hoary peaks and glacier crags burn with crimson and aureate fire. As we reached our mountain shelter, day was dying, and purple shadows hung their sombre draperies over valleys and ravines. We saw simultaneously an eagle, soar into a lingering streak of a sunset-gold, and our Swamiji said, “Let us fly like that bird, right into the radiant Heart of God ever ignoring the creeping shadows of darkness that envelope the earth-life.”

Om! Om!! Om!!!

X. (PEACE MAY & JUNE 1934)

The rude Dak bungalow affording shelter for the night, after our glamorous journey amid snowy crags and drifting cloud-ships, was pointed out by a friendly denizen of the tiny mountain village. Early spring in the Himalayas is very cold. When the shadows of night fell, our Srinivasarao and Atma Ram went into the village food-kitchen to procure some warm food. Our Guruji then taught meanwhile, some ancient scientific method to warm the body with inner flames of divine energy. Behold a pleasant glow seemed to enfold me as from a radiant hearth, as I meditated and practiced!

The boys returned very soon with hot buffalo milk, Dahl, a porridge of dried peas, and flaky disks of unleavened bread, which tasted as if the gods had secretly dropped nectar upon them. Wrapping up in a cocoon of woollen things, we then happy and sleepy, sought our Charpies, the native beds of woven cord or tape over low wooden frames, which seemed almost luxurious after bedding on earth or stone often and often,. The last scene that filled one's heart with rapture was the rearing majesty of range on range of pure white mountains and large scintillating stars. The drowsy rush of a thousand springs and streams sang the sweetest of Cosmic lullabies, till one sank into deep sleep. Dawn came with a musical chanting of the Om Mantra, from Swamiji and the merry greetings of the boys. When one looked about at the room bare as a medieval nun's cell, one's soul was filled with silent laughter to remember other risings, in another life, as it were, amid aces, silks, rich carpet and the whole artistic clutter which cultured western existence takes casually as sheer necessity to life and well-being, but which one can do so well without.

Looking into the glorious morning vista a green valley, and the great mountains and the sunshine sweeping over all with a golden touch, my heart sang a song without words, dwelling again and again on the master note, Om, the glorious Word which created all, Om, that wondrous Love, beckoning us from the heart of nature with sweet messages of hope and joy eternal. After our brief morning devotions and breakfast, we walked down the sunny lane amid a caravan of pack animals, and got into our lorry. Our genial Pathan driver, who often made us feel as if we were in an aeroplane, instead of a mountain truck as he looped the loop from peak to valley,

gave us a dazzling morning smile. He leaped into his seat at the wheel, his scarlet turbaned flapping jauntily in the clean wind, and we tore out into the winding hazardous trail again.

Rosy cheeked Kashmiri shepherdesses with long hair plaited together with wool and jingling with silver head ornaments, who were dressed in wide sleeved garments of vivid-hued wool, were leading their flocks to pasture on the mountain sides. The goats and sheep were given by nature protective coats of very long and heavy texture. The rich Kashmiri shawls, blankets and rugs are made from wool and hair of these creatures. We noticed too how the horses, kine and mountain dogs were supplied by beneficent Providence with coats warm and thick against the bitter cold of these heights. Occasionally a lone horseman came around some bend, and we had to slow down, lest the frightened steed plunge off the narrow pass into the abyss below. The rider would Salam his thanks with a swift gesture of salute from head and heart.

At noon we descended again into a valley crossing a suspension bridge over a foaming, roaring river, swollen from the melting snows. Logs of timber were being floated from some lumber station. The timber industry is one of the many sources of income to this ancient land of Kashmir, and its craftsmen immigrants from far Persia, are thought to be the finest wood-carvers in the world. They carve with infinite patience, patterns of rich and rare design, with the crudest of tools. The beautiful patterns are taken from nature's own art-book. Fruits, flowers, leaves, birds etc. are cunningly wrought together with vines and intricate tendrils, still scarcely a spot of smooth wood remains; all is one mass of finest carving. To the curio-hunter each of these objects is a thing of joy, and is sold away by the poor artist for a pitifully little sum. Often it searched one's heart to see in places, which were frequented by tourists, some purchaser with a dormant sense of beauty as well as pity, haggling over the already low price of some masterpiece that must have tortured the fingers and eyes of the starving artist for weary months.

On the opposite side of the bridge we halted for refreshment in a little Inn on the river bank. From the open veranda I could see two mendicants, their bodies smeared with ashes, and long matted locks done up in a top knot symbolical of how

little they lived in or cared for their bodies. They were stirring something in a tripod over a little cooking fire, and singing a sacred song in Hindustani.... “Life is changing like a big wave, beauty of youth abides for a few days; earthly possessions are as transient as thought; the whole series of our enjoyments are like occasional flashes of autumnal lightning, the embrace round the neck given by our beloveds lingers only for a while. To cross the ocean of the fear of the world, attach your eye to Brahman.” It thrilled and inspired me to hear this sage little sermon from the two Indian hermits, so much in essence like the words of the Bible..... “Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden pitcher be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern. Then shalt the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it. Prepare to meet thy God!” On departing we left some fruits with the Inn-keeper to give to our river hermits, who sang to the mountains and valleys their philosophic chants, inspiring some stray fellow-pilgrims who passed their way.

Again we spend on, having now descended from the mountains to the Sind valley which was warm, sunny and emerald-green with young rice crops as far as the eye could gaze. Many ancient ruins of Hindu temples lay along the way. They had been demolished by the Mogul invaders long long ago. We got out and sat on the crumbling white walls, again having a silent lesson on the perishable nature of all material things which are after all only thought forms massed together. Our blessed Guruji then said as we poked about among the white ruins, “Children why meditate any longer on the ruined and decayed? Let us turn our thoughts to the Supreme Being, infinite and eternal the life and cause of the whole universe. God, who is the only truth, substance, intelligence and love. To know Him aright is our salvation and life eternal.” We were all grateful that our tender Light-bearer always took us from the earthly and perishable to the habitation of the Most High, that High Tower of God-Mind, that everlasting Rock of ages, even as we blissfully journeyed on, sowing seeds along Indian roads.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XI. (PEACE JULY 1934)

Now our road lay white and winding thru the far Kashmiri vales so exquisitely immortalized by eastern poets, who too had feasted their souls on their radiant beauty, as was now our little caravan as we drove along. The famous saffron flower-beds were pointed out to us which in the fall would be a sheet of golden blooms yielding from their little hearts the rare spice so delicate and costly. Thru avenues of stately trees we passed into quaint and lovely Srinagar, the lively little trading and supply centre of Kashmir. For the time being, it was journey's end for us.

We were soon received by kind friends to whom we bore a letter from the great and beloved Swami Narayana, and settled temporarily in the Kalsha hotel on the main thoroughfare. From our balcony one could see the lively street scene below, like a travel cinema. There were Europeans in smart camp togger, long-robed Persians and Kashmiri Mohammadens, Hindus, stately Sikhs and Indian holy-men of many sects, and the rough-looking traders from Tibet and Mongolia. How one loved them all as they passed by! As the weather was bleak and cold, a servant brought each of us one of the unique little native warming devices; a clay-pot full of burning charcoal enclosed in a little basket which one hugs, or holds one's hands over. The natives carry these little pots about under their woollen robes and even take them to bed at night without upsetting them or burning themselves having become so accustomed to their use. I marvelled at the hardihood of the Kashmiris who with their long winters and heavy snowfalls seem not at all equipped against such weather. The houses are so old and crumbling for the greater part, that they threaten to cave in at the next wintry blast and only open fire-places with a few sticks of wood burning seem to be along with those little charcoal pots, the only heating system. After rest and refreshment we went down to become part of the strange cosmopolitan street throng, affording them as much interest as they afforded us. No sooner had we begun to look into the fascinating bazaar windows where the native

handcraft was displayed, than we were besieged by “mungies’ keepers of house-boats, who flashed sheaves of testimonials as to their personal merits and that of their water-craft before our bewildered gaze. “They shoved and jostled each other almost into the Jhelum River, now gliding under the bridge we were crossing.

Our Swamiji dispersed them with a few kind words, promising that we would soon inspect their boats in view to rental. Then we turned into a shoe bazaar because we had come from the sunny south in sandals, composed of a leather sole and thongs that looped about the big toe, now the weather demanded stockings, so we needed thongless slippers, rather stout, for the climbing and walking we were to do. The merchant surprised at seeing a tall saffron clad holy-man, a foreign disciple in Indian dress, Srinivasarao in Gandhi cap and cloth, and Atma Ram in European dress hastened to serve us; arranging bundles of slippers that hung about like drying chillies. I thought I had suddenly fallen into the pages of Arabian Night’s Tales. There were bundles of slippers of crimson and azure velvet, embroidered in gold or of tooled leather gay with red pom-poms and curiously turned up at the toes looking for all the world like little gondolas—it seemed strange to think that some people were still fashioning and using this, odd ancient foot-gear. They came all the way from Peshawar and Afghanistan, noted for leather craft. It was hard to resist the soft embroidered slippers. They were beautiful, but designed for gentle Purdah wear, and I looked forward to a free and athletic season in these mountains so was soon fitted out with a more hardy slipper, not too much turned up at the toes. Soon we all were fitted out in our new footgear and various merchants fairly dragged us into their shops to display beautiful shawls, wood-carvings and paper-matche, silver and curios, from all Asia.

I was fascinated by the display of the sweetmeat vendor, strange compositions of milk, sugar and nuts with sheets of gold and silver-leaf floating on them. In the Ayurvedic, ancient Indian medicine school, gold and silver are considered when taken internally in small doses, wonderful tonics. Therefore it is common to see it garnishing sweetmeats in this manner. Walking along the banks of the Jhelum we could see the river-life, all kinds of house-boats were moored on either bank waiting sleepily for tourists to occupy them. Small boats bearing cargoes of vegetables were

being punted along and from kitchen boats ascended tongues of smoke into the sky and the lively chatter of the river-gypsies over their noon-day bowels of rice. There was so much to intrigue one's fancy that we had soon reached the home of our friends on the Bund, where we were happily ensconced before long.

As we sat in the balcony before sunset, we could look at range on range of snowy Himalayas, the river flowing gently with in its green banks, the magnificent chennar trees rustling their leaves in the fresh wind, filled one's soul with a sense of deep peace. Two Pandits called to exchange a few thoughts with our Swamiji. It was difficult to withdraw from the dreamy beauty without, to attend their philosophic questions. They were kindly souls who spoke Sanskrit from the Vedas.... Full of Truth and Wisdom, which they would quote to illustrate some point, and translate for me. Finally they said "What are worth the Vedas, the Smritis, the readings from the Puranas, the vast Shastras, or the mazes of ceremonials which give us, as their fruits, arresting-place in heaven. All else is but the bargaining of traders except, that one way which admits one into the state of supreme bliss in one's Self, and which is like the final fire to consume the evolving mass of worldly miseries." Then our Swamiji added, "And knowing that they melt in silence". These words arrested every one with their beauty. We had a few moments of rich silence together and then took leave of our Pandit friends.

Dr. Atri, a well-known physician of Srinagar who had become a devoted friend, then called to take us driving to Harwan. We caught our first glimpse of beautiful Dal Lake with its wealth of lotus blossoms on the way. As we sat in the wonderful twilight silence of the reservoir at Harwan we felt the great nearness or oneness with the Presence. Our eyes beheld His glory all around; in the crimson afterglow over the Himalayan crags, which splendour seemed like a flood of Love pouring from the great heart of creation, in the lovely roses and lilies about us, filling the air with a sacred sweetness; in the calm, cool waters of the reservoir, over which His breath quivered, and in the contentment and unity we felt with one another. "O Light of Lights!" prayed our beloved Swamiji, "As the whole world is laying its offerings of perfumes and wondrous beauty at Thy feet this evening, may we also offer Thee the humble gifts of our entire hearts, and the poor fragrance of our devotions! Thou

alone great God, can't admit us this Grace in this fleeting moment—now. Let us feel that we are Thine own forever, for it is high time to render up our lives to Thee. May all creation be blessed to melt into Thy boundless Love; our Saviour, Truth and Light”.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XII. (PEACE AUG. & SEPT. 1934)

GOLDEN Kashmiri days, and silvery Kashmiri nights with the swooningsweetness of wide-eyed lotus stealing across limpid lakes, passed one by one, with haunting glamour. They could brighten with fond memories long after days without grace if needed.

Into our lives came other tired children of God on their road to paradise. Ever the Bubbles floating up to touch kindred Bubbles, and all to merge in due time again into the vast ocean of Eternity. Thus we dwelt happily in Srinagar on the green banks of the Jhelum, scattering from out the heart such seeds of Love and Wisdom as we had gathered unto ourselves, to all who came seeking them or to spend an hour of sweet communion with a fellow pilgrim on the Path.

Desiring to find a suitable place to found a branch of Santi Ashram, where western friends especially could come to their spiritual retreat, in climate more suitable to their needs, than the fervent Madras atmosphere, we decided to move on, from busy and cosmopolitan Srinagar. The many new friends and devotees of our blessed Guruji showed such enthusiasm and cooperative spirit, that we were greatly encouraged. They remarked that, a truly, universal Peace Center of the nature of Santi Ashram under the guidance of Swamiji, whom they loved and respected so much for his God-fragrant, humble life, would be a divine spark to set aflame the ancient smoldering religious life in this region. Here, to a large extent, ceremonies, piety, name and form and pilgrimage worship, had usurped the loftier and mystical Adwaitic (Oneness) principles of yore.

Our Swamiji humbly disclaimed to have so much influence, but promised these ardent Bhaktas that he would serve with his whole heart, mind and soul; and God as ever, would move according to His will, to establish His Kingdom. Along with this purpose, we felt behind the curtain of space the great Beloved beckoning us to a time of meditation and communion with Him in the pure Himalayas. He called insistently from the recess of the heart, to plunge within for fresh strength and new light. Our Kashmiri days must be as rich as possible. We must plunge deep into the ocean of Truth and bring up at least one pure pearl. With these happy thoughts and aided by our kind friends, we took up our river-gypsy life, to float for miles and miles of serene beauty. Joining our ménage came Jagrath Singh, whom we always think of as “The Faithful One” indeed, as his name signifies. He was one of those radiant souls who can do the so called “menial tasks” with such courtly grace, that one can see at once that he is indeed serving the King of Kings, thereby, as much as a devoted priest or a Pujaree at worship.

It was with keen joy that we launched forth in our little Shikara-boat with its auspicious name “Long and Peaceful Life Shikara” on a placard, amid frilly red and white curtains and glinting beadwork, as if it were going on a Venetian carnival instead of taking merely a group of peace-workers on their quiet errands. These errands however did not forbid whole-hearted pleasure at the land and river scenes that filled one’s heart with pure poetry, too lovely for language. The pretty Kashmiri women and children and the lords of the Dunga boats that skimmed by, called greetings as they paused from their work or hubble-bubble pipes to study us.

The first evening of our house-boat life, we sat on the little wooden roof facing the flaming sunset-sky to say our “Hail Lord!” together. It was so cozy and jolly, sitting among the homely little potted plants of pink geraniums. The Divine Mover ruffled the shining Dal Lake and whispered in the cool wind: “Be at peace. Fear not. Thou shalt yet conquer all evil and behold me.” Highly festive-like and solemn was our first supper from the hands of our Jagrath Singh, Punjabi preparations all new to one. All eyes were shining, and as one glanced thru the carved lattice windows, purple rolled fittingly across the sky. It seemed that all Nature was spreading its rug so royally purple for the still, still footsteps of the Presence; which was wafting peace

like evening dew, on the quiet vales of Kashmir and into every open heart. From another house-boat of some missionaries, floated a clear contralto voice to a harmonium's accompaniment. It was an exquisite air by Mendelsohn which I had often heard pealing from the Sabbath organ in the far away church of my childhood. Dulcet and clear came the music:-

*“As pants the wearied hart for cooling springs,
That sinks exhausted in the summer's chase.
So pants my soul for Thee, great King of Kings.
So thirsts to reach Thy dwelling place.”*

This soul cry, sweet, poignant with feeling, like the deathly panting of the cruelly pursued wild heart, seemed to be the sharp cry from the whole sin-hounded, panting, and Love-thirsty heart of creation. It was the sad cry rising from man and beast and every living thing in this world. They all travail for the Sons of God to come into their Heritage, and make His will of love and wisdom to be carried out in earth, as it is in heaven. “O children of God! O weary fellow pilgrims,” my heart cried, as I listened across the lake—“let us quicken our footsteps to meet that Day of ineffable Glory.”

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XIII. (PEACE OCT. 1934)

Another radiant morning of our halcyon Kashmiri days found us on the top of our houseboat buying our ambrosial breakfast from a passing boat; white honey, milk and strawberries, were procured for a song, from one of the itinerate vendors who float their travelling grocery-stores to one's very door. The house boat was punted along by means of long oars to guide and steer the clumsy craft. The early morning clamour of a stirring world was in the air and along the river banks bathers

were frolicking in the river among flotsam and jetsam of every kind, and at the bathing ghats of silver-domed temples devout Brahmins were performing their bathing rituals. The ancient houses built of mud and brick leaned crazily as if to tumble down any moment. The roofs were adorned with grass and flowers lending a quaint beauty to the scene.

We had to bend low in passing under the many wooden bridges and the arching trees, until the boat finally emerged into the open country where crimson poppies smiled among yellow mustard tops or the lovely blue-bells of oil plants. It was interesting to see farmers washing their woolly sheep or to see the floating gardens, patches of morass on which melons and pumpkins thrived. At intervals our boatmen rested, mooring the boat near some picturesque village. Soon we were surrounded by a floating vegetable market. Here one beheld again cabbage, carrots, beets etc. and fruits of northern climes which seemed almost exotic things, like orchids in winter, in gay New York. For over a year, by God's grace, we had flourished on the few fruits and vegetables that abounded in and about our southern Madras Ashram.

There were exotic foods which one had to get acquainted with, learning how to pare, how to prepare and just how to eat them, raw or cooked, all my new Indian kith and kin so lovingly helped me in this, bless them all, for there was not one herb fruit or vegetable that I had even so much as heard of before except cocoanuts and bananas. Of course one could procure "English vegetables" as they are termed here, but they arrive from afar withered, and after all, it is always best to eat what food natives of certain places eat, to keep fit, I have learned, provided the food is vegetarian and pure, as God ordained, when he made men Sons of God, far back in the tragic story of humanity.

After floating for many miles in full view of the alabaster Himalayas, accompanied all the way by smiling flower-faces and the jewelled flash of piping king fishers, night fell and we moored near a tiny village. At dawn our journey was resumed with the musical swish of the oars and the chant of the boatman—Allah Allah Allah or some other mono syllable to, 'ease their toil,' as they say. At noon we reached Gandorbal one of the beauty spots of Kashmir from which countless trails lead to ancient Himalayan holy places, and the trade routes to Mongolia and Tibet. Our river home was now secured near a beautiful grove of chennar trees, magnificent giants like the oak trees of the west. Mogul kings had planted them to create a garden of all Kashmir. Soon the rent official called for the petty tax levied on mooring places. He told us all about the environing sacred places, and mountain trails leaving a guide-book.

He soon became a warm friend along with the Tahasildhar of the place and many other officials. We had many blessed hours with these natural and delightful souls. In spiritual discourse, Swamiji was always ready and willing to share his much appreciated thoughts with them in his usual loving way. Our literature was freely given to the many that came daily. One remembers with rapture the blessed hours of “Sowing Seeds”, in this fair corner of God’s garden. Often a small group would gather about our Swamiji at dusk or in the clear moon-light seated on the soft grass in the wondrous hush and beauty of nature. The flowing river, the fresh wind blowing from the high white mountain-tops all seemed to join in the exquisite peace and harmony that fell on our hearts as our Guruji lifted us higher and higher to the secret place of the Most High, by his God-imbued influence, and inspired messages. It was Love Itself reaching out and drawing its own to It thru the pure heart of our Swamiji. We did not merely hear words but felt, the power of the Spirit mightily. Such is the life of God-men to give thru the veils of May a glimpse of the all-creating Beauty and Wonder.

On one occasion since it was a time of strife between the Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus, our Swamiji addressed the group that had gathered about him, thus: “Dear friends these are happy days for us in this sacred land so renowned for its spiritual wealth of saints, sages and eloquent poets and its great cultural heritage the Sanskrit language. Whenever I lift my eyes to those snowy Himalayas a deep awe and humility pervades my heart, and I am gripped with an intense longing to be filled with such calm and silent purity, shining with the radiance of God’s love and giving forth fresh streams of life-giving waters of Healing, Peace and Unity. It makes me sad these days however, to see the high communal tension and ill-feelings between Hindus and Muslims, fighting and breaking each other heads; forgetting entirely that in doing so they are denying their Almighty Father the One Presence, in wounding and hating each other they crush the dear Self. It is time for us to forget that we are Hindus or Muslims of this creed, or that sect, or belonging to other outer terms and forms of belief, and to realize in the stillness of our hearts that we are indeed all the children and images of the One God. With such a Love attitude alone does religion have a meaning, and with such a realization Unity will take the place of hate and strife, and peace universal will begin rapidly to set up its Kingdom on earth, O! let us all strive to find that kingdom of Peace in the sanctuary of our own hearts, giving our, One King full allegiance thru our blessed lives of love, compassion, and goodwill, and then as surely as the dark night is followed by radiant day, the Universal Peace will be established to the joy of all creation.

May we now meditate on that great Peace, which is the life and goal of our existence!

Om, Amin, Amen!”

Thus our Swamiji shining with the Peace that passeth all understanding, daily sowed in every listening heart, golden seeds of Love, Peace and Wisdom, during our journeyings in ancient and beautiful Kashmir.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XIV. (PEACE NOV. 1934)

The whole creation vibrated with prayers, as we walked at an early morning over a rich carpet of grass under the armed Chenar trees, along a brook dashing on so merrily that it flung diamond drops into the blue eyes of the forget-me-nots on its banks. Reaching a little village where everyone greeted us with a sweet greeting and smiles we visited the rural Post Office to hold in our hands again letters, the sacred words of love from dear ones so many miles away beyond those snowy Himalayan crags and many lands and seas, making one realize the hand clasp of how unity and love may pierce the veils of time and space.

A small group of our Kashmiri friends soon gathered to catch a few golden Peace Seeds from our Swamiji's smiling lips, and as we departed said loving and reverent words to him, their eyes too seemed to say, "We have known it all from his lips, he has bathed us in holiness." Keener and keener grew the ecstasy of my heart with the pride of having such a Guru, in whom one saw indeed all that was Divine. In walking in his foot-steps, I, most unworthy, often shared the love and reverence that his godly presence so often won in the hearts of great saints, sages, other thinkers and potentates who rule the lives and destinies of men, as well as the myriads of simple children of God whose lives he touched.

In those moments when I received the blessings and tokens of love and was made to sit in high places, my heart knelt to God in a burning prayer. "O Divinity, give me a heart so faithful and true to Thee, that were this loving reverence turned to hate and infamy, were the sweet santal paste or sacred vermillion placed lovingly upon my brow a bruise or a blow, were there perfumed garlands, iron chains were

the foot-steps of my Guru to be stumbling painfully amid curses and jeers to the very cavalry of life – then O! God give me the strength to stand by him as serenely as in these days of his homage and honor, when sages and saints embrace him, and the young and old try to take the dust from his feet to adorn their heads when the old mothers bring offerings of burning camphor, and the young mothers bring their children for his blessing.”

It was the hour of golden sunset of variegated colors with a rainbow across the heavens, drawing our minds into the sublime heights of nature’s beauty, when our Swamiji took all of us for an evening stroll, to conduct our usual spiritual class, always ending in a deep meditation. He teaches usually from within, without the need of any scriptures, but occasionally he opens a page from Bible or Gita or Imitations of Christ. There is a favourite book of his called ‘Jivan Mukti viveka’—Liberation in this life, now and here, which he takes joy to expound some of the deep texts of this illuminating book that contains the Cosmic experience of all sages and saints. This particular evening, facing the glorious sunset we were all seated in PADMASANS—the cross-legged-postures, awaiting like bees for honey to drink the soul stirring words of our Swamiji. He started with the repetition of a prayer of unity, drawing our minds to the restful center and thus to prepare us for the spiritual feast. After reading and explaining to us, in his melodious voice, he came across the words, KNOWING THAT THEY MELT IN SILENCE. After repeating these sacred words Swamiji could read the book no more, nor could he explain any further. The book was closed automatically and he too closed his eyes and entered into deep silence.

KNOWING THAT THEY MELT IN SILENCE.

Seeing our Swamiji melting into silence, we too tried to merge within making the best use of the holy vibrations that were vibrant within and without particularly at that hour of sunset. When we opened our eyes the sun has gone down into the horizon and the river Jhelum is silently flowing at our feet, teaching us the great lesson of ceaseless flow of love and peace towards one and all. After a time our Swamiji too, opened his eyes, but one could see, that he was still deeply absorbed unconscious of the surroundings, hence we dared not disturb him, and thus we waited in mute silence. Finally, when Swamiji came into his full consciousness it was getting quite dark and we were all in a hurry to get back to our boat in time but he was unconcerned, with time or space. Lingered still for a while in the same state, he rose from his seat unwillingly and repeated the following sacred benediction in Sanskrit, the essence also is given below.

Om Poornamadah poornamidam,

Poornat poorna muthachyate

Poornasya Poornamadaya

Poornameva vasishyate.

Om Santhi Santhi Santhi!

‘This Full and so is that. Full comes out of the Full. Taking away the Full from the Full, the Full remains for ever. May Peace be unto all.’

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XV. (PEACE DEC. 1934)

On another morning rich with tokens from God’s treasure-house of love and beauty, we were slowly driving on a mountain road, in a single horse Tonga carriage, to view the various lands that had been offered to our blessed Swamiji for establishing a northern Santi Ashram. The peace and serenity of early morning threw its subtle charm over our hearts so that our words were few. In the valleys beautiful mares with their little awkward foals romped or stood grazing among the iris on the banks of shining rivers. Picturesque shepherds in long bright robes led their flocks to the fresh, green pasture lands. In the spreading trees one saw with delight the graceful play of long-plumed birds, which filled the clean mountain air with their cosmic flutings.

When I expressed my delight to our Guruji, he recited for us, a few lines from a lovely Sikh poem.

The Soaring One of the shining silver feet!

They are His feet that in their silver flight trail in my heart!

My eyes like two crying cranes soar after Him in the holy blue of heaven.

Afar He flies!

*And from the invisible heights come no news, but shower of Bliss, a Nectar rain
that feeds and makes me rich.*

We all felt indeed drowned in a shower of blessings, to behold the Maker in all His infinite variety about us, and so radiant in the presence of our Swamiji. As we passed thru little sunny villages we saw Muslims and Hindus at their morning devotions at Mosque or Temple. As we passed a rural school house where lessons were being read out under a spreading chinar tree, the good master paused in his work and came to salute to our Swamiji, and invite us to visit for a little while. We gladly consented, and were soon listening to the clear bird-like songs of about forty little Kashmiri boys, who were quite proud to display their talents. They all wore little embroidered skull-caps and brightly dyed woollen robes. They all had slates covered with weird Hieroglyphics and a few very abused looking primers.

A number of recitations followed, of a nature very highly philosophic it seemed, for such diminutive students, yet it seemed less strange when I recalled that this was a very ancient land, full of ancient races, where mothers sang philosophic lyrics to their fondling children. After another sweet song, Swamiji said a few words that were assimilated by the smiling dark eyed hoydens with interest and decorum. The gentle young school-master was left beaming and Salaming as we proceeded into the far hills, by Swamiji's gracious praise. As noon-tide approached, one could see the rosy-cheeked peasant women carrying food and large brazen vessels of steaming tea to the workers in the rice fields, who made picturesque groups in their vivid robes among the lovely emerald green of the crops. Having reached a place of great scenic splendour, we turned our faithful horse loose to drink and graze, and took our own refreshment to the banks of the magnificent river Sind.

Great boulders furnished us both chairs and tables and the rushing mountain river afforded us fresh cold water. Here the Himalayas were truly grand, rearing up into steep and fantastic crags, making one aware of the majesty of the Almighty power Who fashioned them thus, and Who crowned them with hoary snows down the dim ages. His mighty love songs roared from the heart of the rushing foaming river. His touch was on our faces, in the fresh wind and flying sprat, as the mighty roaring wasters dashed against the rocks. We had all parted for a time to wash and refresh ourselves. The innermost Essence of one's heart, seemed to be drawn out to meet this Source in ecstasy and exaltation. One's heart was aflame with the wonderful sense of the nearness of the great Beloved, here in His vast Temple of Space and mighty power. My Beloved spake and said unto me "Rise up my love my fair, one, and come away. For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers of the earth appear, the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land Arise, my love my fair one, and come away. O my

dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely.”

This was one of the many precious flashes that leaves the little palpitating life and identity, inebriated with bliss so supernal, that one needs must merge in Him thus eternally or perish with longing. Swamiji was quite lost in the beauty of the Most High and sat in the golden sand, his feet laved by the flowing waters. The wondrous call of Nature about us, had recalled to him his priceless spiritual experiences when as a tender youth he had spent over five years in the ancient and sacred Himalayas ever meditating in all stillness, in the Heart of Silence; to learn in solitary humility lessons of wisdom, life and light. Thus did Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and all the lesser saints and sages who hold or have held the Light of Heaven before the thirsty eyes of mankind, always the God-man goes to His Source first, and filling his soul with nectar, scatters the precious drops freely upon the hearts of the children of men, pouring out his very soul in selfless love and compassion.

We sat long on the cool earth absorbing its strength and magnetism, speaking only now and then some inspired thought. A caravan of Tibetans with laden yaks came threading down the mountain pass. The animals had long mantles of fur almost touching the earth, and carried loads of woollen carpets and blankets from the cold, bleak roof of the world. The men looked like stout Eskimos in their heavy clothing and leggings bespeaking the rigors of the wintry wastes they had traversed to trade their little store, and then return again ere the blizzards in those forbidding regions beyond which they dwell, close the narrow trails. It was very fascinating to watch this passing caravan plodding on and on, also a token of Eternity. As we wandered on the river bank gathering the beautiful smooth stones, our Swamiji remarked that they were symbolical of man. How like these stones, he was first an inseparable part of the whole, a unit, and then somehow in the dim and tragic history of the world, he became separate, and then in the stream of time, he is smoothed and beautified and worn, again into a oneness a formless and nameless, merging with mother earth, and finally blending with God, as the ground and petrified sand which was once a pebble; and becomes again united rock-bed—One in God-head. When we drove home over the peaceful lands we all felt that creation was on glorious anthem of beauty to the Great Maker of all.

“O Infinite, how can I come to know Thy nature?”

Intoxicated with its beauty, I fain would lay myself at its altar as a sacrifice, but too poor to do my heart's desire. Ah! Even but once!

Thy will, O Beautiful is good!

Thy Pleasure is all!

O formless One! Thou art for ever!"

The above words are a meditation that brings the children of God from east and west, who see His splendour and glory, and feel its throb of ecstasy; in united love to the feet of His throne. Let us repeat them together losing ourselves in the beauty and wonder of the Most High.

Om, Santi, Santi, Santi!

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XVI. (PEACE JAN. & FEB 1935)

Radiant stars were yet shining over sleeping Kashmiri vales, when we heard the songs of pilgrims as they walked along the banks, or floated in their little shikara boats on the river Jhelum. It was a great festive day at the temple Ksheera Bhavani situated on a dreamy isle hidden by great trees. So ancient is this forest fane, that folklore and legend can part but little, the glamorous veil that hides past from present; and thus reveal the splendour of mighty Ksheer Bhavani, a forest deity who once freed the grateful hamlet of some evil entity. Now, the good people of all the surrounding region, still commemorate the auspicious day, by visiting the time hallowed spot on pilgrimage. They worship God with offerings of fragrant garlands, sweetmeats and incense, as well as coins for the wandering mendicants and "holy beggars" who sit above the moat of changing waters, chanting praying, doing penance are lost in Samadhi (divine ecstasy). From afar in the soft silvery mist of the river, we loved to hear the beautiful songs of devotional India, rise to sing with the stars of the beauty and wonder of the Most High. We listened in rapture, till our hearts burned within us to glimpse Him, but once, and dissolve in the glory of His splendour for ever.

Swamiji was chanting Om, Om, Om seated serenely on the houseboat steps, and the pilgrims that passed saluted him happily. Floating down memories stream again, the vision of them is with me still. The young virgins, madonnas, in their bright shawls had faces half concealed, but eyes eager to behold us, the strangers that dwelt on their river. They carried garlands of roses or helped their mothers'

string, the heaps of fragrant jasmine birds to be offered at the festive temple soon. The boys and men in fresh turbans and other holiday attire, played on flutes and harmoniums singing the hymns of their souls. It does the heart good to behold and join in with those who are rejoicing in the Lord, to feel the deep universal love, so that one can grasp the sacred spirit of worship, faith and truth, even in forms of devotion and in creeds that are unfamiliar to us in the outer aspect. How fragrant is the divine great red rose, made up of all the faiths and creeds, clustering petals about their one golden Heart of God! The day had come for our dear Atmaram to leave for his college in the south, with the dawn of Ksheer Bhavani festival as well. We tried not to think of the parting and after a merry breakfast, got into the waiting Shikara boat, and were soon floating from one Lotus Lake to another to take our brother Atmaram to Srinagar. White gleamed the snowy summits which would so soon separate us from his kind and faithful camaraderie. Forgetting his own sorrow at departing, on the long journey, he tried gallantly to cheer us all with the happy news, that our beloved mother Ratnam and Ramaraoji were coming to Kashmir and also bringing a niece to be a sister companion to me. The rowers grew hot and tired as the Sun rose, and drew up to an enchanting place on the rivers' edge, to rest and take refreshments. We climbed out, walking a short way on the fresh, green grass and gathered about our Guruji under a great tree. Little frogs hopped about with chirping noises, kingfishers perched on lotus stems. The great rosy lotus flowers wafted a subtle perfume thru and vale. Peace and beauty on every hand, made us feel that we were indeed in the greatest temple. As its blue dome arched above us, and we felt attuned with the Universal, our Guruji spoke softly the day's message, from the depths of his pure and radiant heart:

O Universal Lord of Love – sweet Indweller of our hearts' sanctuary, we feel Thy Presence brooding over us like great white wings! May we be purified, enlightened and held thereby. Bless each one of thy creatures with what they most need to find Thee and Kingdom within. Give floods of Peace and Grace to those who are weary and heavy laden! May all Thy creation be blissful in Thee, who art shining in that dazzling Sun, and in the perfumed hearts of the lotus flowers – verily, and Who art Indwelling our very hearts now. O may we feel Thee there now – with every throb and every breath! May Thy Name be praised from world to world and from eternity to eternity! Om Shanti Shanti Shanti! As we opened our eyes after this invocation which made us aware of Gods! Abiding love, our Guruji continued: - Lo! The Kingdom of God in Peace and Wisdom and Joy in the Holy Spirit, these are also the pearls from the treasure house of God which are given to the Holy – to the pure – to His children. We must prepare ourselves to receive these rich spiritual gifts by reaching for them, with clean hands and heart. God will come to console and bless us like a dear friend, in all His glory and beauty, if we but prepare a place

for Him within. God communes with the inward man. A clean heart is the trysting place of the great beloved within a craving human soul. Yet, He, coming to the inward man alone must not be sought in the passing and changeful outer life and phenomena. Let us call to mind the ancient parable of one of our Indian Sages who when asked by his young chela, “When and how may I find God” took his pupil to the banks of a river and gently but firmly held him, head and all under water, till he struggled and cried for his life and breath. After raising him up, again he said, “My child in the way you longed for air when you were held under water, thus must be your longing, your great craving for God ere you can hope to realise Him.” Let us all analyse our hearts – are we but lukewarm in our craving or are we indeed faithfully and earnestly striving above all else to attain that blessed state wherein we cannot live another moment apart from the great Beloved? With these words locked in our heart’s treasury we thoughtfully climbed again into our waiting boats resolving by His grace and the guidance of our holy Guruji to leave far behind, the mean tinsel and glass beads of the outer world and turn inward, making ourselves worthy to receive the Pearl of Great Price.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XVII. (Peace June&July 1935)

The stars had scarcely paled in the glory of dawn when a tall turbaned figure came into our houseboat. It was Pundit Tikkalal come to take us to a distant mountain village. While Mother Ratnam and Chinnammayi prepared our tiffin Tikkalalji sang and played lovely morning anthems lending festive charm to the happy day. Looking out across the lotus beds inhaling the godly fragrance we could see the mountain named Shankaracharya where that young saint had founded one of his numerous temples of pure Adwaita Vedanta. A troupe of pilgrims was descending. They had spent the night of the full moon in song and worship together. As they came down the steep, rugged path we were flying along the open road and their bright shawls and songs melted into the distance.

Over brown hills, thru vales of young green rice crops, past many a rushing waterfall we came to a wide plateau. Here we left our car and took strong horses for our steep mountain passage. We rode thru the wild forest enjoying the beauty of the bright Indian birds as they flew singing and crying in the tall trees. We rested often

near some lovely spring to let our ponies refresh themselves. Lonely hermits met us with silent blessings and saluted Swamiji with reverent love. Coming at last out of the sombre forest we reached a rude hamlet, and seeing the silver tower of the temple knew that we had arrived at our destination. In the temple garden we refreshed ourselves and then gathered together with the priests and pilgrims to hold discourse. Fakirs and mendicants of various orders were in the congregation and also urged our Swamiji to speak. Recognizing the loving Divinity that beams like an everlasting lamp from his sweet presence, they longed for a message of inspiration, to guide and encourage them on the Path of Light.

With his luminous gaze fixed on the rolling mountains of ageless snows, Swamiji smiled and his face lit up with the great prayer of his soul, as half reluctantly he broke his rapt silence to share his holy thoughts: “Loving friends as I behold the handiwork of our beloved Creator and see how He fashioned those snowy mountains into alabaster temples of grandeur power and beauty I am lost in a storm of ecstasy. I like to think that His hand—the hand of the Artist Divine, is also shaping and forming us day by day. We are the clay or the stone which He shall yet fashion into undreamed of things of beauty. Let us present ourselves to Him as the white snow presents itself for moulding, and allow His skilful omnipotent hand to carve at will, that which He would create. Now we may be the rude stone and the clay lying supplicating for His touch, at His lotus feet, and behold the wonder He can perform at will!

If He so desires He transfigures into His very own image, our waiting souls, and makes His devotees entirely like Himself. A little lifting up of our hearts in remembrance of Him in silence or in prayerful worship, a little earnest craving for His love is often enough to make us immortal, images of Divinity. Let us think of God whenever we can thus by degrees we will find ourselves adoring Him in everything we do and say. Thus my loved ones, as we gather here in His temple let us breathe with each breath the little humble prayer of peace—O Lord of my heart, here we are in deepest devotion, make us in Thy own Image. We have ever felt Thy blessing of inward joy raining like nectar into our beings, now let Thy grace pour in torrents like that mountain stream so that we may ever feel Thy near Presence.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XVIII. (Peace Aug 1935)

Simple words, yet words that caught fire from heart to heart were the utterances of our Guruji. No vain mystifying philosophies but fiery arrows sent from the heart of Truth. To commune with and feel the Presence of God—is there any higher yet simpler form of adoration? Deeply moved and grateful for Guruji's words we rose after a meditation and took leave of our friends who followed us with their gaze till we disappeared again into the dense forest. Riding for some time we came again upon a silvery tower and soon came upon a group of Brahmins and holy-men, who paid their respects to Swamiji and greeted us lovingly. They led us into a temple garden where a gentle stream flowed into a pool alive with carp, the spot is ancient and the fish are temple pets fed by devotees on festive days of worship. Some of these lovely Himalayan fanes are so ancient that their legends are unknown even by the wise, and yet the ceremonies are observed to instil feelings of devotion in the hearts of the masses and of course to eke out a livelihood for priests of a certain kind.

Dear Mother Ratnam and Rama Row performed a ceremony in the little silver turreted temple and had a sort of mass read for the latter's departed mother who had requested it. It was very nice to see them go up the temple steps in peace and unity to worship together, their bright garments enriching the tones of the exotic picture about me. Swamiji and the others interpreted stories told about this place for me and as we fed the fish with crumbs from big disks of unleavened bread we watched for the one magic fish who is said to wear a jewelled collar and appear on auspicious days like the birthdays of gods and great incarnations. I felt indeed that I had come back to the fairy land gardens of childhood when every lily bell seemed to cradle an elfin queen and every frog seemed an enchanted prince. The tower of silver plates, the ancient pool dancing with fish, the fountain murmuring songs of long ago, the people about me seemed unreal in the golden mist of the setting sun, and our Swamiji chanting a musical Mantram in minor key, seemed to be the magician who had waved his wand for me. Ah yes, Guruji did bring magic into my life, and into myriad lives with his song of Om and his message of Freedom, Peace and Self-reliance. May God bless this dear miracle worker to break the bonds of Maya's enchantments from many a soul in east and west by the touch of God-conscious Love. All our friends agreed with me that on Swamiji's birthday, the magic fish with his golden necklace should surely sport upon the surface of the pool, or the legend does not hold. Charm of spiritual India, subtle beauty of an exquisite old land, India you seem so often to hold flashes of the lustre of heaven for me, how can anyone know you Mother India and your naïve, philosophic children and not love you and venerate you?

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XIX. (Peace Sept 1935)

Many days slipped by in sweet contentment amid the old world surroundings of various villages set like gems in the high Himalaya, where people live their graceful, natural lives safe from the whirlpools of the seething ocean of life beyond, and where "Politeness of the heart" soothes the weary traveller like a caress. On Krishna Jayanti the birthday of the celestial azure-hued divinity, Swamiji gave his beautiful farewell message "The Flute of the cosmic", and I too expressed my homage to the Author of the Bhagavad Gita at the Arya Samaj meeting at Srinagar, where we had been so cordially invited to sow seeds of Peace, to the large gathering of Krishna Bhaktas. The theme thought of our Swamiji's lecture was that each one of us are flutes on which God longs to play most divinely sweet melodies, making flowers redolent of peace and happiness spring up on earth's most arid and wild desert spots. If we but clear the flute of ego and little self, the All Lord longs to play thereon His universal songs. Swamiji's thoughts were deeply appreciated, and many came later to reverently touch the feet of the gentle saint then whom, they avowed, on that auspicious day, the Lord Himself, had spoken, to their hearts like the notes of a celestial flute.

When the moon of our last night on the lotus lakes of Kashmir, rose white and high, we sat in spiritual converse with three friends who had come to call, attracted by our Guruji whose arrestive personality, saffron robes, and shaven monk's head they had often marked. They were an Indian major, a German lady and a French businessman who were interested in Theosophy and Buddhism. We all took keen delight in each other, and saw in this international gathering the work of the Great Uniter of Souls. We sat together on the deck looking out into the beauty of the moonlit vales as Swamiji chanted his favourite Mantram Om, Om, Om, telling our friends the significance of this sacred syllable, the Word that echoes and lives in all creation. The faint perfume of thousands of full blown lotus blossoms crept into one's very heart, where all beauteous things are stored and crystalize, to form a rainbow bridge from earth to heaven itself.

Morning found us bidding adieu to dear faces and places as we drove away from the glamorous gardens of Kashmir, breathing a fervent prayer that the Peace seeds sown in those fair green vales among rocks and laughing rills would spring up as fragrant flowers for the glory of God. Golden Peace Seeds so long watered by the tears and blood of saints and sages down thru the ages, reverently gathered again

by others as celestial flowers of love and truth, and sown again, a perpetual sowing and reaping of living seeds of Peace down thru time, till God's plan for mankind is perfected on earth. Our Guruji too gives the Peace seeds springing from his very heart's blood and life of sacrifice unending. May they be blessed further to glorify the whole world! The majesty of the Almighty spoke to us, all along that mountain drive, from roaring rivers and waterfalls, from overshadowing heights, those mighty temples of hidden power, from the songs of birds, thru the wind in leafy bowers,. And fully intoxicated with beauty the captive soul burst thru its earthly bounds soaring away with God-mad hymns to mingle with the All.

After refreshing rest in a Dak Bungalow under a terrifying crag, we started out for Murrie a cantonment town where we were lovingly received by Br.Holmes an English occultist. We enjoyed his kind hospitality and exchanged thoughts with him about the pilgrim Path, in the serene presence of a large Buddha in a little shrine room. Loathe to part at eventide from this dear brother and his friends, we left for Rawalpindi, ever descending from the cool, sweet mountain heights to the hot, parched plains. The Kashmiri fairyland of gleaming snow and emerald green, waterfalls and dewy lotus flowers was already a vanished dream. The terrible grains of sand falling thru the hour glass off time so swiftly, brought us to the heart of a dusty town with massive walls and buildings, against which senses accustomed to the wild free beauty of the pure Himalayan heights, cried out in rebellion as the horrid odours and city sights, assailed them like cruel blows.

The shock of this change was soothed by the reverent love and kind hospitality of Rao Bahadur Jai Chandji who entertained us with true Hindu charm and kindness. A train of devotees came to visit every day and Swamiji gave them such messages and initiations as they required, sending them away in God-conscious rapture. We visited a home for poor widows presided over by an aged saint who shed tears of joy at seeing Swamiji, and who embraced me, looking long into my western eyes with her dark eastern eyes of love. She said she could not keep her tears from failing because she loved us, and wished to follow us to the Abode of Peace in the south, but was too frail and old. Our hearts were touched with her sacred love, unto aching. A great Zamindar, a statuesque giant, Tulsi Das visited, and asked Swamiji for initiation and carried us away to see a school and a beautiful temple he had built and endowed. Then reaching his home all the members gathered and asked Swamiji to bless them with a few sacred words while they eagerly attended. My eyes rested on the oriental decorations usual in homes of wealth, a large cabinet in one corner crammed with little figures and toys, souvenirs from places of Hindu pilgrimage, about the walls many pictures, scenes from Hindu Folklore and legends. They showed forth the great love of symbolic beauty and power of illuminated imagination of an ancient race.

Articles of furniture in India are usually rare due to the custom of sitting on the floor on mats and carpets. One is ever impressed by the great simplicity of food, raiment and living in general, in the homes of not only the wealthy merchants but that of the Rajahs and Maharajahs who have such fabulous wealth. One can ever sense the air of non-attachment to the earthy, caught by them from the teachings of the Vedas. To keep alive tradition and satisfy the cravings of, or to impress the masses Maharajahs, appear at times in Durbar splendour, but in private life they wear some plain cotton garment as they dine quietly on rice and curries, in utmost simplicity. Thus ancient India is ever, a land of paradoxes and charming riddles delightful to ponder on and solve. For those hearts who have felt even so faintly the throb of the great Universal Heart, India must be venerated, loved and tenderly, called Mother because of her immense giving power to all the world for ages. Down thru the annals of dim, dim time, she has given birth to a thousand curious arts, invaluable merchandise of gems and gold and spice, but rarest of all, the exquisite culture of the God intoxicated heart, and thus thru her Philosophy gives us God Himself, the Indwelling Presence. With hearts full of glory and peace we beheld another Dawn all vermillion and gold, a bright back ground for wind-blown palm-trees on dreamy undulating hills. Our train proudly drew its heavy, snorting body like a charging dragon into ancient Haridwar, a little white temple city at the foot of the Himalayas, unknown even to some of the wise, of other lands. What Rome is to the Catholic, what the Holy land is to Jew and Christian, what Mecca is to all Islam because of sacred associations that is what Hardwar is to the Hindu heart. Besides being a holy-place of pilgrimage, where the Ganges rushes very free and fresh from its mountain cradle, to leave its *Bhaktas* with healing waves. Hardwar is a Grand Central for pilgrims who seek the yet greater tranquillity of silent retreats, in the far Himalayan heights or still, still valleys of the Ganges. Mothe Ratnam and Sister Chinnammayi were putting the finishing touch to my toilet by placing a vivid red mark of unity, on my brow, as Swamiji and Ramaraoji came to guide us thru the station throng, followed not only by coolies carrying our gypsy-like luggage on their heads, but several of Swamiji's fellow-passengers who as usual, had been entirely won by his God-conscious and arrestive presence. They were loath to leave him so soon. They pressed about to help and serve him and brought us to the "Rama Thirtha Dharmasala" or guest house, where we were soon made very comfortable, in little pent houses on the roof.

In the courtyard below, a line of holy men from Nepal and all parts of India of various sects were receiving the rations of native bread and pea porridge, which at every guest house is given freely to pilgrims and holy men. Some were naked in loincloths, bodies smeared with ashes or mud, the locks wild and unkempt, in

penance. Some were partially clad, wearing a big earring in one pierced ear, some wore beards and hair long and had flowing saffron robes and unkempt, in penance. Some were partially clad, wearing a big earring in one pierced ear, some wore beards and hair long and had flowing saffron robes and turbans on. Others wore heads shaven and single garments of cloth stamped all over with mantrams, and tied about their necks apron fashion. Yet others wore rudraksha seed beads about wrist or neck, and carried wooden balancing stands for meditation and Tapas, or emblems of Siva or Vishnu. Some carried pouches and pipes, for the smoking of vapours of forgetfulness, of this world of delusion. Some without special outward marks, also meekly and silently took the proffered food into little bowls, vessels, leaves or the open hand. Merchants or Rajahs built and endowed these centers, as acts of charity or devotion. One may find choultries and dharmasalas all over India. It warms one's heart to trace, as one journeys all around the world, human hearts implanted with the celestial seeds of kindness and charity expressed in so many forms and ways. O! roses of brotherhood and universal love, may you thus fall in fragrant showers and over this vale of tears, and soon transfigure it into a glad and smiling garden of Peace and Eternal Joy!

As I sat in the sun drying my hair after a dip in Ganges waters, to my great delight a dozen or more of monkeys, of various sizes demurely walked along the parapet and then stood about me, for all the world like inquisitive children. Having a basket of fruit at hand, I held a banana out to one of them, and it was gravely taken and run off with. One by one they crowded around, taking the proffered fruit, and then growing very bold they began snatching the fruit out of my basket, chattering and fighting with each other till it was quite empty; and even that I had to snatch away from an engaging Mrs. Monkey whose baby had jumped into it. How one laughed at the antics and pranks of these children of Hanuman, who being somewhat pampered for services rendered to Sri Rama in the past, are grown exceeding mischievous and bold. A continuous theatre performance was enacted for one by these monkeys of Haridwar. One could see them running off with shoes and clothes, pots, pans and other objects which from some place of safety they examined and played with, while some robbed irate owner, hopeless and despairingly looked on. It is not an uncommon sight, to see some unwary person carrying a basket of food on his head or shoulders, to be attacked by these little bandits, pilfered, and perhaps bitten and scratched into the bargain. The natives of Haridwar and other places where

these simian friends rove in large numbers, having long been victimized; drive them off with long poles and warn newcomers to beware of their elemental pranks.

In oriental lands where the complexities and manifold distractions of western life have not encroached too much, news travels very quickly from mouth to mouth. Especially in Hindu communities, where the caste is more or less like one large family, and human sympathies are very warm, anything unusual or interesting is sure to be quickly shared with the neighbour. Ever wistfully alert for news of the great beloved, above all else, the presence of a *mahatma*, whole God-conscious, shining life, or miracles, deeds or austerities, proclaim him as one who has real news of the sweetest one; will arouse keen interest. The people will flock to him to honour God who shines in the holy personage and eagerly listen for some message of illumination that will initiate, them into higher wisdom. Thus our loving Guruji Omkar although shunning publicity and worshipping peace and silence, and only giving out before the multitude his pearls of love and wisdom when requested, by seekers of truth, also is ever hailed by throngs, when he moves about on his various missions of mercy. He cannot hide the Godly-glow that emanates from his whole being, nay more than can sun-ray, which like Swamiji's presence silently falls on myriad lives, touching the hearts with a heavenly radiance. So dies a messenger of the Celestial One, sow silently the seed of peace and devotion, in human hearts, as he passes along on his holy God appointed mission. Preachers, teachers, public penitents, miracle working Yogis as well as the many parasites and pretenders who openly court name and fame, for personal ends, are seen in Haridwar, and the world over, they beguile an idle moment, but leave the heart arid and all untouched, as if they had never passed that way. That is why the world, still remains full of unspeakable agony, and souls go on being broken on the *karma chakra*, crying out for a son of man, a man of God whose life is so ideal that it may verily point out the way to liberation. Homage be unto those few sanctified lives who are truly bearing news of the great beloved! How beautiful is the music of their voices, and their silent deeds how fraught with blessings!

After a few days in Haridwar, the city of many temples and religious abodes, we left it; Swamiji having sown many seeds of peace, in the hearts of the eager evening throng on the banks of the Ganges; where hundreds of little flower lamps floated, winking at the stars above. He left in flower also the fertile hearts of his many new *bhaktas*, who continuously came and went. Sri Swami Sivanandaji assisted and enhanced the meeting with Vedic chants. We then moved on to Rishikesh and wandered on foot into the mountain pass, leading to many lovely, natural haunts and retreats in the forests about the Ganges. At nightfall we reached a quaint rest-house on the banks of India's beautiful sacred river, which rushed gurgling and chanting over huge rocks more silvery than silver in the bright moon-

light. As we approached the house, an aged sadhu peeped at us by the light of his uplifted lantern, one by one, greeting us benevolently with Hindi salutations, and the ancient greeting of the Himalayas, *Om Namō Narayana*, at last he came to our Swamiji, who stood with a soft smile as at some occult joke, on his bright face. The old hermit suddenly gave a glad cry, and prostrated full length at Swamiji's feet, before he could prevent him. He sobbed joyfully, "Sri Omkarji, for this glad moment God has lengthened my earthly days. I prayed to see your face once more. How many years have passed since you were here as a lad, sporting in the Ganges, wandering in the mountains, and lost in Samadhi, in these mountains? Outwardly you have not changed much, you look as you did then, but your inner light which attracted everyone to you, even then has increased and grown. May God be praised".

Needless to say, we were all deeply moved at this sacred reunion, it recalled to mind some scenes from the pages of the bible, where an aged patriarch hails the coming of some youthful avatar or saint, and blesses him for the great work. The holy charm of the Himalayas towering above the rushing river, the elevating communion with Swamiji and other sacred souls, transported one into nameless regions of ecstasy so that one slowly melted into the cool white radiance of this all lovely night only to awaken to further precious spiritual experiences.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XX. (Peace Oct & Nov 1935)

Silvery grey as a Japanese rice-paper drawing came the new day, with a light rainfall, so that we had to strain our gaze to see the opposite shore of the Ganges. Upstream from the pretty temple towers of Swarg Ashram, a small ship was slowly heading for the middle of the river. Intuition seemed to tell one that there was something fateful about that little barque out there in the grey, like Charon's ferry-boat. I called our Swamiji and others to watch with me the silent masque of death that then began to be enacted. Several figures, monk-like in long loose robes, slowly lifted from the prow of the boat a long object like a mummy in its swathings, and with measured movements and a dirge-like chant, threw the "thing" into the clean foam of the rushing river. Later we learned that it was the simple funeral of some sadhu we had witnessed, given by his brother monks. Our souls were filled with a solemn awe, and we spoke of the perishableness of these bodies in which we dwell for only a few brief years, even if one reaches the full span of a human life. Swamiji remarked that mindful of our grass-like existence, we ought to live each day as

thoughtfully and sacredly as if it were the last one of our lives. Then we should fear to waste our precious God-given time, and seek instead our salvation, thus swiftly coming to Jivan Mukti or Liberation the aim and goal of life, instead of going about in aimless circles day after day, paying more heed to the mundane non-essentials than to the Reality. Soon this sombre picture was rolled up in our memories, and the bright sunshine came bringing joy to all nature and into our hearts. The dew drops flashed on shrub and tree, birds called and sang in the thickets, long armed black apes swung about the mountainsides, on long creepers festooned with orchids, and Ganga's hair glittered a glad welcome to us as we crossed to the opposite shore. Our fellow passengers sang praises to Ganga thus:

"Something for all nothing denied, the Ganga distributes life and joy as she rushes down.

The thirsty creatures of the forest drink from her cup as she holds it to their lips.

Man, bird and beast rejoice! The Ganga knows the way in which Heaven does good to all.

The heat of the heat oppressed, she takes to here self. She fain would be muddy, if only others may be made clean.

She gives and forgives; she knows how to serve with her coolest waves, if only others may be happier thereby.

Attracted onward by the ancient teachings,

The Ganga seeks the sea,

To be one with the Great Infinite.

To be lost in the one great stream the oneness of things"

Then they would toss offerings of flowers, fruit and coins into the leaping waters, as an offering to God in the form of Ganga, so that they might have a safe crossing over the rough waters so full of great boulders. Reaching swarg Ashram we were made very welcome and given a comfortable house on a hill which gave to wonderful views on all sides, from its windows and *verandahs*. Our Swamiji's heart glowed with happy and tender memories, filling his face with a great light, as he beheld old familiar surroundings. After sporting in the waters and sunning ourselves on the great smooth rocks, we dined on chapattis, dal-soup, and coarse big plantains. Fruit and vegetables are rarities in these far retreats, and it must surely be heavenly

mantra bestowed by the grace of God, that keeps the hundreds of holy-men alive and fairly well, on the vitamin scarce fare, which is freely doled out at the various ashrams, by the kindness of certain rich merchants and princes.

Soon various sadhus and yogis, began to call on Swamiji, some who had known him and loved him as a youth, when he was there among them for five fruitful years of close communion with the great beloved of his heart. It thrilled one's soul to hear these gentle Himalayan priests paint vivid and beautiful word pictures of those past memories, interwoven with many an anecdote of the holy youth's God-imbued life there. One yogi who had about him the atmosphere of heaven itself spoke very rarely, his inner radiance soon caused him to be known, and honoured through the region by the brother monks, as well as the visitors who were lucky enough to find him in his forest haunts, sitting at the feet of the divine one, in rapt meditation. He spoke of the Russian nobleman who passed that way, and who was so rich that he rewarded all that did him the slightest services with hundred rupee notes. Hearing of the youthful sadhu Omkarji, he sought out in a cave, high in the silent mountains, where he would retire for long periods, all unafraid of the forest denizens who often roam those places in search of prey. Finding him at last, rapt in meditation the Russian brother tarried with him, waiting for recognition. Swamiji soon spoke with him, answering his questions. The nobleman was so charmed and found so much peace from his hour with Swamiji that he left in great ecstasy, relating his happy experience to all he met.

Many other friends spoke of Swamiji in reverent love, and said it was wonderful what he had accomplished, in those few brief years since he had left them, in creating so fair a garden of silence—the Santi Ashram, in Totapalli Hills for seekers of peace, of any nation, creed or colour, offering them a pleasant retreat in which to commune with the Indweller of their hearts be He Tao, God, Brahman, Jehovah, Allah, Buddha or Ahura Mazda—after all—all the one, whose basic principles in all religions are the same. By the kind arrangement of Swami Swarupanandji one memorable day, our Swamiji spoke to the hermits, monks and yogis of the environing country, who flocked together in large numbers from their various retreats. It is no easy task to address souls of this kind, saints, sages and philosophers of various schools. Our Swamiji met the occasion with poise and calm and God touched his mouth, as it were with a holy flame and God's mighty spirit was felt by all, as the message came forth in stirring words that vibrated the cords of the hearts of that elect company. The theme was 'Let one man live in God, and the whole world may be regenerated'. Every heart was stirred when he said:

“Here we are, the world calls us saints, sages and mahatmas if we really are such—then why does the world go on in such darkness, cruelty and pain—what are we

doing, where is our light shining? The world is a thirst and on hunger for the bread of life and the nectar of truth. We are His avowed priests and entrusted keepers of the ancient flame. Let us then really feel it burning within, recognize it in our hearts and beings, and give it forth to the whole of creation. The countless children of men, the supplicating multitudes are looking up to us to give them one touch of true love, one crumb of the bread of life, one drop of that *brahmic* bliss, that endows the mortal with an eternal Godhood, glorious beyond all word or thought.

O! Let us then awake and arise from our slumbers and lethargies, throwing aside our little differences of cult and sect, rivalries and jealousies. If they yet abide in the hearts and beings we have long since offered to God alone, and to His all-consuming love fire, let us purge ourselves wholly.

Asserting and manifesting our divinity here and now, let us renew our sacred vows and be entirely worthy of our Sun-garments of orange or other outward signs of our priesthood. Let us be indeed living beacon lamps, and set the world aflame with sweeping lights of love and peace and unity. Om, Om, Om.”

This message to the priests and votaries of God in the form of Brahman, Allah or Buddah, reminds me of a lovely inscription I saw on the walls of a monastery, is it not expressive of the life of a holy, dedicated priest of God.

TO A PRIEST BY LACORDAIRE

To live in the midst of the world without wishing its pleasures;

To be a member of each family yet belonging to none;

To share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets;

To heal all wounds; to go from men to God and offer Him their prayers;

To return from God to men to bring pardon and hope;

To have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity;

To teach and to pardon, console and to bless, always—

My God, what a life and it is yours,

O! Priest of Jesus Christ.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXI. (Peace Dec 1935)

After a timeless period of pure peace and joy at Swarg Ashram, and its lovely environing glades and glens, where Ganga laughed as she wildly dashed over her rocky bed, we turned our faces towards Haridwar again, to journey on. Having safely crossed the rushing river, the farewell chanting of our dear brethren on the opposite shore, mingling with the cadence of the waters—"Om, hari, hari," we took to the beautiful forest road, with its high green arch of bowing trees. Ah, God! What a land is this India. Mile on mile of beauteous caves, forests, temples and diverse retreats, to provide just the proper atmosphere for the God-seeking or God-imbued heart, where aided by the exquisite harmonies of a simple and natural life, and the companionship of kindred hearts when desired, the soul may take wings, and in uninterrupted flight may just soar, till it bursts through to its home in the heart of the Sun of suns, that nameless mysterial of the most high!

After wandering till evening, we rested and refreshed ourselves, in an ancient temple-garden, where a group of mendicants were performing *homam*, a fire ceremony; in honor of the nine planets. On the western altar of the sky, the great glowing sun was also offering *homam* to the creator, bidding us to light high in the sanctum of our own sacred hearts the burning flames of divine love, and thus be part of the light of the world, shining everywhere. At nightfall reaching Haridwar we visited swami Madhavanandaji in the Madrasi Dharmasala, a lovely ashram, with its bathing ghat of white steps going down into the Ganges. A *bhajana* or song-worship was in progress which we were invited to join. In the pauses between the chants, highly philosophic thoughts were exchanged, and refreshments were passed around. Such, I pondered, must have been the agape or love feast of the early Christians and my heart rejoiced in the rhythmic Indian songs, emphasised by the music of drums, cymbals and bell instruments. The room was gay with pictures of scenes from the *Vedas* and *Puranas*, and before the altar hung a large curtain on which was painted the beloved Krishna dancing on the hydra-headed serpent, symbolizing his supremacy over the *gunas* or senses. The whole pleasant fantasy before one was part of that long, long dream called life, and our blessed swami Omkarji brought the former to a close, by a beautiful meditation, that brought us into the presence of that great reality into which all dreams, names and forms melt and merge.

A rare and perfect string of rudraksha beads was given to me by the kindly priest-host with his blessings, and Swamiji showed me how they were used for keen concentration, when repeating powerful mantrams, especially his favourite, one which makes up his own name also. Deep in my inner consciousness was treasured an ever-growing rosary of lovely spiritual experiences, at the feet of the most high, where Sri Omkarji was ever leading us. The thought came again and again, in deep and humble gratitude, how fortunate to be ever associated with one, who shows us not only the highest and best of all Hindu forms of worship, but the best of all worship, in earth and heaven, the honey-sweet essence, of all religions and creeds, namely self-realization. After a pleasant train journey, where golden seeds of peace, were left by Swamiji, in the hearts of his adoring fellow passengers, we came to the spacious mansion of Pundit Sharma of Amritahara fame, in Lahore. Although the temperature made us think that like Dante we were being shown the secrets of the Inferno, our host's charming hospitality made us forget the heat without, in the large house with its great cool rooms, and bathing pools. Sri Swamiji asked us to think of Siva, seated in the eternal snows, rapt in meditation on Kailas, as shown in a picture that hung on the wall. Thus rapt in meditation, we felt the refreshing coolness of God, through the thermometer registered 125 Fahrenheit.

Learning that Amritsar with its world-famed Golden Temple, was not at all afar, we started forth to visit it. Guru Nanak whose loving and universal teachings through sacred poetry, we all admired, was held in reverence in this chief temple of all Sikhs, those lion-hearted warrior-men of India. When we entered the courtyard, a noble youth, came forth to make obeisance to Sri Omkarji, and took us with him to his abode, in the temple vicinity. We left our sandals without, and bathed our feet as is the custom. He offered us refreshment, and presents of books on the faith of Guru Nanakji and Swamiji in turn, gave out his message of peace, to the gathered company of priests and pundits. They took us to the grand temple after a restful hour of discourse. It was built of some precious, white stone, beautifully ornamented with mosaics of pictures of the lives of Sikh gurus, without and within. The turrets blazed their pure, yellow-gold against the very blue sky, like some fairy castle, fashioned of dream fabric. Going within, we joined the worship, namely that of sitting on the floor about the carved altar, where a priest in pure white robes and turban, was reading incessantly the Sikh's, the Granth Sahib, which lies open on a very precious stand, of skilful workmanship, and which is held in extreme reverence by the Sikh community.

*“Of Him, the One True Name is Om,
Creator, all-pervading He:
Devoid of hate and fear, unborn,
Undying Self—existent Lord.*

*He can be reached by only those
Who on the Guru wait for help,
O thou who sleekest after Him,
To Him alone thy worship give.*

*He in the beginning did live,
He was before time came to be,
He verily existeth now,
He shall exist forevermore." Etc.*

Thus read on the high priest while all listened intently, feeling the words of loving Guru Nanak pervading the heart.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXII. (Peace Jan & Feb 1936)

Nearing our journey's end in an almost complete circle around lovely and ever-fascinating India, we came in the perfumed dawn, to Lucknow, ancient and majestic. From its gardens bloom roses red with the blood drops of buried dead British and Indian warriors, while even its vast station boasts the architectural glamour of a mogul palace. The burnished gold of the temple towers of Amritsar faded from one's memory in the present bright vision that soon met the gaze, namely that of our beloved Sri Narayanji and Omkar Swamiji as they embraced on meeting. They seemed in their rich-orange robes, in the soft morning sunshine, like the burning heart in a candle flame. Perhaps this glimpse of light within light, was due to the deep inner conviction that these souls manifest to a wondrous degree the Flame within all flame, the Light within all light. They had spent many years in the vast silences of the Himalayas, gathering spirit fire unto themselves and then reluctantly descended again into the valleys to ignite the hearts of receptive men, from their torch of inner light, each in his own way. Sri Narayanji touches countless lives through the labours of the Rama Tirtha Publication League, as well as through the inspiration of his pure and consecrated life. Sri Omkarji on the other hand also blesses myriads through his ministry of the Missions of Peace and their manifold

activities, as well as through his subtle power of silent peace-giving. Ah, would the sacred orange robe but cover many more such silent, faithful and God-imbued hearts!

Through the ancient streets with their bazars already busy as beehives we came to the quiet abode of Sri Narayanji in the league. There in the heart of one of India's busiest cities, this man of renunciation leads a divine forest-life, maintaining within his heart the silence of the deodar forests of the Himalayas, through his body be actively engaged in sending forth the works of Swami Rama Tirtha the poet sage who was his guru, unto the ends of the earth. We were shown by Sri Narayanji relics of the departed saint Rama and the wonderful orderliness of the whole organization. It made our blessed Omkarji exclaim, "Here indeed is manifested a Truth I love to emphasize, Work idealized thus, is Worship." A delicious repast was served us by the loving and wise mother who presided over this institution as hostess and a silent guide in activities where the subtle touch of womanly intuition often proves a blessing. Later we were taken to the spacious mansion of Guru Bhaksha Singhjee where we were most lovingly entertained. Other guests were present, so that even while resting here our Swamiji was given the opportunity to scatter golden grains of peace on waiting hearts, hungry for a touch of true love. In every question put to him there seemed to be the same anguished cry of the soul searching for its own. In every kind and sage answer was the irresistible and winning theme of self-realization—look not vainly down upon the rubbish heaps of outer life or upon the outer tumult of word and thought, for That, which thou sleekest O precious soul, but turn thy gaze within, where resides deep in holy stillness serenely waiting, Thy One Beloved.

There is no miracle among all the *siddhis* (abnormal powers) nor sight sweeter to behold, than the unfolding of a seed of peace in some open heart, to see the first faint dawning of light on some erstwhile pain-dimmed face. This miracle of love is often unfolded, as we go sowing seeds along Indian roads and our blessed Swamiji's influence falls like a holy shadow across many lives, transfiguring them forever. The mere biped animal comes to realize—I am man, blessed with human birth, the man awakens and realizes exultantly, I am divine! Visitors to the Abode of Peace are often intrigued by some of the ashrama pets which seem to become humanized by association with Swamiji, the dog Rammy who chants Om and meditates with us, and the cat Hanuman who clings to Swamiji like a monkey day and night, and tries to talk to us, the dawning humanity looking out of his large yellow eyes. Sometimes the unfolding of the peace seeds is slow, depending on the receptivity of the heart-soil. Yet in after years, months, weeks or days one's soul rejoices to see individuals, once touched by our Swamiji, realize in themselves and repeat as their very own the cosmic words—the peace seeds he so lovingly implanted. In visiting our various centers in east and west or in contacting lives he blessed, I hear people using certain

of his catchy cosmic expressions, and in their letters they often imitate his mode of salutation and closing. His much appreciated original prayers and prose which he never had copyrighted, come to our notice at times with other authors' names boldly undersigned. Sparks that really come from the altars of heaven, thus gradually become a conflagration, igniting fire from heart to heart. Living peace seeds thus grow and fructify, dead ones don not. Some souls cling frantically at first to certain of their delusions and limited views of life or religion, as a chick to its shell but the shell sagely, naturally, gently removed, they go forth chirping, as it were happy at the new expansion of their lives knowing at length how necessary it was to abandon their shell of limitations to experience a novel and better order of things. So ploughs and sows a holy man.

Sri Narayanji shared his rich experiences with us often as he showed us the beautiful mosques and palaces of old Lucknow. We went through the labyrinth passages of an old fort-castle, redolent with the vanished past. Coming out upon the ramparts we sat facing the sinking sun in a few rich moments of vibrant silence. The divine Shakti of the two great saints lifted our souls on high. When we departed for the earth again, words sounded faintly in our ears and faltered and our steps reeled a little with joy. Everywhere about the large city, people reverently saluted Sri Narayanji, he seemed to be known and honoured by the whole city as a man of true renunciation and benefaction to the race. The day of departure from him came all too soon and we who know him best and therefore love him best also touched his feet, saying in our hearts: "I bow to that perfect self whose knowledge is ever full and infinite, who has known the self as the very self and the non-self as a thing very different." Sri Swami Narayanji embracing Sri Omkarji whose face shone with a refulgent light, and blessing and assuring us that we are ever in his dear heart, we entrained for Kashi or Benares.

Heralds of this sacred pilgrimage city came in at every station along the way, all kinds of fakirs, sadhus and penitents who looked like weird apparitions with their ash-covered bodies, high piled hair, markings, and implements for *yogic tapas*. They carried neither purse nor script, for they had no tickets and the Benares guards in kindly eastern fashion, let them freely journey to their hearts' desire. Who would come between a soul and its sin-cleansing dip in Ganga at Kashi? Muslim conductors with visions of Mecca Haj in their hearts also smiled and let them stay, while the passengers made room for them, offered refreshments and small coins, happy at the thought of "holy company." One seemed to be moving in a veritable kingdom of Mahatmas. What is a mahatma, do I hear some dear reader now ask? You yourself may be a mahatma, or at least a latent one, and here is a poem, which was dedicated by a German devotee to our Swamiji and which I have translated, as it answers the question, what is a Mahatma, ruminating in so many minds:

MAHATMA

*One Soul and one vibrant Atma floating through
 Eternities and fathomless deeps of Space.
 Beings, vegetation, stones,
 Waters, vapours, breezes, odours,
 Stars and storms, the light and darkness,
 Atman all, the one
 Eternal Spirit of Creation,
 That, the Over soul of all and the Origin of worlds.
 All, all but the One
 Though diverse in size and stature be each individual.
 Like unto a range of hills, one peak over all the rest
 Towers to a mighty height,
 Thus the height of Spirit-power and the soul's
 God-consciousness
 Graduates twixt man and man.
 Large in one and small in others; one a great man, one
 So noble, and midst these, oft one who towers
 mightily o'er all the rest.
 Richly dowered by the Spirit, with a soul both great and
 Noble looming as a king o'er kings,
 A conceiver of new worlds
 Worlds of his rich phantasy,
 An anointed Son of God living symbol, great Mahatma
 Of the new race of his time.*

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXIII. (Peace March & April 1936)

Tropic brightness interpenetrating to one's very heart, poured down from the sun, steadily mounting the vast blue deeps over Kashi where we found ourselves in a new Indian world. Passing through the main street, one saw the heterogeneous

throng garbed in all the various forms of dress seen throughout India. Like bright-hued moths flying to the one radiant flame; the compelling force of a mighty faith, drew this diversity of pilgrims. After days or even years of travel-hardships and inconveniences, they gather from Comorin and Himalayan heights to bathe in the common river, worship common deities at common shrines, performing the same ceremonies and chanting the same *mantras* and *slokas*. A diverse collection of human beings indeed, but all merging in a unity of the one religion.

We were delighted that our Benares abode, the water palace of Maharaja, was beautifully situated on the very banks of the Ganges, commanding a splendid view of the river for miles on either side. The lovely green of the opposite shore, all the important bathing and burning ghats, and the shore part of the city—a cluster of temples spread before us, a colourful picture of true Indian charm, enlivened by the rushing flow of the ancient and sacred river below, with its small picturesque craft and bathing multitudes. The vivid and enchanting vista all aureoled in golden sunlight, was doubly charming to one who had expected much the reverse from the gross, morbid accounts of sensation creating authors, who I fancy must never even have visited Benares, or missionaries who translated all they saw in terms of their creeds, and deliberately closed their eyes and hearts to the beauty and artistic values of this interesting city, mellow with age, and the vibrations of devout millions down the corridors of time. Where were the “floating corpses,” “the dirty crowds, bathing in dirty disease laden water”. What I saw like a real revelation was a beautiful rushing river pierced by effulgent life-giving rays of sunshine, where neither a corpse nor a germ could long delay, for Ganga a true daughter of mother nature, quickly receives and alchemises all pollutions that man, beast, bird or reptile offers her, and benignantly gives back eternal freshness, endless purity and perennial, radiant life and health. And the bathers below were the cleanest of the clean, not only bathing their well-formed blemishless bodies, and then donning clean garments, but adding to their person the sweet odour of fresh sandal paste in caste marks or flower ornaments. They were also earnestly bent on leaving their hearts and souls with celestial gushes of living water from the throne of the most high, and clothing their beings in shining robe of heavenly grace; the latter being one could perceive as important a ceremony as the former outer purification.

Learning over the spacious balcony I watched our mother Ratnam and Ramaraoji with their panda (ceremonial priest), of which there are, hovering about each holy place of pilgrimage, hordes waiting to be engaged for these ceremonies. Our friends were having a ceremony, a sort of mass performed, to evolve of states of higher consciousness their dead, who had showered love upon them when alive eastern wisdom teaches that there continues a subtle link between the living, and the departed ancestors of families. The Chinese also have great wisdom concerning

these things. So they not only greatly honour and respect their living elders insuring their blessing, the protective merit of which has been known to the wise down through the ages, but remember them with beautiful ceremonies after their passing again from the unreal to the real. Thus they call into their lives, merit in the form of clouds of pity, love and succour like soothing fragrance, from these who now dwell in reality, having attained very high states of being. Boatmen were busy ferrying pilgrims down the water-front to various places of interest. After regaling ourselves, we also got into one of these rude, log boats which a friend had engaged for us. When seated in the boat our fellow passengers saluted us, and began respectfully to address our Swamiji. It seems they had been discussing the siddhis, and desired his opinion about these yogic powers, because, they said they could sense at once that our Swamiji was an exalted soul. Our Swamiji closed his lotus eyes and kept a wise salience for some time, emanating a deep repose which impelled the others to silence. It brought to my mind an incident in the life of the Buddha Sakyamuni who also had learned like our Swamiji, that all words are but counterfeit coin before the true gold of silence and can never purchase truth:

*“The Blessed One sat high among His own,
Upon the Peak of Vultures, and there came
Before His quiet feet, the heavenly King,
And laid before those feet a heavenly flower
Golden of hue, praying that He should speak,
And in sweet speech instruct them in the Law.
The blessed One received the heavenly flower
Within His hand and sat in utter calm,
But spake no word. And all the assembly mused
What this might mean, and musing could not know,
But Hahakasyapa mused and smiled
He only being wise and venerable.
Then softly spake the blessed One to him,
Who only knew: I hold within my heart
The Essence of the Law, the wondrous thought
That is Nirvana. This I gave thee
World less and world less thou hast seen and known,
Thus the great teaching moves from heart to heart,
Nor needs it words for wings”*

Thus by his silence Swamiji also sowed seeds of *nirvanic* peace in these hearts, illustrating eloquently, that indeed truth can never be told in words it must be

realised. Seeing the expectancy of a few of the less wise, he finally spoke: “A yogi went to a sage and claimed that he could fly in the air, remain underground for months together, lie on the surface of the water and perform other such wonderful feats.” The sage coolly replied “Brother, birds fly in the air, worms are concealed in the earth for years, and fish live in water. What glory is there in doing what the lowest animals do? Try and imitate God, become divine in your love for others, in wisdom and humility. Above all leave off vanity.” You have perhaps heard this illustration before. If you search the scriptures you will find that we are ever warned to avoid, and admonished never to be misled into pitfalls by siddhis, for they are not only brief in duration, but are dangerous, often leading the beholder or possessor, into hopeless delusion. The highest and only worth-while siddhi, is to merge in God. Attaining that, what are the lower siddhis, but humble vassals ready to serve if called on? Then let us with our highest intellectual faculties attain realisation, and thereby enter into reality, beyond all names and forms. Through deeper and deeper meditations on the reality, let us take hold of that power, which will make us identical with the God of our hearts. Through right meditation of the Highest, we will find all Peace, Bliss, Life and Light, which the physical world can never bestow. Then why seek to founder in the delusive realms of shadow? Even beginners in their first imperfect meditations on the One Reality, will be happy at the result—a feeling of radiance and inner calm. Persist, and there comes the blessed all-embracing moment, when the tiny ego-bubble, melts into the universal ocean. Time and space, nay the whole universe, is then one within the Eternal I Am! All my efforts to describe this perfect state, fail to reveal this *Brahmic* Bliss. Only those who have tasted it know, others cannot understand. What are words? Silence is higher than all knowledge and only in the Highest is all Peace, only in Peace is Samadhi! Then let us merge in a Sun of suns, as a moth in the candle flame.

*“Folded his wings within till He became,
One colour and one splendour with the flame,
He only knew the flame who in it burned,
And only he could tell who to tell returned.”*

Our boat floated along. The ancient, white buildings emerald green at the base from the centuries of lapping waters, looked down tranquilly. They too seemed to comprehend the deep and divine truth that Swamiji was sowing into our hearts. They having looked so long on outer ceremonies, who had listened for endless years to the clamour of conch loud chants, and temple gongs who had seen endless trains of mendicants the burnings of myriad corpses of the mortally sick and aged who came at the last stage of life’s journey to Kashi, these same buildings seemed to have

gathered unto themselves souls, wise and old, who now looked serenely beyond, into the heart of the burning sun, lost in *nirvana*. Our fellow passengers were very grateful to Swamiji and considered themselves greatly blessed to have had his ‘*darshins*’ discourse, prostrating profoundly. Later when we had reached the cool, spacious halls, of our abode, I asked our beloved Swamiji what the Siddhis really were, which the boat friends had enquired about. He then asked a Sanskrit pundit who had come to pay his homage to tell me. He very graciously quoted certain *slokas*, from the *Samhita Yoga*, in a pleasant sing song voice, employed by scholars, for our Swamiji’s approval and then translated them for me: There are two kinds of *Siddhis Kalpita* and *Akaltita*. The first is induced by charms, drugs and severe training. The second come naturally through true yogic purification practices. The attuned yogi, usually keeps inviolable powers that burst into his consciousness like *tirthas* (sacred springs), and he sets no great store by them, indifferent whether they remain with or leave him, for his main object is to identify himself with omnipotence, through his austerities and great renunciation, “Taking the Kingdom of Heaven by Violence.”

Our pundit continued explaining further these latent powers in all but thought abnormal by most men: The *siddha yogi*, feels very light, but very strong. Elimination is almost nil, since his food is so little. His flesh exudes a musk-like fragrance. His complexion brightens. His voice becomes soft and silvery. These are early results of Yoga. Further water does not drown him, fire does not burn him, nor will reptiles, insects or wild beasts harm him. Objects piercing his flesh fail to hurt him. He can eat or drink large quantities without ill results. His senses are keen, he can stand all rigours of climate. He can stride over space like a frog, and climb with the agility of a monkey, and finally levitate. He can read the *akasic* records, seeing past, present and future events. And these it is recorded, are the *asta siddhis*!

Anima and Mahima—The yogi can greatly inflate or reduce the appearance of his body through pranayama.

Laghima and Garima—The advanced yogi learns to swallow large draughts of air retaining it in the oesophagus and stomach, which makes him float on water or levitate, or by compressing much air within makes himself exceedingly heavy.

Prapti—In this stage the yogi obtains objects of his desire, becomes clairvoyant, clairaudient, has healing power, and sees the beauties and mysteries of the astral planes. Sometimes like St. Francis, he can understand the language of our little brothers of the bird and animal world, and speak with them.

Prakamya—The yogi knows the secret of perennial youth and vigor.

Vasitwa—Hypnotic powers, hereby come to the yogi who can control men or animals to obey his will.

Ishatwa—Herein the perfect yogi who has not fallen into delusion by the previous powers, merges into God, in cosmic-conscious glory, and being one with him even has the power to give life, in resurrection to himself and others.

Of course the highest attainment is that which transcends all physical phenomena, and reaches true yoga or unity with God, which our beloved Guruji so clearly explained a short time ago. We thanked our pundit for all his pains, chanted together the om *mantram*, three times which reverberated beautifully through the large halls, with its great stone pillars.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXIV. (Peace May & June 1936)

With a rosy blush that dyed the flowing Ganges and the little swift-sail-boats on her ripples a dreamy crimson sunset merged into nightfall. Our Guruji gathered us about him on a pavilion that looked out into the twilight. He led us into meditation by chanting a *sloka* rich with meaning. One felt as if the whole universe was flowing through one, as wind through a little veil. On waves of infinite wonder and peace was flung a verse into one's consciousness heard long ago in a temple-garden in Japan: "Zen is the secret stream of life, that flows from the Master to the Chela, and it is life that begets life; no thought of meditation nor yoga could bid it in us flow, no penance nor renunciation, nor ways of giving alms could command it, nor lip-worship nor rites of a thousand kinds, nor prayers that rise not from heart and life combined, nor Gods of our own making, nor musings of the Zen sky." Only His grace dear reader, even a single drop of that *brahmic* nectar, at the ripest moment of our lives can bring us the peace for which there is no audible word, and transfigure us forever into divinity, even in the twinkling of an eye.

Soon thousands of temple-bells began ringing all over ancient Kashi and a sea of worshipping voices rose and fell, as the stars came out in golden glory, and the lights of the small river-boats began to imitate them. We went out on the palace steps and a bent and snowy bearded ancient approached us offering to show us the astronomical instruments on the terrace. They were relics of long ago. Up a winding stair-case we followed our venerable guide. How white the terrace and the great

geometrical instruments shone, almost like snow in the moon-light. Mingled odours of incense filled the sultry air from a thousand shrines, down there in the eastern dream-city below us. Learning over the terrace one could see the leaping flames of a burning ghat, where two corpses were being consumed on pyres of aromatic wood. The mourners stood calmly about, watching the “undertaker a huge, oily giant attend the cremation of the two charred skeletons, all that was left now of two human forms that had been placed on the pyres a few hours ago.

*“All things are transient.
They being born must die,
And being dead are glad to be at rest.”*

Knowing the truth of this thought, one could gaze calmly at the scene down there, another act in the gripping phantasia of finite life, Ganga flowing by like a symbol of eternity. Turning then to the planetarium, like one rapt in a strange vision, our venerable astrologer showed us how to locate the various planets by gazing along this, or mounting the steps of that instrument. I loved to hear the Sanskrit names of familiar planets, and feel their subtle light vibrations filling my heart with a calm joy. Our sage belonged to the *brahmin* caste versed in the high science of the stars, and their influences upon the children of men who are said to be under the care and discipline of their rulers, rishis or mighty beings, of a high order. In the orient the stars are regularly consulted in connection with births, marriages and events of all kinds, and this ritual has drifted to the occident too, of late to a marked degree. One loves the way of India in clinging to God with a childlike trust, walking and talking with Him in a sweet intimacy by day and resting in His brooding love at night. The world is but a beautiful portal ornate with a bewildering diversity of names and forms, opening suddenly on the endless domains of limitless space and Glory, which all may pass to in due time. About us common signs and sounds are filled with symbols and meanings that make this pilgrimage on earth a thrilling adventure full of singing beauty.

The following day found us motoring with Pundit Rameswara Shyai to the famous Deer Park of Lord Buddha, just a few miles out from Benares, at Saranath. It is recorded that here the enlightened One first began his wonderful ministry of bringing peace and compassion into the hearts of men. Here he gave out his noble ‘eightfold path’ philosophy, whose parts are: Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Meditation. Arriving at Saranath our pundit took us first to a dome shaped ruin of an old temple, reported to have been built when the pure one began to preach the

dharma or the good law. Like most Buddhist remains, which have passed through climatic and Vandalistic ages, this ancient vane also retains little of the rich, symbolic art which once made it an open book of stone to the seeking devout, who came to worship and get the wonderful thought of *nirvana* from the Buddha, and his disciples. We slowly wandered to a museum nearby, having walked about the ruin, feeling a deep and inexpressible sense of peace, in the thought of the lotus-eyed one, who is to those who also love *dhyana*, meditation the perfect ideal of tranquillity.

Our Swamiji whose exquisite arhat calmness and purity, as well as his bright robes of renunciation, created about us an atmosphere most fitting for the viewing of things associated with the great transmitter of *nirvana*. He explained many of the symbols on the beautiful ruins, which seemed to vibrate from their atoms the impassioned devotion, of those early artist-sculptors who strove to symbolize the whole universe in stone. Here and there one could trace the cycle of transmigration—the various departments of the *karma chakra*. Stone struggled to symbolize, temporary heaven and its luxuries of bliss, the human world with its delusions, the *asuric* kingdom with its fierce wars, the nether realms of tantalized ghosts, and the world of the multifarious creatures. Over this tragic wheel of karma, is shown a horrible monster, representing selfishness or egoism. It is this monster who holds the revolving wheel, and only through escaping from all delusion, of my or thine egoism, and becoming one with God, may we elude this cycle of horror, birth and death.

Within the wheel centre of karma, one sees illustrated in old Buddhistic charts, in the lovely Zen—monasteries of Japan, or in the various schools of northern India, China and Tibet, the symbol of a snake, a pig, and a dove, chasing each other around and around. Our Swamiji pointed out that these creatures are used to represent the dominant vices of egoism, namely, anger, greed and lust. In the karma-bound, these manifest in greater or lesser degree, one or the other, rising in the deluded man at various time. All the ills and agonies of this world can be traced to the cycle of this snake, pig or dove state, and the ancient Buddhist artist-monks, certainly used their imaginations to show forth the plight of the souls caught on the *bhava chakra*.

Swamiji pointed out that the realms of the Bodhisatvas and Buddhas, are not included in the karma chakra, because they have escaped the demon egoism, and have attained nirvana of unspeakable and inexpressible bliss. As an answer to the eternal mystery of *nirvana*, we came to an exquisite Buddha image, seated in the heart of a wide-eyed lotus. His lovely, smooth face was wonderfully calm—the figure breathed into one's consciousness, "I have the wonderful thought of nirvana, the eye of the right law. Have you perceived this? Then to you I shall also transmit the pearls and rubies of *dharma*." Taking away in our hearts fragments of truth, and beauty, from these fair relics and ruins of speaking-stone and metal, we went out into the

morning sunshine, to a new, white temple rising amid the ruins of the old, to perpetuate the memory of the gentle Buddha, and keep alive the flame of His torch. On ascending the steps, one saw inscriptions testifying to the strength and universality of Buddhism, for eastern and western names were intertwined in the one deed of devotion, namely the offering of this chaste edifice. The simplicity of the interior augmented the lovely atmosphere of tranquillity that pervaded and permeated the meditation hall. Peace like a halo, rayed in from the long windows and encircled the beautiful, meditating Buddha seated on a pavilion amid flower offerings. We lit a long stick of incense, and placed it in an urn of sand on the altar. A fragrant, purple cloud-wreath began to ascend and curl about the symbol of dhyana.

We gathered about our Swamiji, who had already closed his lotus eyes, and who had lifted his soul, high up into the dimensionless peace, of the most high. Thrilled with the holiness of the place one sought the presence of the dreaming Lord of our heaven. With the faculty of realization one groped through waves of light to attain the climax of all meditation, and find forever that glory which passes all description. After a time, fallen again into the valley of life, when we went forth to the outer-world, much of the light and radiance of the heights, survived in our moods. How inadequate must all words and pens, be to relate that final state, too great for mortal frame to hold, when even a glimpse into that great face of splendour, makes one, swoon and every atom burn in a nameless purgating alchemy of terrific lightening fire! How glorious is the thought of some day dissolving in that splendour in utter surrender! We left Kashi next day for Calcutta “kali Ghat” where the beautiful doctrines of Buddha, the compassionate, have never touched thousands who still cling to the crude rituals of our first forefathers, who worshipped a deity of terror, and vindictiveness, and try to vainly propitiate mother Kali by animal sacrifice, rather than by the true sacrifice, the only acceptable sacrifice that our loving mother asks of her little children, that of their own love and compassion-filled hearts, purified by responding freely to Her grace. It is the full response to grace alone that can make us sing with the consecrated David of old: “He who dwells in the secret place of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the almighty” etc. Psalm 91. No other protection is needed from our loving mother, love and recognize Her! We offend Her by killing our little brothers and sisters, Her younger children. By loving, teaching and protecting them are we truly serving Her. Animal sacrifice will only

please some evil entities, who might delude us with temporary favours, but destroy our souls finally, and increase our misery, in hopes that we will continue to feed their lust for the suffering of the innocent, more and more. The delusion of animal sacrifice is terrible, and all Indian humanitarians should concentrate on removing this ancient blot from mother earth. It is even more demoralizing than to slay for mere love of flesh food, for the insult of hypocrisy offered to god is a greater crime. The mystery of iniquity is great! Great is delusion in this world! The voice of right is faintly heard, in all the tumult and confusion, while might and ignorance is strong and mighty in the earth, which is its own kingdom. Vivisection and serums extracted from the agony of helpless beasts is also an example of the work of fiends--subtle, cunning and all-deluding.

Happily the home of our friends, was far off from the slaughter-house under the name of "temple" but the very air of Calcutta seemed to be filled with the means of the innocent and indignant animal spirits. About Chicago and other abattoir localities, the atmosphere is the same and a gifted theosophist attributes much of the immorality and crime of such places, as directly due to the baneful animal hatred that charges the very air, taking possession of weak human beings, driving them to crimes in vengeance.

Brother Jethananda entertained us with great hospitality and friends and members of the family often gathered about our Swamiji to satisfy the craving of their devoted hearts by imbibing his sage remarks and peaceful presence. Before parting for Waltair, we crossed the Hoogly river and saw the largest tree in the world, the famous banyan tree, which in time has become a forest. Thus with the aid of mother nature, may also the golden seeds of peace that are falling everywhere, in all parts of this earth, also grow into strong trees of life, and mighty forests of cooling shade, to give shelter, relief, and bliss to the hearts of all agonizing humanity and all creation.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXV. (Peace July & Aug 1936)

With a farewell tour about Calcutta, and folded hands we made our namaskar to that dowager Maharani of so many baffling, contrasting Indian moods, ranging from the atavistic barbarity of a Kalighat temple, flowing with innocent blood, to the culture of holy men of God, who cannot give pain even to the heart of an ant. On the bank of the turbid Hoogly river, this siren who has lured countless adventurers, abides, proudly watching the great ships from many ports, lading and unlading—the mighty drama of commerce at its best. She notes the endless stream of heterogeneous men who come and go with their wonderful products of a million kinds. With equivocal calm she beholds too the naked, starveling sweeper, plying his palm-fibre broom, stooping with terrible patience to remove and droppings of the sickly kine who roam in search of offal, incongruously amid the swanky, stream-line motors of the rich sahibs. She gazes ‘neath skies like hot brass, at the teeming multitude of treasure-seeking exiles from Cathay, Nippon, England, America, Germany and other remote corners of the world. Some hurry along or dally in the shops of Sindhi merchants, for beauteous things grown familiar to the seasoned traveller, carved cinnabar, sandalwood and ivory, rich brass and wood work, shimmering rugs, embroideries, flashing silks and gauze madly festooned amid tiger and panther hides and odd Mongolian furs. She sees with a weary impersonal gaze the evil brothels where the lonely sailor or derelict drinks himself insensible, and the little Seventh Day Adventist Mission where a little group are holding a prayer meeting. She beholds philosophically the piteous leper crying for food to the pale *memsahib* accompanied by her pretty *ayah*, and two white children buying dainties for tea time. She witnesses days filled with a thousand fierce passions and then the calm, sultry nights, when the dust of day has settled, and the stars look down the streets where now, only a policeman is pacing, listening to the lonely chimes of the Sir Hogg Market clock tower.

Amid all this pageantry and colourful scene our Swamiji moved with his little band of Santi Ashram peace-savants, endeavouring to scatter here and there, seeds of peace---a thought, a word, a book or a prayer, for everywhere there are beings craving their heritage, hungrily awaiting word about it from the Man of God. This latter thought brings to mind the lovely poem of Puran Singh, and it describes the life, work and faith of peace-bringers like our Swamiji, let us pause in our odyssey to chant it for I think you will like it:

*The man of God doth live in his own paradise made of dreams,
And he watches the calm changes of the colours of his sky and how with those
changes change his joy and pride and aroma of faith!*

*His life is a continuous inspiration,
 At times the stream grows thin like an unspun thread of cotton, when spider- like
 he rolls it in himself and flies from all society,
 At others the steam surges in all the four directions like a shoreless roaring sea,
 And the man of God comes out to oppose the whole world of unfaith and lower self.
 His God-inspired mighty sword doth cleave the dark and save the saints and
 destroy all that is false.
 And yet he is the child of man whole won sustenance is but a cup of milk drawn a
 fresh from the golden stream of love that flows toward him from the lotus feet of
 God.
 The man of God feels suffocated if drawn away from this holy presence.
 The vision of His glory redeems his mind from all wandering aims, and
 concentrates it in a little luminous point of His nam, builds faith that God is, and
 grows the man beneath the shades of mists, the primeval dreams of which man is
 made.
 His life is love of God, his life is Nanak Simran; his is the science and growing
 faith in the life of man, his is the art of the gardener that plants the man of God in
 man;
 He sows a poet, a seer, a lover of God, a hero in a common child of man.
 He exalts the common life of man to the dignity equal to or more than Gods.
 For the joy of this life all creation pines and the Gods of heaven do pine.*

Thus dear reader, as this poem tells us, the true mahatma, or spiritually great man of God has but one vocation—God—and finds his highest joy, in serving Him by serving his manifested forms. Down through the annals of time, we can trace how seeds of peace planted in human hearts by the gardeners of God, have transfigured them, making them bear the fruits of spirit. Solomon of old has truly said: knowledge of God is the beginning of wisdom. No one can deny how a life imbued with God, shines forth in both deeds, words and even in silence, because the child of God cannot help but express His interpenetrating radiance, any more than the sun can stop reflecting His glory, power and beauty. When the seeds of peace blossom in a

fertile heart the living corpse becomes a living soul, so the greatest of miracles takes place. As we entrained for Waltair, and passed the flying scenes of Bengal, with its lush green, rice fields, lotus tanks, and rivers flashing past like blue serpents, and peaceful villages nestling underneath the mango topes we felt as if reminiscences of the odyssey around India, covered the span of numerous lives, and not a mere fraction of but one. Holy men, golden-tipped temples, snowy Himalayan peaks, dreamy lakes of perfumed lotus flowers, bathing ghats, sacred secret old ritual caves, great plains and rivers, and dark deodar forests, Alladin like palaces and the palm-thatched hovels of the destitute, queer river craft, birds flaming like jewels, blue skies and torrential rains, elephants, camels, and other wild things in beautiful jungle settings, memories too immense to contain. Visions of rare beauty, visions of cruel ugliness, joining the millions of impressions of other lives, and all of them to merge again into the vast ocean of peace. And now to clear the mind of them—like a lake of too many ripples for with the lake of the mind calmed, one only can see the Beauty of beauties, to which all else pales and fades. One observes, however running through all *maya* like a golden thread how everyone everywhere longs for peace or eternal well-being—that blessed state which holy books describe as everything which we know to be attractive and desirable, a state exempt from all karma wherein reason and love are heightened and developed so that we may perennially obtain more pure and direct knowledge of the truth and make advances in holiness mounting from star to star to have the beatific vision continuously, in the brightness of the divine glory, enjoying the presence for ever, to have the friendship of celestial beings and their guidance, to be free from the adversities and sufferings of life and all its causes, to be delivered from the earthly body and our lower principles, to have entire separation from the society of the wicked and evil disposed who in various ways seek to injure the righteous man and embitter his life on this plane. Hearts of all creeds and religions crave this heritage, bless without change, interruption and satiety and the highest well-being in the heart God—with all other beings. Our conversations with fellow way-farers, showed us how much men craved this peace, that passeth all understanding as we flew over Indian roads “Sowing Seeds”.

Reaching Waltiar at eventide Brother Rednam extended warm hospitality to us, and as the evening was very fair, we went to the moon-lit beach, and Swamiji led us in a deep and divine meditation to that Grand Central where all ways terminate, and the loveliest earthly scenes pass into great wave of Light and Peace. When we opened our eyes the sea was all shimmering not only with silvery moonlight, but a great sheet of phosphorescence, blue and luminous as the cave at Capri. It seemed verily to be the crystal sea of sweet, Christian hymns, that sea that leads to the Great White Throne. We cried out with ecstasy, and waded in the radiant, electric water like happy children, examining with wonder the little animalcules who also strive to

show forth the light of their creator. Where the beach meets the water some of the radiance clung to the wet shore, so that our footsteps shone strangely in the sand, and as our Swamiji wrote a sacred *mantram* in Devanagari letters, which shone like lightening for a moment, our hearts were also inscribed with the word, and we went our way singing the hymns of our souls, and firmly resolving to be worthy of all His showering blessings, of love and joy, humbly craving to share anything we have with others, who might, have need of it—namely seeds of peace.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXVI. (Peace Sept & Oct 1936)

Glorious sunrise with its subtle vibrations of peace and love found our little band at the end of the long journey through India. While our gypsy baggage was being assembled at friendly-looking Durgada railway station, one could see our own beautiful Totapalli Hills, serene and lovely, like miniature Himalayas, but instead of pearly snows, bright masses of rosy, morning clouds were piling themselves over their green tops. Our hearts were overflowing with gladness like the fresh world about us, whose beauty impelled one to breathe a prayer of praise to the wonderful creator of universe, and blessings of peace to all ends of earth. Later as our car swept along under the great, banyan trees arching high over the road, the song of the wild-dove and cuckoo came to us with a melting sweetness, from the jungle, and beautiful butterflies filled the air like a rain of jewels, and beautiful butterflies filled the air like a rain of jewels. All nature seemed to be celebrating high festivity, as we flew along to our home in the hills. Ah, is not every day in the heart of the beloved Mother Nature a festal day for her children? What a wealth of kindness there is in her, what untiring and infinite beneficence! What healing balm and perpetual inspiration!

As they heard the sound of our motor, the people of the tiny, palm-thatched villages along Santi Ashram road, ran forth with glad cries and greetings. These simple children of the good earth ever fill me with love and wonder, and give rise to deep philosophic musings. Despite their abject poverty, illiteracy and lack of hygiene they still seem happier than those who have all the advantages of so-called western civilization, for they are not deprived of that first the foremost joy of life: the close intimacy with nature. They are free from the enslaving doctrines of the world which tend to make life more and more complex, violent, unhealthy and joyless. They seem to practise much more nearly the peaceful, chaste, natural life that Jesus Christ advocates in his sane, practical and little-heeded doctrine. The doctrine which is also that of Buddha, Confucius and other great lives. Swamiji

blessed the villagers, and we drove on past the beautiful, green fields with their billowing rice-crops. The soft-eyed kine looked up, and lowed their welcome as we drove through the great white gate of our beloved Santi Ashram, the home of peace and love, with its universal symbols, and great, white archway.

Our dear brothers and sisters and the little school children greeted us with song and music, as we proceeded to the worship hall. Garlands of roses culled from the fair gardens were hung about our necks, and the altar of our worship-hall was also showered with roses, the flowers of love. Swamiji led us in prayers of thanks-giving for our happy and safe return, and all joined him in praying that the peace seeds sown far and wide on our journey through India and Kashmir, would take root, and help the great brotherhood in its work of bringing all mankind at length into the kingdom of God as a whole and united mystical body. Fruit and sweetmeats were distributed to all present and the day was spent in rejoicing before His Presence. As we walked about the dear Abide of Peace, how friendly all the familiar nooks and corners looked, a haunting charm hung over the orchards and fields smiling in the sunshine. The gardens poured forth their glory of flower and fragrance. The roads with their border of white-washed stones, and all the quiet little cottages seemed pervaded by the atmosphere and aroma of Om. At sunset we assembled on a quiet terrace for meditation, sending our souls far out into the infinite. The wonderful journey through India and its thrilling, joyous days, seemed only like a song, lovely dream, as if we never had left our peace home to sow seeds along those interminable, Indian roads that led from coral strands to snowy places almost at the very top of the world.

Mingling with the even-song of the birds, came through the scented breezes the *bhajan* songs of the worship hall. Our Guruji was lost in a deep meditation surrounded by little *brahmacharies*. The sunset splendour cast a golden halo upon his face and robe, like some exquisite modelled Buddha, he seemed a symbol of tranquillity and emblem of all that is truly good and pure. Our faithful dog was lying at my feet looking up with a half-human gaze. The hour was blessed indeed, the peace of the cosmic spread over Santi valley like benediction, laying invisible fingers of love on everything; making them divine enough for heaven itself-heaven which seemed so very near. After our meditation Swamiji related some of our wonderful experiences of Sowing Seeds Along Indian Roads, and laid upon the hearts of his little band, the importance of drawing close to men individually, and of every being alert to the great things of eternal life, and so live, to also make all whom we meet aware of the great fact that it is individual peace, that will pave the way for the great shanti, the universal peace to come. Preaching and teaching he added may often not avail, and be powerless to convince, but the ever-shining and radiating love in our hearts, revealed in personal services and ministries will tend to soften the stoniest heart, so that the golden seeds of peace may drop upon it, and with patient,

tender care finally take root, He further said that, it is the duty of all who wish to serve in the vineyard of truth, to establish first and foremost peace within their own hearts; for the blind cannot lead the blind. To impart love—wisdom, born of the direct perception of truth, to others, we must have it ourselves. When one is tossed up and down in this changing world of *samsara*, where everything is changeful and evanescent and fraught with much pain and sorrow, where everything is made up of the pairs of opposites as joy and sorrow, sickness and health, heat and cold and even life and death, the wise one will after suffering enough, finally become discriminating. He will question thus, what is the permanent thing in this maze of varying phenomena? Leaving aside *prakriti*, delusive *maya*, he will strive to recognize truth the living *purusha*. When he meditates on *purusha* the Sun of suns in his heart centre in rapt silence, the illuminated consciousness once thereby gained, direct perception, gives him power to feel the peace and presence of God, even when engaged in outer activities. Thus the truth shines in his eyes, thinks in his mind, works in his hands and manifests itself in every moment of his life. He becomes the embodiment of Truth or the crest Jewel of Wisdom—whether he is working or meditating. This is the summit of spiritual life, and the glory of love-wisdom, the undying flame of knowledge of the higher self. Thus spoke our Guruji, closing with the loving words:

May you ever shine as that light! Ah, may the truth-seekers and truth-teachers in East and West be filled with this glorious jnana—light, so that the divine seeds sown all over the world, may grow into that fair garden of peace, nirvana or the kingdom of heaven, for which all hearts have sighed through the ages.

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXVII. (Peace March 1939)

SOWING PEACE SEEDS IN JAPAN

Since the terrible Nanking Incident and a swift series of unholy similar events in the Far East, that so deeply seared the hearts of all peace lovers, travellers have lost all desire to view the cherry blossoms of Nippon. However when we have

learned to drink from the stream of love that ever flows towards us from the lotus feet of God, we also learn to say with the teachers of ahimsa: I have the same feeling for the high, as for the low, for the moral, as for the immoral, for the depraved as for the virtuous, for those whose beliefs are good and true. We must ever strive to separate the deed we might hate, from the doer whom we always love. Holding high in consciousness this view-point, I sailed bravely, despite war clouds to Japan, to fulfil a charge that had come to me, not of my own seeking, but in one of those secret and imperious illuminations of the spirit, to ignore which, is to betray God.

Previous visits to Japan in the blessed companionship of Sri Swamiji had been poems of idyllic charm. The silent temple retreats and the communion with kindred spirits whose whole vocation is also peace, made Japan seem a veritable Tusita Paradise of Contentment, wherein Maitreya the next avatar, might suddenly appear to us. An unearthly loveliness hung like a spell over ancient Nara, Nikho and Kyoto where the eidolons of Buddha smiled down on gardens of blossoming trees. Serenely the gentle mannered groups of people walked about us and worshipped at the shrines fragrant with clouds of incense. We often watched them too in the rock gardens picnicking under wisteria arbours, peacefully sipping tea and nibbling from lacquered plates. Even in the busy cities, in bazaars, hotels and open thoroughfares, tranquillity and politeness of the heart, delighted us everywhere. Indeed the love of nature, little children and a deep culture of heart and mind, made Nippon a truly beautiful land, where it seemed Buddhism live on in vital form, commingled with the best ideals of spreading Christianity.

When our illustrious and beloved brother Nicholas De Roerich toured Japan, his ideals of beauty and peace met great response and warm appreciation. Suddenly however like one of their own exploding bombs, descended twilight over Japan and its culture. The thundering forces of darkness seem to hold in grip the fairyland of our tea cups. The elusive and chaotic events of the past months, leave one amazed with horror, as if an iridescent butterfly had suddenly changed into a hooded cobra, before ones very eyes. Abroad the Japanese steamer on which I took passage, there were no signs of war and to insure good will and a better understanding, every American and European passenger was given a booklet explaining the Japanese angle of the conflict. As I read it and conversed during the long and mellow voyage with Japanese friends, I learned that as is the case in every war, mass animal magnetism deludes the people to believe that their particular cause is right and just. And sad to relate this mystery of iniquity also blinds the spiritual guides of a warring people, so that they exhort the flower of the land to fight for "God, Emperor and Country." Thus it was in the great western tragedy of mankind, and so it is in the Far East today. The shrines and temples are being plundered of their lovely, metal, votive

vessels and ornaments hallowed by time, to be molten down into weapons of death. Alas!

Silently witnessing this delusion of patriotism I used every opening to sow seeds of peace in the hearts of all Japanese friends contacted during the voyage and while in Japan. As most of the educated Japanese know the English language I gave out unhindered many of our peace tracts and pamphlets, praying that they would do their silent work of sowing seeds in some open hearts here and there. In the little pine garden on the topmost deck, a few international fellow passengers would gather together after tea, whenever the sunset was very beautiful for a silent meditation, and a philosophical discourse, which I had the privilege of leading. Words cannot convey what inspiration ran like lightning from heart to heart, and needless to say, one felt a great joy, to find this unexpected opportunity to sow Seeds of Peace. The presence of God's love seemed to be pouring in a steady stream, making the days slip by in timeless, space less bliss. Arriving at Yokohama one saw nothing in the graceful flow of eastern life, suggestive of war times. In a Jinrickshaw one rolled through the autumn sunshine studying the colourful throngs of gaily clad people and all the interesting sights and customs and things of beauty on display. Passing through Kyoto Street, the main bazar, I was sad to see the bright toys on display to be mostly of a grim nature. There were all kinds of wooden and metal guns and swords, tanks and bombing planes, tiny tin helmets and soldier suits and endless regiments of leaden soldiers. Innocent Japanese cherubs would clamour for these death dealing toys and were soon satisfied by their elders. Japanese infants are taught from the cradle that patriotism is religion itself, and the festivals of the little boys are all of a nature to instil his delusion in the hearts with their first impressions of life.

One blessed afternoon standing once more before the wonderful Buddha of Kamakura, feeling the presence like a bright enfolding garment, I thought of all the great companions of the race. Red and golden autumn leaves were falling about me, like lives in China, I pondered, and silently prayed the blessed, compassionate ones to intercede. After a charming tea ceremony in a temple garden, facing a pool full of water roses, with Buddhist friends, some beautiful poems were read, that fluttered from the maple trees. One which was translated for the foreign guests, on request was:

THE MOON ON TUNG TING

*Would that the day would quickly come,
When fighting ends,
And I can view the shining moon,
On lake Tung Ting, with Chinese friends!*

I was thrilled with the loving sentiment and beauty of that little verse, by the philosopher poet Asataro, showing the true “Kokoro” or heart thought, of Japan, now hidden under a cloud. While in any land the universal, illuminati give out their gentle yet powerful thoughts for brotherhood and peace, there is yet much hope for humanity, despite gathering twilight over the surface of lands and nations. The workers of peace must forge ahead, and band close together, as there is yet an immense task before them in every land. For object lesson I relate the following: The night before sailing for India, I was wakened out of a deep, blissful sleep by the incessant tramp, tramp, tramp of hundreds of marching feet. As I peered down into the broad street before the Oriental Hotel facing Kobe harbour, a sense of anguish tore through my heart, that was not my own, but belonged to all creation. In the cold white moonlight, I beheld a vast regiment of soldiers, looking in their dark yellow uniforms like a field of ripe grain, ready for the scythe of the ghastly reaper. What filled my being with nameless woe was to see at that late, chill hour of night, also an army of women and little children, trotting along in helpless agony, trying to keep pace with that moving field of men. Their small wooden sandals clattered frantically, above the heavy thud of the hurrying, hurrying boots. They carried flags and cried, ‘Banzai’ from time to time, to keep up courage.

The frail, flower-like forms, in bright Kimono’s, strained every nerve, to follow the desperately loved ones, to the bitter end—the quay, and transport for China. Here and there, some spent form would finally have to surrender to exhaustion, and fall back, crying “Sayanara” a last goodbye. The beloved face then swept on, in the dreamlike river of faces, his voice even now become only an echo, perhaps forever. Ah! There is something so sanctifying and chastening in a sudden sight of all such of all such needless world pain! It bids one keep oneself forever free for service in the cause of peace. How much longer shall men prey upon each other and families be impoverished and rent asunder?

Dear lovers of peace, there is still a mighty task before us, which needs dedication and sacrifice anew, from all the great silent band of illuminated souls, the world over. Then only, can we begin to dream of peace, plenty and goodwill in Europe, Japan, China and the whole earth. May peace be unto all!

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXVIII. (Peace April 1939)

SOWING PEACE SEEDS IN CHINA

One November morning at the roseate blush of sunrise, when only the morning star blazed its winter glory, our white cruiser dropped anchor in a beautiful harbour of ancient Cathay. Among the picturesque Sampans with which the port was swarming stood the grey battle ships of many nations, gay with signal flags, but formidable with pointed guns. Later as our launch glided towards the pine clad shore, one's heart burned with compassion to see the Sampans overflowing with refugees, squealing house hold creatures, and squalid poverty. The patient misery of those suffering Chinese families seemed a reproach to us, tourists, who in sharp contrast were so comfortable and cared for in every way. It seemed so inadequate to toss them only a few coins, and then pass on, with the golden tide of life. At the landing, our small group of British and American tourists were promptly besieged by another group of desperate, ragged and hungry looking mortals that wrung one's heart. Far above our tiny sparks of love and compassion burns the wisdom, compassion and love of the heavenly all-father, and to His mercy we can only commend His poor, unfortunates, all of whom we cannot personally succour.

On making inquiries we learned that these great numbers of dolorous souls, fled hither from the interior of stricken and bombarded China. They came in such locust hordes that it was beyond the private philanthropists or benevolent societies to care for them all. Hence they were begging, stealing and scavenging for food and sleeping in the streets, alleys and sea caves becoming more subhuman each day. Finally, emerging from this maze of sufferers, we passed on to the main thoroughfare and there too were the armies that rise up after war—the three armies of cripples, mourners and famished thieves. My heart was haunted long after by the sight of one gentle, old lady seated on the curb stone and wailing a mournful air:

*A cricket lingers o beneath,
Where dying winter weeds are rife,
There is no shred of value left,
In such a life.*

The melancholy interpretation, probably referred to the singer who in old age, was left through the cruel war, hungry, companionless and desolate, as a belated cricket. Later with a group of lovers of peace and brotherhood amid surroundings

that breathed of the golden Ming dynasty, and beauteous with art relics from that period of peace and culture, one spoke of the work of redemptive evolution, now strange to realize, in great progress, despite outer world chaos. The great election work is now in progress, and the people of kingdom of heaven are being chosen from out of the mass of the abnormal and unregenerate human race. We are dwelling in the glorious time of transition when humanity is emerging rapidly from its chrysalis of outworn traditions, customs and narrow beliefs. This great process is painful, in that all that is evil or ignorant much yet destroy itself. Yet the awakened heart and mind can readily perceive one every side, the force of spiritual power supplanting material power.

We see the old forma and civilizations which we upheld as desirable, sweeping away almost overnight. Out of these entailing ordeals the new order of things, is being born with plans of growth that will naturally suggest themselves to the builders of this plane. "Mere scholars whose interest in the letter dims their perception of the Spirit," may not agree nor see the signs. As our blessed brother, Sri Omkarji emphasizes, in his universal ministry, the first and foremost way to hasten the Magnus opus or the grand transition from *kali yuga* to *satya yuga*, is for each aspirant or elect builder to reach the prophetic promise of whom it is written: "Unto whom the Lord is coming a living stone, rejected indeed of unformed men, but with God, elect, honourable, ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, for a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people of God's own possession." Departing from Cathay, our white ship sailed through a quivering bed of radiant sunset colours, to the fair Malayan Isles, where I looked forward to further news of the strides of the great redemptive plan of peace and good-will on earth. My heart grew and joyous at a memory and knowledge, of the great companions of humanity, of olden days, and those who now walk in their shining foot-steps:

*"A thousand times I would die for them
Who listen to His story, and are informed to Him,
They are honourable men who lay their Foreheads
On the dust before my Lord in
Total self-surrender!
Those hands are beautiful
They look to me so bright, and fair
That write His praise without end,
Those feet are holy that go the way which goes to my Lord
All calamity is over in a company of Saints!"*

May peace and boundless friendliness fill the whole world!

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXIX. (Peace May 1939)**SOWING PEACE SEEDS IN MALAYA**

Sailing once more through the South Seas that bore our white ship nearer and nearer to beautiful India, one experienced while viewing the surpassing beauty of sea and sky, a sense of ineffable rapture and ethereality. Here, the horizon disappears and heaven and earth run together so that the palmy isles of spice, dotting these beautiful tropical waters, seem to float in space like fairy visions. At sunrise and sunset, especially in South China Sea, the gulf of Siam and the Malayan waters, one sees delicate, pastel shades of a peculiar luminous quality rarely seen elsewhere. Such hues of violet, turquoise, jade green and cerise inter-shot with gold, only our master can make and mix, on His vast palette, the cosmos! Beholding His masterpieces on the canvas of nature, one's whole soul bows down spontaneously, lost in adoration.

The great school of Zen Buddhism nurtured in Japan, a land so rich in natural beauty, has learned the value of meditating amid the grandeur of nature, to bring the soul quickly and naturally into a state of unity with its own intrinsic beauty and purity. The Zen masters or *gurus* give their *chelas* some enigma of nature to fathom, wisely aware that in contemplating the handy work of the artist divine, something of the secret soul of all loveliness must also be perceived. By searching the lost key, the divine logograph is found. Soon Singapore, that city of a thousand mystery stories of adventure loomed up, now become a great British fortification and called, the Gibraltar of the east. It stands in readiness to take part in Armageddon, the death struggle of the old order of the world, with its differences of castes, creeds and colour and other hindering separations of mankind. On landing, a ship in the Far East is swiftly invaded by all kinds of money changers, merchants, jugglers and fortune tellers, making a bedlam of picturesque confusion. All Americans are thought to be millionaires and are the first to be besieged. So I too had to run this inevitable gamut, finally escaping all, but one palmist, a Muslim brother, who was bent on reading my palm. His patient persistency, gaunt appearance, and shabby clothes, made one sense that the poor soul was very needy, so turning I said kindly, "Brother you may not read my palm, but if you are in need, you shall nevertheless have a little 'baksheesh'"

with Allah's blessing. I have long since given my heart, hands and fate into the keeping of Allah, as He wills it, I am ever content, and neither anxious nor curious concerning my fate. When we trust all to Him, all is well, eternally!" The astonished man studied me a moment silently, and then said, "Lady, you are right, the words you speak are true, they are what my Quran says. If I dare to say that you are wrong, and I am right in reading fortunes, I would be a devil. Believe me because of this palmistry, I am suffering every day in my heart. Now I will go right home and pray Allah for pardon. As you have been for me His mouthpiece, I cannot take 'baksheesh' from you."

Apparently shaken by some inner flash of experience this honest Muslim brother, salaamed and bowed in the kindly Eastern fashion, and hurried away. Absorbed in a soul before me, I did not at once, take notice of the small interested audience that had gathered to listen, among them three friendly missionaries. One was deeply touched at this incident and opportunity for sowing seeds of peace, not only the Muslim brother, but the silent witnesses also had come forward to ask about my vocation, the work of our Santi Ashram, and to request the simple messages of our blessed Swamiji, which I carried with me—the golden seeds—such as "Do you want God? Thou Art that, and the Message of Peace." It was a joy to see people studying them all along the passage to India, from the U.S.A.; keeping them, and asking for further news. I never saw anyone throwing them away, as meets the fate of most pamphlets. Let us send forth our thoughts that these seeds will take root and flourish in the cosmic gardens of peace.

It is really praise worthy how eastern souls especially, be they Muslim, Hindu, Parsee, Buddhist or Christian, gravitate as it were, towards the things that pertain to God. They drop and forget all mundane matters for the time being when news of God is within hearing. Even their holidays and festivals are spent in visiting holy men in their retreats, and places of temples, and pilgrimage. After a pleasant visit to rubber plantations, botanical gardens, Chinese farms and temples, sowing peace seeds, I returned to the ship. When the steamer was about to sail from Singapore, our Muslim brother with a group of friends kindly came to say, God speed, and offered me a pretty nosegay, all shiny with tinsel, and a basket of mangos teens.

The missionary friends who had seen this whole incident later began to talk to me about religion, upholding their own creed, and denouncing others. Listening silently, the words of the Buddha flashed to my mind and lips: There should be no praising of one's own sect and decrying of other sects; but on the contrary, a rendering of honour to other sects for whatever cause honour may be due. By so

doing one's own sect is helped forward, and other sects will be benefited, by acting otherwise, one's own sect will be destroyed in injuring others. Whosoever exalts his own sect, by decrying others, does so doubtless out of love for his own sect, thinking to spread abroad the fame thereof; but on the contrary he inflicts the more an injury on his own sect. In other words Jesus also bade us not to wrangle in His name, but to let our light shine forth, if we have indeed light in our souls. The magnanimous words of Buddha, Christ and Krishna should be pondered on by all teachers and missionaries of all creeds and sects. One's own weakness and not the creeds and beliefs of other souls are to be despised and set right. All the enlightened and compassionate souls, never insult forms of faith which others hold sacred, nor is any cause thereby advanced. Universal truth is found in all great religions, and when this one truth is found in all great religions, and when this one truth is felt and lived, unity, peace and brotherhood are the fruits. May peace be unto all!

Om! Om!! Om!!!

XXX. (Peace June, July & Aug 1939)

SOWING PEACE SEEDS IN CEYLON AND SOUTH INDIA

The timeless halcyon days of my return passage to lovely India, were now like a charming tale, almost told, Ceylon, that alluring fragment of India, which some prehistoric cataclysm had torn away from the motherland, was looming upon the horizon. I rose early, to greet on deck, the wondrous beauty of the tropical dawn. One half of the sky was still under the spell of night, a velvety purple blue, like the rich lining of a jewel casket; within which lay gleaming the mystical southern cross, a pearl like fragment of the moon, and the iridescent morning star. The other half of the heavens meanwhile, showed the pale and luminous morning hues, over the palmy isle of Ceylon, known as 'Lanka' in Buddhist and Hindu lore. When one reads such living psalms of beauty in the open book of God, one can take little interest in the trifling interpretations of men, concerning Him and His ineffable grandeur. The book of nature is so comprehensive that it not only illumines the intellect, but the soul: The sense of God's presence makes each day a holy day; so too in the calm splendour of this tropical dawn, one's soul rose to God and mingled with His spirit;

*If I take the Wings of the Morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall Thy Hand lead me.*

Suddenly when my sandhya or morning meditation was finished, I heard with a startling clarity, as if he were standing at my right hand, our Swamiji's joyous voice, in greetings: Hello! Sushila, we are awaiting you in the harbour. I flashed back mentally my own greeting. A few hours later we were amused and surprised at the accuracy of these, wireless mental messages. Science is now rediscovering this subtle means of communication, so common among the primitive peoples, as well as among the rishis of China, India and Tibet, whose faculties are unimpaired by the poisoning influence of civilization. Many of the co-workers in the cause of peace and brotherhood, whose ideals and affections also meet at a Center, beyond themselves, namely, God, and his service, relate similar experiences. Through mutual dedication to God they become as children of one birth, such an entire sympathy, and intuitive understanding exists among them. Thus, we account for the loving unity between sages and saints, or God-conscious men. The Mohammedan, Hindu, Christian or Buddhist masters, meet and are seen to instantly recognize and love one another; in the name of the one divinity, whom they all have witnessed, though call by different names. Their hearts and aims are one, having alike received the gracious and all prevailing influence of God's spirit.

Those who have not yet experienced the intimate and enlarging relationship with divinity, are conscious of petty differences, which often give vent to strife, each sect upholding its own limited intellectual concept of God. We see in the semi religious politics of India, this separation at times, but Hindu Mahatma Gandhi and Mohammedan Gaffar Khan are arm in arm, brothers ever in their spirit of limitless love and service. From afar, as the white cruiser glided gracefully to a halt, in the harbour of Colombo; I could indeed discern, as prevised earlier, our beloved Swamiji, brahmachari Rama and other friends, waving their welcome from a large sampan with orange sails, which was rocking in the golden waters among other pretty Asiatic barques. Soon they were on deck, and amid the jolly clamour of landing and the Japanese music, I proudly introduced Sri Omkarji as promised to the kind, ship friends. They were greatly impressed by his aura of sanctity and peace.

The Japanese captain and officers were also highly pleased to meet a great Indian "Bhikshu", his bright robe and shaven monk's head so reminiscent of their own priests, in the fair temple gardens of Nippon. They hastened to order delicate

refreshments for the Ashram party. The lovely welcome garlands of jasmine, rose and sweet camphor that had somehow gotten around my fortunate neck, were admired in their artistic workmanship, by the English and American friends who had never seen the like before. After farewells were exchanged, our party descended into a government launch which a kind British officer proffered us, and which was much cooler and swifter than the open sampan. As we beheld the shinning water and the sunlit pier, we felt that we were going forth into a gleaming land with golden gates; and is not always the dear, bright future like that; ever rich with the promise of higher spiritual attainment, high adventure and happy service in the Vineyard? Before long we were driving through the pleasant, green countryside, which convinced one that Ceylon is one of earth's fairest islands. Its climate is good and its scenery full of variety, harbouring many archaeological treasures, its people are interesting races of many lands. The traveller who is universal, and a student of comparative religions, finds in Ceylon one of the most sympathetic, interesting and illumining centers of Buddhistic research and study.

Here are many temples amid scenes of great natural grandeur that breathe of the golden age of Buddhistic art. Ease of access and very famous, is the temple at Kandy, which is said to treasure a relic of Goutama Buddha, namely and eye tooth. A spreading Bodhi tree, grown from a twig from the very tree in India, where the patient Buddha at last obtained a glimpse of nirvana, is also an attraction, for all lovers of the compassionate one, and his noble eightfold path. There are monastic schools in Ceylon which train many *Bhikshus* for missionary work, and also having become masters of Pali, some of these give their lives to translating the wonderful sacred archives, found in ruined temples, and secret treasure chambers of the brotherhood, in China, Mongolia, Tibet and India. We longed to visit at length these beautiful treasure houses of truth, but were expected in India for the Christmas festival, so had to leave our kind friends after a brief visit in Colombo. Christmas was at hand and the cosmopolitan town was busy and humming like a beehive. In the emporium of Hindu friends, it was interesting to see the variety of rich and lovely things, gathered as in a museum, from every odd corner of this curious old world. What artisitry and marvellous cunning of workmanship were here represented! The Christmas spirit was in the air, and the Mohammadens, Singhalese, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians, showed a most universal hearted love and respect for the great avatar, whose birthday was approaching. It was strangely pleasant and incongruous to hear in this very oriental bazar, the radios playing loud Christmas carols, transmitted from the U.S.A., England and various European lands.

My soul caught a glimpse under the vast mountain of colourful impressions gathered on the passage from America to Ceylon, ranging from wars and bombing planes over China and Japan, to this peaceful commerce, that good was steadily

pressing upward, out of all the evil and unreality that was hastening to destroy itself. The golden lotus of truth the love and universal brotherhood was silently, steadily unfolding its beauty, and pressing up out of the coze and mud of world pain and suffering, to fulfil the mighty plan of creation, born of God's ineffable love for all His children. Crossing the bay, we reached next day the cape of our beloved India once more; and as the train of the landing proceeded across the sunlit land, one could see the beautifully carved and gleaming, white Rameswaram temple against the blue sky. In the train we had the opportunity of sowing seeds of peace as our fellow passengers all showed a kindly interest. Swamiji gave out some of his universal thoughts, and also spoke through his wonderful silence which transmits more than words. Thus we reached ancient Madura, one of the great Hindu pilgrimage centers. Brother Naidu who is a high railroad official and who escorted and made us very comfortable, on the train, entertained us with true Indian hospitality in his pleasant home. He gave many of his friends and neighbours the opportunity of hearing Swamiji, and joining in the beautiful meditations in preparation for the holy festival season.

Before departing from this old city, we were taken by our kind host and hostess to the large and interesting Madura temple. The thoroughfares around its immense walls were peopled with pilgrims and mendicants of various sects. The magnitude of these ancient temples of India can hardly be described. It overwhelms one with awe to see the mighty carven gateways, massive corridors built of immense slabs of stone; avenues of great pillars magnificently carved with symbolic figures and designs so intricate and bewildering that one is lost in the maze. A retinue of Brahmin priests came to guide us about, and offered to perform *puja*, worship at the various shrines. They carried censers of the most delicious incense called *sambrani*, and waved them about us. The shrines framed beautiful deities of rare and difficult workmanship, tokens of the golden age of Hindu art, now awakening again to a brilliant renaissance that thrills the world. Centuries rolled back as one beheld these wonderful, old corridors. At the shine of the seven planets, *puja* was offered. The many ghee lamps brought out the curious beauty of the carving about us. In the dim half-light, and clouds of fragrance, one could see down the halls of pillars, illumined altars at intervals.

Yogis and holy men were seated in deep meditation and prayer, here and there in the vital, purple gloom, parrots screamed from innumerable cages at the groups of pundits at their religious discussions. From the dreamy forest of pillars we suddenly came out to the large tank, around which the edifice is built. Weary pilgrims were bathing in the waters full of the reflected light of the stars and votive lamps. The four great gateways, splendidly carved, stood out against the sky; staunch and beautiful as the old, old soul of India. The atmosphere was alive with

sympathetic vibrations left by millions of devout souls down through the ages, such as a yogi we stopped with for a few moments. He was seated in lotus posture, his fine, dark face peaceful in its frame of tangled hair. His body was as rigid and calm as the carven images about him, all animation suspended, thus for the past week. What marvellous and complete control over restless matter, what august and profound serenity! We all felt like joining him there, and sharing his dream of nirvana; but passed on and out into the night, to an active nirvana of sowing peace seeds, among some loving souls who were awaiting us; thinking as we left the wonderful, old temple:

*Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?
If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there;
Even the darkness, hideth not Thee,
But the night shineth as the day!*

Om! Om!! Om!!!